



Becoming a
WAPRO
Certified
Public Records
Officer

Brief About Me

- ▶ Deputy City Clerk for the City of Olympia
- ▶ Working with public records for almost 10 years.
- ▶ Became a CPRO in 2016
- ▶ Been on the WAPRO Board since 2021

About WAPRO

- ▶ There are approximately 2,200 local governments and numerous state agencies in Washington State. The Public Records Act mandates that every government entity have a public records officer. The goal of the Washington Association of Public Records Officers (WAPRO) is to harness the collective knowledge and talent of these public records officers to increase transparency and Public Records Act compliance through standardized education. Conventional wisdom says “many hands make light work” and “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” With 2,200 pairs of hands working together, WAPRO will help make light work of PRA compliance.
- ▶ By participating in WAPRO, a small investment from each local and state agency in WAPRO will help buy a lot of prevention. WAPRO will increase transparency and better PRA compliance by increasing the availability of standardized Public Records Act education. WAPRO will also serve as a forum where Public Records Officers and others who are part of an agency’s PRA compliance program can share ideas, spot trends and share best practices.

What is a Certified Public Records Officer?

- ▶ In 2012, WAPRO initiated a program to provide certification for public records officers meeting high-quality professional standards. WAPRO certification requirements are designed to promote and support a sound background in public records laws, procedures, work processes and educational achievement for certificate earners. Certification demonstrates personal commitment and dedication to administering the Washington State Public Records Act (RCW 42.56). Upon approval of the application, the applicant will be issued a certificate and recognized both on the WAPRO website and during the WAPRO Annual Business meeting.

Certification Requirements

Subject matter	Category	Minimum Hours Required
Washington Public Records Act: Law & Theory	A	2
Public Records Request Response Processing	B	10
Legal Updates	C	4 (within past 2 years)
Electronic Records and Technology	D	4
Records Management	E	2
Substantive Program Area Courses	F	2
Elective Courses	G*	6
TOTAL		30

- Must have attended at least one WAPRO Conference within 3 years of application and a minimum of 10 hours of training must come from WAPRO;
- Must provide documentation of courses;
- No more than 10 hours of training may be pre-recorded “On-Demand” trainings.

Recertification Requirements

Subject matter	Category	Minimum Hours Required
Legal Updates	C	4 (within past 2 years)
Electronic Records and Technology	D	4
Elective Courses	G*	10
TOTAL		18

- Must have attended at least one WAPRO Conference since Certification;
- At least 6 hours must be WAPRO provided.

WAPRO Course Categories

- ▶ A: PRA Law and Theory – Courses which generally provide a broad overview of the PRA and its requirements
- ▶ B: PRA Processing – Courses which delve deeper into the specifics on how to process a PRA request
- ▶ C: Legal Updates – Courses which cover recent case law regarding the PRA
- ▶ D: Electronic Records and Technology – Courses which cover technology and the PRA
- ▶ E: Records Management – Courses covering records management and retention
- ▶ F: Substantive Program Area – Courses which relate to a specific field of the PRA (Body Worn Cameras/LE Records, School District Records, Medical Records, Juvenile Records, etc.)
- ▶ Elective Courses: - Elective credits which may be fulfilled by any of the above

How to get credits

- ▶ WAPRO Conferences (Spring and Fall) – Worth about 8 hours of credits per conference.
- ▶ PRA University – Put on by State AGO, worth 1 to 1.5 hours per course.
- ▶ MRSC Courses – Usually worth 1 to 2 hours per course.
- ▶ Secretary of State Pre-Recorded Trainings – Varying lengths, many are worth “D” credits which are sometimes difficult to obtain.
- ▶ NAGARA/LEIRA also provide many PRA trainings
- ▶ You may submit Approved Course List applications for credit for any training you believe is relevant that is not already approved.

How to apply for certification

- ▶ Once you have met the training requirements to become a Certified PRO, you may apply online through the WAPRO website.
- ▶ \$100 fee for WAPRO members, \$125 for non-members
- ▶ Provide documentation of courses; please label each piece of documentation provided with the course code.
- ▶ Certification is good for 3 years; **Beginning January 1 2025: Recertification must be done within 1 year of lapse.**

Application Approved or Denied

- ▶ If your application is approved, you will receive an email informing you that you have been approved, and a certificate will follow.
- ▶ If your application is denied, WAPRO will reach back out and let you know what deficiencies were in your application, and work with you to fix them.
- ▶ Corrected applications resubmitted within six months have the application fee waived.