



Innovation & Modernization Program

From Legacy to Leading Edge

September 2024

WaTech

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Executive Summary

The Washington Technology Solutions (WaTech) Innovation and Modernization (IM) Program is a groundbreaking initiative – the first in our state – aimed at creating an innovative culture that solves critical business problems with enabling technology and accelerates legacy systems modernization for Washington state agencies.

The IM Program was authorized by the Washington state Legislature in 2023, providing dedicated funding to support rapid modernization efforts and innovative technology solutions, thereby enhancing service delivery and operational efficiency.

The IM Program helps state agencies quickly update old technology by providing grants. These grants are used for smaller projects that replace outdated systems or improve existing ones.

The goal is to provide high value and quick results. The program speeds up the process of updating old systems and promotes a culture of innovation across state agencies.

The IM Program stands out by providing quick and easy funding for short-term, low-cost, and high-impact innovation and legacy modernization projects.

The program's governance ensures that agencies have equal access to this funding helping all agencies, regardless of size, advance technology solutions to solve business problems. By focusing on both innovation and updating legacy systems, the IM Program brings in modern technologies such as artificial intelligence and centralized electronic consent management, making services better and operations more efficient.

The 2023-25 biennial budget appropriated \$3 million for the IM Program, with \$1.5 million available for fiscal year 2024. Within the first five months, WaTech received 34 proposals requesting more than four times that amount (\$6.6 million). The IT Investment Board (ITIB) approved 12 projects that best aligned to the IM Program's goals, including innovative solutions, reducing the number of legacy systems, and achieving clear business outcomes. Even though there were challenges such as vendor delays and difficulty integrating new technologies, the program has built a strong foundation for continued improvement, maturing the program to ensure future project successes.

This report, required by Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5187 ([see Appendix B below](#)), provides a detailed look at the estimated and actual costs, project timelines, and business results of the approved projects. It also shares lessons learned and provides recommendations for future project proposals, emphasizing the importance of early planning, strategic vendor relationships, and active program oversight.

The IM Program's early success shows its potential to build an innovation culture in the state of Washington and improve state IT systems and services, benefitting all Washington residents by making government operations more efficient and effective.

Program Background

To help address the significant technical debt and outdated IT systems burdening Washington state agencies, WaTech received approval from the state Legislature in the FY2023-25 biennium to create the Innovation and Modernization (IM) program.

This fund, the first of its kind for Washington state government, aims to help agencies quickly update outdated systems and introduce new technology by providing grants for IT projects.

The Legislature appropriated a total of \$4.5 million for the 2023-25 biennium, which includes a \$1.5 million boost in funding from the Legislature for FY25 in recognition of the program's success, popularity, and increased demand.

What agencies are saying about the IM Program

"Small agencies benefit from WaTech's support for projects such as these ... Without the ability to access IM funds, agencies like ours may not be able to make critical infrastructure upgrades when they are needed."

- *Annette Roth, Community Development Manager, Washington State Arts Commission.*

"Collaborating with the WaTech team to bring our project vision to life has been an engaging, informative, and productive experience."

- *Corey Lucas, Risk Management & Legal Services, Department of Transportation.*

"In our previous system only 5% of our object (art) collections were online, with this new system we are able to increase that number to over 40%. This increase ... allows more voices to be heard and for more diverse stories to be told."

- *Brooke Wagner, Museum Collections Curator, Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture.*

Governance of the IM Program

To ensure the success of the Innovation and Modernization (IM) Program in FY24, WaTech established a governance structure that includes both the IM Program and an IT Investment Board (ITIB). The IM Program, led by the State Chief Technology Officer, plays a critical role in managing the entire process – from reviewing agency proposals to providing ongoing project oversight. The IM Program engages with the IT Investment Board for the evaluation and selection of proposals, helps agencies develop strong proposals, and ensures projects stay on track by removing obstacles and managing risks.

