# Table of contents

**Executive summary** ........................................................................................................................................ 2  
**Best practices** ........................................................................................................................................... 6  
  - Governance part II - using your executive steering committee ................................................................. 6  
  - Vendor relationship management part II .................................................................................................... 8  
  - Agile project management .......................................................................................................................... 10  
**Lessons learned** ...................................................................................................................................... 15  
**Contact** ..................................................................................................................................................... 17  

**Appendices**

A: Project management partners ...................................................................................................................... 18  
B: OCIO project management resources ......................................................................................................... 19  
C: Previously shared best practices .................................................................................................................. 20
Executive summary

The 2021-23 operating budget section 151(1)(a) provides the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) funding for experienced information technology (IT) project managers to provide critical support to agency IT projects that are under oversight from the OCIO. This report:

- Summarizes key accomplishments from July 1 through Sept. 30, 2021.
- Presents selected best practices shared with state agencies during this same reporting period.
- Provides a summary of lessons learned shared by state agencies with IT projects that have been completed since June 1, 2021.

The project management partners are honored to update our stakeholder community on accomplishments over the last quarter, and to share best practices and key lessons learned.

Key accomplishments

Key accomplishments during this reporting period include:

- **Continuation of IT project management (PM) community of practice (CoP) program.**

  This past quarter the CoP conducted three monthly events:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th># of participants</th>
<th>Agencies represented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Project Budgeting</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Peer Networking Event</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Investment Planning</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Peer Networking Event</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Agile Project Management</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Peer Networking Event</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Project Governance and Decision-Making</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The CoP is guided by an advisory board that consists of four active members representing four agencies. The CoP uses Microsoft Teams as its collaboration platform where the community can share advice, best practices, tools, resources and become involved in discussion boards. Membership of this site is nearing 170 individuals representing 36 agencies.

- **Project management guidance.**

  The project manager partners (PMPs) continue to provide project management guidance to projects subject to oversight. Their work provides the selected best practices researched for each quarterly report. The project managers’ experience informs the OCIO’s recommendations. The highest-impact topics are selected for deep analysis and strategic recommendations to the state. This allows for tracking of projects completed during each quarter and compiling lessons-learned for incorporation into the OCIO lessons-
learned repository. The following are several examples of how the project managers' work and guidance helped shape the success of state projects:

- They offered guidance to several projects lacking a go-live readiness plan or dashboard checklist and provided templates and expertise. The projects using these tools experienced a successful go-live.

- The project managers counseled a number of projects to consider an investment in a business analyst (BA), a role that bridges process and technology. The BA role is underrepresented in the state and adding this skillset has helped several projects bridge the gap between software and business processes to stay on schedule and meet milestones.

- Their work in the state over the past quarter provided the impetus to research best practices for project estimating, project sponsorship/governance and vendor management. The project managers’ efforts contributed to noteworthy improvements in several state projects – leading them to take steps to hire a vendor manager, re-assess their governance model or membership and improve estimating success for submission of an approvable technology budget and a reliable project plan.

It can be difficult to measure active learning on display (the OCIO’s goal). The metrics below represent the current best attempt to quantify the office’s impact. Project management partners spent over 1,100 hours working with individual state agencies, providing project management guidance to 52 projects representing 32 state agencies from June 1 through Aug. 31, 2021. The charts below provide a view of project management partner engagement by quarter and by service category.
The following chart represents where the project management partner’s time was spent during this quarter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>PMP Time Spent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PM consultation</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk and issue management</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology budget</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality review of work products</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM planning</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement advice and consultation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM best practices</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QA response consultation and advice</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The project management partner’s scope has recently been altered by new statute to empower PMPs to support non-gated funding projects as well as those subject to gated funding or oversight. This has been a welcome development. In addition, the OCIO made a strategic decision to engage earlier with projects (before they turn red on the dashboard) to assist with planning and initiation activities, such as creating an effective governance structure. Because of this adjustment, the office will be proposing new metrics for the annual report to assess CoP impact. For example, we might want to track a decrease in projects that do not increase in risk – rather than (or in addition to) projects that decrease in risk.

