

IT Governance Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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About IT Governance

Q: What is IT Governance (ITG) and why is it important?

A: IT Governance consists of the structure and processes that guide information technology investment decisions and determines the priority of when and how those decisions get completed. With limited budgets and resources, IT Governance helps the courts ensure that the Administrative Office of the Courts Information Services Division (ISD) resources meet the business needs of the Washington Courts.

Q: How is this new IT Governance process better than previous IT Governance processes?



A: The new governance process focuses on involving the court users in the decision making process from start to finish. Each step is open and inclusive. There is improved tracking and communication, and the request process has been simplified. The status of IT requests and the decisions affecting them will be shared with all court community stakeholders throughout the process. Court communities will play a key role to ensure business priorities are addressed through their role in the [Endorsing](#) bodies and as members of the [Court Level User Groups](#) that recommend IT requests. The new governance is directed by the Judicial Information System Committee (JISC) with a consistent end-to-end process designed to serve all court levels.

Q: What are the steps in the IT Governance process?

A: The IT Governance process consists of the following five steps: (1) Initiate a request, (2) Endorse the request, (3) Analyze the request, (4) Recommend the request for approval and scheduling, and (5) Schedule the request to be completed.

About the IT Request Process

Q: Can anyone submit a request?

A: Yes, any person can submit a request to the IT governance process. However, in order to use the IT Governance website you need a network logon called a 'RACF ID'. If you have a RACF ID and you are having trouble logging on, please contact the AOC Help Center (courts: 800-442-2169), (non-courts 360-357-2412). If you do not have a RACF ID, please send an email to heather.morford@courts.wa.gov, Vicky.marin@courts.wa.gov, or Kevin.ammons@courts.wa.gov and they will help you submit your request to the website.

Q: How is a request initiated?

A: Use the IT Governance website to initiate your request by clicking on the "initiate request" button and then fill out the online forms with the basic information to submit your request.

Q: How do I determine if another similar request has already been submitted?

A: The ITG website has a button on the menu for "all requests". This will show all of the open and closed requests in the system and is where you can look for similar requests.

Q: What information is needed to send in a request?

A: The website where you submit the request will ask you to answer questions about the business need, groups impacted, why the change is important, when it is needed,



and other important details that will be helpful to understanding your request. Please provide as much detail and information as possible.

Q: What if there is a business need but I am uncertain about how to actually write the request?

A: If there is an identified business need but you are uncertain how to write it as a formal request, you can contact the AOC staff or AOC Information System Division Business Liaisons listed in the contact section at the end of this FAQ for further assistance.

Q: Can additional Information be added to a request?

A: Yes. Once a request has been initiated, it must be saved first and then after its saved you will have the ability to upload attachments to the request. You can upload additional Word documents, PDF's, images or other files that you think are necessary for the evaluation of your request.

Q: How will a group or an individual be notified about the status of the request after it has been submitted?

A: A notification process is setup so that every time an action is taken on a request, an email goes out to the initiator of the request, the [endorsing group](#) and/or the [recommending group](#) depending upon the stage the request is in.

Q: How does a request become endorsed?

A: The IT Governance process has setup a website located at <https://inside.courts.wa.gov/index.cfm?fa=ltgPortal.home>. Please use the website to initiate your request. When you submit your request you will be asked to select an endorsing group from a list. Choose the endorsing group that best matches your request. When action is taken on endorsement, you will be notified via email.

Q: Which endorsing group should the request go to?

A: Choose the endorsing group that is most closely aligned with your business need or that your request impacts the greatest. If you aren't sure, contact the AOC staff or AOC Information System Division Business Liaisons listed in the contact section at the end of this FAQ for further assistance.

Q: Can a request go to more than one endorsing group at a time?

A: No, send a request to one endorsing group at a time. If the request is not endorsed by the first endorsing group and you still feel strongly about having your request endorsed, you may choose to send it to another endorsing group.



Q: How long does it take to get a request endorsed?

A: Because each endorsing group has a different schedule for reviewing requests, contact the individual endorsing group to see what their process and timeframe is. Endorsing groups may choose to review requests as part of their regularly scheduled business meetings, or may setup sub-committees to review the requests or handle requests by other methods.

Q: After the request is endorsed, how is the analysis done?

A: The analysis stage is designed to give an estimate of the time, resources and cost to complete a request. The Court Level User Groups (recommending) and the JISC use the analysis as part of their decision process on whether or not to move forward with a request. The analysis is done by AOC-Information System Division staff, in consultation with AOC-Judicial Services Division and other AOC staff. They will examine each request to determine the scope of the request, required resources, as well as impact to the systems and other court users. Once completed, the analysis will be attached to the request in the ITG website and be available to review.

