



NASCIO 2018 State IT Recognition Awards

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State: Colorado

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Executive Summary

The process for transitions in state government can seem like organized chaos, and the period between the election and the first legislative session plays an important role in determining a successful kickoff of the new administration. With a term-limited governor, Colorado will be electing a new governor this fall. To ensure that the transition process is as seamless as possible, a team within the Colorado Governor's Office of Information Technology (OIT) has been working behind the scenes creating a common process and enacting a detailed plan template for each state agency and leader.

The last time Colorado had a change in administration was nearly eight years ago. Transition plans for continuity of government used to include a limited number of thick, three-ring binders, which were cumbersome, difficult to review, and limited access to the information to one reader at a time. Additionally, the information was not readily searchable and, needless to say, not very portable. Finally, with limited general guidelines, each agency created their plans in a vacuum resulting in an inconsistent presentation of information (e.g., types, depth and breadth) needed by the incoming administration.

The OIT transition team developed a unique mobile application to allow for a dynamic, sustainable platform for continuity of government during the transition to an incoming Governor-elect and the executive branch agencies. The application was created using existing resources to meet the requirements set by the Governor's Office that it be mobile friendly, single sign-on, tiered level of access control and sustainability. In addition, the OIT transition team was responsible for developing the guidelines and template to be used by all agencies to aid in developing their individual transition plans.



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Project Narrative: Concept, Significance and Impact

Concept

E-Book Transition Mobile App

The Governor's Office approached the Office of Information Technology to develop a digital platform that met the following criteria:

- The E-Book App must be mobile friendly and accessible across platforms.
- It must have granular level of access control.
- With the sensitivity of each executive branch agencies transition plan, the agency executive director must have the ability to designate staff who will have access during the development of their plans and of the final published documents.
- The Governor's Office must have the ability to limit access to all agency transition plans, including the working documents and published E-Book, to those designated by the Governor.
- Access to the E-Book Mobile App must use existing authentication so that an additional username and password are not required.
- The entire process and transition plans be built on a platform that is sustainable across administrations and easily updated as there are administration changes.

* The E-Book and the transition plan documents are not subject to the Colorado Open Records Act due to the sensitive nature of the information contained within the agency transition plans.

Guidelines and Template

It was apparent after reviewing the transition plan binders from the 2010 election that no standardized template existed across the agencies for the information that was being presented in the plans. To ensure that each agency was providing the information required for a smooth transition between administrations, the Governor's Office surveyed the contents of all the agency plans and created a list of the sections that provided the most important information to be conveyed. The OIT transition team then created a standard template that could be used across all agencies. Within this template, specific guidelines were included in each section providing further



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information on the details being requested. Notations were also added to the template to avoid duplication of efforts where some information had already been created for other purposes. For example, each agency submits an Annual Performance Plan which contains information that is useful for the transition plans and thus could simply be copied and pasted into specific sections within the template. Individual templates were then shared with each agency.

Process and Program

In addition to creating the Mobile App, Guidelines and Template, OIT produced a process and program around completion of the transition plans, including holding kick-off meetings to educate the agencies about the program, regular follow-up meetings with each agency to ensure timely completion, and deadline reminders. Once the agencies have completed their transition plans, the OIT transition team will convert the documents to a PDF format and upload everything into the document repository, ensuring that all files are standardized and uploaded well before the election.

Significance

Transition plans help newly elected governors become knowledgeable about each agencies' organizational structure, mission, responsibilities, mandates, and more before they assume office. The Governor's Office selected and entrusted the OIT team with oversight and development of transition plans for the state's executive branch agencies, including: developing the process, timelines, guidelines and templates, the mobile application, and accountability across all agencies for completing their respective plans. The Governor's Office selected OIT after considering all other Colorado agencies for this effort. To our knowledge, this is the first time that the Governor's Office has transferred this responsibility to an agency.

An especially significant aspect of the transition program and the mobile application is that it is in a digital format which provides ease of use. Newly elected/appointed officials will have the ability to search for pertinent information on any device including tablets and mobile phones. This digital format provides a sustainable platform that will span future administrations. Previously, agencies would have to create new plans for each transition year. With this new digital format, only



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information that has changed during the current administration will need to be updated.

The entire program was built around elegance and efficiency of government. The guidelines and template published to the executive branch agencies focused on existing documentation already required through legislative mandates. These publications include financial reporting, annual reports, performance plans and strategic plans. The mobile application was created using Google resources and tools with no additional budget required.

This program will help facilitate a smooth, seamless change in leadership and allow for the continuity of government as well as provide a sustainable platform for future administrations. Best of all, the entire program, from the process, the mobile application and the guidelines/templates, is easily replicated across state governments.

Impact

- **Agency Impact:** Agencies have a clear and easy to follow process as they populate their discrete transition plans. They are assured that their sensitive information will be protected and shared only with designated personnel.
- **Governor-Elect:** The incoming governor will have a consistent and reliable set of data, thus paving the way for a smooth and seamless transition come inauguration day. The mobile app and digitized transition plans will provide the new administration with standardized, searchable information across all state agencies with an unprecedented ease of access for this information. This ease of access promotes a more efficient hand-off of duties both at the agency level and within the Governor's Office, providing a smooth transition of government services for the citizens of Colorado. As the information is transferred readily behind the scenes, citizen-facing services are not impacted.
- **Replicable:** The mobile app and template with guidelines can easily be replicated across other state and local governments, increasing the efficiency of governmental operations, saving precious time and budget for other state governments.



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