The ITIB, composed of experts in enterprise architecture, privacy, cybersecurity, project management, and key agency leaders, brings invaluable insight to the proposal review process. Their expertise ensures that projects align with enterprise services or lay the groundwork for new statewide offerings. After reviewing proposals, the ITIB makes funding recommendations to the Technology Services Board (TSB), which has the final say on which projects receive funding and at what level.

The funding offered through the program is only for start-up and project costs. Ongoing maintenance and operations are the responsibility of the agencies.

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The ITIB is co-chaired by the State's Chief Technology Officer (CTO) and one agency representative. Membership is comprised of:

- One member of the Business Management Council.
- One member of the Technology Management Council.
- Two members of the Small Agency IT Governance.
- WaTech Chief Financial Officer.
- WaTech Deputy Director of Technology and Operations.
- WaTech Deputy Director of Strategy and Management.
- State Chief Enterprise Architect, WaTech.
- State Chief Information Security Officer, WaTech.
- State Chief Data Officer, WaTech.

The ITIB developed the process to apply for funding. Agencies requesting funding are required to submit a project proposal outlining the business case including:

- Problem statement.
- Proposed solution.
- Cost.
- Risk assessment.
- High-level milestone schedule.

IM funding is focused on projects that are short duration, low-cost, and high impact, with technology that can enable quick outcomes. It's perfect for smaller projects that replace outdated systems or update existing ones, especially for agencies that are small and do not have a lot of excess funding. Notably, the funding offered through this process is only for start-up and project costs. Agencies cannot fund ongoing maintenance and operations using this appropriation, outside of a reasonable amount of subscription fees.

Proposals are assessed on the [rating criteria](#) established by the IT Investment Board. Following the initial review of the applications, selected agencies are invited to present project proposals to the ITIB.

The agency presentation highlights the key components of the project proposal and communicates the criteria for a successful project outcome.

The IM Program works with agencies to initiate the project, schedule regular project check-ins, establish regular reporting of project progress and transfer funding.

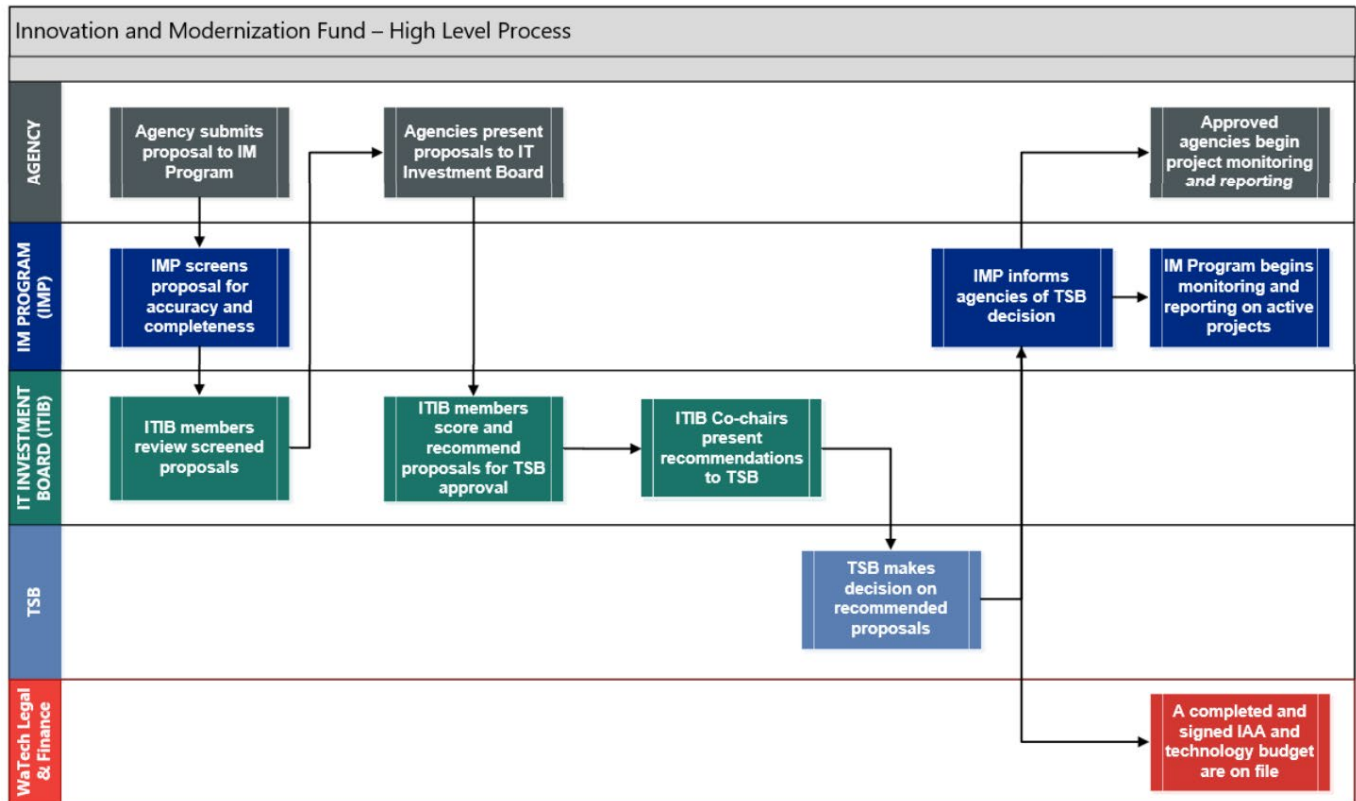
The projects funded by the IM Program must deliver expected business outcomes within a 12-month period, ensuring swift implementation.

