



JLARC Public Records Reporting

WAPRO Fall Conference

October 2025

Presented by: Geneva Johnston | Ryan McCord

Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC)

Legislative committee, membership evenly split between parties

About 30 nonpartisan staff members

Representatives



Rep. Pollet
Chair



Rep. Orcutt
Secretary



Rep. Barnard



Rep. Berg



Rep. Fey



Rep. Manjarrez



Rep. McClintock



Rep. Scott

Senators



Sen. Wagoner
Vice Chair



Sen. Salomon
Asst. Secretary



Sen. Christian



Sen. Goehner



Sen. Hasegawa



Sen. Lovelett



Sen. Short



Vacancy

Presentation overview

Background

Reporting Requirements

Metric Details

2024 Reporting

Recent Legislation & Public Use



Why are we here?

2016 State Auditor's Office performance audit:

The Effect of Public Records Requests on State and Local Governments

Wanted to answer questions about cost, staff time, and other factors related to public records requests



<https://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch/Home/ViewReportFile?arn=1017396&isFinding=false&sp=false>

Why are we here?

[RCW 40.14.026\(5\)](#)

- [ESHB 1594](#) passed during the 2017 Legislative session
- Went into effect July 23, 2017

Annual, ongoing reporting requirement



Why are we here?

2017 - first year of data collection (partial year)

July 23, 2017 – December 31, 2017

2018 - metrics were modified, clarified, or removed

2020 - Legislature required itself to report

2024 - 7th full year of data reported



Reporting Requirements

Who must report?

When is reporting required?

How do agencies report?

What needs to be reported?



Who must report?

Agencies, as defined by the Public Records Act ([RCW 42.56.010](#))

- **State agency** includes every state office, department, division, bureau, board, commission, or other state agency.
- **Local agency** includes every county, city, town, municipal corporation, quasi-municipal corporation, or special purpose district, or any office, department, division, bureau, board, commission, or agency thereof, or other local public agency.

When is reporting required?

Agencies with at least \$100,000 of combined staff and legal costs associated with fulfilling public records requests during the prior year (January 1 – December 31) are required to report.

Agencies below the \$100,000 threshold may voluntarily report.



When is reporting required?

Deadline is set in statute ([RCW 40.14.026](#))

July 1

Reporting
system opens
in January!

Ongoing reporting, due every year by July 1st

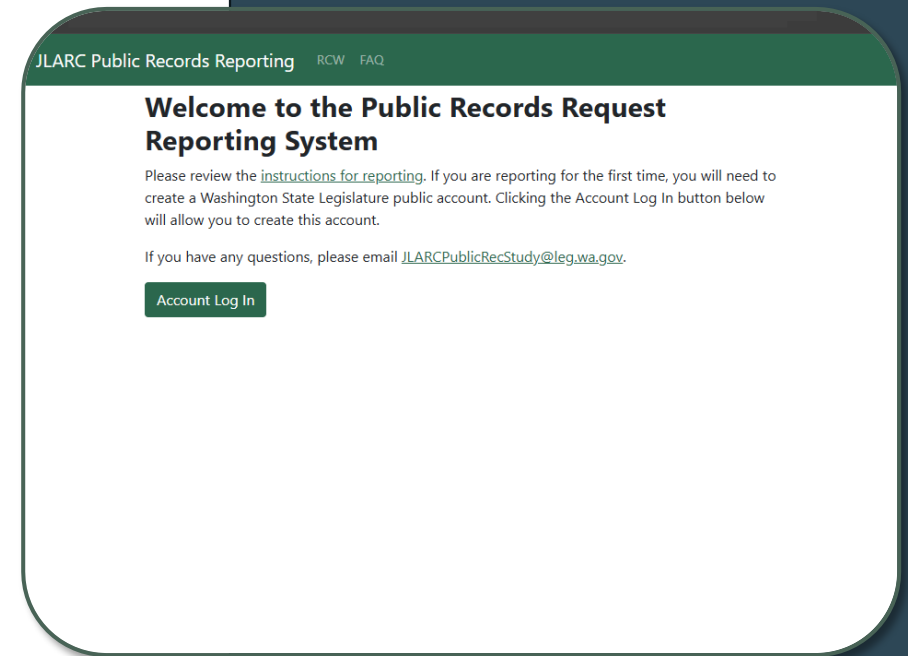
How do agencies report?

