

**Final Proposal**

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# Community Partner Background

## Overview

The Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) is composed of 100 leading cancer research centers in North America, including National Cancer Institute-designated centers and academic-based cancer research programs that receive NCI support. According to its website, the AACI’s mission statement aims to promote cancer research through its dedication to “*reducing the burden of cancer by enhancing the impact of North America’s leading academic cancer centers*”(AACI)*.* Given that the AACI is a relatively small organization with about 10 employees, the organization primarily shares information on its website and through annual meetings. Most recently, the AACI added a new public resource library with hopes to expand knowledge of current members in government relations roles, government officials, and patient advocates.

## Programs

Currently, the AACI is involved with five programs: The Presidential Initiative, CAR T, Clinical Research Innovation, Network Care Initiative, and the Physician Clinical Leadership Initiative. The program that has the most influence on our project is the Presidential Initiative.

The AACI Presidential Initiative enables the president, Roy A. Jenson, of the AACI board of directors to formalize a special project of broad interest and value to AACI members during their two-year term. The current Presidential Initiative project, proposed by AACI President Roy A. Jensen, MD, is the Public Policy Resource Library. The library, which still exists in its pre-established state, was in part developed by Carnegie Mellon Information Systems students in the 67-373 course last semester, and further developed by a third-party developer named Mark Busnelli. Our project this year is also a project based on the Presidential Initiative. The president proposes a main objective and discusses the probability of the goal with other staff members. Then the staff comes up with different ideas and they collectively decide the vision of the final product. Even though the final goal is similar among different staff members of AACI, each of them has different preferences.

## Staff

The staff at AACI works to support North America’s cancer centers and is comprised of leadership, administration, communications and external relations, development, meetings and events, and programs. Among other programs, the entire team is involved with Clinical Research Innovation (CRI) which provides a network for cancer center clinical research leaders to share best practices that promote operational efficiency and industry engagement through an annual meeting attended by over 400 clinical trials leaders and government agencies. The staff works together to support its mission of finding a cure for cancer through research and fellowship and work together at its headquarters in Pittsburgh’s “Eds & Meds” Hub. The Hub is located in Pittsburgh’s Oakland neighborhood, minutes from the UPMC and other local universities and hospitals.

Jennifer W. Pegher is the current executive director of the AACI, and she oversees all the initiatives of the association. She was named executive director in October 2018 and joined the AACI in 2012 as a government relations manager, where she supervised the association’s legislative portfolio. Prior to her work at the AACI, Pegher was involved with the Western Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Hemophilia Foundation, and worked for former Congressman Philip S. English of Pennsylvania as well as the National Association of Federally-Insured Credit Unions.

Our two main contacts in AACI are Emily E. Stimmel, the Communications and External Relations Coordinator, and Jaren Love, the Government Relations Manager. Each of them has different responsibilities and has a slightly different vision on the final product. Based on our current understanding, Jaren has more knowledge on the government relationship, where Emily coordinates different projects and solves any problems identified.

## Technology Infrastructure

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Technology** | **Description** |
| **Hardware** | Staff members at the AACI have either their own PC or have access to a working computer at their office. Make and model vary. |
| **Software** | Microsoft Office, Craft CMS |
| **Network** | Typical, business-class internet connection at their office |
| **OS** | Windows or Mac OS |
| **Peripherals** | Projectors |

Table 1. An overview of the technology infrastructure at the AACI.

## Technology Management and Planning

Currently, our team is aware that while there is no structured IT department at the AACI, we do know that there is at least one employee responsible for handling technology related issues. For any technology development needs, the IT personnel will often outsource to third-party vendors. Their current website was built by a previous 67-373 group using HTML, CSS, and Javascript, using a platform called Craft CMS, and is maintained by an external developer who works remotely from AACI. AACI staff in general is not very tech-savvy and most staff members only know how to navigate to the organization’s Public Policy Resource Library URL. One employee, Jaren Love, is responsible for updating the entries and curating the Public Policy Resource Library (that will eventually connect with the web page we develop), and thus serves as one of our points of contact for our project. Emily Stimmel is responsible for editing entries for the library and collaborating with Jaren to determine policy priorities, SEO keywords, and new features to discuss with Mark Busnelli, AACI’s contract web developer for the project. For this reason, while AACI generally has an online and technology presence, the organization is not specially trained to understand the technical details or converse fluently in technical jargon.

In terms of technology planning, since the board of directors oversees all the programs that the AACI is running and their committee chairs, there is communication between each program to the IT personnel. To our understanding, the board of directors and the president herself make the final decision on technology and budget planning. However, employees such as our points of contact, Jaren and Emily, can contribute and communicate their ideas that may impact the decision on technology planning. Given that there will be a new president inaugurated in October, we are uncertain whether the current organization’s stance on technology budgeting and planning will change dramatically within the year or stay the same. Our team is happy to work with the AACI IT personnel to understand these specifics to the best of our ability.

