OFFICE *of*
**information
technology
services**

Executive Office of the Governor
Alberto Gonzalez, Administrator

Strategic Plan
FY2024 – FY2027

Table of Contents

Message from the CIO

As Idaho's Chief Information Officer and Administrator for the Governor's Office of Information Technology Services (ITS), it is with great pleasure that I share our strategic priorities for FY24 and beyond.

In an era of rapid technological advancements and evolving business landscapes, it is imperative for government agencies to adapt and transform to stay ahead of the curve. With this in mind, we have invested considerable time, effort, and expertise to develop short-term comprehensive strategic priorities that will shape the future of Idaho's state IT.

At the core of our strategic vision lies our commitment to leveraging technology as a catalyst for growth and innovation to make government agencies more efficient and citizen-friendly. We believe that by harnessing the power of emerging technologies, we can create new opportunities, enhance operational efficiencies, and deliver exceptional value to our customers.

Our strategic priorities revolve around a few key guiding principles:

- **Customer-Centric Approach**: Our agencies and citizens are at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to deepening our understanding of agency/citizen needs, preferences, and pain points. By leveraging data analytics and customer insights, we will develop personalized and collaborative experiences that build lasting relationships and drive responsible taxpayer use and citizen fulfillment.

- **Secure and Resilient Infrastructure**: In an increasingly interconnected world, data security and resilience are paramount. We will prioritize investments in robust cybersecurity measures, ensuring the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of our systems and data. By adopting industry-leading practices and frameworks, we will establish a resilient infrastructure that safeguards our assets and protects against emerging threats.

- **Innovation and Agility**: We will foster a culture of innovation and agility, encouraging our employees to think creatively, challenge the status quo, and explore new frontiers. By embracing emerging technologies, we will drive breakthrough solutions for the sustainable, responsible state growth that our citizens demand.

To achieve our strategic priorities, we will focus on fostering collaboration, both internally and externally. We recognize that meaningful partnerships and collaborations are key drivers of success in today's complex government environment. By forging strategic alliances, nurturing vendor relationships, and engaging with industry experts, we will leverage collective intelligence to overcome challenges and unlock new possibilities.

While the road ahead may be challenging, we are confident that our strategic priorities will guide us towards a successful future. We invite each one of you, our esteemed stakeholders, to embark on this transformative journey with us. Your continued support, insight, and feedback will be invaluable as we navigate uncharted territories and redefine the boundaries of excellence.

Thank you for your trust and belief in our organization and Governor Little's IT Modernization Initiative. We look forward to collaborating with you as we turn our strategic priorities into reality.

Agency Overview

Core functions of ITS are outlined in Idaho Code Title 67, Chapter 8. The agency was established in 2018 and is composed of four bureaus committed to coordinating and implementing information technology (IT) services and cybersecurity policies within the State of Idaho.

Bureaus include IT Operations, Cybersecurity/Compliance, Enterprise Architecture, and Business Administration. ITS provides leadership towards and administration of enterprise state IT solutions. ITS operates the core network and related security systems used by all agencies and guarantees reliable communications for state government through telephone, IT networks, and internet services. ITS currently provides IT services to 48 agencies, boards, and commissions. IT services include desktop troubleshooting, cybersecurity, server/storage administration, web support, project management, e-mail and collaboration tools, application support and development, and enterprise services, among others.

ITS supports a primary committee and three subcommittees. Established in Idaho Code 67-831 to 67-833, the Idaho Technology Authority (ITA) establishes statewide IT and telecommunications policies, standards, guidelines, and conventions assuring uniformity and compatibility of state agency systems. The committee's composition ensures those affected by policy decisions have a role and say in policy direction. The three subcommittees focus on specific portions of the ITA mission: the IT Leadership Council, the Idaho Geospatial Council-Executive Committee, and the Access Idaho Steering Committee.