- During this quarter, approximately 40% of projects assigned a project management partner saw reduction in OCIO-assessed risk during the last reporting period. This means a project’s risk was reduced from red (high risk) to yellow (moderate risk) or yellow to green (low risk) on 40% of projects that were assigned a PMP. This is down from the Q2 2021 reporting period – which saw a 43% risk reduction – due to one large program that increased in risk. The project management partners’ target metric is to reduce risk for 50% of projects on which the project management partners are engaged.
Chart depicting both counts of projects with which the PMPs engaged, and those projects which benefitted from engagement via improvements in risk profile.
Best practices

Project management partners identified the following opportunities to bring industry best practices to projects:

- Governance part II – using your executive steering committee.
- Vendor management part II.
- Agile project management and continuous integration.
- Project estimating – techniques, tips and tricks.

Governance part II - using your executive steering committee

In last quarter’s report the OCIO addressed the importance of the project executive sponsor. This report explores the role of the executive steering committee (ESC) and its place in public-sector project success. Ineffectual steering committees can be a larger problem than a weak executive sponsor or a poorly skilled project manager.

Project governance is a critical area of competency for business executives and often a low priority due to competing demands and other factors. Executives are busy people. Governance roles don’t require training and are not considered difficult to serve in. In one national study, 98 out of 110 executives admitted they did not know what their role on the ESC was with any confidence or how they could add value to the project. Of the remaining 12 who said they were confident, additional interviews indicated that only two had the correct understanding of their governance role1.

There are many factors that contribute to ineffective ESC bodies:

- **Lack of role clarity and training:** Often, people don’t understand their roles, have any tools to use or understand how they should be measuring their success
- **Emphasizing the wrong goal:** Orthodox project methodologies emphasize cost management and largely ignore value management. Delivering on time and on budget is not the best lens and is almost certainly the wrong measure of success.
- **Lack of thoughtful composition of the ESC group:** For example, it may be too big or too small, or people don’t really know why they’re there, or don’t get along, truly don’t belong or can’t resolve conflicts productively.
- **Analysis paralysis:** A decision that should only take 24 hours could end up taking a month if there are no established parameters for how long decision-making should take.
- **Lack of goals, ground rules or boundaries:** Many ESC bodies do not have a mission, a charter, ground-rules or guiding principles for how they will make decisions and interact.

Appropriate ESC roles include:

- Defining, protecting and delivering the project’s value.
- Ensuring maximum value-added output for the resources that are input to the project.

---

1[https://discover.hubpages.com/business/project-governance-failure](https://discover.hubpages.com/business/project-governance-failure)
• Clearing obstacles from the pathway to success for the project.
• Steering a single project (or group of projects) to successful conclusion through governance-related deliberation and decision making.

The key question, then, is how can state’s leaders be better equipped to perform effectively in this role?

Best Practices

The following guidelines are based on CoP work with state projects.

• **Pick the right people**: Make sure those on the ESC have a vested interest in the success of the project. That they possess appropriate decision-making authority. Set boundaries for the ESC by establishing who can attend in their absence. For instance, will the sponsor allow a delegate, or prefer another ESC member as their proxy.

• **Provide training and information**: There may be some members that are new to serving on a steering committee. Leaders and project managers can help ease them into their duties by providing training and coaching.

• **Enshrine the mission in an action-driven charter**: As a roadmap, the charter specifies how the committee will be organized and how it will operate, all from a procedural and process point of view. This is a great tool to improve productivity, save time, minimize conflict and set expectations.

• **Explain and justify the project**: Regardless of the experience that everyone may have serving on steering committees, each person needs to understand the plan, description, purpose and current scope.

• **Develop competencies**: Members of the ESC need to have the skills and expertise to fulfill their mission. They need more than the competencies required for normal operational management and more than just a tick-list of responsibilities to help them. For example, they must possess the skills to do the following:
  - Define the desired business outcomes for the project.
  - Define the correct measures of success that guide the steering process.
  - Set and protect the project’s scope.
  - Affirm the business requirements.
  - Evaluate and approve the project business case.
  - Select and guide the project manager.
  - Negotiate and agree on the project’s completion criteria.
  - Ask the right questions and assess the answers to ensure all is well.