JLARC maintains an online reporting system that all agencies use to submit data

Agencies use a variety of tools to collect data internally and prepare it for submission

Reporting system is available on the JLARC website:

<https://leg.wa.gov/studies-audits-and-reports/performance-audits/public-records/>





What needs to be reported?

For agencies above \$100,000 threshold or voluntarily reporting:

Performance metrics are outlined in [RCW 40.14.026\(5\)](#)

JLARC worked with consultants, advisory groups, and work groups to develop definitions for metrics and provide guidance for agencies

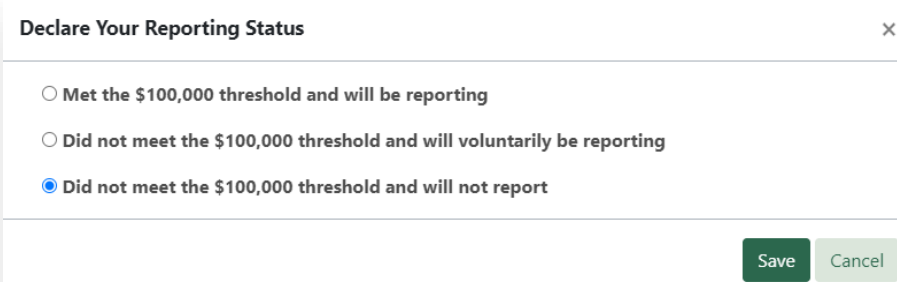
The metrics include a wide array of information including:

- Number of requests
- Costs (maintenance, litigation, staff, etc.)
- Time to respond to requests

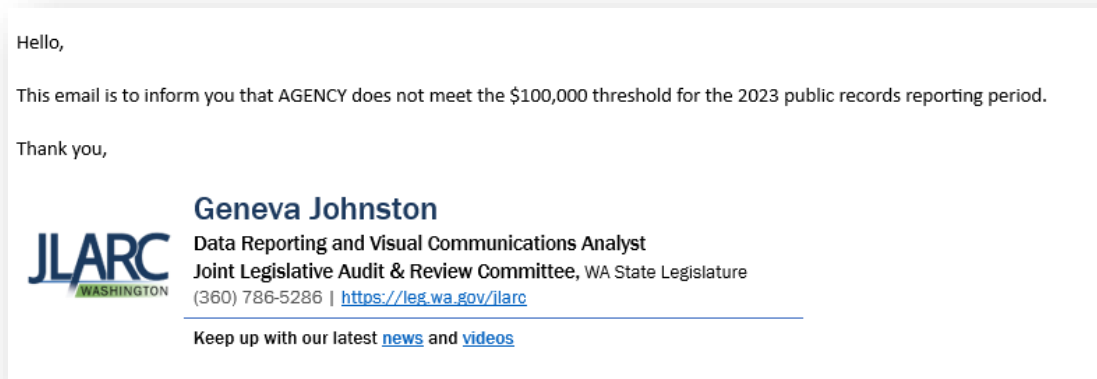
What needs to be reported?

For agencies under \$100,000 threshold:

- Option 1: Declare your reporting status in the online reporting system
- Option 2: Email JLARCPublicRecStudy@leg.wa.gov



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Declare Your Reporting Status" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. It contains three radio button options: "Met the \$100,000 threshold and will be reporting", "Did not meet the \$100,000 threshold and will voluntarily be reporting", and "Did not meet the \$100,000 threshold and will not report". The third option is selected with a blue dot. At the bottom right, there are two buttons: "Save" (green) and "Cancel" (light green).



Be sure to include your agency, name and title, and acknowledge the reporting year

Common issues

I forgot my password.

