

NASCIO State IT Recognition Awards

Shining the Gold Standard: Modernizing Nevada Gaming's Core System

Operational Efficiency

State	Nevada
Agency	Nevada Gaming Control Board, Administration Division, Application Development Team
Category	Digital Experience: Agency/Program Solutions
Project title	Shining the Gold Standard: Modernizing Nevada Gaming's Core System
Project dates	September 2023 - March 2026
Contact	Rebecca Garcia, Deputy Chief of Administration rgarcia@gcb.nv.gov (702) 486-2210

A stalled legacy modernization became a disciplined, state-led recovery that protected gaming regulation, tax collection, and business continuity.

Metric	Result
Modernized scope	489 function screens migrated into a modern .NET framework across 9 key functional areas
Operational scale	2,996 licensed gaming establishments regulated in FY25
Economic significance	\$1.2 billion in FY25 taxes and fees collected, approximately 20% of Nevada General Fund revenue
Productivity	Issues resolved more than doubled: 753 total / 47 monthly average to 1,549 total / 103 monthly average

Executive Summary

The Nevada Gaming Control Board (NGCB) regulates an industry central to Nevada's economy, but its core system of record was built on 1970s-era technology that was nearing the end of life. Hardware was becoming unavailable, COBOL expertise had retired, and the system supported essential functions including gaming licenses, employee registrations, investigations, tax collections, and business operations. The consequence of failure was not an inconvenience; it was regulatory, fiscal, and economic risk.

After years of uneven progress with a vendor-led modernization, the Board reached a pivotal moment in 2023. Rather than abandon nearly \$21 million already invested, NGCB renegotiated the contract into a deliverables-based model and asked its internal application development team to lead the charge. The team coordinated vendor output, subject matter expert input, testing, change management, bug remediation, and user adoption while still supporting production systems and external portals.

The result was formal project completion on March 13, 2026, after a \$33.8 million investment over 13 fiscal years. NGCB migrated 489 individual function screens from legacy COBOL-based technology into a modern .NET framework, created role-based access control aligned to least privilege, improved workflows across key portals and systems, resolved more than 2,300 issues during the critical project period, and preserved business continuity for a regulatory system that supports \$1.2 billion in annual taxes and fees.

Submission Snapshot

Question	Answer
Category fit	Operational efficiency through system modernization, project turnaround, disciplined methodology, workforce upskilling, and better role-based processes.
Universal challenge	States routinely inherit legacy systems that support critical public functions while the skills and hardware to maintain them disappear.
Innovation	State-led governance recovered a distressed modernization through deliverables-based accountability, parallel workstreams, and internal team ownership.

IDEA

NGCB's legacy DEC Alpha/COBOL core system had served the agency for decades, but it became increasingly unsustainable. The system had accumulated functionality across more than four decades, hardware was no longer readily available, and staff with the specialized programming knowledge had retired. Continuing to rely on the platform put regulatory operations, valuable data, and statewide fiscal activity at risk.

The Board's functions are high volume and high consequence. As of FY25, NGCB regulated 2,996 licensed gaming establishments. In calendar year 2025, its Enforcement Division processed 31,479 applications for gaming employment and the Board approved 185 new licenses and registrations. In FY25, the Board collected \$1.2 billion in taxes and fees, around 20% of Nevada's General Fund revenue.

- Prevent data and operational risk from an end-of-life core system.
- Protect tax collection, licensing, registration, investigations, and regulatory business continuity.
- Recover value from a long-running modernization investment rather than walk away from taxpayer dollars already spent.
- Create a modern platform that internal staff could maintain and enhance after vendor support ended.

Why it matters: This was a classic public-sector modernization problem: the system was old enough to be hard to defend, important enough that failure was not acceptable, and complex enough that success required people, governance, and culture - not merely code.



IMPLEMENTATION

Beginning in September 2023, NGCB restructured the project around deliverables and internal ownership. The application development team had until June 2025 to finalize years of software development that had moved in fits and starts. They also had to do so while maintaining production systems and external portals used by licensees, gaming employees, applicants, and internal staff. The team used a Capability Maturity Model Integration approach, with new features developed as others were released and defects tracked against already-deployed functionality. Work was divided into parallel tracks with regular meeting cadences between the vendor, subject matter experts, and the application development team. This allowed the project to address requirements, capture remediation needs, manage change orders, and build stakeholder buy-in.

- The application development team expanded from a small group supporting daily operations to a larger team capable of driving a major modernization and handoff.
- Staff completed 34 technical training courses: secure coding, programming languages, new technologies, database management, and project management tools.
- The team tracked vendor productivity and deliverables while reshaping agency culture toward adoption of the new system.
- After contracted development ended, internal staff took on remaining bugs, code fixes, data fixes, errors, and user issues that impeded business operations.

Implementation lever	Operational efficiency created
Deliverables-based contract	Moved the project from effort tracking to output accountability.
Parallel workstreams	Allowed six divisions and many functional areas to validate requirements without stopping daily operations.
Internal ownership	Gave NGCB control over prioritization, production support, and long-term maintainability.
Training and handoff	Prepared state staff to maintain and improve the system after vendor warranty support ended.

IMPACT

NGCB converted a high-risk, long-running modernization into a completed operational improvement. The new system provides a more stable, secure, and extensible platform. Role-based access control improves data protection and supports least privilege, replacing an inherited pattern where user access had been mirrored and copied over time until systematic access control became difficult to verify.

The project also delivered measurable productivity gains. From September 2023 through December 2024, the team resolved 753 issues, averaging 47 per month. From January 2025 to March 2026, the team resolved 1,549 issues, averaging 103 per month - more than doubling output during the second half of the project period.

Impact area	Measured result
Modernized functions	489 individual function screens migrated to a modern .NET framework across 9 key functional areas.
Access control	Role-based access control implemented to better secure agency data and support least privilege.
Issue resolution	753 issues resolved from Sept. 2023-Dec. 2024; 1,549 resolved from Jan. 2025-Mar. 2026.
Regulatory continuity	System supports 2,996 licensed gaming establishments and statewide licensing, registration, investigations, tax, and audit functions.
Economic impact	\$1.2 billion in FY25 taxes and fees collected through Board operations, about 20% of Nevada General Fund revenue.
Workforce readiness	34 training courses completed to prepare staff for maintenance and continued development.

Testimony

Voice from the field: An Enforcement Division team lead reported that the application development team significantly improved workflows across GCBApps, SAGE, Public Login Portal, and RegApp, streamlining processes for the entire registration unit. An Audit Division supervisor described the team as collaborative, professional, and dedicated, with five recent features deployed to production.

What Now

- Maintain the backlog of user requirements and continue regular backlog grooming with divisional stakeholders.
- Sequence enhancements based on immediate business value, critical sticking points, and available developer capacity.
- Continue mentoring, coaching, and training so system knowledge remains with state staff.