ITS Organizational Chart
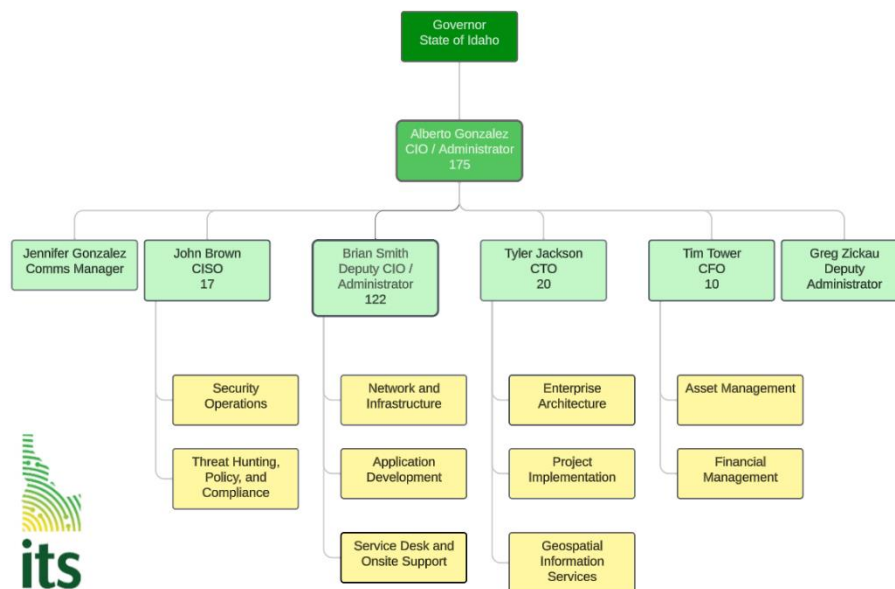
Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priorities

The ITS FY 2024 – FY 2027 Strategic Plan establishes IT focus areas and goals and sets the direction for the state's IT enterprise. This document highlights technology decisions and investments that align with Governor Little's IT Modernization Initiative to implement state IT priorities securely and efficiently. ITS will be pursuing the fourth phase of IT modernization beginning in FY 2025. Work on this initiative continues to increase efficiency in IT services across state agencies, enabling agencies to focus on being IT consumers rather than IT providers. Governor Little's statewide priorities serve as our inspiration, while our mission and vision statements lay the foundation for strategic initiatives. Our plan is dedicated to improving the productivity and quality of government services through technology solutions.

ITS Mission Statement

We connect citizens with their government.

ITS Vision Statement

Inspire trust and confidence in state government through modern solutions for technical services.

In looking ahead, ITS has positioned technology to be scalable and adaptable to sustain the state's day-to-day business and support the Governor's priorities. We are committed to collaborating with leaders in Idaho state agencies to address long-term concerns. ITS has identified seven key strategic goals to drive our priorities and activities over the next four years:

1. Complete Governor's IT Modernization Initiative
2. Strengthen Cyber Security Posture for Idaho
3. Modernization of Legacy Applications
4. State Network Cost Reduction and Service Improvements
5. Strengthen Communication and Collaboration
6. Implement a Cloud Smart Strategy
7. Establish Foundational Policy for Utilization of Artificial Intelligence

ITS has also identified additional strategic objectives as valuable and important for the state based on agency business priorities, staff capabilities, and anticipated enterprise needs. Here we describe additional objectives in periods of near-term (up to 18 months), mid-term (within three years), and long-term (more than three years). These objectives are dependent on key external factors, staff capacity, and budgetary availability.

Goal 1: Complete Governor's IT Modernization Initiative

The consolidation of all IT services from multiple state agencies into a single centralized agency under the Governor's office offers a tremendous opportunity for proactive communication and strategic planning. Such centralization enables the state to establish standard operating procedures and technologies across agencies, making the communication of initiatives and the sharing of data significantly more efficient. Economies of scale are an additional benefit; by aggregating the purchasing power of multiple agencies, the state could negotiate better contracts for hardware, software, and services, thereby maximizing taxpayer value. A core tenet should be the retention and reassignment of existing agency IT staff. Not only does this safeguard institutional knowledge, but it helps in the smoother transition of technologies and processes from individual agencies to the centralized IT agency. Keeping agency employees in the loop ensures a sense of ownership and responsibility, crucial for the success of such a large-scale transformation.

Goals

1. Achieve full standardization and interoperability across all executive branch agencies to improve communication and data-sharing.
2. Realize measurable cost savings through economies of scale in IT procurement, maximizing taxpayer value.
3. Retain and reassign as many existing agency IT staff as possible to ITS.

