

NASCIO State IT Recognition Award Submission
Cover Page

State: Florida

Agency: Northwest Regional Data Center (NWRDC) / Florida State University

Award Category: Enterprise Technology Management

Project Title: State Data Center Transition

Project Start Date – End Date: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2025

Primary Contact Name, Title, Email, Phone: Tim Brown, Ph.D. Assistant Vice President for ITS: NWRDC and FLVC, tim_brown@nwrdc.fsu.edu, 850-345-9690

Executive Summary

The State Data Center Transition represents a significant enterprise technology transformation for the State of Florida, bringing together operations, services, and infrastructure under a unified governance and service delivery model. Effective July 1, 2022, the Northwest Regional Data Center (NWRDC) assumed responsibility for the State Data Center, integrating 24 additional state agencies, four non-state entities, and onboarding 91 personnel within a condensed timeframe.

This initiative focused on enhancing enterprise service delivery, strengthening security posture, improving operational resilience, and aligning financial and governance models. Through thoughtful coordination and modernization efforts, NWRDC advanced an already established environment into a more scalable, efficient, and customer-focused shared services model.

Provide a concise overview of the project. This summary may be published in the NASCIO Awards Library.

Project Description – IDEA

• What problem or opportunity does the project address?

Prior to July 2022, Florida's State Data Center experienced several operational challenges. Storage, virtual, and backup infrastructure were nearly completely obsolete and not able to meet service level requirements of its agency customers. There was no clear understanding of service costs or total cost of ownership. Roughly 30% of allocated staff positions were vacant. This lack of resources impeded the organization's ability to mitigate compliance and audit issues, as well as the ability to keep agencies up to date on issues impacting their services.

At that time, Florida State University's Northwest Regional Data Center (NWRDC) had been operating in a role similar to the State Data center, serving public sector organizations across Florida for over 50 years. Known for its open and managed service approach, NWRDC had a budgeting\cost management process that consistently delivered enterprise services in a shared cost model. The Florida Legislature, in conjunction with the Florida Digital Service and Department of Management Services, worked with FSU to unify data center operations under NWRDC to improve consistency, scalability, and coordination across agencies.

• Why does it matter?

Operational issues within the former State Data Center impacted the state's ability to function. Agencies were inundated with equipment failures, and a lack of data protection due to unreliable backup systems, insufficient storage, and server infrastructure to meet modern demands. This project enhances the ability of state agencies to deliver reliable and secure services to Florida citizens. By aligning service delivery and governance, the transition supports improved efficiency, stronger security, and more consistent customer experiences across agencies.

• What makes it different?

A partnership between higher education and government, this initiative is distinguished by its scale and coordinated execution, including the integration of 24 state agencies, four non-state entities and onboarding of 91 staff within a short timeframe. The project balanced operational continuity with forward-looking improvements, ensuring stability while advancing enterprise capabilities.

- **What makes it universal across states?**

The project addresses challenges common across states, including consolidation of services, improving shared service models, enhancing governance, and aligning financial structures with service consumption.

Project Description – IMPLEMENTATION

- **What was the roadmap?**

1. Stabilization – Transition of operations and personnel, ensuring continuity
2. Modernization – Standardization of services and tools
3. Optimization – Integration and ongoing enhancement of enterprise capabilities

- **Who was involved?**

This was a collaborative effort involving NWRDC, Florida State University, state agencies, legislative partners, and governance bodies. Adoption was supported through regular communication, stakeholder engagement, and executive briefings.

- **How did you do it? (resources, architecture, approach)**

The implementation aligned people, processes, and technology, including onboarding staff, coordinating financial models, and standardizing tools and services. The focus remained on delivering meaningful improvements to customers while maintaining continuity of operations.

Project Description – IMPACT

- **What did the project make better?**

The State Data Center Transition strengthened and elevated an already critical enterprise service environment by improving consistency, coordination, and scalability across state agencies. A budget process was implemented that tracked costs for each service. Service Level Agreements were created, detailing all services and their costs. Monthly service review meetings were established with customers, providing agencies with a detailed understanding of the services being delivered.

While short-term improvements were made to resolve immediate infrastructure needs, a long-term plan was developed and implemented to ensure the needs of the agencies were being met going forward. Staff development and training were emphasized, updating skills of existing staff while critical vacancies were filled.

The existing staff were key in resolving many issues. They knew where the key problems and bottlenecks were and were provided with the resources needed to resolve them. This effort included resolving the 9-year backlog of audit findings.

