Washington State Judicial Branch
2025-27 Biennial Budget
OPD IT Modernization

Agency: Office of Public Defense

Decision Package Code/Title: A2 – OPD IT Modernization

Agency Recommendation Summary Text:
The Office of Public Defense (OPD) requests funding to align Information Technology (IT) services with modern systems and practices. OPD currently operates with outdated technology and inadequate IT staffing. Ongoing funding is needed to join WaTech's Enterprise Shared Tenant platform for heightened security, to integrate modern software suites, and to add 1 FTE systems administrator and 1 FTE user support. This comprehensive update is essential for OPD to effectively meet the routine IT needs of more than 60 agency staff, as well as hundreds of contractors and other business partners.

Fiscal Summary: Funding is requested to modernize agency IT systems and practices, and add 2 FTEs.

	FY 2026	FY 2027	Biennial	FY 2028	FY 2029	Biennial
Staffing						
FTEs	2.0	2.0	**2.0**	2.0	2.0	**2.0**
Operating Expenditures						
Fund 001-1	$752,000	$670,000	**$1,422,000**	$670,000	$670,000	**$1,340,000**
Total Expenditures						
	$752,000	**$670,000**	**$1,422,000**	**$670,000**	**$670,000**	**$1,340,000**

Package Description:
Background and current situation:
The 2023-2025 biennial budget funded the Office of Public Defense (OPD) to start updating technology and IT practices. After beginning the process in Fiscal Year 2024, OPD, in consultation with Washington Technology Solutions (WaTech), realized that the original plan to utilize WaTech's Small Agency IT Support program was not the best approach to satisfy OPD's IT and business needs. OPD is reverting $485,000 for Small Agency IT Support in the Fiscal Year 2025 supplemental budget, and is correcting course with this new decision package that utilizes alternative WaTech services.

Although it was not able to move forward with WaTech's Small Agency IT Support program, OPD did make critical IT progress in the 2023-2025 biennium, including:
- Hired a CIO, whose expertise proved invaluable in properly analyzing and identifying gaps in the initial plan and correcting course with this new decision package. (Ongoing funding to retain CIO position is requested in a separate decision package.)
- Completed OPD office cabling project.
- Migrated the OPD website to WaTech; completed accessibility review and initiated improvements. Funding is requested in this decision package for ongoing website hosting at WaTech.
- Implemented Smarsh "text capture" software to ensure proper records retention for text messages.
- Implemented Granicus/Gov Delivery mass emailing and subscription service.
- Deployed Adobe Acrobat subscriptions as new staff came on board; funding is requested in this decision package to upgrade other agency employees.

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Problem:
Despite recent targeted improvements, for the most part OPD continues to operate with outdated technology and IT practices, compounded by a lack of in-house resources and an over-reliance on outsourced providers for day-to-day IT services. This impedes efficiency and compromises the agency's ability to meet statutory responsibilities and timely serve its growing user base of staff, contractors, other state agencies, and local governments.

Proposed solution:
OPD proposes a comprehensive IT upgrade focused on the following key objectives:

1. **Enhance IT service capacity:** OPD proposes adding 2 FTE IT professionals to ensure reliable, timely response to routine service requests from OPD staff and contractors. For example, an OPD-contracted attorney or OPD staff who is locked out of password-protected brief banks or legal strategy resources needs a quick response to their call for assistance. Reducing reliance on outsourced providers will enable more efficient and effective systems management. WSU Energy Program has provided this service to OPD in the past but is itself not adequately resourced to meet OPD's daily needs in a timely fashion.

2. **Migrate to WaTech's Enterprise Shared Tenant:** Transitioning to WaTech's Enterprise Shared Tenant platform will ensure modern infrastructure and enhanced security measures consistent with State of Washington objectives. This move is essential for safeguarding sensitive data and ensuring compliance with regulatory standards.

3. **Adopt WaTech's Teams Telephony system:** Teams Telephony will allow OPD to replace last-century telephone technology with a modern system that will improve collaboration between onsite staff, remote staff, as well as counterparts and peers throughout the state.

4. **Purchase of Teams compatible phones:** Existing desk phone hardware is not compatible with Teams Telephony. New phones and/or headsets are required for onsite staff.

