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**ATTORNEY GENERAL  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

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March 6, 2023

The Honorable Ken Weyler, Chairman  
Fiscal Committee of the General Court  
State House  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

His Excellency, Governor Christopher T. Sununu  
and the Honorable Council  
State House  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

**REQUESTED ACTION**

1. Pursuant to RSA 14:30-a VI, authorize the Department of Justice to accept and expend federal funds in the amount of \$195,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF) for the purpose of rebuilding the Department of Justice website to better serve New Hampshire residents, effective upon the approvals of the Fiscal Committee of the General Court and Governor and Executive Council through June 30, 2023. This is an allowable use of ARP FRF funds under Section 602 (c)(1)(A) to respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts. 100% Federal Funds.
2. Pursuant to RSA 124:15 and contingent upon approval of Requested Action #1, authorize the Department of Justice to establish Class 046 – Consultants for the purpose of supporting the redesign of the Department of Justice website, effective upon the approvals of the Fiscal Committee of the General Court and Governor and Executive Council through June 30, 2023. 100% Federal Funds.

Funds are to be budgeted in account #02-20-20-200010; Department of Justice, Justice Department, NEWXXXX – ARPA Web<sup>1</sup> as follows:

<sup>1</sup> All direct program costs will be accounted for using activity 00FRF602PH2002A and all administrative and indirect costs will be accounted for using activity 00FRF602PH2002Z. Accounting classifications may be subject to technical changes at the discretion of the Department of Administrative Services' Division of Accounting Services.

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Class & Object	Class Title	SFY 2023 Current Budget	Requested Action	SFY 2023 Revised Budget
040-501587	Indirect Costs	\$0	\$19,500	\$19,500
041-500801	Audit Fund Set Aside	\$0	\$1,950	\$1,950
046-500465	IT Consultants	\$0	\$173,550	\$173,550
<b>Total:</b>		\$0	\$195,000	\$195,000
<b>Source of Funds</b>				
000-400338-16	Federal Funds	\$0	\$195,000	\$195,000

### EXPLANATION

The Department of Justice is requesting to accept and expend funds from the Federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF) for the purpose of enriching services to New Hampshire residents by rebuilding and enhancing the DOJ's current website. This new website will be more accessible and easily navigable to the public, making it easier for the state's constituents to find and search for the information that they need. The project will also ensure that the website is ADA compliant, and accessible to constituents with disabilities, as well as increase DOJ's capacity to provide services to its constituents during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, as the public health emergency has moved many of the interactions between citizens and government online, making it crucial that governments are able to effectively deliver services over the internet.

Federal award funds, for this item, are budgeted to support grant activities as follows:

- 040: Indirect costs to pay for SWCAP services.
- 041: Audit fund set-aside costs.
- 046: To pay IT consultants to conduct website services.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in an increased number of online inquiries through the Department of Justice (DOJ) website and highlighted the reality that the existing website is outdated and in need of an overhaul to better serve online users.

The Department of Information Technology (DoIT) initially received Governor and Executive Council approval on March 27, 2019, Item #28, to contract with SilverTech, a sole source website design vendor. The DOJ has begun work, through DoIT, to enhance its current website. This web design firm will work to (a) implement a citizen-centric web presence and design to increase productivity for DOJ audiences; (b) establish a unified website brand for DOJ; (c) create new ADA compliant online forms; (d) add a searchable resource center that supports files and videos that can be categorized; (e) minimize the number of clicks for users to access

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information needed to create a logical and intuitive navigation system; (f) streamline processes to publish and maintain content; and (g) ensure the ability to scale and evolve functionality of the site as the DOJ changes its programs and services, matures in its web presence, and keeps current with evolving technology.

NH DOJ's current website is dated, not easy to search/navigate, and does not give visitors the ability to enter search terms. It does not incorporate social media or embedded video, and most importantly it is not as easy to use or as accessible as it could be to enable persons with disabilities to use or access it. In addition, given that the DOJ is the chief law enforcement agency of the State, it is important for New Hampshire citizens to be able to navigate the Department's website and have an easier time finding out who to contact for various issues with which they may need the assistance of the DOJ.

In addition to the above, we believe that a better functioning website could free up staff resources. First, a better functioning and easier to navigate website will help citizens have an easier time reaching the correct Bureau. Staff get bogged down trying to help redirect citizens to the correct Bureau. Second, a better functioning website should enable some citizens to answer questions with reference to the website content, thus eliminating the need to call the Department and freeing up time staff would otherwise spend answering questions that could be answered with reference to the website. And finally, we are hopeful that a better functioning and more attractive/compelling website would enhance recruiting efforts and potentially reduce the need to place ads in other digital spaces, which carries additional costs and reduce staff time committed to other recruiting efforts.

**The following information is provided in accordance with the Comptroller's instructional memorandum dated September 21, 1981.**

- 1. List of personnel involved:** This item involves working with a consultant and DoIT, to update the existing Department of Justice Website. There are no personnel costs associated with this item.
- 2. Nature, Need, and Duration:** The nature of this project is to upgrade the existing Department of Justice Website, the need is to better serve the citizens of New Hampshire and the duration for the consultant is to September 30, 2024.
- 3. Relationship to existing agency programs:** This service is provided by a Vendor working with State Agencies to update existing websites.
- 4. Has a similar program been requested of the legislature and denied?** The Department has not requested a similar project.

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5. **Why wasn't funding included in the agency's budget request?** This project was not available during the budget planning process.
6. **Can portions of the grant funds be utilized?** This is 100% Federal Funds.
7. **Estimate the funds required to continue this position(s):** There is no position related to this project.

In the event that Federal Funds become no longer available, General Funds will not be requested to support this program.

Respectfully submitted,



John M. Formella  
Attorney General

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