

Tips for preparing a project proposal

Follow these top tips from the IT Investment Board (ITIB) and agencies that have successfully secured grant funding for their project proposals.

Strong business case/alignment: Build a business case that clearly aligns with your organization's goals, whether at the agency or enterprise level. Make a clear plan that matches your organization's goals. Focus on a specific problem and explain how your project will solve it. Use metrics and real-life examples to show the benefits. Tell a compelling story about how your project will make a positive impact.

Well-defined metrics for business outcomes: Set clear goals that explain what your project will achieve and how you will measure progress. Use clear metrics that have a deadline or timeframe for achieving success.

Clear differentiation of project type: Make sure your proposal clearly states whether it focuses on innovation or updating old systems (legacy modernization). Explain why your project is innovative or how it modernizes existing technology.

- **Innovative projects:** Describe how your project will change the way your agency connects with the people it serves.
- **Legacy modernization projects:** Explain how your project will accelerate the replacement of old systems. Discuss the outdated technology that will be replaced, any security issues that will be fixed, and how operations will improve.

Many agency systems have modernization needs. Describe why the IT Investment Board should select your proposal over other agency proposals.

Project scope and contingency planning: Agencies need to ensure the project scope is realistic and includes contingencies to mitigate risks in delivering within the short project timeline. Projects that do not need the full year to implement, are desirable.

Business sponsorship: Having strong business sponsorship is critical. Agencies should make sure their business sponsor is actively engaged throughout the proposal development process and through the entire project, if approved.

Address the ITIB criteria: Agencies need to show that their project meets the requirements for the Innovation and Modernization Fund. Projects should clearly match the fund's goals:

- **Strategic technical alignment** - Demonstrate the reuse and interoperability of the proposed solution. Describe how this project will reduce legacy technology and highlight the creativity and innovation of the proposed solution.
- **Business alignment** - Describe the clear and measurable benefits for the people affected by your solution. Make sure your proposal has a strong business purpose for the IM funds and solves a specific business problem.
- **Agency readiness** - Prove that you're prepared. Do a needs assessment to understand the main requirements, technical setup, and possible vendors. Ensure your project has the right governance and project management structure, including support from business and technology leaders, vendor/contract management, involvement from stakeholders, and a budget that covers both the project and future support needs.

Timely submissions: Agencies are required to submit their pitch decks and materials on time. Agencies risk rejection of proposal if proposal is not submitted on time.

Tips for pitching your project to the ITIB

Clear, concise pitch deck: Be sure you are using the correct version of the [pitch deck template](#) (Sept. 2024).

- Include all the required information in the template and be sure to answer all of the questions on the slide.
- Avoid text heavy slides and do not reduce the size of the font. Insert additional slides to address all questions.
- Keep it short and simple! The board wants high-quality pitch decks with a clear, straightforward story that's easy to follow.

Business sponsor leading the pitch: The business sponsor should lead the pitch. This shows the business commitment to the project at the highest level and helps answer questions that may arise in the pitch meeting.

Practice, practice, practice: Agencies must rehearse their pitch to ensure they stay within the 10-minute time limit. It's crucial for a smooth well-thought-out presentation. Go through the "pitch" presentation with your colleagues and have them ask questions about your proposal to ensure it is organized and easy to follow along.

Hit the high points: You do not need to speak to each slide in your pitch deck. The board members will have reviewed your pitch deck prior to the pitch meeting and will have your proposal in front of them during the pitch meeting. Your pitch should hit the most important items about your proposal.

The board's perspective: Tailor your pitch to the board's perspective. What is in it for the board? Why would the board want to fund your project? How does the project meet the board's priorities and objectives? Agencies should understand what the board is looking for and align their presentation accordingly.

Questions?



Contact information:

Innovation and Modernization Program

improgram@watech.wa.gov

Visit the [IM Program](#) website.