5. **Migrate to the state's wireless services:** This will allow for a fully integrated state government network experience for OPD staff and will provide a consistent mobile experience for other state agencies visiting OPD.

6. **Migrate from on-premise servers to the state's cloud architecture:** This will enable greater remote opportunities while utilizing the state's proven security architecture.

7. **Upgrade to modern software suites:** Modern software suites will improve collaboration capabilities with other state agencies and OPD's counterparts across the state. These advancements will streamline workflows and facilitate seamless information exchange, ultimately enhancing operational efficiency.

8. **Purchase grant management software:** OPD administers several grant programs to provide public defense funding for local governments throughout Washington. (For example, RCW 2.70.200 grants to assist with misdemeanor drug cases, RCW 10.101.050 grants to improve criminal defense, and grants to assist with resentencing under *State v. Blake*.) Grant management involves overseeing applications, data collection, progress report reviews, and communicating with grantees. Currently, OPD manages these tasks using inefficient methods: Applications are developed and formatted in Word, data is manually entered into Excel, and staff track deadlines manually. Customizable off-the-shelf grant management software will streamline OPD's grant operations. It will simplify the application process for applicants, enable the agency to generate data reports on demand, save staff time, and minimize the risk of errors. This technological upgrade is essential to efficiently and effectively administer OPD's multiple grant programs.

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This decision package represents a strategic investment for OPD. Upgraded IT infrastructure will position OPD to effectively respond to statutory responsibilities and meet needs of agency staff, contractors, and other business partners.

Fully describe and quantify expected impacts on state residents.
This decision package enhances agency operations to benefit OPD staff, hundreds of contractors, other agencies and local governments, and thousands of public defense clients across the state.

Transitioning to WaTech's Enterprise Shared Tenant platform and adopting modern software suites will not only improve data security and operational reliability, but also will streamline workflow. State residents can expect faster and more efficient processing of applications for public defense services and grants, reduced wait times, and improved overall service responsiveness.

Explain what alternatives were explored by the agency and why this was the best option.
OPD explored several alternatives before deciding on the comprehensive IT upgrade outlined in this decision package. Among the alternatives:

- OPD considered standing up its own Microsoft Azure tenant independently of WaTech. However, the agency concluded that this option would involve significant overhead and effort, which would be impractical and inefficient. Moreover, leveraging WaTech's proven track record for strong security and scalable solutions was seen as advantageous, aligning with OPD's need for robust infrastructure.

- In 2023 OPD originally planned to join WaTech's Small Agency IT Support program, but after closer review and more detailed consultation with WaTech, OPD determined that this option still represented a primarily outsourced service with limited ability to respond quickly to day-to-day operational needs. WaTech Small Agency IT Support ultimately would be more costly and less flexible, and would not be fully responsive to OPD's business needs.

- Therefore, OPD opted for a hybrid IT upgrade approach. By leveraging WaTech's cloud infrastructure and Enterprise Shared Tenant platform, along with the cybersecurity features provided through the central service model, OPD will ensure a highly secure IT environment. Simultaneously, implementing in-house IT staff will allow OPD the flexibility to ensure reliable, timely response for the service needs of OPD staff and contractors.

This hybrid approach ensures OPD can benefit from WaTech's robust cloud capabilities and cybersecurity expertise while also retaining greater control over daily IT operations. It represents a balanced solution that enhances security, scalability, and operational efficiency to meet the needs of OPD's staff, contractors, and other business partners.

What are the consequences of not funding this request?
Not funding this request will leave OPD operating with outdated technologies and inefficient, outsourced providers. Not funding this request will increase the agency's exposure to data theft and security incidents, which will compromise OPD's ability to maintain critical data sharing agreements with other state agencies such as the Department of Children Youth and Families, Department of Corrections, and Administrative Office of the Courts.

Is this an expansion or alteration of a current program or service?
The proposed IT upgrade expands OPD's technological capabilities by increasing the IT department's capacity, transitioning to modern cloud infrastructure, and adopting advanced software and communication systems. Simultaneously, it alters outdated practices such as manual data entry and decentralized IT management, aiming to streamline operations, enhance security, and improve service delivery efficiency.

