



State

Texas

Agency

Texas Department of Information Resources

Award Category

Enterprise Technology Management

Project Title

**Website Services Coming Up FAST:
The Texas Flexible Accelerator for Scalable Transformation**

Project Dates

March 2023-August 2024

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Executive Summary

Flexible Accelerator for Scalable Transformation (FAST) Website Services is a comprehensive digital solution aimed at assisting Texas state agencies to rapidly develop and maintain modern, secure, reliable, and user-centric websites.

FAST Website Services was created as a solution to help the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) assist Texas state agencies in designing, developing, and maintaining websites in a more efficient, cost-effective, and secure manner. FAST Website Services was born out of a large, full-scale website redesign and re-platform for the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), which launched in March 2023. The flexible accelerator solution consists of a modular, reusable, configurable design system and a set of content management system templates with optional, strategic design services for a more customized solution. By accelerating and lowering the cost of design and development, Texas agencies now can optimize and modernize their website presence more efficiently and affordably and have flexibility to allocate more budget to strategic design services. Since the launch of dshs.texas.gov and the subsequent packaging of the FAST Website Services solution, several additional Texas agencies have taken advantage of the FAST website services accelerator to improve their existing websites for constituent users and internal business owners.

Idea

Some Texas agency websites and the underlying content management system had become neglected and outdated over time, resulting in a substandard constituent experience that did not meet legislatively mandated requirements. These websites had become difficult to update, manage, and maintain internally. Additionally, due to tighter budgets, shortage of resources, and a focus on other critical, cost-saving initiatives, website and portal modernizations had become deprioritized.

The drastic increase in online usage with the onset of COVID in 2020 drove state agency interest in improving both the constituent experience as well as the agency experience to create and update website content quickly and efficiently. However, traditionally only large agencies with more substantial budgets and a larger pool of internal resources could allocate time and resources for a new, full-service website redesign and management system re-platform. A more cost-effective solution was required to allow a broader set of state agencies to modernize and optimize their public-facing, information-rich websites and underlying content management system.

Why It Matters

Agencies in Texas needed the ability to easily update their web presence to provide timely, required information to meet the needs and expectations of a broad base of constituents, including other state and local agency users.

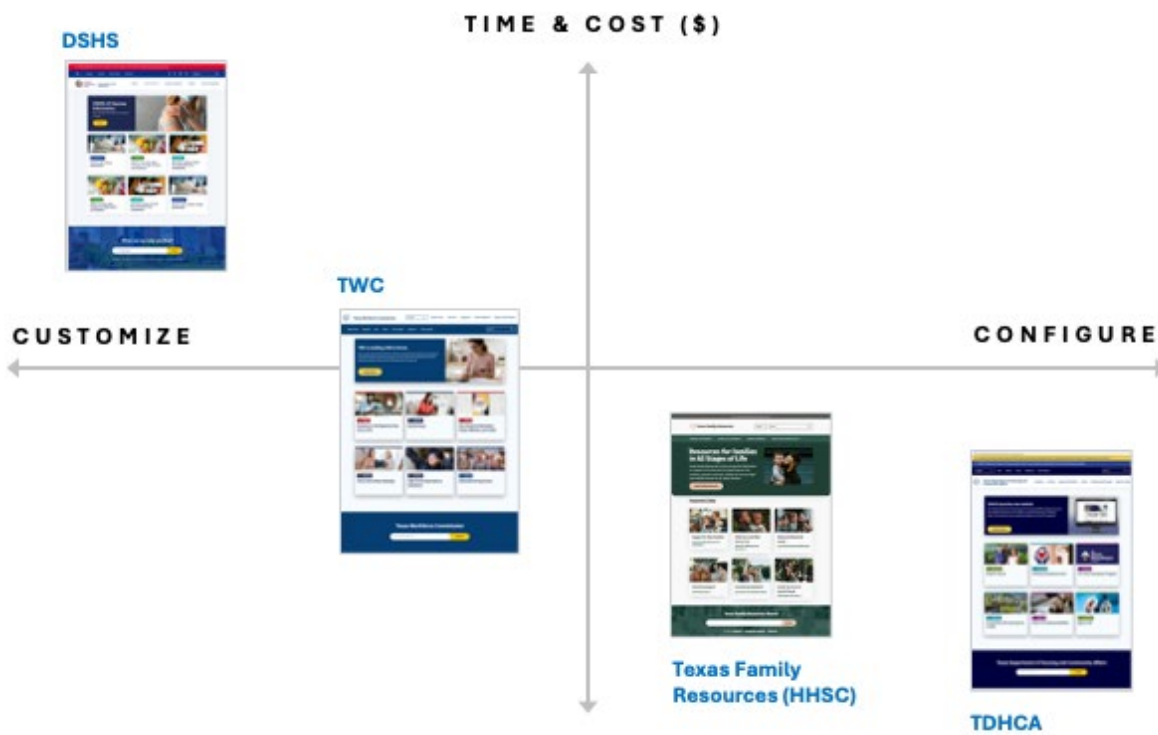
Constituents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need an “always on,” trustworthy, accurate source for timely, relevant, and critical agency information, such as policy or procedural changes, any documentation required to complete actions, and safety information for seasonal or regional directives or emergencies.• Non-English speakers and constituents of all abilities need the same easy access to critical information.
Other State and Local Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Other state and local agencies “link to” or repurpose certain other agency website pages and content as the “source of truth” for their local operations. For example, health officials at the county and municipality level used the Health and Human Services Commission and DSHS websites for federal and state updates and guidance during COVID.
State Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need a secure platform and support to publish, maintain, and govern timely, critical updates to information and news on their websites in an efficient manner for non-technical business owners



