

Washington's Agency Consolidation—what does this mean for IT?

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In her proposed **2011-2013 budget**, Washington State Governor Christine Gregoire recommended the consolidation of 21 state agencies into nine agencies. This consolidation would save approximately \$30 million and would eliminate an estimated 125 positions over the next biennium. For the state's Central Services Agencies, the consolidation would reduce five agencies to three. According to the Governor's Office, this consolidation would save approximately \$18.3 million and reduce 95 positions.

According to Gov. Gregoire's plan, portions of the Department of Information Services will be included in the new Department of Enterprise Services. The new department will take over certain services, such as printing, that are currently conducted separately by each agency. The Department of Enterprise Services will also be in charge of procurement and contracting.

The Office of Financial Management will remain largely as is, maintaining control of the budget, policy, forecasting, statewide accounting, and state IT policy and project management. The newly formed Consolidated Technology Services (CTS) Agency will house the state data center, network and telecommunications, IT security, and email. The **goal** of CTS, according to the Governor's Office, would be to "begin to privatize and further standardize the basic technology that state agencies use." The director and governing board of the CTS will decide which services can be provided internally and which must be procured.

GovWin's Take

While this money-saving option sounds promising, what does it mean for IT in Washington state? It's possible that the reduction in staff will cause initial problems with responsibilities divided among fewer people, and there will likely be a transitional period for all involved to adjust to the changes. The decisions made by the newly created Consolidated Technology Services Agency could also significantly impact the number of services and projects contracted out by the state. Since the recommended consolidations still have to be approved, it's probably too early to speculate on what may or may not happen; however, if all goes well and the consolidations turns out to be a solid financial decision, we may see more states attempting to consolidate on some level given the current economic environment.