



North Carolina Department of Information Technology

NC One IT: We're in IT together.

2016 NASCIO State IT Recognition Awards: Improving State Operations
State of North Carolina

Contact: Keith Werner, State Chief Information Officer

Project Initiation/End Dates: Initiation occurred on September 18, 2015,
and the DIT Transition is still in process

Executive Summary: During the early 20th century, North Carolina had a haphazard collection of dirt and gravel roads that stretched thousands of miles but did little to connect one community to another. Highways were built independently, resulting in a sprawling patchwork of roads. State leaders, who recognized that strong transportation infrastructure was necessary to foster economic prosperity, established the State Highway Commission, now known as the NC Department of Transportation (NC DOT). Over the next two decades, North Carolina built more than 7,600 miles of paved roads, earning the reputation as the “Good Roads State.” Now in the early 21st century, state leaders find Information Technology (IT) in North Carolina as fragmented as the roads systems were a century ago.

Like the 20th century’s maze of roads, North Carolina’s technology systems were not designed to work together, leaving too much duplication and complexity. IT was viewed as a backroom service rather than a strategic enabler. This view inhibited the way in which agencies interacted with each other and with citizens. It was clear that change was needed, and IT in the state needed to be fixed and modernized. When Governor McCrory took office, he recognized the need to make IT a priority, and he asked his cabinet to break down silos and works as a team to serve the citizens of North Carolina, providing better customer service and efficiency. He had a vision that “interacting with government should be as consumer-friendly and cost-effective as checking the latest scores or shopping on a smartphone.” His focus on effectively serving the citizens drove the efforts to restructure IT and reimagine the role that it plays in the state.

Under Governor McCrory’s leadership and direction, the consolidated, unified and now cabinet-level NC Department of Information Technology has delivered several large-scale projects to improve interaction within state agencies, as well as the way in which agencies interact with the citizens of North Carolina. All of these actions, plus many more, pave the way for North Carolina becoming known as the “Good Technology State.”

Concept (20%) **Key Point: the project successfully addresses an important dilemma in public service and/or encourages civic engagement.**

Historically, North Carolina's technology systems were not designed to work together, leaving too much duplication and complexity. IT was viewed as a backroom service rather than a strategic enabler. This view inhibited the way in which agencies interacted with each other and with citizens. It was clear that change was needed, and IT in the state needed to be fixed and modernized. When Governor McCrory took office, he recognized the need to make IT a priority, and he asked his cabinet to break down silos and work as a team to serve the citizens of North Carolina, providing better customer service and efficiency. From the beginning, Governor McCrory had a vision that "interacting with the government should be as consumer-friendly and cost-effective as checking the latest scores or shopping on a smartphone." His focus on effectively serving the citizens drove the efforts to restructure IT and reimagine the role that it plays in the state.

A key initiative born from Governor McCrory's vision for IT in North Carolina is the consolidation of North Carolina's IT resources into a unified cabinet-level Department of Information Technology (DIT). The department, which was created by law through the North Carolina General Assembly, will reduce the costs of delivering IT services while improving citizen interaction. This was a priority for Governor McCrory and something he called for in his 2015 State of the State address.

Throughout any consolidation effort or change management operation, communication is key. DIT has created a strategic communications plan to help guide its activities throughout the transition lifecycle. The communication objective is to enable a successful multi-agency transition into the North Carolina Department of Information Technology by creating **trust** among micro and macro audiences in the transition process. DIT's communication strategies include:

- Establishing a transparent and trusted transition process by communicating informatively, predictably and assertively.
- Educating audiences on the "why" and "how" of the transition process to build a base of advocates.
- Encouraging engagement and participation by all those affected by the transition.
- Assuring all stakeholders of progress through the transition.
- Acknowledging mistakes and working quickly to fix them.
- Celebrating transition process success stories among target audiences.

All of these efforts will pave the way for North Carolina to operate more efficiently and serve its citizens more effectively.

Significance (20%) **Key point: The project is consequential, relevant and transformational for state government and/or constituents.**

In the past, 74 percent of State IT projects were over budget and behind schedule. State IT professionals were scattered across more than two dozen agencies, and the state had a limited effort to aggregate buying power or identify shared technology solutions, which led to more than 1,000 systems that were never designed to work together. A transition effort of this scope has never before been attempted in the state of North Carolina. The consolidation of the State's IT resources into a unified, cabinet-level Department of IT supports Governor Pat McCrory's vision of making government more effective, efficient and user-friendly for the citizens of North Carolina, and will ultimately reduce the costs of delivering IT services, while also improving citizen interaction with state government.

Specific targets and performance measures throughout the transition are identified by the DIT Transition Program Office. The value of a unified Department of Information Technology is in creating efficiencies and achieving cost savings. DIT anticipates cost savings to be in the following principal focus areas: staffing (includes vacancies and supplemental staffing), IT contract consolidation and maintenance agreements, data center consolidation and operational efficiencies (includes reducing duplication and establishing standards).

Impact (40%) **Key point: the project leads to substantial and measureable change; it makes state government *better*.**

Historically, North Carolina's technology systems were outdated and disjointed. Because State IT professionals were scattered across more than two dozen agencies, work flow and systems were inefficient and projects consistently came in over budget. A unified IT structure model most effectively meets the objectives of restructuring IT by providing clear accountability and authority for the governance and management of IT across the State. This recommended model has been proven to improve efficiency and realize benefits and savings more quickly. The benefits from unifying funding, talent, IT systems and management practices include:

- Enhanced Citizen Interactions and Satisfaction
- More Efficient Information Technology Operations
- Quality-Driven Project Performance
- Streamlined and Effective Sourcing Practices
- Institutionalized Businesses and IT Planning
- Clear Accountability with Transparency
- Enhanced Data and Analytics Capabilities
- Integrated Risk and Security Management
- Effective IT Talent Management

In addition, the new, unified DIT will enhance North Carolina's ability to attract, retain and reward IT talent. Technology jobs are the manufacturing jobs of the future, and the Research Triangle region can be the third anchor of the nation's research triangle (ie: Silicon Valley and Boston). This new, consolidated, unified cabinet-level agency has delivered several large-scale projects to improve interaction within state agencies, as well as the way in which agencies interact with the citizens of North Carolina.