



DEFINE THE VISION AND DIRECTION FOR AN UNPRECEDENTED RESIDENT EXPERIENCE.

The Washington Resident Portal Challenge will award up to \$550,000 to develop a roadmap that will inform a resident portal and improve the lives of Washington's residents.

Washington State

Disrupting the Norm: How Washington Turned Procurement into a Platform for Innovation

PROJECT: Resident Portal Procurement Challenge

CATEGORY: Enterprise Technology Management

PROJECT TIMELINE: April 2024 – September 2024

Submitted by:

Wendy Wickstrom

Chief Digital Experience Officer

Washington Technology Solutions

wendy.wickstrom@watech.wa.gov

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2024, the state of Washington, led by Washington Technology Solutions (WaTech), launched a visionary and first-of-its-kind initiative: the [Washington Resident Portal Procurement Challenge](#). This bold effort reframed traditional government procurement by inviting innovators—individuals, teams, and organizations—to submit a comprehensive roadmap for the development of a statewide digital resident portal.

Rather than beginning with a predetermined solution, the state sought a strategic blueprint—prioritizing platform architecture, service integration, data privacy, accessibility, and user experience. The challenge reflects Washington’s commitment to enterprise modernization, emphasizing human-centered design, inclusion, and interagency integration.

With a budget of up to \$550,000, the challenge signals a new model for how public agencies can engage stakeholders, de-risk major IT investments, and foster connected digital government. It is directly aligned with NASCIO’s top priorities, including Digital Government, IT Governance, and Legacy Modernization.

The winning roadmap, delivered in October 2024, laid the foundation for a seamless, secure, and personalized digital gateway to state services—defining the next era of enterprise technology management in Washington.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

What problem or opportunity does the project address?

Public access to state services is often fragmented, inconsistent, and difficult to navigate—particularly for those with limited digital literacy, access to technology, or familiarity with government structures. Recognizing this persistent challenge, the state of Washington, led by Washington Technology Solutions (WaTech), launched the [Washington Resident Portal Procurement Challenge](#) in April 2024.

This pioneering initiative presents a bold opportunity: to invite innovators to propose a comprehensive roadmap for the design and development of a statewide digital resident portal. Rather than beginning with a fixed solution or pre-selected vendor, the challenge leveraged the collective intelligence of technologists, designers, and civic innovators to build a **human-centered, equitable, and secure digital gateway** for all Washingtonians to access services.

Why does it matter?

The Resident Portal will serve as the cornerstone of Washington’s connected government vision—providing residents with **frictionless, personalized, and equitable access** to a wide array of state services, from licensing and benefits to healthcare and education.

Without strategic modernization, the state risks:

- Continued siloed digital experiences.
- Reduced engagement among underserved populations.
- Redundancy and inefficiency in IT service delivery.
- And decreased public trust in government's digital capabilities.

The challenge reframed traditional procurement by emphasizing **vision-setting before solution-building**, thereby reducing long-term risks and ensuring strategic alignment across agencies.

WaTech committed up to **\$550,000** for the winning roadmap—a forward-thinking investment that will inform future platform selection, architecture, governance, integration, and service delivery.

What makes it different?

The Washington Resident Portal Challenge marks a **first-of-its-kind procurement-as-innovation model** that redefines how governments approach enterprise-scale IT transformation:

- **Open Innovation:** The challenge crowdsourced expertise from individuals, firms, and cross-disciplinary teams—prioritizing agility, creativity, and human-centered design over pre-determined specs.
- **Roadmap-First Strategy:** Instead of procuring a finished product, the state procured a **strategic blueprint** detailing technical architecture, data strategy, privacy controls, cost projections, and integration methods.
- **Resident-First by Design:** Grounded in insights from **statewide surveys, peer reviews, journey maps, and user personas**, the challenge ensured equity, accessibility, and usability were not afterthoughts—but core design tenets.
- **State-Aligned:** The effort aligns with Washington's enterprise architecture standards, modernization goals, and accessibility mandates.