and authors.

Why It's Different

FAST Website Services is a flexible, configurable accelerator solution that is purpose-built and implemented for each Texas state agency and their constituents' needs upon project request and approval. The modular design system and set of common Drupal content management system templates provides the core, foundational elements of a content management system-enabled website, allowing agencies the ability to tailor the brand design, site structure, navigation, and content to meet their unique, individual, missions—efficiently and cost effectively. In addition to reducing design and development effort, Drupal is a free, open-source content management system platform that eliminates ongoing software licensing costs. Also, when agencies have an existing Acquia license for hosting and support, adding a new instance reduces overall implementation costs versus a new, standalone Drupal instance or using another subscription-based content management system offering.



Why It's Universal

The flexibility and efficiency of FAST Website Services makes it an appealing solution for a wider variety of agencies and budgets. Additionally, it is aligned with the NASCIO CIO priority of digital government and services as well as legacy modernization. For smaller agencies with more limited budgets, FAST Website Services can be implemented by configuring the Design System and Drupal content management system templates with existing content and site structure and a lean internal Drupal development and migration team. Conversely, larger agencies can take advantage of the efficiencies gained to allocate more budget to prioritized, strategic design services and customized development. Additionally, the overall similar—yet different—website experiences provide a consistent, recognizable visual aesthetic that creates familiarity and breeds trust with users as an official State of Texas website. FAST Website Services achieve user experience excellence and operational efficiency as we enter a new era with an increased focus on self-service and “doing more with less” in government.



Implementation

Roadmap

Vision

FAST Website Services is the product of a large, full-scale, award-winning website redesign and re-platform for DSHS launched in March 2023 by Deloitte as a vendor partner of DIR under the Technology Solution Services of the Shared Technology Services (STS) program. DIR's vision for FAST Website Services is to provide a website design and development solution that is efficient, cost-effective, and flexible to meet the needs of agencies big and small. To date, Deloitte, in partnership with DIR and customer agencies, has delivered four successful FAST Website Services implementations; two are currently in progress to be completed in Fall 2025, and one is proposed to begin in the Fall of 2025.

Modernized Websites & Portals Implemented to

Date:

- [Texas Department of State Health Services](#)
- [Texas Workforce Commission](#)
- [Texas Department of Community Housing and Affairs](#)
- [Texas Family Resources for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission](#)

Coming Soon:

- Early Childhood Texas Portal & Childcare Portal for the Texas Workforce Commission
- Texas Secretary of State Website

Approach

Fast Website Services takes a people-focused, collaborative, and iterative approach to design and delivers solutions to meet the varied needs and budgets of state agencies under the STS program. The approach is based on three core principles: human-centered design, co-creation, and agile delivery.