Use the link on the reporting system homepage to reset your password.

Didn't get an email? Check your junk folder or firewall settings.

I need to update my email address.

Email addresses cannot be updated.

Create new account with your preferred email address.

Recommend using a generic or shared email.

I don't have access to report for my agency.

Send email:

JLARCPublicRecStudy@leg.wa.gov

Reporting Metrics

Overview of reporting metrics

Common questions/errors



The image is a blue-tinted close-up of a financial document. The top portion displays a table with multiple columns of numbers, likely representing financial data. A prominent total value of 3,955,090.00 is visible. The bottom portion features a bar chart with three bars of different heights, and a table below it containing numerical data, including values like 5,72, 15,25, 33,24, 2,276, 25,41, 54,32, 18,17, 3,654, 23,31, 55,32, 55,32, 9,220, and 17.

Response time

Court cases

Response format

Requests received & closed

Baseline data

- Number of requests open at start of reporting period
 - Number of requests closed - open at beginning of reporting period
- Number of requests received during reporting period
 - Number of requests closed – requests received during reporting period

Total requests closed
(used in other metric calculations)

Metric 7

- Number of requests by type of requester

Total must equal number of requests received from baseline data

Response time

Metric 1

- Number of requests closed within 5 days

Should not include requests with 5+ day estimate

Metric 2

- Number of requests with estimated response 5+ days

Metric 3

- Average and median days to final disposition
 - Number of requests with final disposition
 - Total number of days to final disposition
 - Median number of days to final disposition
 - Average number of days to final disposition

Total requests closed
(from baseline data)

Example:

Request 1	1 day
Request 2	2 days
Request 3	1 day
Request 4	3 days
Request 5	3 days
5 requests	10 days

Clarified, denied, abandoned

Metric 4

- Number of requests needing clarification

Metric 5

- Number of requests denied in full or part, common reasons for denial
 - Number of requests denied in full
 - Number of requests partially denied or redacted
 - 5-10 most common reasons for denial

Metric 6

- Number of requests abandoned by requesters

Response format

Metric 8

- Percent of requests fulfilled electronically and physically

Number of requests fulfilled by:

- Electronic means
- Physical records
- Combination (electronic means and physical records)
- Closed – no responsive records

Reporting system will calculate percentages using **baseline data**

Total must equal
**total requests
closed**
(*baseline data*)

Metric 9

- Number of records involving scanning

Time & cost

Metric 10

- Average estimated staff time spent on each request
 - Estimated total staff time (in hours)
 - Average estimated staff time in hours per request (*system calculation*)

Metric 11

- Estimated total costs incurred fulfilling records requests
 - Estimated total costs
 - Agency staff costs
 - Legal costs – non-litigation
 - Supplies and services
 - Average estimated cost per request (*system calculation*)

Litigation costs
captured in **metric 13**

Time & cost

Metric 14

- Estimated cost to manage/retain records
 - Cost of agency staff whose primary duties involve managing/retaining of records
 - Costs associated with purchase, lease, and maintenance of agency systems whose primary function involves the managing/retaining of records
 - Costs associated with services purchased in relation to managing/retaining records

Metric 15

- Expenses recovered from requesters

[RCW 42.56.120\(3\)](#)

Court cases

Metric 12

- Number of court cases filed alleging a violation of Chapter 42.56 or other public records statutes
 - Violation type(s)
 - Exemption(s) (if applicable)

Only include cases filed during the reporting period.

Cases filed, then subsequently withdrawn should be included.

Do not include ongoing cases opened prior to reporting period.

