

2020 NASCIO State IT Award Submission

Cross-Boundary Collaboration and Partnerships

Public Safety Team Collaborates to Promote the Safety and Security of Tennesseans

Submitted on July 15th, on behalf of the State of Tennessee


by Strategic Technology Solutions, Department of Finance and Administration

The logo consists of the letters "TN" in a white, serif font, centered within a dark blue square. The square is set against a light blue background with a subtle, repeating pattern of the state of Tennessee.

TN

Collaborate.

*"Alone we can do so little, together we can
do so much." – Helen Keller*

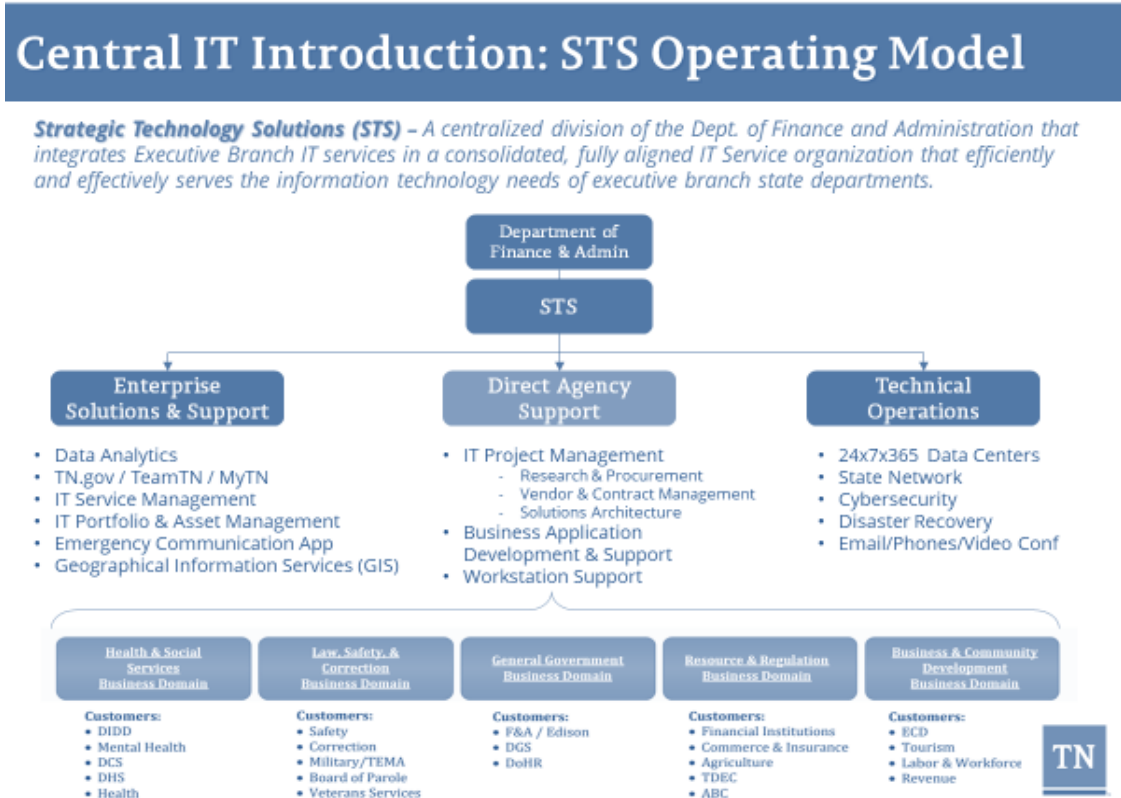


A division of the Department of Finance & Administration (F&A), Strategic Technology Solutions (STS) is the recently highly centralized IT service organization that was revamped due to a business problem. After review of several high-profile IT project challenges, the State CIO realized that it was imperative that the state modernize its IT workforce. This included adopting and standardizing best practices and procedures across all Departments, retaining our IT workforce, and recruiting certain advanced skills that were critical to the success of adopting and maintaining today complex technologies. As the Office of the CIO began planning, it became apparent that it would be cost prohibitive and impractical to try to recreate this complete set of skills and staffing 23 times across the state's 23 departments.

This ultimately lead to the *Enterprise IT Transformation* initiative that unified 20 Departments' IT staff into one organization -- with the goal of standardizing IT best practices and training, reducing redundancies, leverage shared staffing resources wherever possible, and increasing the use of shared systems and contracts across the state. STS collaborates with state departmental customers to provide technical expertise and innovative solutions that support their ability to efficiently and effectively deliver services to citizens.