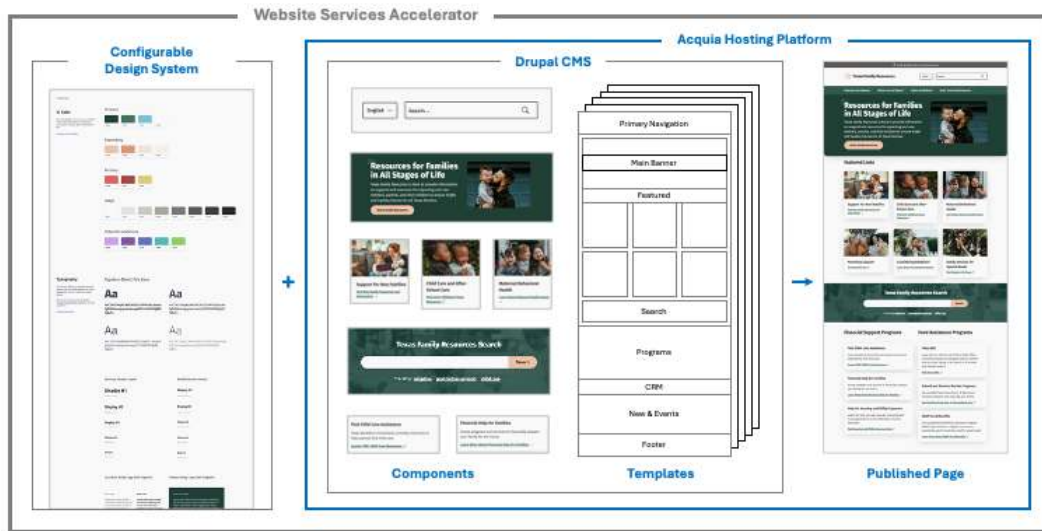
Involved Stakeholders

The FAST Website Services takes a team across the STS program and involves collaboration with DIR, agency stakeholders, the Deloitte team, Acquia, and the STS Public Cloud Manager (Rackspace). DIR oversees the entire project from initiation to delivery and ensures compliance with the STS program and agency success. Agency stakeholders include the project manager and team, business and communication representatives, IT, and executive leadership to ensure alignment with their overall mission. Acquia provides the hosting platform and support services to provide around-the-clock monitoring and 99.95 percent uptime—procured by the agency through the Public Cloud Manager. The Deloitte team consists of expertise from project management, research, user experience, visual design, content, search engine optimization, development, and quality assurance.



Base Configured Solution: The FAST Website Services base solution is designed for smaller agencies or smaller budgets with internal development and migration resources.

1. **Configurable design system** to meet agency brand standards such as
2. **Drupal page templates and components** (6 core and 10+ optional sub templates) within the
3. **Drupal content management system**, hosted and supported on the
4. **Acquia hosting platform** (AWS GovCloud).



Customized Solution and Design Methodology: Agencies with websites with a larger number of pages, more specific requirements, and a commensurate budget can request additional strategic design services and development customizations to the base components and page templates.



Discovery: User research, stakeholder workshops, heuristic (user experience design) evaluation, brand review, content audit and assessment, plain language assessment, search engine optimization assessment, technical discovery, and accessibility compliance scanning.



Define: Site vision, site structure and information architecture, taxonomy (naming system), content strategy, search engine optimization strategy, modern design component and templates wireframes, role/persona creation, user testing, sprint planning, and future state roadmap creation.



Design: New content recommendations, keyword recommendations, detailed designs for new components and templates, interface animation, design validation testing and quality assurance, and development documentation.



Develop: Content creation and writing, keyword recommendations, customize and enable new components and templates, enhanced site search, security penetration testing, legacy content migration, and archiving.



Deploy: "White glove" launch, hyper-care support, and enhanced training sessions.



Core Drupal Templates as Published Pages

Impact

Key Benefits and Results

Since the FAST Website Services solution was introduced, several agencies have taken advantage of the accelerator to improve their existing websites for constituent users and internal business owners. Also, there is a steady pipeline of interest, including repeat agencies, like the Texas Workforce Commission, wherein two FAST Website Services implementations are in progress.

Constituent Benefits

Constituents get an improved website experience that makes it easy to find, understand, and act on relevant and critical information.