Enterprise Coordination and Service Delivery

- Unified service delivery across 24 state agencies and four non-state entities, creating a more consistent and predictable experience via updated service level agreements
- Strengthened alignment between data center facilities, enabling more seamless cross-site operations and support
- Improved internal coordination through shared processes, cross-training, and standardized practices

Customer Experience and Engagement

- Increased communication cadence and transparency through expanded customer engagement models, including more frequent service reviews and executive-level touchpoints
- Provided customers with clearer visibility into their environments, utilization, and upcoming needs
- Enhanced responsiveness and proactive support, reducing uncertainty and improving planning for agencies
- Strengthened executive engagement and transparency through quarterly CIO Town Halls, providing consistent strategic updates and opportunities for direct customer feedback
- Maintained proactive communication through recurring monthly customer meetings, supporting ongoing service reviews, performance discussions, and customer-specific coordination

Operational Maturity and Efficiency

- Transitioned to more standardized enterprise tools and processes, improving reliability and supportability
- Reduced complexity by consolidating services and aligning operational practices across environments
- Improved monitoring, reporting, and service oversight, enabling more informed decision-making
- Established and refined service level metrics to support consistent performance monitoring, improve accountability, and enhance operational maturity through data-driven service delivery and continuous improvement

Financial Transparency and Stewardship

- Successfully addressed a \$3.3 million appropriation gap, ensuring continuity of services while supporting agency budget alignment
- Strengthened alignment between service consumption and billing models, improving transparency and predictability for agencies
- Reinforced NWRDC's role as a trusted steward of state resources through proactive financial management
- Realized cost savings of approximately \$1.7 million annually through disaster recovery site migration, optimizing resource utilization while maintaining service continuity and resiliency
- Improved financial visibility and accountability through Apptio utilization tracking, enabling detailed insight into service consumption, supporting accurate forecasting, and strengthening data-driven financial decision-making

Security and Reliability Enhancements

- Strengthened enterprise security posture through improved coordination, monitoring, and infrastructure alignment
- Enhanced reliability of core services, including backup and recovery capabilities, supporting improved operational resilience
- Established a more consistent foundation for ongoing risk management and compliance efforts
- Implemented a more proactive maintenance approach, enabling early identification and resolution of potential issues, reducing unplanned disruptions, and supporting sustained system performance and reliability

• How do you know? (data, metrics, testimonials)

The impact of the project is demonstrated through both quantitative outcomes and qualitative feedback:

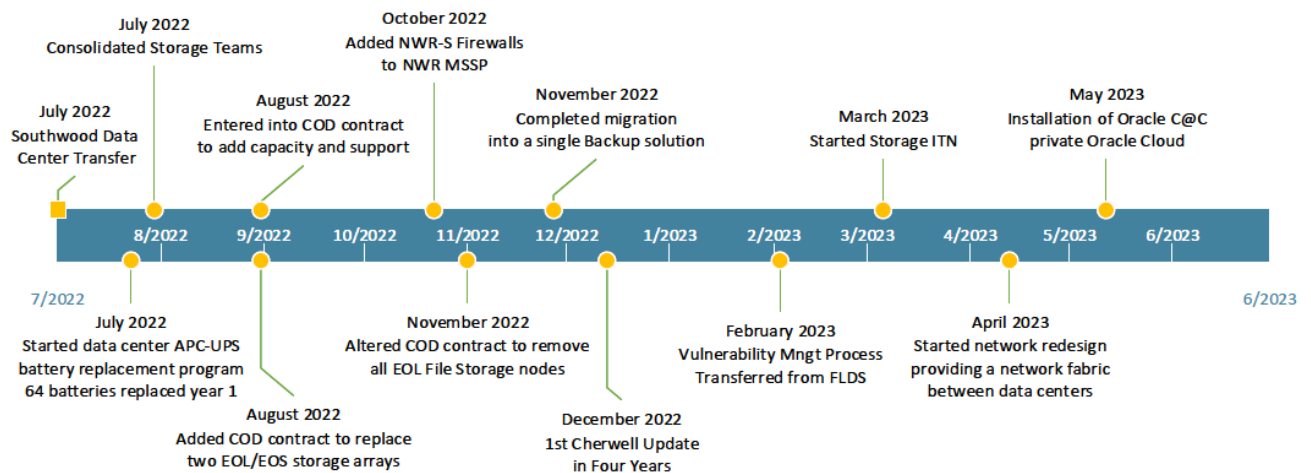
Quantitative Outcomes

- Integration of 24 state agencies and four non-state entities into a unified enterprise service model
- Onboarding of 91 staff within three months, ensuring continuity of operations
- Transition from lengthy audit cycles to more frequent and efficient reporting, enabling improved oversight and accountability, and resolving a 9-year backlog of audit findings within 2 years.
- Financial support of \$3,336,940 provided to address appropriation gaps and maintain service continuity
- Issued \$4.9 million in credit memos to state agencies through rate true up efforts from FY 23/24 to FY 24/25
- Implemented a mid-year rate adjustment in the current fiscal year, decreasing a service rate and resulting in an estimated cost savings of \$621,000 to state agencies