Figure 1 below is a depiction of the high-level process for the IM Program funding requests by agencies and the TSB approval of ITIB recommended projects for funding, from agencies submitting proposals to getting approval, starting projects, and monitoring progress.

ITIB Process

1. Agencies submit innovative or modernization project proposals to the IM Program for ITIB consideration.
2. The IM Program introduces project proposals to the ITIB for review.
3. The agency business sponsor and project team present their respective project proposal to the ITIB and respond to board member questions.
4. Following the agency presentation, ITIB members independently score the project proposals followed by board member discussion and final selection of project proposals ITIB will recommend to the TSB.
5. The IM Program records the ITIB recommendations, TSB approvals and notifies the agencies in writing of the final results for their proposal.

Figure 1: Innovation and Modernization Fund – High Level Process



Project Estimated Costs and Durations

(Section 18a of the proviso)

The ITIB recommended 12 projects to TSB for approval for FY24 IM Program funds. The TSB approved funding for all recommended projects. The table below shows the original projections for duration and cost of approved projects. For additional information on each project please visit the [Washington State IT Project Dashboard](#).

Table 1: Estimated project costs and durations

Agency Name	Project Name/Brief Description	Estimated Duration	Estimated Cost
Department of Ecology (ECY)	Water Rights Online Application An online portal where users can log in, view and submit water rights applications, and check the requirements for submitting these applications online.	11 months	\$152,700

Agency Name	Project Name/Brief Description	Estimated Duration	Estimated Cost
Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW)	Amanda Permitting Application A digital system that replaces old technology and manual processes, making the permitting process faster and more efficient.	12 months	\$380,000
Department of Social Health Services (DSHS)	DDA Field Specialist AI Chatbot Assistant An AI-powered tool that helps Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) field staff quickly find answers to common questions without needing to ask a specialist. The chatbot provides automated responses and connects staff to training materials, resources, contacts, and answers.	7 months	\$90,000
Department of Social Health Services (DSHS)	Language Access Project An AI-powered translation tools that helps DSHS staff communicate better in different languages during virtual meetings. This technology helps staff collaborate more effectively and serve residents who have a need for language other than English.	7 months	\$77,000
Department of Transportation (DOT)	GovQA Litigation Holds and Discovery This project will introduce GovQA software for WSDOT staff to manage legal processes more efficiently. It will automate tasks, centralize case details, notify staff of new requests, and store documents securely in the cloud. This will make the legal work faster, easier, and more secure.	8 months	\$20,943
Department of Transportation (DOT)	Qualtrics Experience Platform This updated platform tracks employee satisfaction and engagement. It provides real-time data on how employees feel, ultimately helping them to do a better job serving the public. The platform also uses surveys to gather feedback and take action on the feedback quickly.	4 months	\$25,000
Eastern Washington State Historical Society (EWSHS)	Museum Collections Management Software This project updated the museum's old system with new software that helps manage its objects and special collections. It automated manual tasks and makes it easier to access the museum's collection database. A new portal makes digitized collections more accessible to the public.	12 months	\$108,000