• **Assist in creating and measuring value**: This includes the following domains:
  - **Project delivery success**: Project delivery success is about defining the criteria by which the process of delivering the project is successful. Essentially this addresses the classic measures: scope, schedule, budget and quality. These measures are limited to the duration of the project and success can be measured when the project is officially completed. Besides the classic project delivery key performance indicators (KPIs) such as scope, schedule and budget, other KPIs can also be looked at such as overtime, project member satisfaction, stakeholder satisfaction, lessons learned (improved project delivery capabilities), etc.

---

2 [https://status.net/articles/steering-committee/](https://status.net/articles/steering-committee/)
3 [https://www.ittoolkit.com/articles/project-steering-committees](https://www.ittoolkit.com/articles/project-steering-committees)
Product or service success: Success is about defining the criteria that determines if a product or service delivered is successful – such as uptime, customer satisfaction, decreased operational costs, the proportion of users who actually use the new system. These criteria must be measured once the product/service is implemented and over a defined period of time. It cannot be measured at the end of the project phase.

Business success: Business success is about defining the criteria by which the product or service delivered brings value to the overall organization and how it contributes financially and/or strategically to the business. For example: financial value contribution (e.g., increased turnover, profit), competitive advantage (e.g., 5% market share won, technology advantage), etc.

Establish guiding principles for ESC members – which may vary on each project. Examples include:

- Get engaged: The ESC must be inquisitive, looking for ways to help while the project team must be planning contingencies, offering the best recommendations and requesting assistance from the steering committee as needed.

- Set high standards: The ESC must demand performance from the project team while simultaneously showing where their help will make that possible. Demand clear information, open dialogue and respect for the facts.

- Strike a balance: A balanced presentation of the facts will help the steering committee know what decisions need to be made and what interference needs to be run. The project team members need to know they can come in with facts, even if it's bad news. Avoid focusing exclusively on one project element, like budgets or deadlines. Contain the emotional issues within a specific portion of the agenda.

- Be honest and transparent: The project management partners have worked with project teams that want to keep issues and challenges away from the ESC because they think it would make them look incompetent or endanger the career of the project members. They all have seen the watermelon reporting tactic: green from the outside and bright red from the inside.

- Make decisions, real decisions: A decision has not been made until people know who is accountable for it, any relevant due dates or milestones, impacted stakeholders and communication needs.

- Always conduct a benefits realization review: After the organization has had the chance to use the outputs from the project, evaluate the extent to which the benefits identified in the original business case have been achieved.

When architected correctly, ESCs are a useful governing body for project managers that increases effectiveness and creates an environment where all members can fulfill their duties efficiently. A good team and clear direction can overcome many perils while enabling the successful delivery of your project.

Vendor relationship management part II
The last quarterly report introduced some basic vendor management strategies that would benefit most state entities who do business with external vendors (e.g., technology and security firms, system integrators, consulting or staff augmentation firms). These best practices included: vendor scorecards, effective communication, a partnership approach and the development of a mutually beneficial value proposition and cost structure. This quarterly report addresses strategic vendor relationships at the enterprise level.
There are several vendors who have accounts across multiple agencies. Some of these are large, multi-national consulting firms, others are small to mid-size, local firms. Both are strategic, and essential for the state to achieve desired goals. The state’s authorizing authority has taken an interest in strategic vendor management and is asking challenging questions about how to leverage the state’s buying power at the enterprise level.

For example, the state may not have a holistic view of a vendor’s performance across multiple agencies. A vendor may give a strong performance at one agency but lack follow through at another agency. Often these projects do not interact or report up to the same state or vendor leadership structure. Currently, vendor performance visibility across all state contracts is not achievable. Given this complexity, it can be hard to declare whether a vendor is delivering strong results to all its Washington clients.