All IT staff that were once located in executive branch departments transitioned to the centralized IT organization, Strategic Technology Solutions (STS). STS staff that service the departments directly work directly in one of five groupings of liked-purposed departments, called Business Domains (figure 1.0).

Figure 1.0



STS Business Domain Directors provide guidance and direction over these resource teams. This model allows customers to utilize all previous IT resources, as well as new high-level shared resources that many could not have afforded previously. Examples of these resources are Data Scientists, Business Solutions Architects, Cybersecurity Officers, Senior Business Analysts, and Project Directors. Each domain is committed to fulfilling the STS mission and vision (figure 1.1) for each of their respective departmental customers.

Figure 1.1

Mission

Deliver business-driven technology solutions and services to support state government in providing value for our citizens

Vision

To be a valued and trusted partner in providing outstanding, comprehensive IT solutions and services that support our customers' mission to improve the quality of life for all Tennesseans

In order to help achieve this vision, IT leadership within the *STS Law, Safety, & Correction (LSC) Business Domain* recognized the need to bring together a variety of public safety experts to collaborate on various technology initiatives. To this end, the *Tennessee Public Safety Technology Working Group* was formed in March of 2018. The working group has enabled public safety leaders from several different areas to share and learn from the group's collective strengths. Membership is multi-faceted, and in a broad sense encompasses anyone that is involved in or passionate about using technology to address public safety challenges in the State of Tennessee.

The workgroup group includes leaders from local governments such as the Metro Nashville Police Department, the Nashville International Airport (BNA) Police, City of Memphis Police Department, and the Belle Meade (a suburb of Nashville) Police Departments. It also includes executive leadership from state government, such as the Department of Safety and Homeland Security, Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI), Tennessee Highway Patrol (THP), Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency (TWRA), Alcoholic Beverage Commission (ABC), Tennessee Agricultural Crime Unit, and State Parks Rangers, etc.

STS members from the *Law, Safety, & Correction Business Domain*, serve as staff to this group and are responsible for setting agendas, moderating discussions, and inviting subject matter experts (SMEs) to present at the meetings. Examples of vendor partners that have presented particularly innovative solutions to the working group are Microsoft's concept patrol vehicle and Samsung's DEX platform, etc.

Meetings began in March 2018 and occurred every other month following that. The meeting locations were intentionally varied in order provide participants the opportunity to demonstrate some of the unique technology in use at each of their own organizations. This unique take on "show and tell" greatly contributed to the success of collaboration efforts amongst the team.

The result of the *Tennessee Public Safety Technology Working Group's* first year of business was the formation of sub-committees, each dedicated to address specific opportunities that have

been identified for increasing public safety across the State of Tennessee. Although much of the overall group's initiatives involve highly sensitive or confidential information, they were able to share that the subgroups have been able to make better use of tools through the information shared and collaborative critical-thinking. Leveraging economies of scale has been essential to their successes.

Initially, the working group dedicated much of its time to discussing the various technology initiatives that are in flight at each of the State's public safety departments – particularly of those that would be of interest if leveraged by multiple parties in the group. As one can imagine, discussion and further research unveiled platforms and systems that could get recycled, repurposed, or expanded and fit the needs of more than one organization in the public safety domain.

As time progressed, the *Tennessee Public Safety Technology Working Group* identified opportunities for more collaboration (sharing of tools, sharing of data, sharing of product research, and sharing of experiences with different types of tools). Below is a high-level summary of the topics discussed in this area:

- In-car routers
- In-car camera systems
- Body worn cameras
- Drones/UAVs for public safety use (primarily crash scene reconstruction)
- Drone detection systems
- LPR (license plate recognition)
- Facial recognition
- Driver license security enhancements

The realized benefits of this collaborative implementation have been numerous, including:

- Increased awareness of similar work done by other departments and organizations
- Reduced duplication of efforts in several areas of public safety research
- Leveraged lessons learned by peers with similar public safety challenges
- Identified enterprise opportunities for potential shared platforms
- Developed Proof of Concepts (POCs) that are to be stood up soon
- Created enthusiasm and excitement for “what’s coming” and interest in shared innovative solutions

The collaborative *Tennessee Public Safety Technology Working Group* is still operational today, and reports that they will be able to share more achievements in the near future. The team’s hard work has significantly contributed to Governor Lee’ strategic priority of Public Safety & Criminal Justice Reform by collaborating to promote the safety and security of Tennesseans.