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Decision Package expenditure, FTE and revenue assumptions:
    Staffing Assumptions

Job Title Classification	#s of FTE Round to Nearest Tenth				Workload Assumptions/Description
	FY 26	**FY 27**	**FY 28**	**FY 29**	
IT System Administrator – Senior	1	1	1	1	Configure and support Azure environment, M365 and Teams Telephone and SharePoint. Manage cloud servers. Manage EDR, SIEM, RBVM and backup solutions. Primary focus will be on Azure and network solutions and security.
IT User Support – Journey	1	1	1	1	Provide backup to IT System Admin, provide technical support for end user devices. Follow lead from IT System Admin and assist with Azure, M365, Teams, backup solutions. Primary focus will be on end user/device support with a secondary responsibility to System Admin responsibilities.

Use Standard Costs?
No.

If No, Explain Additional Costs	Round to Nearest $1,000				Description/Assumptions
	FY 26	**FY 27**	**FY 28**	**FY 29**	
Goods and Services	$368,000	$321,000	$321,000	$321,000	WaTech services; software; grant management software; training; WSU Migration costs
Equipment	$111,000	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000	Scheduled hardware replacement; Teams Telephony headsets

See next page for Projected Detailed expenditures by fiscal year and sub object/object.

IT Modernization Projections

FTE's and IT Training	SubObj	or one-time	FY26	FY27	25-27 Biennium
IT Sysetm Adminstrator	AC	ongoing	$122,500	$122,500	$245,000
IT Customer Support	AC	ongoing	$95,654	$95,654	$191,308
Benefits	B	ongiong	$54,539	$56,720	$111,259
IT Training ($2500 per 4 annually)	EG	ongoing	$10,000	$10,000	$20,000
Total Salaries and Benefits			**$282,693**	**$284,874**	**$567,567**
WA-Tech Services					
Enterprise Shared tenant	EL	ongoing	$4,922	$4,922	$9,844
Microsoft 365	EL	ongoing	$41,710	$41,710	$83,420
Teams Telephony	EL	ongoing	$5,400	$5,400	$10,800
M365 backup - AvePoint	EL	ongoing	$2,209	$2,209	$4,417
Cloud Fileshare server	EL	ongoing	$7,440	$7,440	$14,880
Cloud Fileshare failover server/sql express	EL	ongoing	$7,440	$7,440	$14,880
Veeam Backup	EL	ongoing	$4,500	$4,500	$9,000
WA-Tech Wireless	EL	ongoing	$10,000	$10,000	$20,000
WA-Tech VPN	EL	ongoing	$6,818	$6,818	$13,636
Centrex line	EL	ongoing	$540	$540	$1,080
Website hosting	EL	ongoing	$7,500	$7,500	$15,000
Total WaTech Services			**$98,478**	**$98,478**	**$196,957**
Current OPD Software requirements	EY	ongoing	$104,813	$112,088	$216,901
Grant Application Software	EY	ongoing	$100,000	$100,000	$200,000
Total			**$204,813**	**$212,088**	**$416,901**
One Time expenses					
All Staff M365 Training	EG	onetime	$30,000	$0	$30,000
Layer 3 Switch for SGN connection	EE	onetime	$5,000	$0	$5,000
WSU Anticipated migration labor costs	EL	onetime	$20,000	$0	$20,000
Teams Telephony Headsets	JA A060	onetime	$14,000	$0	$14,000
Total			**$69,000**	**$0**	**$69,000**
Start-up					
Equipment Start-up costs	J*/EA	onetime	$22,000	$0	$22,000
Scheduled Hardware replacment	J*	ongoing	$75,000	$75,000	$150,000
TOTAL			**$97,000**	**$75,000**	**$172,000**
Grand Total			**$751,984**	**$670,440**	**$1,422,424**

			FY26	FY27	25-27 Biennium
	AC		$218,154	$218,154	$436,308
	B		$54,539	$56,720	$111,259
	EE		$5,000	$0	$5,000
	EG		$40,000	$10,000	$50,000
	EL		$118,478	$98,478	$216,957
	EY		$204,813	$212,088	$416,901
	J		$111,000	$75,000	$186,000
	TOTAL		$751,984	$670,440	$1,422,424
			$0	$0	$0
	A/B		$272,693	$274,874	$547,567
	E		$368,291	$320,566	$688,857
	J		$111,000	$75,000	$186,000
	TOTAL		$751,984	$670,440	$1,422,424

How does the package relate to the Judicial Branch principal policy objectives?