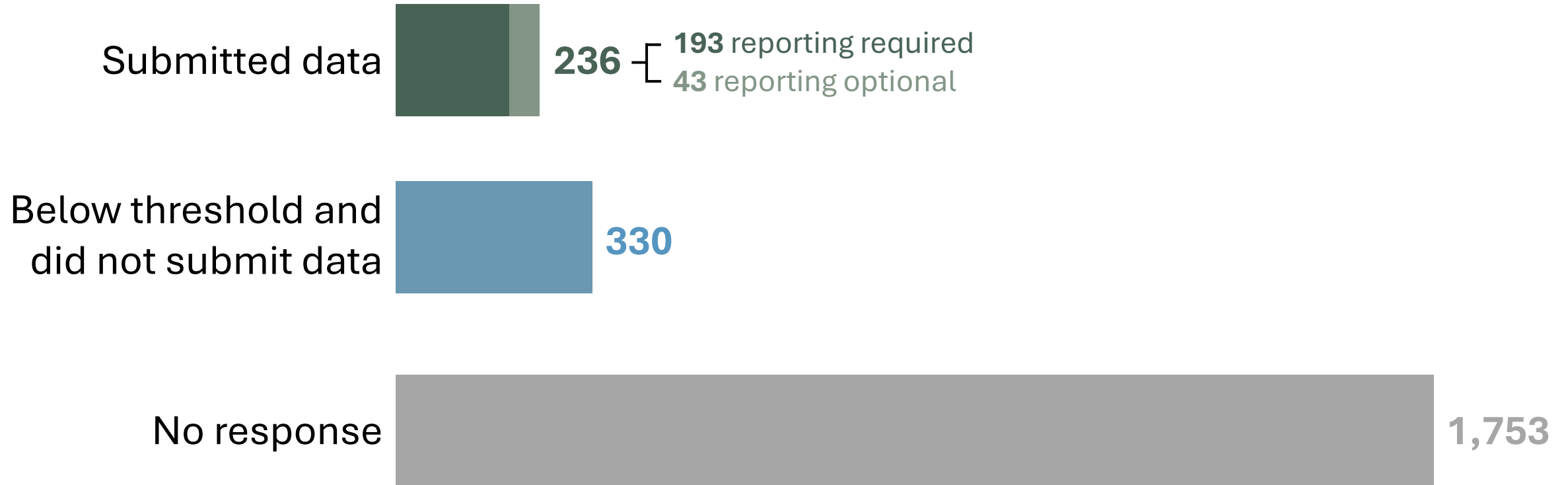
Metric 13

- Cost of litigating cases alleging a statutory violation

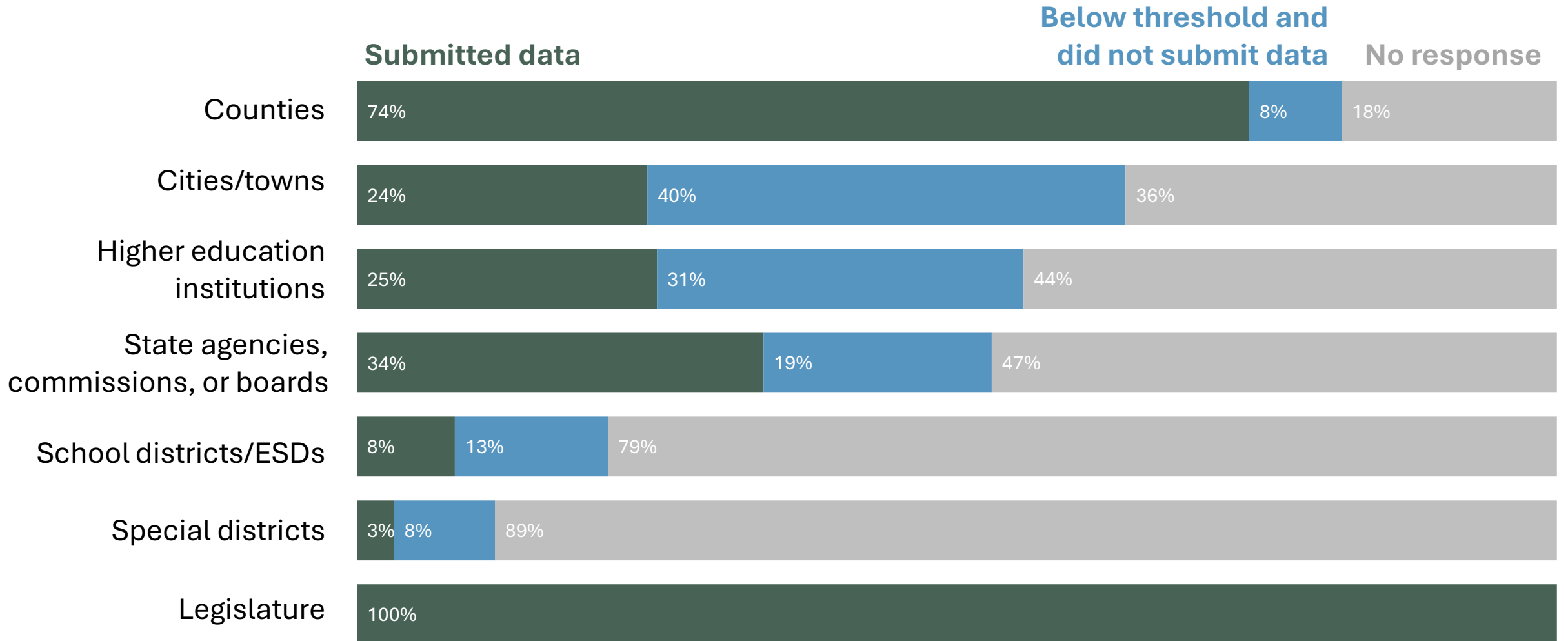
Only include costs incurred after the case has been filed