Agency Name	Project Name/Brief Description	Estimated Duration	Estimated Cost
Health Care Authority (HCA)	Electronic Consent Management Solution This system allows patients to securely give consent for sharing their sensitive data. It's designed to be safe, easy to expand, and meet the needs of healthcare providers. This project is part of a larger effort with the IM Program contributing a smaller portion.	12 months	\$159,687
Office of Financial Management (OFM)	Candidate Relationship Management Tool This project adds a system to help Washington state attract and manage job seekers for IT positions more effectively. It will work alongside the current online job application system to improve how the state finds and connects with potential candidates.	3 months	\$6,000
Office of the Secretary of State (SOS)	Combined Fund Drive Management System This project replaced the unsupported legacy Donor Management System used to administer the Washington State Combined Fund Drive.	12 months	\$150,000
Washington State Arts Commission (ARTS)	Art Collection Database Modernization This project updated the ArtsWA art collection database to replace legacy technology and improve functionality for users and the public.	8 months	\$80,670
Washington State Patrol (WSP)	ServiceNow Mentored Application The project will introduce ServiceNow to help replace old software systems. Through guided development and knowledge sharing, this project will modernize outdated applications and support future updates.	12 months	\$250,000

Actual Project Costs and Durations

(Section 18b of the proviso)

The table below lists the FY24 projects approved by TSB with the actual length of time and costs for each project. The IM fund amount and the total project costs are provided.

Table 2: Actual project costs and durations

Agency Name	Project Name	Actual length of time	Actual cost of the projects approved by TSB
Department of Ecology (ECY)	Water Rights Online Application	13 months	IM Program Fund Amount - \$152,700 Total Project Costs - \$152,700
Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW)	Amanda Permitting Application	12 months	IM Program Fund Amount - \$380,000 Total Project Costs - \$400,000
Department of Social Health Services (DSHS)	DDA Field Specialist AI Chatbot Assistant	7 months	IM Program Fund Amount - \$90,000 Total Project Costs - \$84,706
Department of Social Health Services (DSHS)	Language Access Project	19 months ¹	IM Program Fund Amount - \$77,000 Total Project Costs - \$77,636
Department of Transportation (DOT)	GovQA Litigation Holds and Discovery	7 months	IM Program Fund Amount - \$20,943 Total Project Costs - \$20,613
Department of Transportation (DOT)	Qualtrics Experience Platform	9 months	IM Program Fund Amount - \$25,000 Total Project Costs - \$25,000
Eastern Washington State Historical Society (EWSHS)	Legacy Museum Collections Management System Software	13 months	IM Program Fund Amount - \$108,000 Total Project Costs - \$248,000 ²

¹ Completed proof of concept in February 2024. Procurement of solution and the agency Security Design Review took longer than originally planned. After completing the POC and purchasing the product the agency reassessed the project and determined an agency wide implementation is preferred. This significantly affected the implementation timeline.

² The IM fund amount was a portion of a larger multi-phase project for EWH to implement the museum collection solution.