Key External Factors

1. The centralization process is not without its challenges. Agencies may be hesitant to relinquish control over their IT infrastructure, wary of a potential loss of agency-specific customization and quick decision-making abilities.
2. The current fragmentation across agencies often leads to inadequate investment in IT, stemming from a lack of understanding of the true, long-term costs associated with maintaining separate IT departments. As the consolidation effort moves forward, it is critical the Idaho Legislature lend its support, particularly for the approval of the remaining phases of consolidation.
3. Without legislative backing, the effort could stall, leaving the state with a patchwork of IT capabilities rather than a streamlined, efficient system. A bipartisan commitment to understand, review, and act, upon the consolidation plan is vital for ensuring the state leverages technology as a strategic asset.

Performance Measures

- **FY 2024** – In progress ITD, ICBVI, Libraries (*43 FTE – Total 9,301 customers supported*
- **FY 2025** – Historical Society, IMD, Lands, Labor, Liquor, Historical Society, Public Defender (*53 FTE, 11,527 customers supported*)
- **FY 2026** – ISP, Juvenile Corrections, PERSI (*26 FTE, 12,526 customers supported*)
- **FY 2027** – Health and Welfare (*45 FTE, 15,552 customers supported*)
  *Some previously left behind positions in Phase I, II, III may be considered for consolidation by agencies or ITS

Goal 2: Strengthen Cyber Security Posture for Idaho

In alignment with the state of Idaho's long-term objectives, a key goal over the next three years is to substantially strengthen our cybersecurity posture. To this end, we aim to continue our invaluable partnership with the Idaho National Guard, extending penetration testing protocols across all state agencies. In tandem, the scope of tabletop exercises and penetration tests will be expanded to encompass all Executive Branch agencies, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of vulnerabilities and readiness.

The standardization of Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) tools and capabilities will be prioritized, with deployments planned for all supported agencies. This harmonized approach is projected to facilitate real-time analysis of security alerts generated by hardware and software infrastructure.

Finally, the role of ITS will be clearly defined within Idaho's Cyberfusion program, executed in close partnership with the Office of Emergency Management. This multi-faceted strategy aims to fortify our cyber defenses, enhancing the state's resilience against ever-evolving cyber threats.

Goals

1. Extend penetration testing protocols in partnership with the Idaho National Guard across all state agencies to strengthen cybersecurity measures.
2. Standardize and deploy Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) tools across all supported agencies to facilitate real-time security analysis.
3. Clearly define the role of ITS within Idaho's Cyberfusion program, in partnership with the Office of Emergency Management, to enhance cyber resilience.

Key External Factors

1. The exponential rate at which the threat landscape is increasing poses a significant challenge, necessitating constant updates to cybersecurity strategies and technologies to mitigate emerging risks.
2. The pace of funding is not keeping in step with escalating threats, creating a resource gap that could potentially compromise the state's ability to defend against advanced cyberattacks.
3. The yet-to-be clearly defined role of ITS in the Cyberfusion initiative creates ambiguity, hindering the effective coordination and execution of cyber resilience measures.

Performance Measures

- **Annual –** Penetration Test conducted by third party. Currently, Idaho National Guard has been conducting these.
- **Annual** – Tabletop exercises to ensure practices are in place for business continuity and threat response.
- **FY 2024** – Develop and offer a menu of ransomware protections to agencies so they can prioritize what systems require this level of protection.

Goal 3: Modernization of Applications

Modernizing the expansive application portfolio of 2,000 applications across all Executive Branch agencies in Idaho presents an invaluable opportunity to substantially upgrade the state's digital infrastructure. A crucial first step is the discovery phase, aimed at evaluating the current state of technical debt and deferred maintenance within the portfolio, and setting the stage for informed decisions on prioritization and resource allocation.

It's imperative to establish a consortium of trusted partner vendors who can offer the specialized skills and technologies required for such a wide-ranging modernization effort. Within ITS, the creation of an Application Development Center of Excellence would serve as a hub for best practices, innovation, and skill development, ensuring the modernized portfolio is not only current, but also forward-looking.

Finally, revising procurement protocols to allow for accelerated options specifically for application modernization services is essential for timely project execution. This multi-faceted approach aims to transform the application landscape, rendering it more efficient, secure, and agile, better serving the needs of Idaho citizens and the state's long-term objectives.

