

# Washington State Judicial Branch 2023-25 Biennial Budget Website Accessibility and Security

**Agency:** Office of Public Defense

**Decision Package Code/Title:** AJ – Website Accessibility and Security

**Agency Recommendation Summary Text:**

OPD requests a mix of one-time and ongoing funding to redesign and replace OPD websites that are outdated and don't comply with current federal and state accessibility standards. OPD proposes an interagency agreement with WaTech Web Services for website redesign, user experience testing, and ongoing support and hosting. The project would utilize responsive design, enhance plain language content, comply with modern accessibility and security standards, and improve information flow and user experience. (General Fund-State)

**Fiscal Summary:**

	FY 2024	FY 2025	Biennial	FY 2026	FY 2027	Biennial
<b>Staffing</b>						
FTEs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Operating Expenditures</b>						
Fund 001-1	\$189,586	\$11,586	\$201,712	\$11,586	\$11,586	\$23,712
<b>Object of Expenditure</b>						
CD Contract	\$178,000	\$0	\$178,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
EY Software	\$11,586	\$11,586	\$23,712	\$11,586	\$11,586	\$23,712
<b>Total Expenditures</b>						
	\$189,586	\$11,586	\$201,712	\$11,586	\$11,586	\$23,712

OPD will code actual WaTech expense according to WaTech invoices, once services begin.

**Package Description:**

OPD currently provides a public-facing website as well as a private website to share legal practice materials with agency contractors. Both websites are outdated, lack accessibility and security features, and do not offer a modern-day web experience for users. Deficiencies include:

- Website content is arranged by OPD program, which is difficult to navigate unless the user is well-acquainted with the agency's organizational and program structure.
- Multiple audiences (public, contractor, non-contract attorneys, government agencies) do not have a clear path to the data they need.
- OPD websites are not compatible with screen readers and do not comply with modern standards for mobility or accessibility-first design.
- Outdated search functions require users to select document or webpage searching.
- OPD websites lack images and graphics.
- The user login for OPD contractors is not secure.

**The Problem:**

The general public and other users reasonably expect to be able to navigate a state agency website and locate materials available on the website. OPD websites fall short of this expectation.

OPD currently utilizes open source software, with a few paid subscriptions, with default templates, and with content arranged by staff who are not trained in web design. The most recent redesign was completed nearly 10 years ago, in 2013.

OPD lacks adequate resources to provide basic, professional website redesign and maintenance.

**Proposed Solution:**

OPD requests funding to utilize WaTech Web Services for website redesign, user experience testing, and ongoing support hosting. Website redesign would improve information flow, enhance plain language content, accessibility, responsive design, security, and overall consistency for a more user-friendly website.

**Fully describe and quantify expected impacts on state residents and specific populations served:**

Redesigning OPD website content and improving page usability and navigation would provide equitable access for all Washington residents, including users with disabilities.

**Explain what alternatives were explored by the agency and why they were rejected as solutions:**

OPD considered the following alternatives:

- Do nothing. Rejected because providing a modern, functional website is a basic government service.
- OPD considered utilizing a private vendor. Rejected because WaTech Web Services is a well-established, well-regarded provider of website services for state agencies. Contracting with WaTech would require only an interagency agreement and adequate funding, and would avoid an extensive procurement process.

**What are the consequences of not funding this request?**

Not funding this request would result in:

- Poor quality communication with the public and legal community;
- Inability to convey information efficiently;
- Frustration for users seeking information;
- Frustration for staff wanting to provide information;
- Increasing telephone calls and emails asking OPD staff to provide information that should be readily available on the website.

**Is this an expansion or alteration of a current program or service?**

No.

**Decision Package expenditure, FTE and revenue assumptions:**

Contracting Assumptions

OPD would execute an interagency agreement with WaTech for one-time funding for website redesign and ongoing funding for website hosting and maintenance services through Pantheon. An additional contract could be required with an outside vendor for pdf remediation, depending on WaTech redesign recommendations.

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

*Accessibility:* Improving OPD websites to comply with current web accessibility standards will address this principal policy.

*Access to Necessary Representation:* Improving access to the contractor website for training and practice tools will help ensure quality representation for indigent clients.

**Are there impacts to other governmental entities?**

County and city courts and public defense providers would have improved access to needed information.

**Stakeholder response:**

Responsive design, updated content, improved readability and accessibility would improve the experience for all stakeholders.

**Are there legal or administrative mandates that require this package to be funded?**

- Washington Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) Policy 188 governs website accessibility for Executive Branch agencies. OCIO policies are not binding on Judicial Branch agencies, but may be referenced for guidance.
- Section 508 of the federal Rehabilitation Act in concert with the Americans with Disabilities Act establishes standards for government websites to be accessible to persons with disabilities.

**Does current law need to be changed to successfully implement this package?**

No.

**Are there impacts to state facilities?**

No.

**Are there other supporting materials that strengthen the case for this request?**

Current Websites

- OPD main website- <https://www.opd.wa.gov/>
- OPD Parents Representation Program contractor website- <https://prp.opd.wa.gov/logon>

Services

- WaTech Web Service details and portfolio of work- <https://watech.wa.gov/services/Web-Services>
- Anthro-Tech- user experience contractor- <https://anthro-tech.com/>
- Pantheon Platform- <https://pantheon.io/>
- Monsido Site Governance Tool- <https://monsido.com/>
- Formstack Form Development Tool- <https://www.formstack.com/fs-online-forms/developers>

Guidelines and Standards

- OCIO Policy 188- <https://ocio.wa.gov/policy/accessibility>
- Department of Justice Issues Web Accessibility Guidance Under the ADA- <https://www.access-board.gov/news/2022/03/21/departement-of-justice-issues-web-accessibility-guidance-under-the-ada/>
- Introduction to Web Accessibility - <https://www.w3.org/WAI/fundamentals/accessibility-intro/>
- WCAG2 Checklist- <https://webaim.org/standards/wcag/WCAG2Checklist.pdf>

**Are there information technology impacts?**

No

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