“Relationships with strategic vendors are increasingly key to business performance, but many IT vendor management leaders struggle to compel their most important vendors to be proactive, collaborative and innovative,” says Joanne Spencer, Gartner Senior Director Analyst. “When managed badly, large strategic vendors can become complacent, slow moving and intractable.” Gartner offers a three-step approach to help IT vendor management leaders get maximum value from their strategic vendors:

**Step 1: Data and insight.** Begin by building a holistic picture of the vendor and what it delivers to your organization. This entails the identification, collection, aggregation and presentation of the vendor profile, performance and market data. There are many tools that achieve this, but focus on four key ones:

- **Profiles:** Create vendor profiles that provide relevant market, interaction and performance data specific to each strategic vendor. Update monthly.
- **Dashboards:** Build dashboards that provide near-real-time updates. They often include tactical data most relevant to understanding a strategic vendor’s performance.
- **Scorecards:** Use quarterly scorecards to provide a regular update and objective analysis of the most relevant and strategic measures of a vendor relationship. These can include a 360-degree review, for which the vendor provides a customer assessment and recommended improvement actions.
- **Risk plans:** Prepare vendor risk plans annually, or as often as required by policy or regulation. Plans should provide an overview of vendor risks and the relevant actions taken, or necessary, to reduce residual risks and respond to risk events.

“At this information-gathering stage, it’s vital to ensure the data gathered is reliable,” says Spencer. “Then, when you’re confident with the data and reporting mechanisms, you’re ready to analyze and look for trends that support a discussion with a vendor.”

**Step 2: Reviews.** The second step is to create the governance framework for how the collected data is communicated with the vendor and across the organization’s key stakeholders. Ideally, this is a schedule of review meetings that are agreed upon at the point of procurement or during the onboarding process. Typically, the schedule will contain the following reviews:

- Monthly operational performance and contract reviews to report on performance against SLAs and metrics. This is also a good time to review vendor solutions to any past performance issues.

---

4 [https://www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/3-steps-to-improve-strategic-vendor-management/](https://www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/3-steps-to-improve-strategic-vendor-management/)

5 Ibid.
• Quarterly relationship reviews to focus on evaluating the long-term strategic value of the relationship as opposed to the tactical aspects of the monthly reviews.

• Biannual risk reviews to update and refine business continuity and mitigation plans and report on risks pertaining to the relationship.

• Annual executive review to ensure alignment between the vendor and the client’s goals as well as a time for senior executives on both sides to build trust and share ideas.

**Step 3: Action plan.** "Collecting sufficient information and designing processes to review it closely with the vendor have set the stage for extracting more value from the strategic relationship," says Spencer. “But this will all be of limited value unless you can also ensure broad commitment from within your organization6.”

It is important to note that because Washington does not have an enterprise vendor management service or structure, the above steps may be challenging to implement. Could agencies come together in an informal affiliation to build this capability for one or two strategic vendors as a proof of concept?

To help build buy-in from stakeholders, build standard agendas that can be used for each review type consistently across all providers. Then pilot the process with one or two strategic vendors. Use these pilots to evaluate the best timing, deliverables and participants, which may vary between vendors and internal stakeholders.

When the process is refined, expand it across more strategic vendors. A slow expansion will demonstrate the value of the process and help you make time to communicate it to stakeholders, who should be drawn from business, IT and even the vendor side in some cases.

**Agile project management**

The Washington state IT authorizing environment is increasingly looking at new ways for IT projects to deliver business value to the end users early, provide visibility into project performance, increase predictability and reduce risk.

The right approach for your project or organization depends on many factors including your team’s experience, the organization’s ability to adapt to change, the level of uncertainty in project requirements or technology and frequency of delivery contrasted with degree of change. Projects with clear, stable requirements and a low degree of technical challenges can be easily planned and better suited to a predictive life cycle. As project uncertainty increases, so does the likelihood of changes and rework that are better suited to the other life cycles. The higher uncertainty the more the project would benefit from an agile approach.

An appropriate agile or hybrid approach can meet the needs of the Washington IT project authorizing environment by promoting an iterative process with multiple feedback cycles intended to promote efficiency and effectiveness and deliver usable product early and often. Among all the agile development frameworks, Scrum is the most widely adopted, though there are other frameworks used by agile teams such as Kanban, Scrumban, XP and Crystal.

