Tech Executive Leadership Initiative

Rohit Chandra

Erika Cheung

Laura Lanford

Craig Montuori

Carlos Torres

Greg Warden

To learn more about this project, please visit aspentechpolicyhub.com/teli.

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

California Technology Fellowship Program

Accelerating the delivery of critical technology projects with a cross-departmental fellowship

BACKGROUND

As part of their 10-week technology policy training program, the leaders of the Tech Executive Leadership Initiative spent 6 weeks working on real-world government challenges. Three teams tackled the question of how the State of California can improve its technology project approval and oversight process to better balance accountability with speed and delivery. Each team narrowed its focus to a specific part of the problem, conducted research, and developed solutions. Below is an overview of one team's solution: the California Technology Fellowship Program.

FOCUS

While the California Department of Technology (CDT) — the State of California's division dedicated to driving digital transformation — is well-equipped to lead tech innovation projects, the State could do more to increase the department's capacity. To simultaneously accelerate project delivery, reduce cost, and encourage cross-department collaboration, the state should broaden the pool of employees involved in digital transformation projects.
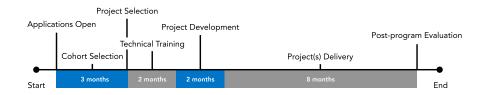
RECOMMENDATIONS

The State of California should launch an annual Technology Fellowship Program that brings employees across state agencies into 12-month rotations at the CDT. Following training on modern digital service delivery techniques, fellows can lead critical tech innovation initiatives through the Project Approval Lifecycle (PAL) and execution.

To implement the California Technology Fellowship Program, the CDT should:

1. Secure private funding to operate the fellowship and backfill vacancies in fellows' home agencies during their leave;

2. Recruit a diverse class of state employees representing a wide array of departments;

3. Collaborate with departments to source innovative projects to benefit California residents or to improve internal state information technology;

4. Equip fellows with training on agile, service-oriented, and human-centered delivery practices;

5. Encourage the cohort to challenge prevailing assumptions and improve CDT processes;

6. Foster personal and professional development of fellows through lunch-and-learns, book clubs, and other creative activities;

7. Create opportunities for fellows to share their learnings with their home departments and other State of California employees; and

8. Evaluate the program's success against its goals of accelerating service delivery, improving project outcomes, and lowering total project costs.

Fellowship Lifecycle

Applications Open
Project Selection
Project Development
Technical Training
Cohort Selection
Post-program Evaluation
Project(s) Delivery

Start — 3 months | 2 months | 2 months | 8 months — End