Agency Name	Project Name	Actual length of time	Actual cost of the projects approved by TSB
Health Care Authority (HCA)	Electronic Consent Management Solution	15 months	IM Program Fund Amount - \$159,687 Total Project Costs - \$920,390 ³
Office of Financial Management (OFM)	Online Candidate Relationship Management Tool	N/A	IM Program Fund Amount - \$0. Project was not able to execute in FY24.
Office of the Secretary of State (SOS)	Replacement Combined Fund Drive Doner Management System	N/A	IM Program Fund Amount - \$0 Project was canceled in Dec 2023 without expending any funds.
Washington State Arts Commission (ARTS)	Art Collection Database Modernization	12 months	IM Program Fund Amount - \$80,670 Total Project Costs - \$80,670
Washington State Patrol (WSP)	ServiceNow Mentored Application Development	10 months	IM Program Fund Amount - \$250,000 Total Project Costs - \$249,840

³ The IM fund amount was a portion of a larger multi-phase project for HCA to implement ECM.

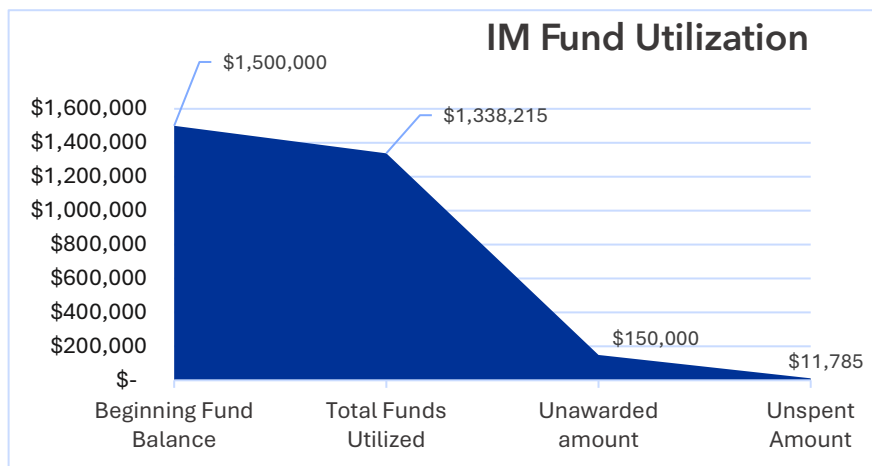
Project Outcomes

(Section 18c of the proviso)

Program Details: IM Program Fund Balance

Of the 12 projects approved for IM Program funds, two were unable to use the approved IM Program dollars.

- The Replacement Combined Fund Drive Donor Management System (SOS) was canceled because of risks identified after project start. WaTech agreed with agency decision to cancel and returned the \$150,000 to the fund.⁴



- The Online Candidate Relationship Management Tool (OFM) was delayed due to vendor issues, which meant the project couldn't be completed by June 30, 2024. Some progress was made, and the agency plans to continue, but the \$6,000 in IM funds remained unspent.
- There is also \$5,784.71 left over from three other projects that spent less than expected. Project costs are listed in [Table 2: Approved projects actual duration and costs](#).

Business Outcomes

Projects were asked to report if they completed what they originally planned, stayed on schedule, and stuck to the budget. They were also evaluated to see if they achieved their goals and met their intended purpose. (For more detail on each project's business outcomes please visit the [IT Project Dashboard](#).)

In addition to each project's performance for the scope, schedule, budget and planned benefits, several themes emerged for business outcomes, regardless of the specifics of the project or technology, including:

- **Reduction in time** - Most projects called out a reduction in time as a benefit and outcome of the project. This included reduced processing time for customers/end users, efficiencies to streamline response time or wait time, elimination of manual processes or automation of process steps.

⁴ TSB approval is required on all funds. Due to the timing of TSB meetings and the required project duration, no opportunities to reassign the funds existed.

- **Improved data** – Most agencies reported improvements in data quality from the projects, including more accurate data due to the elimination of manual entry, better data collection by moving processes online, and more reliable and consistent data for future analytics.
- **Improved access to services** – All projects cited improved service delivery or improved access to services as a result of the project, such as: the ability to process and monitor applications online, make payments online, increase public access to information not previously accessible online, and the ability to access new capabilities not previously available including remote access and offline uploading of new images for an art piece or collection.
- **Elimination of paper** – Most projects found that the new technology helped them get rid of manual processes and paper forms, which was a big advantage. Many agencies said that outdated technology hampered their ability to improve services. For example, one project digitized museum archives, making them available online for the first time, so people no longer had to visit in person. Another agency gained real-time access to information through a web browser, with records optimized for mobile devices. None of this would have been possible without the funding from the IMF.