## Communication

AACI uses email to internally share information and communicate externally. Each member of staff has an @aaci-cancer.org email address. The organization is located in a University of Pittsburgh Medical Center building that has access to wi-fi, thus members of staff are able to access the web. Given that the organization does not have many staff members, in-person meetings are often conducted to exchange information both within the organization and with constituents. Otherwise, email is primarily used. One potential drawback to using email as the primary mode of contact is the lack of instant feedback that can be achieved through messaging tools. For this reason, our team is using Slack to communicate with AACI.

## Information Management and Business Systems

One of the organization’s cornerstone initiatives is the Public Policy Resource Library, which features a variety of cancer legislation curated by AACI staff. This information is critical to the organization and its members, who will be able to receive latest readings on topics such as state funding for Cancer Research, issues related to the elimination of HPV cancers, and tobacco disease control. The library is organized by featured topics, which contain subcategories. Given that there is currently no database to manage the information in the library, we anticipate developing the infrastructure to enable efficient storage of information electronically that can be queried via a filtering or ordering feature. Since the Public Policy Resource Library exists in this pre-established state, we hope to learn more about the organization’s goals of creating an information system that allows hundreds of thousands of readers to gain access and become informed nationwide, and use this as our community partner project opportunity.

To the best of our knowledge, we will be in close communication with Jaren Love on the domain specifics related to cancer research and endorsed legislation curation. Jaren is responsible for updating the website with endorsed legislation that will likely be hosted on Craft CMS, a WordPress alternative.

# Community Partner Project Opportunity

## Project Opportunity

In order to ultimately support the AACI’s mission to inform its audience and expand its readership, we would like to add value and support their in-house technical department through a closer examination of the Public Policy Resource Library. Since the AACI is a smaller organization that has outsourced many of its technical work to third-party vendors, the Public Policy Resource Library currently houses limited cancer resources and policies which are often in the form of fact sheets. For this reason, there are plenty of opportunities to expand the library’s current collection that showcase legislation endorsed by AACI on the state level.

In order to expand on the Public Policy Resource Library’s current collection, our team would like to add value through a project that enhances the current organization’s website through the design, development, and implementation of an additional webpage consisting of the federal legislation that AACI endorses. More specifically, we would like to integrate the page with the existing public policy resource library and maintain consistency with the current library’s branding and theme. The web page should not only present static information on the legislation but also provide ‘interactive’ or ‘dynamic’ components such that viewers are able to monitor the progress of the legislation of their choice. By integrating the proposed web page with the AACI’s public policy resource library, the AACI can present a more comprehensive public policy library to its members that ultimately will engage its readership.

## Proposed Project Vision and Expected Outcome

Through our support of the AACI’s mission to reduce the burden of cancer by enhancing the impact of North America’s leading academic cancer centers, our team aims to ultimately enable the AACI to foster additional avenues of engagement with its members through the Public Policy Resource Library.

After listening to the needs from a meeting with the AACI, our team intends to deliver upon our project vision through a page that enables users to track the progress of federal legislation supported by the AACI. The relevant stakeholders involved with this project include the AACI board and leadership, its technical staff, and members that may involve program steering committees. In addition, cancer center directors and public policy advocates across the nation would certainly be interested in the purposes of the public policy library, which provides them with a way to discover and become involved with the work of the AACI. Since this project requires the curation and dissemination of information, our team will certainly be taking the preferences of the AACI’s current IT personnel into careful consideration, who will be responsible for updating the page and tracking progress.

In creating this dynamic page, our team is excited to contribute to this project dedicated to showcasing the current and future legislature of cancer policy, increasing reader engagement, and ultimately producing a sustainable solution that delivers upon the AACI’s mission of enhancing the impact of North America’s leading academic cancer centers through information and education.

## Feasibility

We will split our timeline into a few stages to ensure the completion of our proposed project. During February and March, we will focus on completing the design of the web page. From late-March to mid-April, we will work on the testing and the deployment of the web page. By the time of the final presentation, we will shift our focus onto the preparation of the presentation and documentation for transition to strive for maximum sustainability.

Our team is equipped with the expertise of webpage design and would love to incorporate our client’s ideas and feedback. Our team has not had much experience with the specific platform, CraftCMS, that hosts the current AACI Public Policy Resource Library; however, we will receive support from Mark Busnelli, AACI’s external developer, throughout the project development.

Love and Emily Stimmel, who manage the content of the Public Policy Resource Library, and Mark Busnelli, who maintains the Public Policy ResourceLibrary in Craft CMS. Jaren and Emily will be mainly responsible for curating the content on the endorsed legislation web page by editing and updating the bills presented on the web page. Mark will be able to provide IT support to maintain the technical foundation of the web page along with the Public Policy Resource Library.

