



# Skagit County Board of Commissioners

Ron Wesen, First District  
Peter Browning, Second District  
Lisa Janicki, Third District

August 21, 2024

Allan Johnson, Project Manager  
Washington State Department of Commerce  
1011 Plum Street SE  
P.O. Box 4252  
Olympia, WA 98504

**Re: Skagit County Paper to Digital Grant Application**

Dear Mr. Johnson,

The Skagit Board of County Commissioners has approved the attached proposed scope of work and budget request for Washington State Department of Commerce Paper to Digital grant funding to implement the requirements of [Washington State Senate Bill 5290](#) related to local permit review processes.

In addition, to receive grant funds we understand this grant has the following conditions that we must meet prior to becoming eligible for this grant. We agree to the following:

- (1) **We are committed to the update of our permit review process** from paper filing systems to software systems capable of processing digital permit applications, virtual inspections, electronic review, and with the capacity for visual storage.
- (2) **We will abide by the Scope of Work agreement.** We must provide deliverables to the Washington State Department of Commerce to receive reimbursement for expenses tied to the completion of each milestone.

If you have any questions regarding Skagit County's application for grant funding please reach out to Allen Rozema, Assistant Director for the Planning & Development Services Department, at [arozema@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:arozema@co.skagit.wa.us) or (360) 416-1320.

Sincerely,

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

  
Peter Browning, Chair

  
Lisa Janicki, Commissioner

  
Ron Wesen, Commissioner

**Skagit County Paper to Digital Grant Budget**

<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>Deliverable #1</b> - Outfit field crew with cellular digital tablet devices	\$ 10,000.00
<b>Deliverable #2</b> - Install Public Computer Kiosks	\$ 4,000.00
<b>Deliverable #3</b> - Transitions conference rooms and team work areas to work digitally through the use of digital white boards, computer docking stations and upraded video conferencing cababilities.	\$ 28,000.00
<b>Deliverable #4</b> - Configure custom digital reports (permits) for Town of La Conner, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and Fire Marshal's Office	\$ 33,000.00
<b>Deliverable #5</b> - Digitize microfilm and paper permit records and make publically online.	\$ 300,000.00
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>\$ 375,000.00</b>

**Grant Objective: Transition our paper filing system to a software system capable of processing digital permit applications, virtual inspections, electronic review and with the capacity for video storage.**

<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
<b>Deliverable 1</b>	<b>Outfit field crew with cellular digital tablet devices</b>		
Task 1.1	Skagit County PDS staff to work with Skagit County Central Services to identify and select specific models and features.	9/10/2024	9/13/2024
Task 1.2	Central Services to work with County vendor to purchase units at contracted rate.	9/16/2024	9/16/2024
Task 1.3	Receive units, configure and distribute to all field team members	10/7/2024	10/11/2024
Task 1.5	Calibrate and trouble software integration into new County permitting software system.	10/14/2024	10/29/2024
<b>Deliverable 2</b>	<b>Install public computer kiosks for citizens to apply for permits online</b>		
Task 2.1	Skagit County PDS staff to work with Skagit County Central Services to identify and select specific models and features.	9/10/2024	9/13/2024
Task 2.2	Central Services to work with County vendor to purchase units at contracted rate.	9/16/2024	9/16/2024
Task 2.3	Receive units, configure and install in public permit intake area	10/7/2024	10/11/2024
Task 2.4	Calibrate and trouble software integration into new County permitting software system.	10/14/2024	11/4/2024
Task 2.5	Open to public.	11/12/2024	11/12/2024
<b>Deliverable 3</b>	<b>Transitions conference rooms and team work areas to work digitally through the use of digital white boards, computer docking stations and upgraded video conferencing capabilities.</b>		
Task 3.1	Purchase Meeting Owls for conference rooms (or equivalent) (3)	9/9/2024	9/9/2024
Task 3.2	Purchase and install computer docking stations into small conference rooms for one-on-one private meetings between staff/public clients.	09/09/2024	9/16/2024
Task 3.3	Skagit County PDS staff to work with Skagit County Central Services to identify and select specific digital white board models and features.	9/11/2024	9/13/2024
Task 3.4	Central Services to work with County vendor to purchase digital whiteboard units at contracted rate.	9/16/2024	9/16/2024
Task 3.5	Receive units, configure and install in team work area(s) and selected conference rooms	10/7/2024	11/4/2024

<b>Deliverable 4</b>	<b>Configure custom digital reports (permits) for Town of La Conner, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and Fire Marshal's Office</b>		
Task 4.1	Planning Department to work with Central Services to determine scope of work for report configuration.	9/9/2024	9/11/2024
Task 4.2	Central Services to prepare Professional Service Agreement with Tyler/EPL for custom report configuration	9/16/2024	9/24/2024
Task 4.3	PSA executed and work to configure reports.	10/1/2024	12/16/2024
<b>Deliverable 5</b>	<b>Digitize microfilm and paper permit records and make publically online.</b>		
Task 5.1	Organize appropriate County departments to identify scope of projects and records to scan	9/23/2024	10/04/204
Task 5.2	Planning Department to work with Central Services to draft RPP	10/7/2024	12/16/2024
Task 5.3	Central Services to distribute/Advertise RFP	12/23/2024	2/3/2025
Task 5.4	Central Services selects preferred qualified vendor	2/3/2025	2/3/2025
Task 5.5	Execute digitizing contract	2/3/2025	2/20/2024
Task 5.6	Scan all documents identified and upload	3/3/2025	6/13/2025

**Question # 4: Provide a concise description of your current residential permit process. This should include any current challenges or issues you are experiencing in your current process and whether or not you are using an all-paper system or a hybrid digital and paper system to accept and review permit applications and complete residential inspections. (15 points)**

Skagit County's current permitting system is a hybrid of paper and nearly three decades old technology and software.