Table 3: Project Scope, Schedule, Budget Assessment

Agency Project		Scope	Schedule	Budget	Successfully met original goals / business intent
ECY	Water Rights Online Application	✓	✓	✓	✓
DFW	Amanda Permitting Application	✓	✓	✓	✓
DSHS	DDA Field Specialist AI Chatbot Assistant	✓	✓	✓	✓
DSHS	Language Access Project	✓	✗	✓	✓
DOT	GovQA Litigation Holds and Discovery	✓	✓	✓	✓
DOT	Qualtrics Experience Platform - Modernizing Engagement	✓	✓	✓	✓
EWSHS	Replace Legacy Museum Collections Management System	✓	✓	✓	✓
HCA	Electronic Consent Management Solution	✓	✓	✓	✓
OFM	Online Candidate Relationship Management Tool	✗	✗	✗	✗
ARTS	Art Collection Database Modernization	✓	✓	✓	✓
WSP	ServiceNow Mentored Application Development	✓	✓	✓	✓

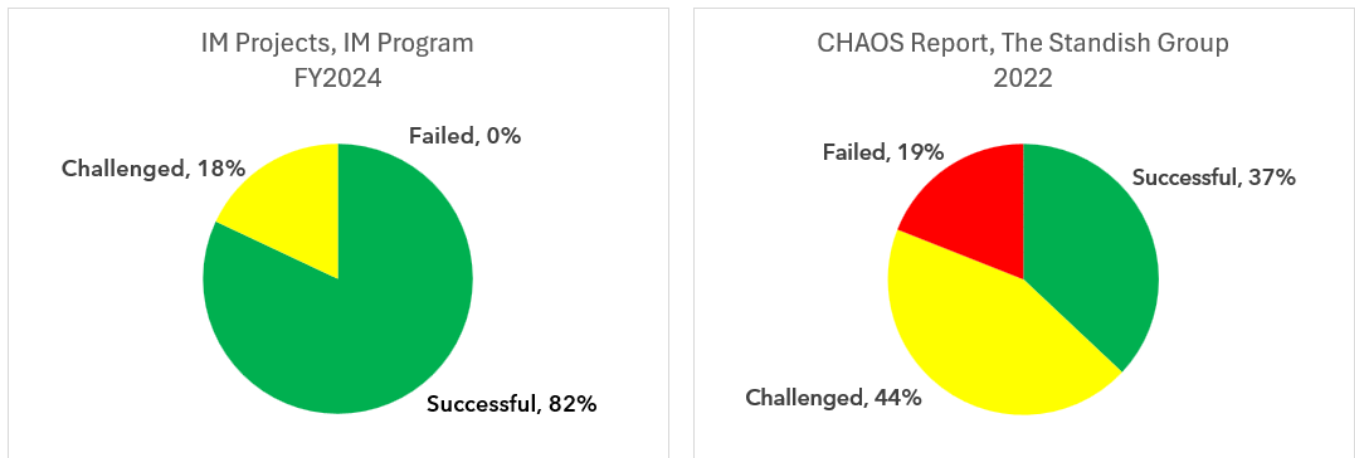
LEGEND

- ✓ Within 3% variance, all items delivered, <5 days difference.
- ✓ <10% within variance, partially delivered, <30 days difference.
- ✗ >10% past variance, not delivered, >30 days difference.

Project Success

WaTech has worked closely with each agency to ensure the project had a successful outcome for the business. Below is a comparison of the IM project success rate versus the industry standard for IT projects success.

Figure 3: IM Project success percentages versus The Standish Group, industry standard for project success



The Standish Group has been reporting on the success of IT projects since 1994 and is recognized as the de facto resource for monitoring IT project success rates worldwide along with publishing the industry standards for the project management discipline.