**Expected Outcomes**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective** | **Outcome** | **Success Metric** |
| Understand our project scope better | List of features proposed by client | List is considered exhaustive by the client |
| Establish the timing which information should be updated on the webpage | Established routine on how information gets sent and updated on the website | Client is comfortable with ou established information curation-to-publication pipeline |
| Ascertain the sustainability of our project design and implementation strategy | Our client’s technical staff affirms that they are able to operate and maintain our page given our implementation method. For example, if we implement a page in HTML/CSS, the client’s technical staff should affirm that they can continue operating the page using HTML/CSS. | Our client is aware of the pros and cons of different methods and has confidence that our strategy is what’s best for them. |
| Rapid, possibly parallel prototyping of the web-page look and overall experience | Working Figma prototype | Client provides solid feedback and comments on the experience after running a few user tests on relevant stakeholders. At this stage, it is important that the client is communicative and responsive. |
| Second iteration on webpage | Working Figma prototype that takes first round of user testing feedback into consideration | Client positive feedback after user testing |
| Webpage implementation using intended languages and any relevant APIs/software | Working demo | Client is able to successfully navigate to the webpage and have a positive user experience |
| Provide relevant documentation for IT personnel in order to continue operating the webpage and pushing information; outline relevant details on scalability in the future | A meeting with the client to present our documentation in a paper and emailed copy, along with answers to their questions about anything in the documentation during the meeting | Client is satisfied with the information written in the documentation, has a positive outlook on the future of the product, and is appreciative of our time |

**Table 3. Our approach to the project outlined with seven key steps.**

## Risk Analysis

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Risk description | Likelihood of occurrence | Magnitude of potential loss | Early warning | Abatement strategy |
| Robustness of the dynamic components | High | High | Edge case testing omitted | Fuller testing |
| Communication and transition with personnel who works outside of AACI but supports AACI’s structure on Craft CMS | Medium | Medium | Not being able to connect with the outside personnel and no discussion about this issue with AACI | Have a discussion with AACI to see if there is further training or communication needed with the personnel outside AACI |
| Insufficient training with the staff at AACI | High | High | The staff was not able to do multiple iterations of user testing. Or that the dashboard we are going to provide appears drastically different from what was previously used. | Multiple iterations of user testing with the staff who will update or change contents of the web page. |
| Inadequate learning of Craft CMS which can lead to unsatisfactory end result | Medium | Medium | Not allocating enough time to learn the new tool, Craft CMS; Shrinking the scale of the project or eliminating components just because we are not sure how to do it with Craft CMS. | Our team should allocate enough time for the team members to familiarize with Craft CMS, so that we can take advantage of the full potentials of this tool to build a web page with our desired elements. |
| Potential staff or responsibility changes | Low | Medium | Noticing that the point of contact changes or any structural changes in AACI | We should maintain our communication at a constant level and make sure that we are notified of any changes that happen within the organization and may impact the progress of our project. |
| Interruption of pace and loss of momentum due to spring break | High | Medium | No communication with our clients before spring break; not having a plan to deal with or being of aware of the interruption that spring break can bring to the project | We should plan ahead of the spring break what we want to do during the time: how we should maintain our communication with the clients, and what if any progress we want to make. We should also communicate our plan with our clients so that we make a smoother transition back from spring break. |
| Our two main contacts think each other has a better understanding and take less responsibility himself/herself | Medium | Low | Emily might think Jaren has a better understanding of this issue, and ask Jaren to do more. Jaren might think the similar way towards Emily. | While this is not a big issue and could be resolved very easily, we need to clarify our findings on each meeting and make sure our two clients have the same understanding on the current development. |

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# User Stories

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| As a <type of user> | I want <some goal> | So that <some reason> | Priority |
| AACI member | To view the current federal legislation requirements | I can understand the steps I need to follow and understand the process easily on this website. | essential |
| Government relations director | To read relevant federal Bills and Acts related to cancer research institutions | I can get educated about the policies already made | essential |
| Patient advocate | To check how many sponsors there are for a particular federal legislation | I can understand if the group that I am advocating for has gained enough attention on the federal level | Least important |
| Researchers | To read the legislations that AACI endorses | I can understand what AACI endorses and the benefits of partnering with AACI | nice-to-have |
| AACI staff | To update the page with the organization’s endorsed legislation | I can present AACI’s stand on the federal level | essential |
| AACI member | To see the overview of a legislation | I can quickly understand some basic background information on legislation I am not familiar with. | essential |
| AACI member | To see the development or the timeline of a legislation | I can stay up to date with the legislation I care about. | essential |

The Project Proposal for Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) has been reviewed and is:

\_\_ accepted as complete

\_\_ accepted with conditions, as noted below

Approver: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_