- ~ **Enhanced content** that is clear, concise, and written at the appropriate reading level in their language of choice.
- ~ **Improved site structure, navigation, and taxonomy** (naming system) organized logically around user expectations.
- ~ **Modern visual design** that is more appealing and looks official and trustworthy.
- ~ **Enhanced search engine optimization and site search** that makes pages discoverable on search engines and more findable onsite.

Agency Benefits

Agencies get an enhanced content management system experience that is affordable and makes it easy for non-technical business owners to update, get approval, and publish information quickly and efficiently.

- ~ **Content guide and governance** defines roles and rules for authoring new content and streamlined approvals.
- ~ **Modern brand and design system** that reflects agency guidelines, promotes trust, and is used consistently.
- ~ **ADA compliance** that meets required WCAG standards and provides an easy-to-use experience for all abilities.
- ~ **Multilingual support:** Automated, third-party tools or manual translation can be used for additional languages.
- ~ **Feedback and metrics:** Supports third-party integrations for site metrics and survey tools for continuous improvement.
- ~ **Mobile-friendly** experience that is optimized across all devices to reflect an increase in cell phone and tablet usage.
- ~ **Secure hosting and support** on a cloud-hosted, [TX-RAMP](#)-approved platform that meets required service level agreements, or SLAs.



Project Success Metrics

Texas Family Resources – Health and Human Services Commission

Re-imagined FamilyResources.Texas.gov from a single-page, static HTML site to a content-driven, Drupal-enabled, website experience that provides families, parents, and caregivers an online resource to find the information, expert advice, and support to ensure a bright and healthy future for all Texas families.

~ **+350% increase in user engagement time**

~ **Cost savings*: ~38%**

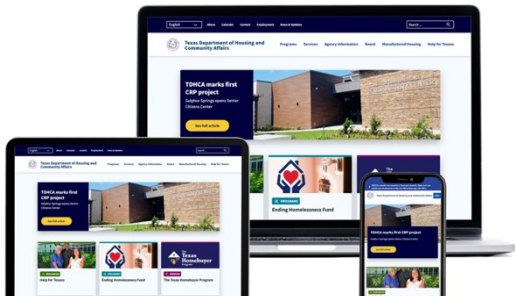


Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA)

Modernized TDHCA website and transitioned from a static HTML site to a responsive, multi-lingual, and secure Drupal content management system. By hosting the site on Acquia, we provided the agency with reliability, security, uptime, and flexible storage needs.

~ **+ 1.7M new constituent users since launch**

~ **Cost savings*: +50%**

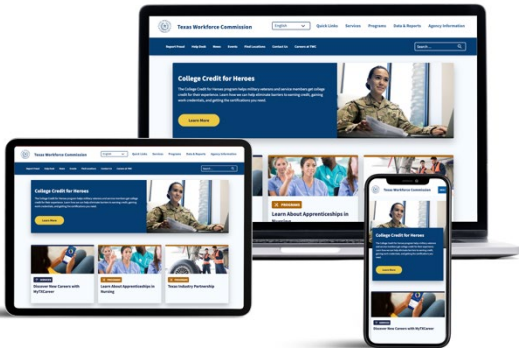


Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)

Redesigned the TWC main website and upgraded the content management system from Drupal 7 to Drupal 9 as part of the development. Provided additional strategic design services, migration, and development support.

~ **1M average page views per month**

~ **Cost savings*: ~28%**



**Approximate cost savings versus new, fully customized design system & templates*

What's Next

In addition to several FAST Website Services implementations slated soon, DIR looks forward to harnessing the latest artificial intelligence (AI) technology to continue to provide a better constituent experience and more efficient service options for Texas agencies. Planned, future-state enhancements include:

- **Develop communication strategy to increase state agency awareness and adoption.**
- **Expand library of components and template options.**
- **Enhance site search with third-party AI tools.**
- **Employ AI and agentic technology for automated stakeholder and user research, content optimization at scale, improved keyword strategy for answer engine optimization (AEO), faster page template development, and automated content migration.**

These future enhancements will continue to utilize advancements in technology to improve the self-service experience for constituents and agencies as we innovate with efficiency and cost-effectiveness in mind.