Goals

1. Conduct a discovery phase to assess the current state of technical debt and deferred maintenance in the application portfolio, enabling informed decisions on resource allocation and project prioritization.
2. Establish a consortium of trusted partner vendors and create an Application Development Center of Excellence within ITS to ensure best practices and innovation in the modernization effort.
3. Revise existing procurement protocols to introduce accelerated options for application modernization services, facilitating timely and efficient project execution.

Key External Factors

1. Agency budget constraints pose a significant risk, potentially limiting the scope and quality of the application modernization effort.
2. Limited agency capacity to participate in the modernization process may hinder the timely and effective execution of the project.
3. Organizational Change Management is challenged by agencies' inherent fear of change, which could result in resistance and slow down the modernization of applications.
4. Compensation rates for software engineers lag 50-80% behind private sector rates, making attracting talent challenging.

Performance Measures

- **FY 2024** – Establish process for discovery to provide agencies information/education regarding their legacy applications so they can prioritize applications to modernize.
- **FY 2024** – Establish the options for how to modernize applications known as the R's of modernization: Retain, Rehost, Re-platform, Refactor, Repurchase, and Retire.
- **FY 2024-27** – Build a community of trusted vendors to provide these services to our agencies and build the purchasing mechanism to do so.
- **FY 2025-26** – Begin buildout of ITS Application Development program to move from 90% maintenance of 900 plus applications but to establish an agile framework to begin addressing some of the necessary modernization of applications in addition to the vendors.

Goal 4: State Network Cost Reduction and Service Improvement

For Idaho, achieving both cost reduction and service improvement in network management is not only feasible, but strategically advantageous. By establishing standards for diverse network connectivity options from multiple vendors, the state aims to cultivate a more competitive and flexible network ecosystem. Exploration of opportunities to integrate the Idaho Regional Optical Network (IRON) as a long-haul and mid-mile provider adds another layer of operational effectiveness. The benefit extends to improving the time required to deliver connectivity services, which will be expedited through utilization of these diverse network options. Together, these measures are designed to make Idaho's network infrastructure more robust, agile, and cost-efficient, ultimately better agencies and their constituents.

Goals

1. Establish standards for diverse network connectivity options from multiple vendors to foster a more competitive and flexible network ecosystem in Idaho.
2. Integrate the Idaho Regional Optical Network (IRON) as a long-haul and mid-mile provider to enhance operational effectiveness in the state's network infrastructure.
3. Improve the time-to-delivery for connectivity services by leveraging diverse network options, making the network infrastructure more agile and efficient.

Key External Factors

1. Resistance from traditional industry players poses a risk to successful implementation of diverse network options, as established vendors may be averse to changes that challenge their market position.
2. Procurement restrictions could inhibit the state's ability to swiftly engage with multiple vendors or adopt new technologies, hindering efforts to realize cost reductions and service improvements.
3. Vendor option limitations may constrain the flexibility intended through the diversification of network options, potentially undermining the goals of creating a more agile and cost-efficient infrastructure.

Performance Measures

- **FY 2024-25** – Modernize and diversify connectivity offered to agencies. While MPLS (Multiprotocol label switching) was once one of the most effective solutions available, technology has advanced, and wireless and wired connections can now be offered with similar reliability at a reduced cost.
- **FY 2024-25** – Develop and release a Request for Proposal to replace our current voice/data contract.
- **FY 2024** – Establish a telecom team focused on current connectivity options and costs analysis, and build a proposal for agencies to understand their options and costs.
- **FY 2024-25** – Work with agencies and cities to understand how government can best leverage the Idaho Regional Optical Network (IRON) and ensure we have Idaho vendors involved with middle and final mile connections.

Goal 5: Strengthen Communication and Collaboration

The importance of enhancing communication and collaboration between ITS and state agencies we support cannot be overstated. Improved communication with agency customers serves as a cornerstone for better service delivery and project alignment.

Strengthening relationships with both executive and legislative branch partners ensures that IT strategies are aligned with overall state objectives and receives necessary support and funding. Regular meetings with agency leadership foster a collaborative environment for shared goal-setting and problem-solving.