The best-known agile frameworks focus on the development process and favor development teams and customer goals, but lack discipline or methods to manage cost, risk, organizational change or procurement. Most IT projects in Washington state claiming to use agile are actually using a hybrid model that holds agile software

---

6 Ibid.
development and delivery to predictive planning conditions like fixed deadline, forecasted budget and thorough risk assessment.

What is Agile management?
The Project Management Institute (PMI) defines project management as “the use of specific knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to deliver something of value to people.” With that in mind, Agile project management requires tailoring the approach to meet the agile needs of the project. This means directly including business and customers in the process early, responding to feedback quickly, adapting as you go, iterating processes and working to deal with the level of uncertainty encountered.

Agile project managers emphasize understanding and addressing the needs and development of team members in order to enable the highest possible team performance. Project managers get buy-in for the project, communicate changes, and steer the project from beginning to end. Solid project planning allows projects to:

- Get stakeholder alignment from the beginning.
- Ensure the project has a strategic goal.
- Identify risks early.
- Adapt to change.
- Reduce re-work.

Best Practices

Governance

- Select the best Agile approach for your project. This may be an out of the box framework like Scrum or Kanban, or a hybrid approach. Consult with a coach or expert, if needed, to make sure the selected approach is going to work with your organization.
- Educate all stakeholders on what it means to be managing a project with agile project management techniques. Set clear expectations for the process and what is expected of their respective roles.
- Get buy-in and commitment from everyone — including leadership.

Resource Management

- Project management style should be facilitative rather than command and control. Avoid micro-management.
- Build the right team: get the right people and skills for your project. Look for agile experience. Create smaller teams with more highly skilled team members.
- Emphasize close interaction between customers/users and development teams.
- Empower the project team to make decisions.
- Practice continuous feedback between team members to help everyone understand how things are going along within the process and what needs improvement.

Project Structure

- Break projects into small, simple phases that deliver value incrementally. Remember that value also means quality, so test continuously.
• Allow time for a discovery phase to learn what you don’t know without burning down the budget or schedule; conversely adapt the scope to deliver value (minimum viable product) within the time and budget available.

• Set clear communication guidelines. Make sure everyone hears the right information at the right time to speed up processes.

Processes

• Adapt existing processes rather than developing new project management methodology. For example, daily stand ups or frequent team meetings to keep the team in sync and respond quickly to any obstacles supplemented with a monthly formal report in lieu of formal weekly reports or a long weekly project meeting.

• Focus on results rather than perfecting processes.

• Plan in near term increments. Employ the rolling wave planning technique to plan increments and adapt at each iteration.

• Use the right tools (e.g., software or metrics, communication techniques). Make sure all stakeholders know the tools and how to use them.

• Eliminate tasks, files or events that hold least or no value to the overall project management process. Question any activity that does not contribute directly to the value of the end product (be careful when it comes to governance structures and funding/authorizing environments). Build quality into products as they are produced and don’t count on testing quality into the product.

• Use burndown charts to monitor project progress and eliminates scope creep by identifying potential risks that might occur with undelivered tasks/subtasks.

• Create a project backlog and vision together as a team so that everyone stays on the same page throughout the project. This also creates mutual understanding between all the participants of the projects and allows them to align the vision in a better way.

• Conduct lessons learned with the affected stakeholders for each iteration or increment. Decide on process changes as a team and adapt as needed.

What to avoid

• Rushing the adoption of an agile methodology can reduce team enthusiasm and take longer overall to accept the change.

• Using agile as an excuse to avoid project management. There’s a common misconception that agile is an “anything goes” free-for-all. Agile isn’t the absence of methodology; it’s a type of framework in itself. Agile does not negate the need for good governance.

• Don’t mistake agile frameworks for project frameworks. Scrum has no beginning, middle or end and requires project managers to facilitate the project framework which includes the development framework.

