



Washington State

Building the Blueprint: Washington's Statewide IT Project Resources & Delivery Framework

CATEGORY: Information & Communication Infrastructure

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Submitted by:

Candice Leonard & Dana McLean, Project Management Partner's
WaTech - Enterprise Strategy and Oversight

Candice.leonard@watech.wa.gov

Dana.McLean@watech.wa.gov

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Washington state has developed the state's first comprehensive, end-to-end information technology delivery framework, an enterprise statewide [IT Project Resources Framework](#) structure that approaches unification of every major discipline involved in delivering modern information technology solutions. Far beyond traditional project management, this framework integrates project management, data governance, accessibility, privacy, security, architecture, engineering, vendor management, and operational readiness tasks, tools, deliverables into a single, coherent delivery lifecycle from initiation through go-live and closeout that is relevant to state delivery.

Before this effort, Washington lacked an enterprise-level IT delivery standard. Agencies relied on inconsistent processes and documentation, resulting in fragmented information, duplicated effort, and limited visibility into readiness and risk. Critical decisions across data, privacy, architecture, security, testing, and stabilization were captured differently across agencies, reducing statewide alignment and increasing delivery risk.

The IT Project Resources Framework fills this gap by establishing a standardized IT delivery backbone, a structure that defines how information is captured, communicated, and validated across all disciplines throughout the lifecycle. It provides initiation guidance, governance roles, deliverable standards, microlearning-based stage guidance (Stages 0–9), and templates supporting design, data, privacy, security, testing, go-live, stabilization, and closeout.

Flexible and voluntary, the framework enhances, not replaces, agency governance. It supports agile, hybrid, and traditional delivery models and adapts to agencies at varying maturity levels. By embedding key IT disciplines directly into each lifecycle stage, it ensures early, consistent, and policy-aligned decision-making.

This initiative represents a major advancement in statewide IT maturity. It delivers a scalable, repeatable IT delivery model that improves transparency, strengthens cross-disciplinary communication, reduces risk, and enhances the reliability of technology services delivered to residents. Its design makes it transferable to other states and public-sector vendors nationwide.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

What problem or opportunity does the project address?

Washington lacked an enterprise unified, end-to-end IT delivery framework. Agencies interpreted lifecycle expectations differently, resulting in siloed approaches across project management, data governance, privacy, security, architecture, engineering, and operational readiness. Without enterprise standards, agencies used inconsistent documentation and checkpoints, leading to:

- Fragmented information
- Inconsistent deliverables
- Duplicated effort

- Gaps in visibility at key decision points
- Uneven application of statewide policies
- Difficulty assessing readiness and risk

Critical IT delivery decisions were captured differently across agencies, limiting transparency and alignment.

Washington needed a single, integrated Information Technology Delivery Framework that agencies could use as a statewide reference point and benchmark for delivery maturity. The IT Project Resources Framework now provides a consistent lifecycle model that strengthens practices, improves communication with oversight entities, and supports scalable delivery across diverse environments.

Why does it matter?

Agencies operate with varying maturity, staffing, and complexity. Without a statewide reference point, expectations were interpreted inconsistently, creating uneven practices and documentation. The framework gives agencies a trusted benchmark to:

- Validate their IT delivery approach
- Identify gaps early
- Strengthen practices across data, privacy, security, architecture, and engineering
- Ensure critical lifecycle steps are not overlooked
- Improve communication with oversight and leadership

It reduces ambiguity, accelerates onboarding, and strengthens statewide IT maturity by supporting predictable, transparent, and comparable technology delivery. Most importantly, the framework empowers agencies, not by mandating a single methodology, but by providing a clear, comprehensive guide they can use to improve practices, build capability, and deliver higher-quality outcomes for residents.

What makes it universal?

The challenges Washington addressed- siloed delivery, inconsistent documentation, fragmented communication, uneven maturity, and increasing complexity - are universal across state government. These issues are amplified by staff turnover and loss of institutional knowledge.