2024 Public Records Data

Reporting Compliance



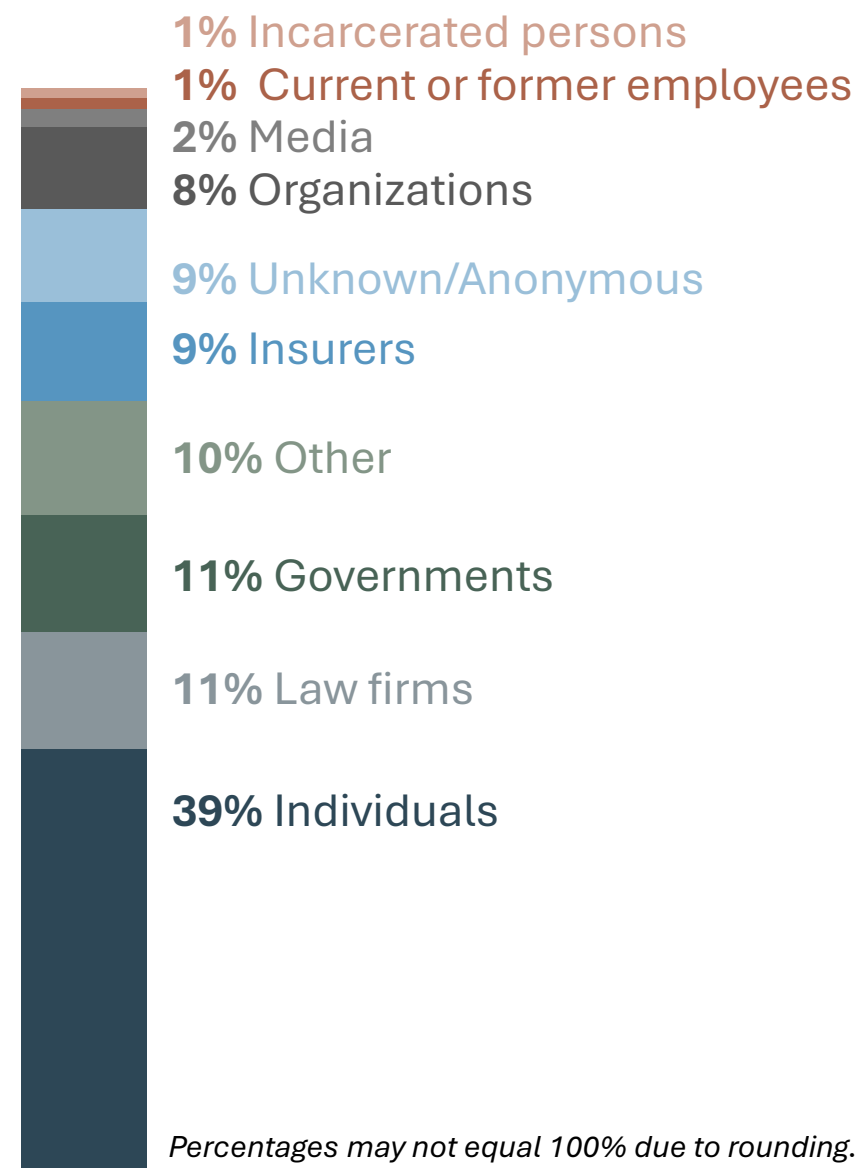
Reporting Compliance



Requests received and closed

Baseline data & Metric 7

36,391	Requests open (Jan. 1)
475,376	Requests received (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31)
456,428	Requests closed (Dec. 31)



Data shown is for agencies that attested above the \$100k threshold.