Contributing factors for the IM project success rates:

- **Collaborative partnerships:** Agencies viewed WaTech as a collaborative partner throughout the project life cycle and felt a high degree of trust in the relationship WaTech established early in the project. Agencies appreciated WaTech quickly addressing agency questions and assisting with resolving project issues or risks.
- **Continuous improvement mindset:** WaTech implemented agency feedback from the project teams and the IT Investment Board throughout the fiscal year to address opportunities for improvement. This allowed the IM Program to implement changes which immediately benefited the agency projects.

Program Performance Metrics

The program performance metrics are from the 2023-2025 decision package which created the IM Program. Not all metrics apply for every project. For example, a new system with new business functionality will not have technical debt or legacy system metrics.

Figure 4: IM Program Performance Metrics



Lessons Learned

WaTech used a continuous improvement approach with the IM Program, regularly improving based on feedback from agency projects and ITIB members. The program made changes throughout the fiscal year and reviewed all lessons learned for additional improvement opportunities before starting FY2025 projects. The following table shows key themes that have emerged. Successful projects depend on early planning, strong vendor relationships, effective integration and program oversight. Involving staff early, having clear roles, and thorough research help meet timelines and ensure smooth implementations.

Vendor Relationships	Agency Resources	New Technology
Executing contracts takes time, leaving less time for designing and developing solutions.	- Involve IT and contract staff at the start to avoid potential delays. - Clearly define and document everyone's roles. - Involved business users/staff from the very start for better outcomes and less rework.	- Research new technology to make sure it fits their needs and can be supported long-term. - Do necessary research before submitting proposals to ensure the FY timeline can be met by the project.
Integration	Project Timelines	Program oversight on projects
- Allow additional time for integration to complex systems, like Secure Access Washington, especially if it involves old technology. - Involve WaTech early in the process to avoid potential delays.	Projects that started phased implementations earlier in the fiscal year were better prepared for full rollout by the end of the fiscal year.	- Program oversight helped agencies manage risks, find solutions, and connect with key experts to ensure project success. - Agencies need stronger business sponsorship and support before submitting projects. - WaTech's support built strong trusting partnerships with agencies.

Agency feedback about the IM Program

- **Washington State Patrol:** The funding received from the IM Program enabled us to move from our legacy technology platform to a more modern and capable platform. This allowed the agency to avoid the more than \$1 million dollar upgrade that would have been necessary to maintain the legacy technology.
- **Department of Fish and Wildlife:** With an enterprise permitting system being stood up through the IM Program funding our agency was able to make real tangible progress towards each of our strategic objectives for digital transformation, public engagement, transparent and efficient processes, and improved reporting on accountability metrics. This digital transformation also enables the public to engage in conservation, harvest and science-related activities more effectively.
- **ArtsWA:** Small agencies benefit from close WaTech support for projects such as these, which are modest in size within the scope of state government but are significant and essential to smaller agencies. WaTech staff were very supportive of our agency project and understood the limits of our internal IT support.
- **Department of Social and Health Services:** Our project has gleaned very helpful information not only for our administration, but enterprise wide. We successfully launched not one, but two proof of concept test environments. This project kicked off proposals for future Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) use and enterprise expansion in collaboration with the administration leads and enterprise architects. We've identified areas in which DDA business processes, such as keeping instructional documents up to date, can be improved upon operationally through managing a chatbot environment.
- **Department of Transportation:** The IM Program provided us the opportunity to modernize our approach to agency case management without taking away from any internal program budgets.

Contact

Questions regarding this report can be directed to:

improgram@watech.wa.gov

Appendix A – FY2024 Proposals Not Funded

The below table lists the project proposals submitted by agencies that were not able to be funded.