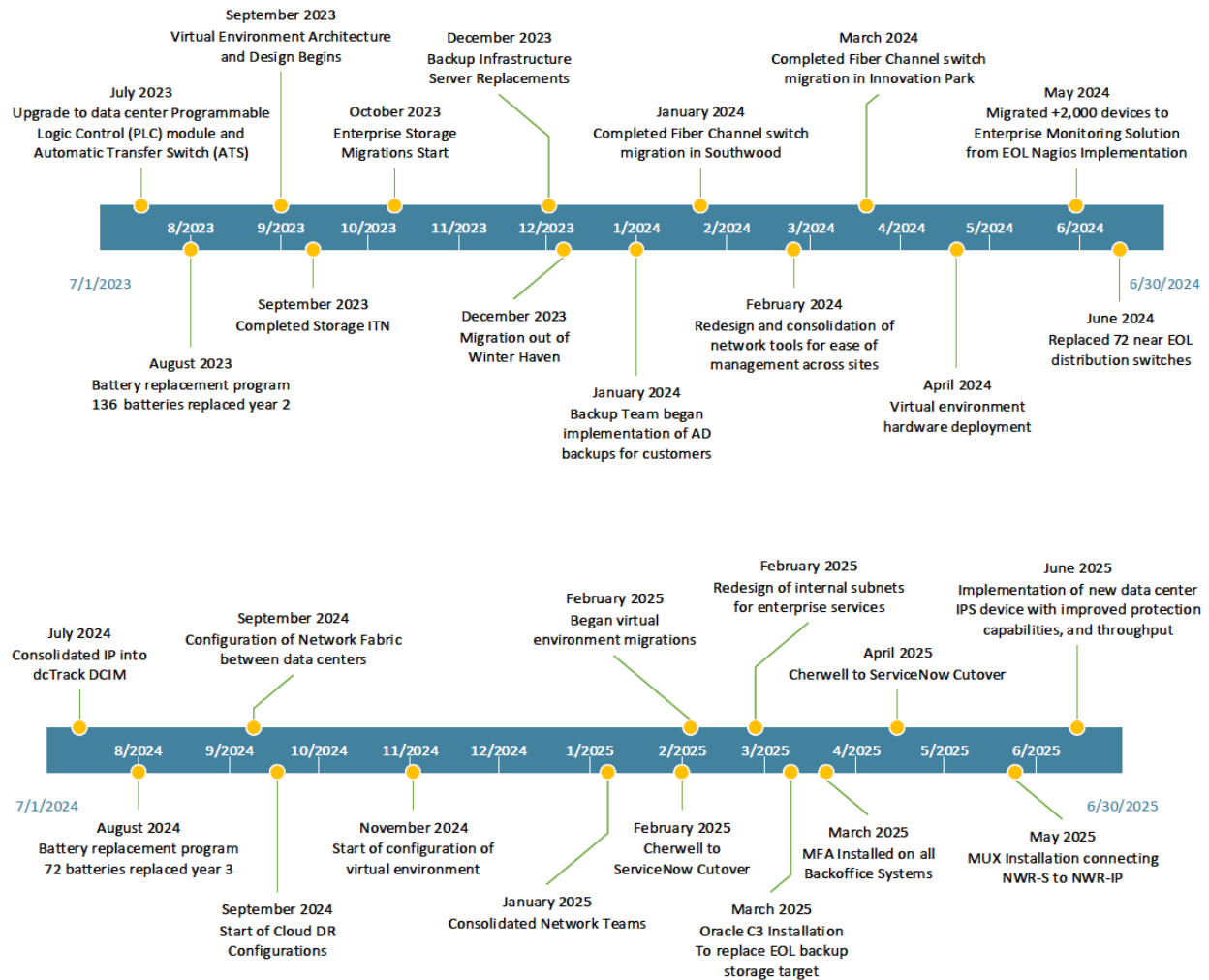
Qualitative Impact

- Positive feedback from state leadership and customers highlighting improved coordination, responsiveness, and service quality
- Recognition of NWRDC's commitment to financial stewardship and operational excellence
- Increased confidence among agencies in the reliability and scalability of enterprise services
- Modernized and standardized service management by transitioning from a legacy ticketing platform that was more than 30 versions behind to a unified ServiceNow environment, improving consistency, visibility, and efficiency in service delivery while enhancing the overall customer experience

This combination of measurable results and stakeholder feedback reflects a significant advancement in how enterprise technology services are delivered across the state.



Enterprise Technology Management State Data Center Transition



• What now? (sustainability and future plans)

Building on this foundation, NWRDC continues to advance enterprise capabilities by:

- Expanding automation and enterprise monitoring
- Continuing to align services and processes across environments
- Enhancing customer engagement and reporting transparency
- Maintaining a focus on long-term sustainability, scalability, and continuous improvement

The transition established a durable enterprise model that positions the State of Florida to adapt to evolving technological needs while continuing to deliver reliable and efficient services to its agencies and citizens.

Supplemental Information (Optional)

Include links or references only. No attachments. Scores are based on written content.

Partner References

List partners involved. Do not include company logos or promotional language.

Agency for Health Care Administration
Agency for Persons with Disabilities
Children Home Society
Department of Commerce
Department of Business and Professional Regulation
Department of Children and Families
Division of Emergency Management
Department of Environmental Protection
Department of Juvenile Justice
Department of Military Affairs
Department of Management Services
Department of Education
Department of Elder Affairs
Department of Health
Department of the Lottery
Department of Revenue
Department of State
Department of Transportation
Executive Office of the Governor
Department of Corrections
Department of Veterans Affairs
Justice Administrative Commission
Public Employees Relations Commission
Public Service Commission