Response time

Metrics 1, 2, 3



57% (268,741)

Requests closed
within 5 days

44% (208,082)

Requests with estimated
response 5+ days



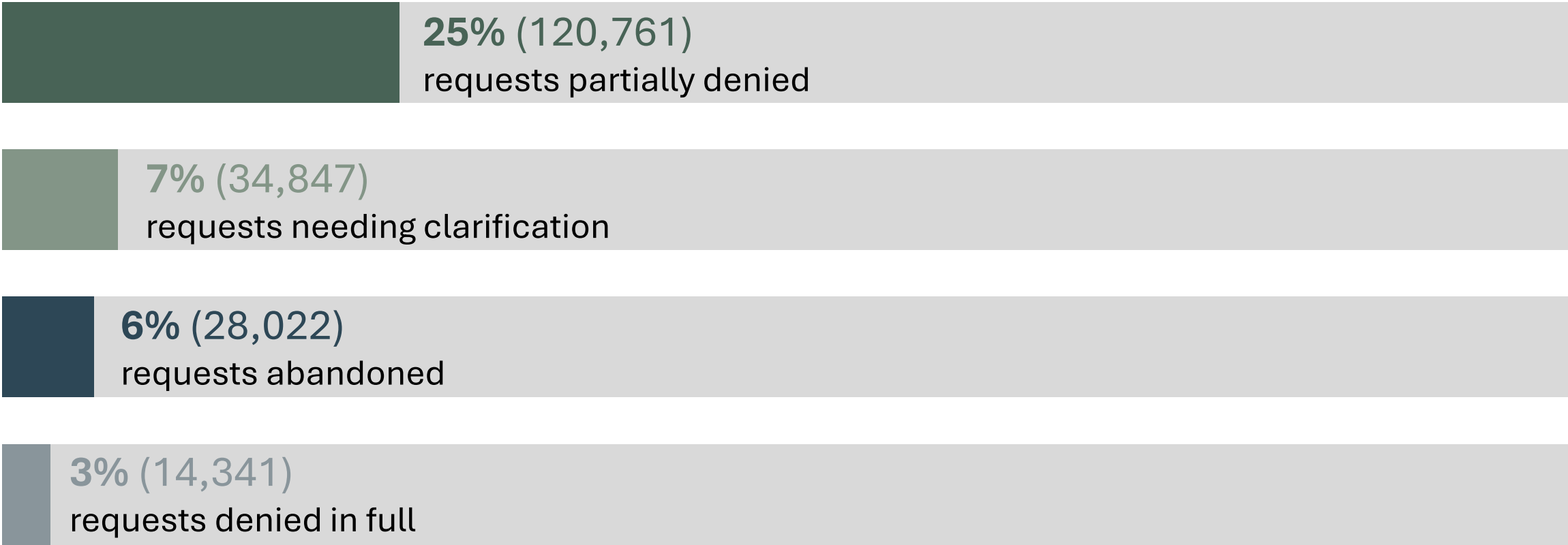
24.6 average days to final disposition

5 median days to final disposition

Data shown is for agencies that attested above the \$100k threshold.