We currently use two separate and outdated software systems (Granicus) as our online portal for most applications. We also accept applications for some activities (predevelopment conferences) via email in addition to receiving applications over the counter.

When applications are received over the counter, our permit technicians have to physical scan the applications to a thumb drive, then take the thumb drive to the non-networked computer, to reprint, then scan into our network (to ensure malware/viruses do not get transferred into our network). Permit technicians then have to hand enter in permit information into our 28-year-old permitting software (Permits Plus), a significant duplication of work.

All field inspections for code enforcement, building, stormwater and natural resources are done on paper, then entered into our permitting software when inspectors return to the office (duplication of work).

The County has a large amount of historical permit, land division and lot certifications records on microfilm and on paper. A significant amount of time is required by nearly all staff to access these records as part of their permit review and approval processes. Additionally, the microfilm reader is so old parts are no longer available to service the machine. When it breaks down, our department will be severely impacted as we will need to drive across town to research records, increasing time and cost to review and approve permits.

**Question # 5: How would this grant funding *provide for the capability of processing digital permit applications, virtual inspections, electronic review, and capacity for video storage*? The answer to this question should include whether or not funds will purchase software, fund research, and/or be used to create and execute a plan to move to digital. (15 points)**

Skagit County has already invested nearly a million dollars and 17 months in designing and building a new digital permitting ecosystem through Tyler Technologies Enterprise Permitting & Licensing Software (Tyler/EPL). We are currently in the final phases of configuration and testing, with the goal to integrate four separate County departments (Planning & Development Services, Public Works, Fire Marshal and Public Health) along with the Town of La Conner and Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, into the County's digital permitting system.

Grant funding from this award will be instrumental in providing the gap funding to purchase the remaining technology critical to enhancing our capability to process digital permit applications, conduct virtual inspections, perform electronic reviews, conduct remote meetings and manage video storage across multiple departments in Skagit County.

Grant funding will be deployed immediately to make final configurations for necessary custom reports (permits) for the Fire Marshal's Office, the Town of La Conner and the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community.

Finally, grant funding will be utilized to digitize critically import records contained on microfilm and in paper files that are necessary for both staff and the public as part of permit review and approvals.

By leveraging this grant award with our current work, we aim to enhance operational efficiency and reduce processing times while also creating a more integrated, accessible, and user-friendly system for all departments and the public.

**Question # 6: Is the work being undertaken with this grant funding ready to begin immediately or will there be a lag time for implementation (i.e. hiring a consultant/staff, reorganizing work assignments, getting internal approval from finance/budget, etc.). Maximum score – 20 points**

Skagit County will be able to begin implementing our grant objectives immediately upon completion of signed grant contract from Department of Commerce.

Skagit County has already invested nearly one million dollars during the past 17 months designing and building a new digital permitting system to integrate the review and approval of permits from four different County departments (Planning & Development Services, Public Works, Fire Marshal and Public Health) along with the Town of La Conner and the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community.

We will begin consolidated permit review integration with our old software system Monday, September 9, 2024, to identify process issues related to consolidated review, ahead of launching our new digital permitting system in November. We are currently scheduled to go live with our new all-digital permitting system November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Funds from this grant will be deployed immediately to assist with the digital transformation from paper (and microfilm) to an all-digital ecosystem. Funds will be used to:

- Purchase remaining digital equipment to aid staff and the public to make the transition,
- Make the final configurations for custom reports (permits) for the Fire Marshal's Office, the Town of La Conner, and the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, and
- Digitize microfilm records and paper records that are accessed daily for permit reviews and decisions.

**Question # 7 Are there future steps that you are aware of that will need to be taken after the conclusion of the grant period in June of 2025 to convert to a digital permit processing system for residential permits? Maximum score – 10 points**

- i. Points will be awarded to jurisdictions that will complete their paper to digital conversion process or have a strong plan to achieve that milestone as follows:**
  - i. We will complete conversion by the grant deadline. 10 points**

The launch and implementation of our digitized permitting program will have occurred by November 2024. The last phase, digitizing our microfilm and paper records, will continue into 2025 and possibly beyond.

It has been estimated it will cost more than \$750,000 to digitize all the microfilm and paper records held in the Planning, Health and Public Works departments. Due to the large number of records contained on microfilm and paper, we anticipate not all of this work will be completed under this grant award.

Our top priority is to utilize funds from this grant award to focus first on all the records contained on microfilm, as the equipment used to view and print these records from microfilm can no longer be serviced. Once all the microfilm has been digitized, we will move to paper records until grant funds are depleted.

Skagit County is seeking additional grant funding to assist with digitizing any remaining records as quickly as possible in 2025 and 2026, as funding will allow.