The establishment of a technology advisory board offers a structured platform for input and expert advice, creating a feedback loop that further refines IT services and solutions. Collectively, these initiatives cultivate a more cooperative, informed, and efficient approach to managing the state's technology resources.

Goals

1. Improve communication with agency customers to serve as the cornerstone for better service delivery and project alignment.
2. Strengthen relationships with both executive and legislative branch partners to ensure IT strategies are aligned with state objectives and are adequately supported.
3. Establish a technology advisory board to provide a structured platform for expert input, refining IT services and solutions.

Key External Factors

1. The risk of lack of agency participation in these efforts manifests as potential misalignment between IT services and the actual needs or objectives of the state, including decreased political and financial support for IT initiatives. Without active agency engagement, even well-intended strategies may become disconnected from real-world challenges, compromising the effectiveness and support of IT services and solutions.

Performance Measures

- **FY 2024** – Establish an advisory group of 10 to 15 supported and non-supported agencies to provide input into the direction and strategies being considered by ITS. This group will meet no less than quarterly.
- **Quarterly** – Newsletters to all supported and non-supported agencies on what is happening at ITS and what is impacting them. This will allow us to highlight technological best practices in use at agencies, so innovation is shared broadly.
- **Monthly** – Newsletters to all ITS internal employees to keep them informed and aligned with our agency-centric approach to delivering IT services.
- **Annual** – Digital Government conference with the purpose of bringing state and local government agencies together to discuss technological impacts and security in government through shared best practices.

Goal 6: Implement Cloud Smart Strategy

While the implementation of a Cloud Smart Strategy in Idaho marks a strategic step toward enhancing our technological infrastructure's scalability and time-to-delivery, it is critical to recognize this often comes at an increased cost. Contrary to popular perception, transitioning to the cloud is not an 'easy button,' nor is it an automatic cost-saving measure. Establishing designated landing zones for major cloud vendors is a nuanced process that requires stringent security and compliance protocols.

The development of robust governance framework is equally complex, aimed at standardizing the use and management of cloud resources while mitigating associated risks and ensuring alignment with state and federal regulations. Agencies will be empowered to make well-informed technology choices through a service catalog that outlines various cloud options, allowing a tailored approach to either on-premises or cloud-based solutions. This multi-faceted approach equips the state to exploit cloud technology's full potential and requires a nuanced understanding and careful financial planning for successful implementation.

Goals

1. Establish designated landing zones for major cloud vendors to ensure a secure and compliant environment for cloud operations.
2. Develop a comprehensive framework of governance and policies to standardize usage and management of cloud resources, aligning with state and federal regulations.
3. Create a service catalog detailing cloud options, enabling agencies to make informed decisions between on-premises and cloud-based solutions.

Key External Factors

1. The industry's promotion of cloud solutions may not align with individual agency needs, potentially leading to suboptimal technology choices.

2. Budget constraints could inhibit full implementation of the Cloud Smart Strategy, affecting the establishment of landing zones, governance frameworks, and service catalogs.
3. A lack of understanding among agencies regarding cloud technologies and governance could impede effective utilization and risk mitigation.

Performance Measures

- **FY 2024-25** – Complete designated landing zones for agencies to utilize their preferred cloud provider.
- **FY 2024** – Develop ITS's comprehensive framework of governance and policies for responsible use of cloud services.
- **FY 2024-25** – Develop our service catalog with cloud offerings for agencies to make informed decisions.

Goal 7: Establish Foundational Policy for Utilizing Artificial Intelligence

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies by the State of Idaho promises to revolutionize the delivery of government services. AI has the potential to enhance operational efficiency, drive innovation, and provide more personalized, timely services to citizens. From predictive analytics in healthcare and transportation to automated customer service channels, the possibilities for AI to contribute positively to the state's objectives are vast and compelling.

However, the pressing need for ITS to establish robust governance framework and policy guidelines around the use of AI technologies is critical. While AI brings transformative advantages, it also presents ethical and operational challenges, such as data bias and the unauthorized use of sensitive information. A well-defined governance structure ensures that AI technologies are deployed responsibly, aligned with the state's objectives, and compliant with legal and ethical standards. Comprehensive policies are essential for creating a transparent and accountable framework, enabling optimized, ethical AI operations. This governance will play a vital role in preserving trust and privacy of citizens while leveraging the full benefits of AI.