Clarified, denied, abandoned

Metrics 4, 5, 6



Data shown is for agencies that attested above the \$100k threshold.

Response format

Metrics 8, 9

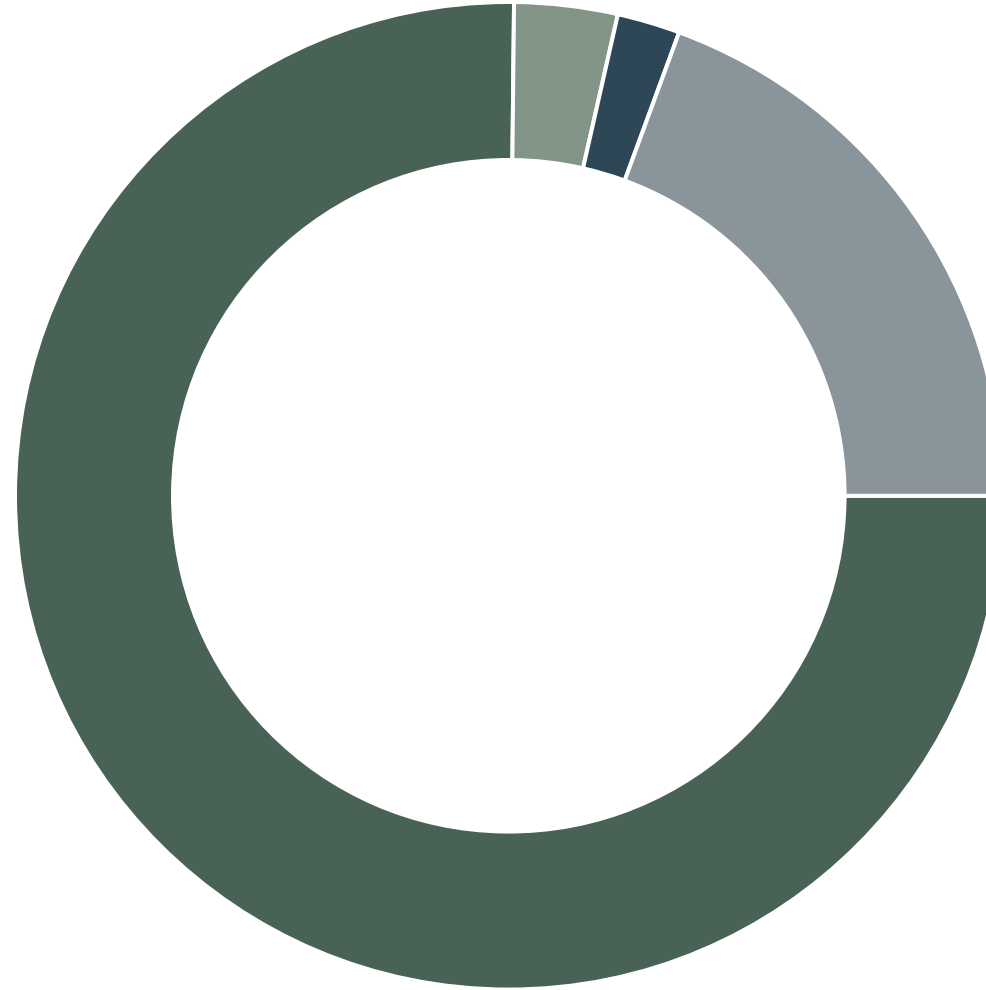
75% (343,117)
requests fulfilled electronically

3% (15,415)
requests fulfilled by physical records

2% (9,401)
requests fulfilled by combo (electronic & physical)

19% (88,523)
requests closed – no responsive records

9% (39,241)
requests involved scanning



Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

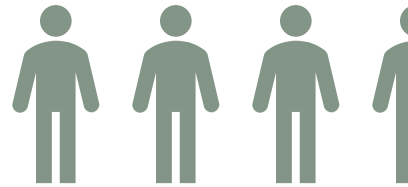
Data shown is for agencies that attested above the \$100k threshold.