Q: How does an IT request get recommended?

A: After the request is endorsed and an analysis is completed by AOC, the request proceeds to the Court Level User Group or JISC based on the court level(s) impacted by the request. The Court Level User Group then uses the information provided by the Requestor and Endorser along with the results of the AOC analysis to evaluate the request. The User Group will apply common filters and scoring criteria to evaluate each request independently, then rank and prioritize all requests under consideration for that group. The results of the Recommend stage will either be to approve or decline the request unanimously, or if there is a split decision it will move forward to the JISC with the pros and cons.

Q: How does a request become approved?

A: The first step after initiating a request is to have an endorsing group evaluate the request and endorse it. Once endorsed, the request will be analyzed by AOC-Information System Division staff. The request and analysis will typically go to the Court-Level User Group which will use a scoring system to determine if the request should be recommended to move forward towards approval and scheduling. Using the score and the analysis, each Court-Level User Group prioritizes all of their requests. Requests that score low, show a high cost to low benefit ratio or are local impact only will likely not be recommended to move forward for approval by the JISC.

Q: How long will it take to find out if a request is approved?



A: The complexity of the request, the impact on court users and the cost will all factor into the turn-around time for responses. The status of a submitted request can be found on the ITG website.

Q: If a request is approved, how long will it take until it is scheduled?

A: Mandated or urgent requests will be submitted for the soonest possible schedule (daily, weekly, monthly – depending upon size and complexity). Other requests will be scheduled based on the priorities assigned at the Court-Level User Group, priorities assigned by JISC, ISD resources available, and the available budget. The status of the schedule will be communicated through the ITG website and once a schedule is set, an email will be sent to the initiator, endorsing group and the court-level user group.

Q: What happens if a request is not approved?

A: If the endorsing group, Court-Level User Group or JISC determines that a request does not meet the criteria to move forward and is denied, then an automatic email notification will be sent back to the endorsing group and the request initiator.

Q: Is there an appeals process if the request is denied?

A: While there is no appeals process for decisions, any request can be re-written into a different problem statement and re-submitted through the governance process.

- **At the Endorsing stage:** There must be a group willing to endorse the request. You can either re-write the request or submit it to another endorsing group which may also have an interest in getting the request approved.
- **At the Recommend stage:** The Court-Level User Groups are comprised of members representing each endorsing community to recommend requests for approval. The decision by a Court-Level User Group to deny a request must be unanimous by the group. Decisions on requests that are split among the group will go up to the JISC for final decision with a list of pros and cons from the Court-Level User Group.
- **At the Approval stage:** The JISC is the governing body for all IT requests. If the JISC has determined that the request does not meet the criteria to be approved based on scope, budget, other priorities or impact, then the request is considered closed. However, the request can be re-written to address any identified concerns or deficiencies and submitted through the process again.

Roles & Responsibilities

Q: How were the endorsing and recommending groups selected?

A: As part of the IT Governance Framework that the Judicial Information System Committee (JISC) approved, [11 Endorsing Groups](#) and [4 Court-Level User Groups](#) were



identified (3 court-level user groups and 1 AOC user group for requests not specific to a particular court level or from outside the court community). The Endorsing Groups are comprised of previously established associations representing specific segments within the court community that have the broadest reach. The Court-Level User Groups are new groups with members self-selected by their communities to represent each of their specific court levels. In addition, AOC will endorse and recommend requests from communities of interest not specific to a court level or outside of the court community. Each endorsing group is a pre-existing established group with its own meeting schedules, sub-committees and processes for doing business.

Q: Who are the endorsing groups?

A: There are eleven Endorsing Groups:

- Supreme Court
- Court of Appeals Executive Committee
- Superior Court Judges' Association
- Washington State Association of County Clerks
- Association of Washington Superior Court Administrators
- Superior Court Judges Association – Family & Juvenile Law Committee
- Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators
- District and Municipal Court Judges' Association
- District and Municipal Court Management Association
- Misdemeanant Corrections Association
- AOC group endorses for non-court communities

Q: How does an endorsing group decide which requests to endorse?

A: The IT governance process is setup to give the endorsing groups control over what processes they use to endorse requests and what types of requests they endorse. Endorsing groups will vary as to how they decide which requests to endorse and the frequency of reviewing requests.

Q: How are requests sent to the Endorsing Groups for endorsement?

A: Using the ITG website, the IT Governance process is setup to send an automatic notification when a request is submitted to the endorsing group. Additionally, in the IT Governance website under the endorsing groups there will be an option to view all of the requests assigned to an endorsing group.