Agency Name	Project Name/Description	Estimated Costs
Department of Children, Youth and Family (DCYF)	Data Quality Tool - Implement single repository to automate collection of enterprise data assets and meta data.	\$91,500
Department of Children, Youth and Family (DCYF)	Relative Search - Create a front-end search tool for business where they can lookup relatives of clients who come through the initial intake of Child Welfare.	\$100,000
Department of Commerce (COM)	InfoNet Modernization - Modernize legacy application that collects de-identified data on services provided in the areas of domestic violence, victims of crime, sexual assault and victim witness assistance.	\$377,000
Department of Corrections (DOC)	Improving Delivery of Operational Data - Expedite delivery of data for decision making, providing data in near real time, to improve the timeliness of decisions.	\$50,000
Department of Ecology (ECY)	Applications Modernization and Rationalization - Conduct application rationalization and develop an application migration roadmap to migrate application workloads to the cloud.	\$250,000
Department of Ecology (ECY)	iPad for Mobile Staff - Staff are increasingly finding the need to be productive while outside of traditional office or home office environments. Ecology intends to adopt iPad Pro for the mobile workforce.	\$40,000
Department of Ecology (ECY)	Modernization to Teams Rooms - Deploy Teams Rooms with dedicated hardware to 39 conference rooms.	\$91,650
Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW)	SCoRE Replacement Project - (Salmon Conservation Reporting System). Modernize the web app and leverage new data sources with innovative data analytics tools.	\$474,000
Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)	AI based Agency Contracts Manager - Build an AI wizard for the Agency Contracts Database using a browser-based interface that leverages AI, natural language queries, and PowerBI.	\$78,100
Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)	BHA Cloud Migration - Migrate 70+ systems and services from on-premises to the cloud.	\$500,000
Department of Transportation (DOT)	Fiber Optic Network Management - Create a Google Maps-style interface for WSDOT's vast fiber optic network that shows where lines are, who is using them, what is available and how they are connected.	\$200,000

Agency Name	Project Name/Description	Estimated Costs
Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA)	Time, Leave, and Attendance - Modernize scheduling, timekeeping, leave and attendance processes by implementing an innovative, efficient and automated technology solution.	\$356,000
Health Care Authority (HCA)	Firearms Background Check Upgrade - Modernize current gun background system and replace Excel file tasks with a modern web application.	\$344,179
Human Rights Commission (HUM)	Case Management and Business Modernization - Modernize outdated case management tools and process to better serve Washingtonians and to deliver on its mission to eliminate and prevent discrimination in Washington State.	\$92,000
Office of Public Defense (OPD)	JCTS Migration from Access to Web-based/Cloud - Modernize contract tracking system from legacy software that is no longer supported to cloud-based solution that meets new and future requirements from legislative mandates.	\$90,000
University of Washington (UW)	Legacy Accessibility Tools Audit - Identify, upgrade or replace tools used to serve differently abled people.	\$250,000
Washington State Arts Commission (ARTS)	CRM Implementation - Implement a CRM system to modernize operations, reduce inefficiencies and serve our constituents in a more equitable way.	\$887,660
Washington State Patrol (WSP)	Record Management System Feasibility Study - Conduct a feasibility study in preparation for procurement of a RMS to consolidate all case, property, evidence tracking, and investigative files.	\$250,000

Appendix B - Proviso Language

68th Legislature, 2023 Regular Session, passed by the House and Senate April 23, 2023

from Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5187, Section 155, Item 18a through 18c, page 149

(18) \$1,500,000 of the general fund–state appropriation for fiscal year 2024 and \$1,500,000 of the general fund–state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 are provided solely for innovative technology solutions and modernization of legacy systems within state government.

This funding is to be used for projects at other state agencies to improve the health of the state's overall information technology portfolio.

Submitted projects are subject to review and approval by the technology services board as established in RCW 43.105.285.

The agency must report to the office of financial management and the fiscal committees of the legislature within 90 days of the close of fiscal year 2024 with the following information to measure the quantity of projects considered for this purpose and use of this funding:

- (a) The agency name, project name, estimated time duration, estimated cost, and technology service board recommendation result of each project submitted for funding;
- (b) The actual length of time and cost of the projects approved by the technology services board, from start to completion; and
- (c) Any other information or metric the agency determines is appropriate to measure the quantity and use of the funding in this subsection.