• Agile is not an “all or nothing” mentality. All projects can use some agile practices, but not all agile practices are suited for all projects.
• “Working solutions over comprehensive documentation” does not mean no documentation. The primary value of documentation is to support the solution. The collaborative nature of agile teams brings collaboration and conversations that should result in descriptive outputs and documented decisions. Without the right documentation, teams will find themselves repeating conversations at different stages of the product development or engaging in unnecessary re-work.

Project estimating – techniques, tips and tricks

Project estimating techniques can help project managers estimate essential elements of a project, such as duration, scope and cost. Estimating techniques also allow project managers to forecast the right mix of funding and resource needs for optimal project success. There are key areas of a project that benefit from the use of estimating techniques.

• **Cost.** If you can accurately estimate the cost of a project, you can be certain you have enough budget to get the work done.

• **Time.** If you have planned the project with accurate duration estimates, you can reliably plan for people and resources and have them available when needed by managing expectations and schedules.

• **Scope.** If you accurately estimate the work involved and precisely what tasks need to occur to complete the work, you can optimize the inputs and expertise needed for the project.

The key best practice for estimating projects is that the whole team is responsible for creating the estimates. The project manager may lead the charge in getting the estimates created. However, the whole team creates and refines the estimates as needed.

The following are five common estimating techniques to consider when estimating a project and you may consider using more than one for your project depending on the activity and/or the certainty of that activity:

1. **Analogous estimating:** Generally used at the start of the project when not as much is known. This technique compares the current project with similar projects. It is a quick and relatively easy method of estimating, although less accurate than other techniques.

2. **Parametric estimating:** Primarily used for estimates that are quantitatively based, such as number of installations per day. Again, this is relatively easy estimating technique, but not every activity or cost can be estimated quantitatively.

3. **Three-point estimating:** This type of technique accounts for uncertainty of the activity. It is formula based and takes the best case, most likely and worst case scenario and weights the most likely heavily. The equation is \((O+4M+P)/6\). For instance, if an activity is most likely going to take 10 days to complete, but could complete in 5, or as late as 20 days. The formula would be \((5+10*4+20)/6=10.83\) days, rounding to 11 days to complete.

4. **Top-down estimate:** This technique assigns an overall time for the project and then breaks the project down into phases, work and tasks. This is usually done based on your project’s work breakdown structure (WBS). PMI’s Project Management Body of Knowledge defines WBS as “a hierarchical decomposition of the total scope of work to be carried out by the project team to accomplish the project objectives and create the required deliverables.”

---

7 PMBOK© Guide - Sixth Edition
5. **Bottom-up estimate.** This technique examines the work at the most granular level of detail and compiles this information to come up with overall budget and timeline and resources for a project. Since each activity is being assessed individually, this type of estimate tends to be more accurate than other estimation techniques but takes more time.

As mentioned above, the key best practice is that the whole team is responsible for the estimate. The process for developing estimates might look like the following:

**Step 1:** Prework. The core team and project manager develop an appropriately detailed WBS. Look for lessons learned from similar projects.

**Step 2:** Create initial estimates. The work package owner or activity owner then uses the information gathered in the prework to develop estimates of the level of effort for each element holding meetings with subject matter experts and technical leads to validate initial estimates. Some important notes here for this review.

1. Review lessons learned provided from prework on what might be applicable to those work packages.
2. Clearly and accurately name the work packages.
3. Decompose the work packages into deliverable-focused elements.
4. Estimate the level of effort needed to complete the package in agreed upon units of measure.
   a. Do not try to factor in interruptions, rework, other environmental factors.
   b. Recommend decomposing work packages to no greater than 80 hours duration.
5. Document constraints and potential risks as notes in the estimates.
6. Document what is included in the estimate and what is not. For instance, (for software development) is documentation included in the estimate or not.
7. Validate time and resource estimates against lessons learned.
8. Require the person who is responsible for delivering to provide the final estimate. This should be the person who reports the status of the work during project execution.