Q: What does the Endorsing Group do when a request isn't clear?

A: If the endorsing group receives a request that is incomplete or lacks enough detail to make a decision on, it is recommended that the endorsing group send the request back to the initiator for further clarification.



Q: At the Endorsement level, what happens when two requests are similar?

A: It is up to the endorsing groups to choose how they handle similar requests. They can be treated as separate requests, each request can go back to the initiator with a suggestion that they work together to combine their individual requests into one request or the endorsing group can decide another alternative way to handle them.

Q: Who are the Recommending Groups?

A: There are four Recommending Groups

- Court Level User Group for Appellate Courts
- Court Level User Group for Superior Courts
- Court Level User Group for Courts of Limited Jurisdiction
- AOC / State Court Administrator – for requests that fall outside the scope of the other three Court Level User Groups.

Q: What is the “IT Service Manager”?

A: The IT Service Manager oversees the work of the Operations Control Board and is the key point of contact for the analysis phase of the IT request process. The IT Service Manager will expedite the request process as much as possible and ensure that each request has consistent and complete analysis to inform the Recommend step and JISC IT investment decisions.

Q: What is the Operations Control Board?

A: The AOC Operations Control Board has the primary responsibility to ensure that IT requests are fully analyzed using common tools, applying consistent criteria and with a clear understanding of the business need. Each request is assessed in terms of other ongoing and planned IT requests and operational activities and the impacts to AOC budget, staff and other resources.

Other

Q: Is this replacing eService or the RightNow system?

A: No, eService and RightNow are still the systems used to manage urgent incidents that are affecting the JIS systems and system users. When something is ‘broken’ in a system or application it should be reported immediately to the AOC Help Center (courts: 800-442-2169), (non-courts 360-357-2412).

AOC Contacts



Q: Where to go for additional information or help with submitting a request?

A: The IT Governance website has additional information on how to submit a request. If you have unanswered questions after visiting the website, AOC has designated staff and AOC Information System Division (ISD) Business Liaisons who can help you. Please review the chart for the corresponding contacts for your court level, association or group.

11 Endorsing Groups	AOC Staff	AOC ISD Business Liaison
Supreme Court	Rick Neidhardt rick.neidhart@courts.wa.gov	Heather Morford heather.morford@courts.wa.gov
Court of Appeals Executive Committee	Rick Neidhardt rick.neidhart@courts.wa.gov	Heather Morford heather.morford@courts.wa.gov
Superior Court Judges Association	Regina McDougall regina.mcdougall@courts.wa.gov	Heather Morford heather.morford@courts.wa.gov
Washington State Association of County Clerks	Chris Ruhl chris.ruhl@courts.wa.gov	Heather Morford heather.morford@courts.wa.gov
Association of Washington Superior Court Administrators	Sondra Hahn Sondra.hahn@courts.wa.gov	Heather Morford heather.morford@courts.wa.gov
District & Municipal Court Judges Association	Shannon Hinchcliffe Shannon.hinchcliffe@courts.wa.gov	Vicky Marin Vicky.marin@courts.wa.gov
District & Municipal Court Management Association	Shannon Hinchcliffe Shannon.hinchcliffe@courts.wa.gov	Vicky Marin Vicky.marin@courts.wa.gov
Misdemeanant & Corrections Association	Shannon Hinchcliffe Shannon.hinchcliffe@courts.wa.gov	Vicky Marin Vicky.marin@courts.wa.gov
Superior Court Judges Association Family & Juvenile Law Committee	Janet Skreen Janet.skreen@courts.wa.gov	Heather Morford heather.morford@courts.wa.gov
Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators	Regina McDougall regina.mcdougall@courts.wa.gov	Heather Morford heather.morford@courts.wa.gov
Other (AOC endorses for other non- court communities)	Contact the AOC staff person or liaison for your community. If you don't know who that is, contact the ISD business liaisons.	Heather Morford heather.morford@courts.wa.gov Vicky Marin Vicky.marin@courts.wa.gov
4 Court Level User Groups	AOC Staff	AOC ISD Business Liaisons
Appellate Courts		Heather Morford heather.morford@courts.wa.gov
Superior Courts		Heather Morford heather.morford@courts.wa.gov
Courts of Limited Jurisdiction		Vicky Marin Vicky.marin@courts.wa.gov
Outside the Court Community	Contact the AOC staff person or liaison for your community. If you don't know who that is, contact the ISD business liaisons.	Heather Morford heather.morford@courts.wa.gov Vicky Marin Vicky.marin@courts.wa.gov