What makes it universal?

Every state faces the challenge of making digital government more coherent, personalized, and inclusive. This initiative offers a replicable model for:

- Developing **enterprise technology roadmaps** before committing to platform builds.
- Engaging residents as stakeholders in digital transformation.
- Elevating **procurement as a policy and design tool**.
- Aligning cross-agency services through a common digital experience framework.

By emphasizing feasibility, collaboration, innovation, and inclusion—four pillars of the challenge's evaluation rubric—Washington demonstrated that any government can approach modernization with boldness and equity at the forefront.

It embodies key NASCIO priorities including:

- Digital Government / Digital Services
- IT Governance
- Legacy Modernization
- Enterprise Architecture
- Customer Relationship Management

IMPLEMENTATION

What was the roadmap?

The project followed a hyper fast phased procurement challenge structure:

- February 2024: Project initiation
- April 11: Challenge launched online
- May 9: Registration closed (71 completed registrations)
- May 21: 31 applications submitted
- Early June: 17 expert judges completed evaluations
- July: Contract awarded to the winning roadmap team
- Mid-August: Draft roadmap submitted
- September 30: Final roadmap delivered

This roadmap-first approach ensured all key enterprise IT elements—architecture, cost, integration, accessibility, and data security—were thoughtfully designed before platform procurement, reducing risk and promoting enterprise alignment.

The roadmap deliverable included:

- Executive summary and vision
- Journey maps and personas
- Functional/non-functional requirements
- Architecture for integration and data privacy
- Market scan of platform options
- Cost model and sustainability forecast
- Organizational roles and governance
- Strategy for integrating agency services

Who was involved?

The challenge was led by **WaTech** in partnership with agency stakeholders and enterprise architects. Key collaborators included:

- Cross-agency working groups contributing requirements.
- A statewide resident survey to capture real user needs.
- Peer reviews from other states and large enterprises.
- External applicants and vendors offering solution concepts.

The winning respondent continued working with WaTech to refine and finalize the roadmap. This included regular coordination with technical leads, resident advocates, and integration experts.

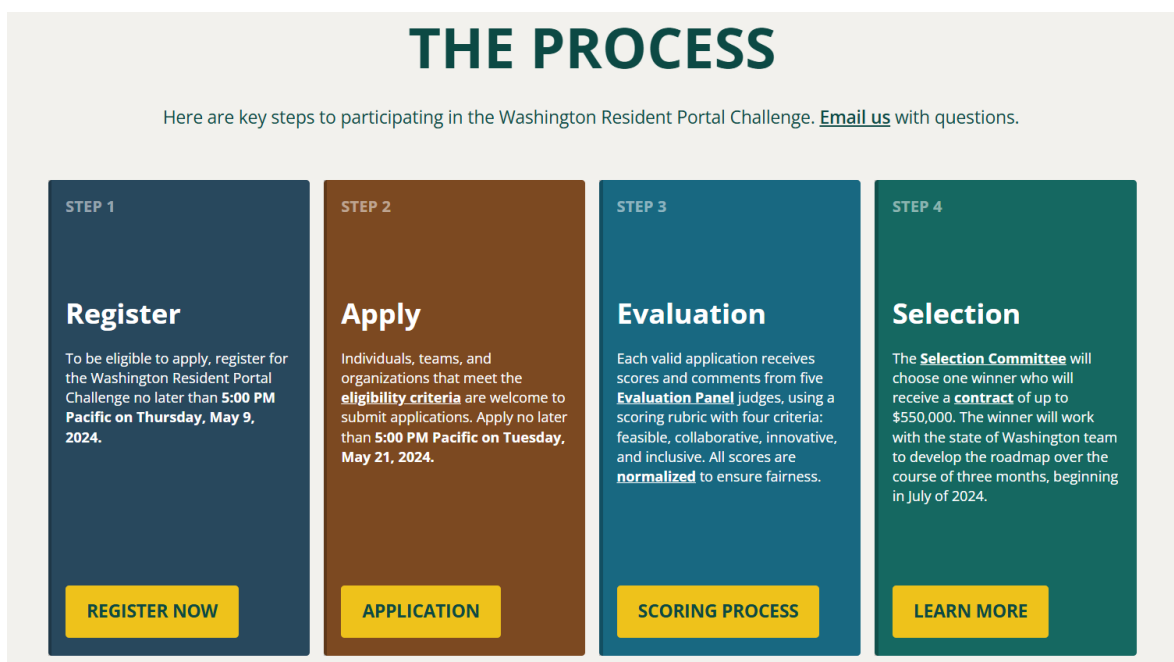
How did you do it?