The framework was intentionally designed to be modular, scalable, and delivery-method agnostic, making it applicable across:

- Agencies of any size or maturity
- States with varying governance structures
- Vendors supporting public-sector IT delivery
- Agile, hybrid, or traditional approaches

It aligns with multiple State CIO Top Ten Priorities, including cybersecurity, digital government, data management, modernization, and governance. By integrating key IT disciplines tasks that could impact delivery success into one lifecycle, it offers a repeatable, transferable IT delivery

model any state or vendor can adopt to improve communication, transparency, and delivery maturity.

IMPLEMENTATION

What was the roadmap?

Washington Technology Solutions (WaTech) Project Management Partners developed the IT Project Resources Framework through a coordinated enterprise effort that aligned statewide capabilities with national best-practice research. The team studied how other states approached lifecycle governance and used those insights to create Washington's first comprehensive, end-to-end IT framework.

The framework's technical architecture integrates all major lifecycle disciplines into a unified, modular guide. Each stage (0–9) provides recommended tasks, deliverables, checkpoints, and templates covering:

- Initiation and planning
- Data and privacy
- Architectural alignment
- Security and engineering requirements
- Testing and validation
- Go-live readiness
- Stabilization and closeout

This structure consolidates previously fragmented guidance into a single statewide reference model that agencies can use to validate their approach, assess capabilities, and strengthen practices.

Designed for interoperability, scalability, and ease of use, the framework can be adopted by agencies of any size or maturity. By leveraging existing statewide investments and aligning with established policies, Washington minimized cost, accelerated development, and delivered immediate value to agencies seeking clarity, consistency, and a trusted benchmark for delivery excellence.

Who was involved?

The IT Project Resources Framework was developed through a highly collaborative enterprise effort involving experts from Washington state government, peer states, and private-sector partners. The project succeeded because it intentionally incorporated diverse perspectives, delivery experience, and national best practices throughout its open-house rollout and iterative development process.

Under the leadership of WaTech's Project Management Partners, the team examined project lifecycle frameworks used by other states and identified opportunities to strengthen Washington's approach in enterprise architecture, security, data governance, privacy, and project management. Their role was to elevate awareness of all disciplines involved in

technology delivery and integrate them into a single, coherent lifecycle model that agencies can use as a statewide benchmark for delivery excellence.

Peer state research was a key component of the implementation. The team conducted interviews and reviewed lifecycle frameworks, governance models, and delivery practices from Vermont, Rhode Island, Iowa, California, and North Carolina. This national scan ensured Washington's framework aligned with emerging best practices in public-sector IT lifecycle governance.

Enterprise engagement was equally critical. WaTech led a 16-week Open House rollout with 25 Washington agencies and six vendor firms representing diverse missions and maturity levels. Their feedback directly shaped the framework's usability, flexibility, and real-world applicability. After each retrospective session, the framework was refined "just in time" to remain practical and immediately usable.

The implementation team also partnered with agencies and vendors to develop case studies demonstrating how the framework's techniques and tools work in real delivery environments. These examples helped participants understand how the framework can streamline onboarding, improve communication, and create a consistent statewide reference point for project expectations.

Together, the involvement of peer states, Washington agencies, and vendor partners ensured the framework was not developed in isolation. Instead, it reflects a broad, practical understanding of what agencies need to successfully deliver modern technology solutions and provides a statewide benchmark for strengthening delivery capability.

How did you do it?

The IT Project Resources Framework was built by leveraging Washington's existing enterprise policies, statewide expertise, cross-agency research and participation, and national best-practice research. Rather than creating a new methodology, the team developed a unified, modular structure that agencies can use to validate their approach and strengthen delivery practices.

Key resources included:

- WaTech policies and standards
- Enterprise architecture and security frameworks
- Data governance and privacy requirements
- Agency project management practices
- Cross-disciplinary working groups
- Microlearning and training development resources

The framework integrates all major lifecycle disciplines into a single guide. Each stage (0–9) outlines recommended tasks, deliverables, and checkpoints across initiation, data and privacy, architecture, security, engineering, testing, go-live readiness, stabilization, and closeout.