**Step 3:** Finalize estimates. The project team and manager meet to review the estimates for each element. Then roll up and compare with initial estimates. Refine the estimates until team agrees that it represents the best estimates.
Lessons learned

The IT Project Lessons Learned Repository has been updated to include lessons learned compiled from April - August 2021. This quarter 34 projects under OCIO oversight completed, and seventeen projects posted their post-implementation reports, 53 additional lessons learned and best practices were added to the repository.

The following table provides a sample of these newly added lessons learned in the categories of procurement/contract & vendor management, cost management and project management/project controls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Lesson Learned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Communications and Stakeholder Management     | • Work with customers/agencies to understand their capacity and how it fits into their plans early on in the project and confirm changes with them as the project proceeds.  
  • Communicate progress to key stakeholders, in this case agencies. |
| Executive Sponsorship and Governance          | • Ensure joint sponsorship across divisions for optimal effectiveness on an enterprise system project.  
  • Engage the sponsors and steering committee in meaningful decision-making processes and not just to communicate project status.  
  • Establish clear roles and responsibilities for the sponsor and steering committee. Establishing a decision, accountability, responsible, consult, and information (DARCI) matrix could assist with this process.  
  • Ensure engaged sponsorship to keep the project on track and visible to division staff and stakeholders:  
    o Share project updates regularly at division meetings, newsletters, email messages, and through discussions with grantees and transportation agencies.  
    o Provide routine feedback and direction to the core team, which allowed them to stay on track or adjust when necessary.  
    o Make timely decisions on challenges, issues, risks, and questions which helped avoid bottlenecks.  
    o Increase the level of accountability with the vendor to ensure deliverables were met through discussions when they were not responsive or resistant to make changes.  
    o Communicate project updates to keep stakeholders informed. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Lesson Learned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Organizational Change Management | • Plan for multiple training methods recognizing that each user or group of users will have different needs and ways of learning.  
                                | • Develop training curriculum to meet the needs of the project.  
                                | • Ensure there is a clear and well-defined organizational change management plan that supports all phases of the project, including M&O.  
                                | • Ensure there is a formalized plan for knowledge transfer and continuously evaluate throughout the project so once the vendor is gone, the agency has the skills, competency, and documentation to successfully manage the solution. |
| Project Management/Project Controls | • Consult with OCIO and potentially consult with other agencies at project decision package submission to ensure resource levels include all IT Pool requirements.  
                                | • Engage OCIO early as soon as budget indicated project is part of technology pool/gated funding. |
Contact
Any questions regarding this Quarterly Best Practices Summary Report may be directed to Nicole Simpkinson, Assistant Director, OCIO at Nicole.Simpkinson@ocio.wa.gov.
Appendix A: Project management partners

The OCIO currently has four master-level project managers.

**Richelle Glascock** has been working with the state’s smaller agencies to provide hands-on support to coach projects on how to set up a project management framework and navigate the gated funding process. She is a Project Management Institute (PMI) certified Project Management Professional (PMP) who brings to the team experience as both a project manager and independent quality assurance on state IT projects.

**Shelley McDermott** is a master-level project manager with a BA in business from Evergreen State College and PMP certification from the PMI. Her background includes assessment and implementation of complex business initiatives, program and project leadership and strategic planning. Shelley excels at managing high-risk, high-visibility projects and leading teams, and has successfully delivered results on both public and private sector organizations.

**Megan Pilon** is a master-level project manager, PMI certified Project Management Professional (PMP) and a PMI Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP). Megan has over 30 years of information technology experience, over 25 years working with Washington state agencies and 23 years in project management. She has extensive experience with Washington state high-profile projects and understands what it takes to deliver IT projects. She has worked for the Legislature, the Office of Financial Management (OFM) and in private industry as a service delivery and consulting director.

**Stacy Steck** is a PMP and holds an MBA. She has served the state on several successful, long-term projects and brings more than 25 years of experience in the field of project and program management to this role. Stacy was a leader in the healthcare industry and had a leading role in implementing electronic health record systems. Additionally, she has a certification in enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution configuration and has implemented ERP modules (HR and Budgeting) as part of her consulting career.
Appendix B: OCIO project management resources

Additional best and leading project management practices and helpful resources are available to state agency project managers:

- **Washington state Project Management Community of Practice.** The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) is sponsoring a community of practice (CoP) for all state agency project managers. The purpose of the community is to foster the exchange of best practices and lessons learned, share helpful resources, tools, and templates, and establish a peer network of support to transform IT project delivery in Washington state.
  - PM CoP Teams Site.
  - PM CoP Calendar Events for 2021.
  - PM CoP Event Recordings.