Financial: Up to \$550,000 allocated for roadmap development—ensuring cost-effective investment in strategic planning before buildout.

Human: Contributions from cross-functional state teams, applicants from private sectors, and a dedicated WaTech evaluation panel.

Technical: Utilization of statewide surveys, user journeys, and architectural standards to inform roadmap content. The roadmap explicitly addresses:

- Platform and integration architecture
- Identity and access management
- Data governance and privacy models
- Service discovery and personalization
- Scalability and availability



IMPACT

What did the project make better?

Before	After
Reactive procurement	Strategic, roadmap-first procurement
One-size-fits-all approaches	Resident-first, equity-focused design
Platform selection without engagement	Co-created vision with residents and stakeholders

This challenge created alignment before development, reducing future costs, duplication, and rework while increasing transparency, usability, and trust.

How do you know?

- **31 roadmap development applications** submitted from a wide applicant pool, demonstrating nationwide interest and competition.
- Outreach results: A marketing campaign that exceeded KPIs—**219% above impression goals, 135% above click goals**, and 7 registrants directly attributed to the campaign.
- Diversity impact: **19 applications from minority- and woman-led organizations**, reinforcing the challenge's equity and inclusion principles.
- Internal and external feedback recognized the challenge as a national model for transparent, equity-focused digital transformation.
- Resident input collected through surveys and interviews directly informed roadmap expectations.
- Architecture and design workstreams established the foundation for long-term implementation and cross-agency service integration.

Anecdotal Impact:

"This forward-thinking vision aims to revolutionize public interaction with government services through the creation of a new resident portal, ensuring frictionless and equitable access for all."

— *Bill Kehoe, State CIO*

What now?

Following roadmap delivery in **October 2024**, Washington has:

- Used the roadmap to create a functional pilot of many of the MVP resident portal capabilities, based on human-centered design principles and resident engagement. The pilot will be used to demonstrate value to agency partners as we begin the implementation phase.
- Developed in-depth architectural diagrams, thoroughly researched technology offerings, and developed an implementation strategy.
- Procured a digital experience platform to accelerate implementation.

Beginning July 2025, Washington will:

- Continue human-centered design and resident engagement activities.
- Implement and launch an **initial set of integrated services** through the portal's foundation.
- Create an **agency engagement framework** for onboarding services.
- Monitor success using SMART metrics around accessibility, satisfaction, and efficiency.

This initiative isn't just about technology—it's about trust, transparency, and transforming how residents connect with their government. Washington's Resident Portal Challenge is a bold step toward a future where enterprise architecture meets human-centered design—and the result is a digital government that truly works for everyone.

CONCLUSION

The Washington Resident Portal Challenge sets a new standard in public-sector procurement by demonstrating that **speed, equity, and innovation** are not mutually exclusive. This procurement-as-innovation approach enabled the state to crowdsource national talent, engage underrepresented voices, and lay the foundation for a future-ready resident portal—all within six months.

More than just a blueprint, this challenge reimagined how government can listen, plan, and build with the public at the center. Its success affirms that procurement can be a **strategic policy instrument**—capable of accelerating transformation, building trust, and delivering digital equity at scale.