This consolidation transformed previously fragmented guidance into a coherent statewide reference model that agencies can use to assess capabilities, identify gaps, onboard staff, and improve communication with oversight bodies.

Designed for interoperability, scalability, and ease of use, the framework can be adopted as a full suite or à la carte, allowing agencies to apply only the components they need. By building on existing investments and aligning with statewide policies, Washington minimized costs, accelerated development, and delivered immediate value through a trusted benchmark for delivery excellence.

IMPACT

What did the project make better?

The IT Project Resources Framework significantly improved statewide access to enterprise resources and strengthened how agencies approach technology delivery. Before its development, agencies relied on siloed practices, inconsistent documentation, and varying interpretations of statewide expectations, making it difficult to assess readiness, communicate across disciplines, or align with enterprise policies.

The framework significantly strengthened statewide IT delivery by:

- Providing a single, coherent lifecycle model
- Reducing ambiguity and increasing consistency
- Improving cross-disciplinary communication and oversight alignment
- Enabling earlier identification of gaps and risks
- Supporting onboarding through modular guidance
- Increasing transparency and comparability of project information
- Elevating delivery maturity through a structured “sound check” model

Most importantly, it created a repeatable, scalable IT foundation that helps agencies deliver higher-quality solutions with less rework and stronger outcomes for residents.

How do you know?

The impact of the IT Project Resources Framework is evident in measurable improvements in clarity, consistency, and delivery maturity across Washington state agencies. Feedback from the 16-week Open House, agency retrospectives, and post-implementation interviews confirmed that the framework filled a critical statewide gap and improved how agencies plan, communicate, and execute technology projects. Agencies reported:

- Clearer end-to-end understanding of IT delivery expectations.
- More consistent documentation and practice areas included.
- Earlier identification of risks and gaps by seeing critical and key tasks in delivery.
- Stronger opportunity for cross-disciplinary communication.
- Faster onboarding for staff and vendors by a clearly laid out framework.
- Increased transparency for oversight bodies to see what is included in delivery.

Participation from 25 agencies and six vendor firms demonstrated strong demand and validated the framework’s statewide value. Agencies routinely described the framework as a “trusted

benchmark” and a “missing statewide resource” that helped them apply the right level of rigor at the right time.

Together, these outcomes show that the framework is delivering measurable value, strengthening statewide IT maturity, and improving the consistency and quality of technology delivery across Washington State government.

What now?

Washington is now building on the success of the IT Project Resources Framework to further strengthen statewide IT maturity and expand access to enterprise delivery resources. The framework has become the foundation for a more consistent, transparent, and capability-driven approach to technology delivery, and the next phase focuses on deepening adoption, expanding guidance, and embedding it into statewide governance and training. Future enhancements include:

- Deeper delivery disciplines specific guidance
- Additional microlearning modules and cohort sessions
- Integration into statewide onboarding and training
- Use as the basis for future IT maturity assessments
- Ongoing updates based on agency feedback and policy changes
- Stronger vendor alignment through shared expectations

The next phase will continue advancing Washington’s commitment to delivery excellence, ensuring agencies have the tools, clarity, and support needed to deliver high-quality technology solutions that improve outcomes for residents and the programs that serve them.

CONCLUSION

The IT Project Resources Framework gives Washington a modern, integrated and scalable statewide model for technology delivery. By connecting project management with key technical disciplines, including accessibility, testing, data governance, privacy, security, architecture and engineering, the framework strengthens delivery maturity across agencies, improves communication, reduces ambiguity and supports earlier, more consistent decision-making throughout the project lifecycle.

Grounded in national best practices and shaped by input from 25 agencies and vendor partners, the framework reflects real-world delivery needs across diverse environments. It creates a sustainable and repeatable foundation for project excellence and demonstrates Washington’s commitment to a more capable, consistent and collaborative technology ecosystem that improves outcomes for residents and the programs that serve them.