To request access to the PM CoP Teams Site, email the OCIO Project Management Partners.

- **Project management guidebook and templates.** The OCIO published the [Project Manager’s Guidebook](#) and [templates](#) in 2020 and plans to continue updating and adding templates and content on its website. These deep repositories of knowledge will continue to evolve and grow over the next two years.

- **Lessons learned.** In 2020 the project management partners, in collaboration with the OCIO, published an online repository of [IT Project Lessons Learned](#) from Washington state IT projects enrolled in gated funding oversight. It provides a useful repository of knowledge for project managers, who can benefit from the experiences of others to reduce project risk. It is searchable by project type, project phase and category. Lessons learned categories include:
  - Agency readiness.
  - Communications and stakeholder management.
  - Cost management.
  - Executive sponsorship and governance.
  - Implementation approach and methodology.
  - Organizational change management.
  - Procurement and contract and vendor management.
  - Project management and project controls.
  - Project team and human resource management.
  - Schedule management.
  - Scope management.
Appendix C: Previously shared best practices

The following table provides reference to the previously shared best practices and the date and forum it was reported (i.e., quarterly report or project management (PM) community of practice (CoP) event).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Practice Shared</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Forum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set up project governance structures.</td>
<td>July 1, 2020</td>
<td>Quarterly Best Practices Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for procurement.</td>
<td>July 1, 2020</td>
<td>Quarterly Best Practices Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a vendor manager review vendor’s progress in meeting contractual obligations.</td>
<td>July 1, 2020</td>
<td>Quarterly Best Practices Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish foundational project management.</td>
<td>July 1, 2020</td>
<td>Quarterly Best Practices Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish strong governance.</td>
<td>Oct. 1, 2020</td>
<td>Quarterly Best Practices Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select a right-fit project manager.</td>
<td>Oct. 1, 2020</td>
<td>Quarterly Best Practices Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage organizational change.</td>
<td>Oct. 1, 2020</td>
<td>Quarterly Best Practices Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead the go/no-go decision.</td>
<td>Oct. 1, 2020</td>
<td>Quarterly Best Practices Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct procurements that protect the state’s investment.</td>
<td>Oct. 1, 2020</td>
<td>Quarterly Best Practices Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share IT project management best practices through a community of practice.</td>
<td>Jan. 1, 2021</td>
<td>Quarterly Best Practices Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use lessons learned to prevent repeating project failures while maximizing opportunities to implement good practices and processes on existing and future projects.</td>
<td>Jan. 1, 2021</td>
<td>Quarterly Best Practices Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a technology budget.</td>
<td>Jan. 1, 2021</td>
<td>Quarterly Best Practices Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner with the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) oversight consultants.</td>
<td>Jan. 1, 2021</td>
<td>Quarterly Best Practices Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiate program management from project management.</td>
<td>April 1, 2021</td>
<td>Quarterly Best Practices Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use business analysts throughout a project initiative.</td>
<td>April 1, 2021</td>
<td>Quarterly Best Practices Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond to QA findings and recommendations.</td>
<td>April 1, 2021</td>
<td>Quarterly Best Practices Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimize project management in a virtual world.</td>
<td>Feb. 24, 2021</td>
<td>PM CoP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectively enable change.</td>
<td>April 21, 2021</td>
<td>PM CoP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective executive sponsorship.</td>
<td>July 1, 2021</td>
<td>Quarterly Best Practices Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable vendor relationship management.</td>
<td>July 1, 2021</td>
<td>Quarterly Best Practices Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for contingency reserve and management reserve in schedule and budget.</td>
<td>July 1, 2021</td>
<td>Quarterly Best Practices Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Planning.</td>
<td>August 19, 2021</td>
<td>PM CoP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>