Time and cost

Metrics 10, 11, 14, 15

1,743,114

Total staff hours spent responding to requests



3.4 staff hours per request

Data shown is for agencies that attested above the \$100k threshold.

Time and cost

Metrics 10, 11, 14, 15

Estimated cost to
manage/retain records

\$337M

Cost of fulfilling requests

\$296M

Expenses recovered
from requesters

\$1.5M

Data shown is for agencies that attested above the \$100k threshold.

Court cases

Metrics 12, 13

38 agencies reported:

112 court cases filed alleging a statutory violation

\$6M litigation costs

Data shown is for agencies that attested above the \$100k threshold.

Recent Legislation

Bill	Summary	Status
HB 1055	- Establishes the Joint Legislative Committee on Transparency (JLCT) to coordinate with the JLARC, AGO, and the Public Records Exemptions Accountability Committee (Sunshine Committee) to conduct a study on the efficacy of establishing an independent state agency to assist individuals with accessing public records. - Requires JLARC to submit a report on the findings of the study and recommendations by the JLTC.	Did not pass

Public's use of reported information

Washington Coalition for Open Government – [Your Right to Know report](#) (2025 update)



Resources on JLARC's website

Sign up for reporting notifications

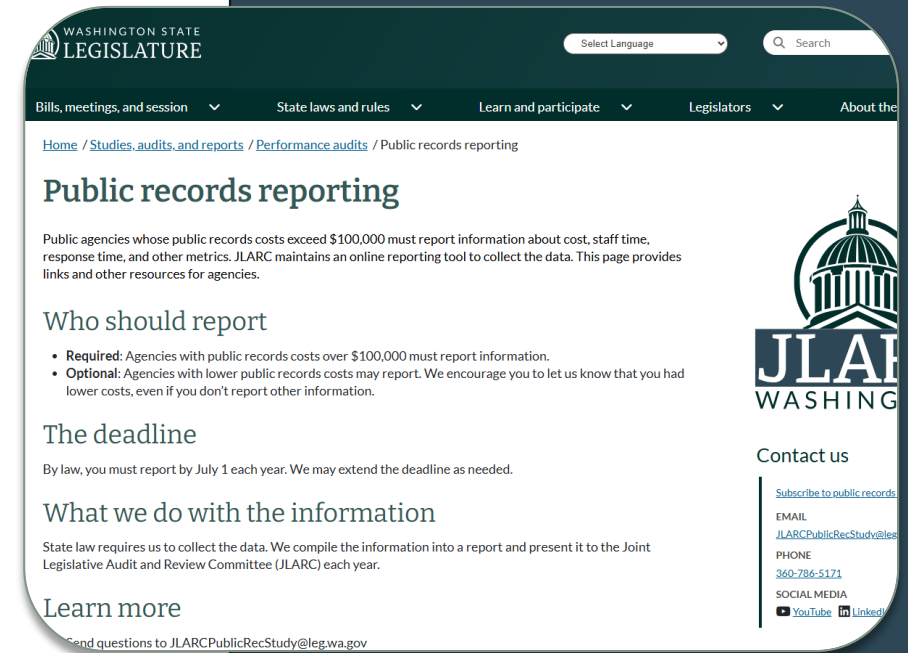
Worksheet to determine if you meet the \$100,000 threshold

Reporting resources:

- Detailed guidance on reporting metrics
- Reporting system instructions

Reports and datasets (2017 – 2024)

- Reports include interactive data



<https://leg.wa.gov/studies-audits-and-reports/performance-audits/public-records/>



Contact Information & Links



Public Records

JLARCPublicRecStudy@leg.wa.gov

<https://leg.wa.gov/studies-audits-and-reports/performance-audits/public-records/>

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<https://leg.wa.gov/about-the-legislature/legislative-agencies/jlarc>



leg.wa.gov/jlarc/audits