>**Accessibility**
>Upgrading to WaTech's data center and cloud solutions will provide more reliable and secure access to digital resources, allowing individuals from diverse backgrounds to engage with OPD's resources more easily. Additional IT staff onsite at OPD will improve capacity to timely update and support accessible features.

>**Sufficient Staffing and Support**
>The proposed 2 FTEs will ensure efficient management of OPD's IT resources, quicker response times to meet IT services needs of OPD staff and contractors, and reduced reliance on outsourced providers.

How does the package impact equity in the state?

>**Address any target populations or communities that will benefit from this proposal.**
>OPD staff, contractors, other state agencies, and local governments will benefit from OPD's implementation of modern IT resources.

>**Describe the how the agency conducted community outreach and engagement.**
>OPD consulted with WaTech to identify how to best meet OPD's IT and business needs.

Consider which target populations or communities would be disproportionately impacted by this proposal. Explain why and how these equity impacts will be mitigated.
This proposal does not create disproportionate impacts.

Are there impacts to other governmental entities?
OPD is coordinating implementation with WaTech.

Stakeholder response:
In order to perform their jobs, OPD staff and contractors need to have reliable, modern IT resources and timely response to IT service issues.

Are there legal or administrative mandates that require this package to be funded?
Industry best practices and WaTech policy (formerly OCIO policy)[1] encourages agencies to discontinue the use of software products prior to the scheduled end-of-support dates. WaTech policies are not binding on Judicial Branch agencies such as OPD, but may be referenced for guidance. Continued use of end-of-life software poses a risk to OPD's network by allowing security vulnerabilities to be exploited.

The Legislature has determined that the state's information technology should move toward cloud services, with the expectation that this will deliver technical capacity, security, resiliency, disaster recovery capability and data analytics platforms and tools necessary to provide Washingtonians the services they require. (See E2SHB 1274, Chapter 40, Laws of 2021.)

Does current law need to be changed to successfully implement this package?
No

Are there impacts to state facilities?
No.

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[1] HB 1947 (2024) eliminated the Office of the State Chief Information Officer (OCIO) as a separate entity and transferred OCIO duties to WaTech.

Are there other supporting materials that strengthen the case for this request?
Reports & Policies
- o Washington State Privacy and Cybersecurity Best Practices- December 2021
  https://watech.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/Privacy%20and%20Cybersecurity%20Report.pdf
- o WaTech Policy SEC-04-08-S (formerly OCIO Policy 186) – Commonly Used Software
  https://ocio.wa.gov/policy/commonly-used-software-product-retirement-policy

Proposed Products/Services
- o WaTech Enterprise Shared Tenant
  https://watech.wa.gov/services/Enterprise-Shared-Tenant
- o WaTech Teams Telephony Service https://watech.wa.gov/services/Teams-Telephony
- o WaTech PBX https://watech.wa.gov/services/Private-Branch-Exchange-PBX
- o WaTech Wireless Service https://watech.wa.gov/services/Wireless-Service
- o Microsoft Teams Enabled Devices https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-teams/across-devices/devices
- o Migration Services to WaTech- Current IT vendor https://www.energy.wsu.edu/ComputerServices.aspx

End of Life Software
- o Adobe Acrobat Pro 2020- June 1, 2025- As new staff have come onboard they have received Adobe Acrobat subscriptions, funding is requested in this decision package to upgrade everyone else.
  https://helpx.adobe.com/support/programs/adobe-support-policies-supported-product-versions.html
- o Microsoft Office 2019- October 14, 2025 -- Requires being part of WaTech Enterprise Shared Tenant platform.
  https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/lifecycle/products/microsoft-office-2019

Are there information technology impacts?
This decision package requests funding for IT services, hardware, software, and IT staff.

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