Goals

1. Enhance operational efficiency and service delivery in government agencies through responsible integration of Artificial Intelligence technologies.
2. Establish robust governance framework and policy guidelines to ensure that AI technologies are aligned with state objectives and are ethically and legally compliant.
3. Create a transparent and accountable framework for AI operations to preserve trust and privacy of citizens while optimizing effectiveness of government services.

Key External Factors

1. The lack of a robust governance framework and policy guidelines could lead to ethical challenges, such as data bias, thereby compromising integrity and effectiveness of AI-enabled services.

2. Unauthorized use of sensitive information through AI technologies may jeopardize citizen trust and privacy, potentially undermining the state's credibility and legal standing.
3. Without proper alignment between AI deployment and state objectives, there's a risk of resource misallocation, leading to inefficiencies and challenges in achieving governmental goals.

Performance Measures

- **FY 2024** – Conduct discovery exercises for proper use of AI in Idaho using the Idaho Technology Authority (ITA) and committees, as well as an advisory committee specific to AI. The purpose will be to gather information, explore possibilities, and understand its positive and negative impact on state government.
- **FY 2024** – Establish AI governance, framework, and policies for proper and ethical use of AI.
- **FY 2024-25** – Begin piloting and modeling proper use of AI so we can safely experiment and validate our understanding of AI in state government. While elements of AI are already in place in some applications or systems we use, a more comprehensive pilot would allow for better understanding.
- **FY 2024-27** – Provide guidance, support, and monitoring wherever we begin to deploy AI solutions.

Key External Factors for the ITS Mission

Rising Costs of Technology

Software licensing costs are skyrocketing, and it's not just a challenge for Idaho—it's an industry-wide issue. The price of firewall tools has surged 52 percent without any functional upgrades, and essential productivity tools have increased 27 percent without any new features. This isn't just about tightening our belts; it's a fundamental challenge that forces us to question the return on investment for these tools, as budgets are increasingly strained.

While switching to more affordable options may seem logical, it's far from straightforward. The immediate and hidden costs of transitioning—such as acquiring new product licenses, system integration, and employee training—are substantial. Additionally, any switch carries risk of service disruptions and delays, compromising service quality.

Agency Under-Investment in Technology

The process of consolidating agencies under the ITS umbrella has revealed a critical issue: many of these agencies have historically under-invested in technology. This lack of prior investment creates a significant gap in expectations regarding the cost of IT services. When agencies receive billing from ITS that reflects the true cost of providing modern, secure, and efficient IT services, they experience a form of sticker shock compared to past expenditures. This discrepancy between anticipated and actual costs has the potential to cause friction and impede the streamlined adoption of more advanced technology solutions.

This disparity in expectations is exacerbated by the continually evolving landscape of IT requirements. As we move toward a more modernized structure, both security and productivity demands naturally escalate, inflating costs further. For agencies that have not kept pace with technological advancements, this shift can be particularly jarring. These increased requirements are not optional add-ons, but are critical for compliance, data protection, and efficient service delivery. While increased billing from ITS may seem steep in comparison to historical spending, it's a necessary alignment with the real costs of meeting today's technology standards and security protocols.

Lack of IT Modernization Funding

Idaho stands at a critical juncture in its pursuit of technological modernization. Just as no company undertakes mergers and acquisitions without budgeting for the cleanup and standardization of disparate systems, it is similarly challenging for the state to consolidate various agency systems under one roof without a corresponding investment in technology standardization and human capital. Consolidation alone does not yield efficiency, especially when executed with reduced staffing levels. A dedicated budget for IT modernization is not merely an operational expense, but a strategic imperative. Without appropriate funding, we run the risk of merely centralizing inefficiencies rather than eliminating them, falling further behind the technology curve that defines modern governance.

To effectively modernize, we must identify and secure stable funding sources that can be channeled toward updating legacy systems, implementing standardized solutions, and upskilling the workforce. Failing to invest in these critical areas leads to a dangerous build-up of deferred maintenance costs and escalating technical debt, which can become crippling over time. These hidden costs of neglect not only impair an agency's operational efficiency but also its ability to deliver quality services to citizens. Investing in IT modernization is not only a pathway to greater efficiency, but also an essential strategy for risk mitigation and long-term fiscal responsibility.