



NASCIO  


State IT  
Recognition Awards

## Title: Borderless Culture

Category: Cross-Boundary Collaboration and Partnerships

State of Illinois

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## Executive Summary

In our interconnected world, ideas, news, commerce, economic turbulence and even pandemics spread easily. People, however, are not nearly as frictionless. We remain tribal, and silos still exist.

Organizational silos, or collections of specialists, are a driver of efficiency, up to a point. That efficiency is less than it could be when people do not collaborate or innovate. For example, silos at the State of Illinois have resulted in:

- Dozens of separate technology organizations, budgets and staff
- Old, duplicative, unsupported systems
- Out of balance cost structures

### How, then, can an organization:

- ... break down organizational borders?
- ... signal change and redesign culture in a way that sustains over time?
- ... encourage innovation and bring fresh perspectives in?

How can an organization remove borders within itself, and between itself and the outside world, in a way that enables change at a pace it has never seen before? How can we create a borderless culture?

**One solution:** Establish collaborative communities within government, between governments and between the state government and the outside ecosystem to work across silos as a key enabler of sustainable change.

A program of 12 different types of collaborative communities has been implemented in a phased approach in the State's technology areas over the last year to:

- **Collaborate:** accelerate transformation and consolidation,
- **Externalize:** get fresh perspectives in – or “externalize the enterprise”, and
- **Innovate:** ignite innovation.

This work coupled with significant technology and organizational changes has resulted in the State of Illinois moving from the [bottom 25% to top 33% in a national digital ranking](#) in 18 months.

## Project Narrative

### Concept:

The business case for the digital strategy and transformation of the state of Illinois consolidating 38 agencies' IT organizations is compelling. Consider:

- Over 3,000 applications covering 16 functional areas. Three examples of many:
  1. 260 individual financial reporting systems and 140 other unconnected, outdated and costly systems focused on HR, grants management and other ERP functions.
  2. More than 50 individual or business license and permit applications
  3. In one agency, it took working with 4 systems just to order a paperclip
- Many systems do not meet basic accounting standards, causing audit findings and reduced transparency.
- It takes 9 months to generate a CAFR (Comprehensive Annual Financial Report), making Illinois 49th of 50 states.
- 70% of the systems operate under antiquated technology platforms creating 42 years of technical debt.
- 82% of applications built in house, 8% are off the shelf, and 10% are unknown.
- 60+ different IT organizations with approximately \$1bn in IT portfolio investments. Little to no spend coordination and inconsistent cybersecurity practices.
- 36% of the IT workforce is currently eligible to retire.
- Password resets accounted for 56% of all tickets in the ticketing system.
- 20+ data centers.
- 3% of computing workload is in the cloud.
- 0% of agencies were using enterprise analytics.
- 1% of citizen interactions were mobile enabled.

The state of Illinois was nationally ranked in the top 10% in IT spending, and in the bottom 25% in a national digital ranking.

This is not just a systems problem. It is a culture change and innovation problem.

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### **Significance:**

Collaborative community examples follow.

**CIO Councils:** This is a full day meeting every other month, bringing together more than 60 Agency CIOs. The intent is to break down silos, and get input, feedback and buy-in to change efforts. It includes...

- Internal leadership speakers: Governor, Deputy Governor, State COO, State Agency Directors bringing enterprise perspectives
- CEO Speaker Series: high level private sector executives, such as the CEOs of Orbitz and 1871, lead discussions on new topics
- Entrepreneur Showcase: start-ups present to Agency CIOs
- Leadership development program for Agency CIOs and their teams
- Agency Innovation Days find, highlight and leverage the many innovations throughout the state
- Encourage innovation through an assessment and recognition process

**Agency CIO Working Groups:** Prior to creating efficiencies via consolidation, there were not many enterprise strategies. Within IT, those enterprise strategies that did exist were hard to enforce. To fix this, Agency CIO Working Groups were formed to create and execute on enterprise IT strategies and action plans for...

- Cybersecurity
- Analytics
- Mobility
- Development Platforms
- Website Technology and Content Management
- Workflow Automation
- Cloud
- Integrity / Fraud
- GIS
- Small Agency Solutions

- Innovation

**Centers of Excellence:** Overtime, Agency CIO Working Groups evolve into Centers of Excellence (CoE). A CoE is defined as a virtual team of people across the organization sharing expertise, best practices and assets to achieve business results.

There are, for example, many people in different agencies that are working on data analytics, but currently don't interact in any way. The CoE is a way they can come together to improve skills, leverage assets and create standards. This in turn increases productivity, improves quality and reduces costs.

At the state we started with two Centers of Excellence: **Internet of Things** and **Data Analytics**. Two more emerged towards the end of the year: **Blockchain** and **Innovation**. Several more are in the pipeline.

These are examples of many that are breaking down internal barriers. Externally, we have many we can learn from. To interact with the private sector and academia, two strategic advisory boards were created:

#### 1. **Smarter Illinois Advisory Board**

The purpose of this advisory board is to bring the best minds together to help the State of Illinois create value through the use of Smart State solutions built on the Internet of Things (IoT) technology. A state can utilize many relevant solutions from the Smart Cities portfolio. It can also build key policies and regulations that enable state agencies, local governments and the private sector to capitalize on them. Members of this board include technology and thought leaders in IoT in the private sector, non-profit, academia and philanthropy. It has subcommittees focused on strategy, technology, workforce, finance, as well as policy and regulation.

#### 2. **Governor's Technology Advisory Board**

The purpose of this advisory board is to tap into the best minds for organizational transformation guidance, best practices and global trends. The end goal is to make the state easier to work with and more efficient, accessible and competitive. It consists of leaders from Illinois-based multi-national corporations, incubators, and academic institutions. It has subcommittees focused on strategy, customer centricity and engagement, data driven value creation, enterprise security, workforce and enterprise IT.

These advisory boards also interact with the Centers of Excellence, as well as with our Smart State initiative.

A **Smart State** is more than the statewide implementation of Internet of Things technologies. And it drives significant interaction with other governmental bodies and private sector parties.

Per the Smart Cities Council, a smart state is one that dramatically increases the pace at which it improves its sustainability and resilience by fundamentally improving how it...

- Engages society
- Applies collaborative leadership
- Works across disciplines and systems
- Uses data information and modern technologies

...in order to provide better services and quality of life to those in and involved with the state (citizens, businesses and visitors).

Illinois is the first state in the nation to target such a comprehensive strategy. Through this initiative, the state increases its interactions with and learnings from the world outside its walls by including city, county, and other states, as well as the private sector and academia. We have been asked by the National Governors' Association to lead a cohort of over a dozen states to become smart states. We even are reaching internationally through Smart State partnerships [with other countries](#).

**Impact:**

Consolidating 38 IT organizations successfully, especially after a previous administration's failed attempt, is significant. It is more than implementing new processes and systems.

There has been enthusiastic and generous participation by the members of all of these silo-busting efforts, from internal Centers of Excellence to external advisory boards and more.

According to the agency CIOs, these collaborative communities bring tremendous strategic and tactical value. Advisory board members and Smart State participants are always eager to engage and give back. The increased collaboration has been tremendous.

Removing borders within the state, and between the state and the rest of the world, is a successful strategy to accelerate collaboration, learning and in the end, the transformation of the State of Illinois.

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