WISCONSIN

STRATEGIC IT PLAN
2020-2022

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The Department of Administration (DOA) develops a biennial statewide strategic plan to guide state IT operations. To craft this plan, we built upon annual strategic IT plans developed by executive branch agencies. We also brought together agency leaders, including agency chief information officers (CIOs), administrative officers, and deputy secretaries, to develop guiding principles, goals, objectives, and benchmarks that form the basis of this statewide strategic IT plan. Additional opportunities were provided for leaders at all executive branch agencies to provide feedback, which we believe has further strengthened our planning efforts.

The plan focuses on fundamental principles, which we believe will drive real change for the State of Wisconsin.

Each goal – Serving Wisconsin, Securing Wisconsin, Optimizing Wisconsin, and Working Wisconsin – describes vital attributes of our day-to-day work. By identifying areas of strength and developing them into areas of operational excellence, we will leverage the incredible talent and passion of all state employees, including contractors and vendors, to drive meaningful, tangible results.

This plan does not encompass all State IT activities; instead, we identified a few areas where the state should invest time and resources. More importantly, these goals and objectives were developed with a long-term vision on how we will evolve with our IT services over the next decade. While these goals and objectives may not be attained within this biennium, our plan deliberately centers on long-term transformational change instead of tactical improvements.

We are committing to quarterly reviews of this strategic plan with the IT Directors' Council and other key stakeholders, which we believe will provide clear unity and accountability among the many participants involved in the provision of IT services. To accomplish the elements of this strategic plan, we will develop and maintain a comprehensive roadmap identifying actions and targets over the upcoming biennium. We will also work closely with the executive branch to build consensus for our activities. We believe that success will rest on the sum of our abilities, as all are equally invested in our enterprise and agency IT efforts, both in the next two years and over the horizon.

METHODOLOGY

In formulating this strategic IT plan, we agreed on a common hierarchy to frame our focus over the coming biennium. This plan incorporates definitions for the terms "goal[1]" and "objective[2]" from the Project Management Institute's *The Standard for Portfolio Management – Fourth Edition* and incorporates the definition for the term "guiding principle[3]" from the *Cambridge English Dictionary*.

Key Definitions

Guiding Principle: These are universal values that inform every facet of this plan. In considering what to include, we wanted to establish a clear foundation upon which goals and objectives would be considered and executed.

Goal: The goals identified in this Strategic IT Plan represent common themes that were distilled from State agency strategic IT plans, other state government strategic IT plans, and content from national associations and thought leaders.

Objective: The objectives identified for each goal represent specific, concrete strategies the State will leverage to move forward. These objectives were developed by DOA's Division of Enterprise Technology, business and technical leaders from several state agencies, and feedback from customers and other stakeholders.

We have also identified several benchmarks that will move this plan forward. In selecting these benchmarks, we deliberately chose those that we felt were critical and foundational to this success of this plan.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1
Promote agency collaboration in planning and execution efforts for IT services.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2
Prioritize Strategic IT Plan goals and objectives to drive focus.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3
Review the Statewide Strategic IT Plan with agencies on a quarterly basis.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4
The Strategic IT Plan should foster a long-term perspective for enterprise and agency planning and execution to better assess risks, identify opportunities and make informed decisions about the State's future.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5
Place customers at the center of State IT efforts.
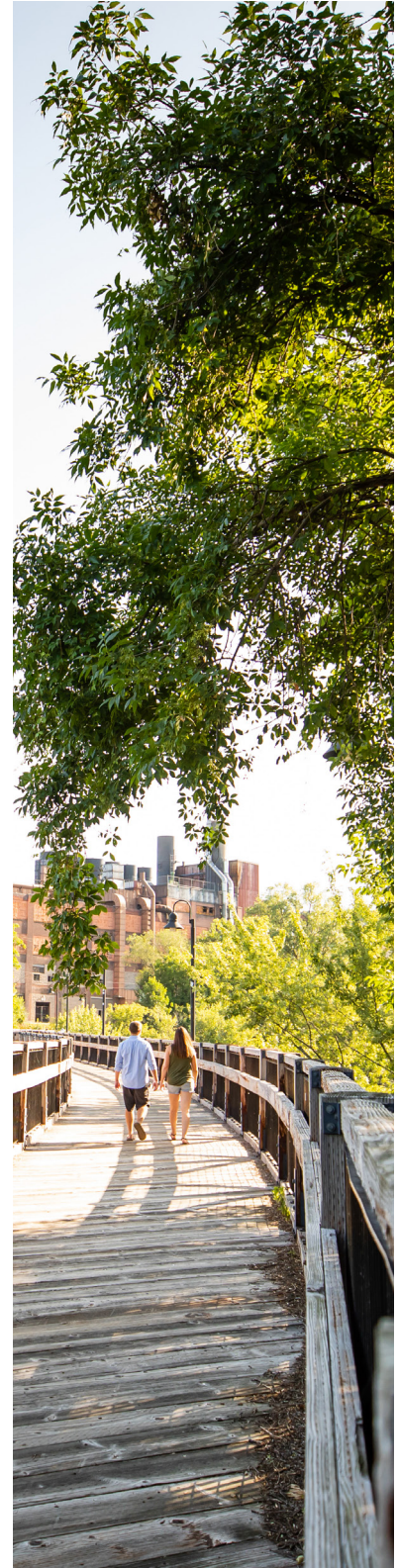
GOALS & OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1 - SERVING WISCONSIN

Improve State of Wisconsin services by embracing self-service, digital-first, and modern technologies.

GOAL 2 - SECURING WISCONSIN

Secure State systems and data by refining strategies to mitigate risk for individuals and other key stakeholders, including operational changes due to unexpected events.

GOAL 3 - OPTIMIZING WISCONSIN

Modernize state agency legacy data and technology assets to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in delivering government services and operations.

GOAL 4 - WORKING WISCONSIN

Adopt practices that strengthen Wisconsin's State government workforce.

GOAL 1 - SERVING WISCONSIN

IMPROVE STATE OF WISCONSIN SERVICES BY EMBRACING SELF-SERVICE, DIGITAL-FIRST, AND MODERN TECHNOLOGIES.

It is vital for the State of Wisconsin to promote program delivery ensuring all individuals can access government services.

According to a 2019 Pew Research study[4], more than 90% of adults across the United States aged 18 to 49 own a smartphone and 73% subscribe to broadband internet. Approximately half of those without broadband internet say their smartphone provides everything they need. However, 26% of rural Wisconsin residents do not have access to broadband internet and many have difficulty receiving reliable cellular service. For many low-income residents, the cost of broadband internet remains out of reach, forcing them to rely on libraries and other public spaces for internet access. Persons with disabilities[5] also have a need for accessible government products and services.

Given these challenges, the State of Wisconsin must serve not only those who wish to access programs and services digitally, but also ensure those who require accommodations or cannot access services online still receive modern practices and technologies.

OBJECTIVE 1: Ensure all individuals can access digital services.

OBJECTIVE 2: Meet individuals and key stakeholders where they are by easing access to government services.

OBJECTIVE 3: Emphasize the proactive use of data to drive agency decision-making and service delivery.

OBJECTIVE 4: Enhance data sharing and governance within and across agencies.

OBJECTIVE 1: ENSURE ALL INDIVIDUALS CAN ACCESS DIGITAL SERVICES.

The State of Wisconsin recognizes the critical importance of providing accessible government websites and applications. Within this context, accessibility refers both to ensuring that persons with disabilities can access websites and web-based applications, and that all individuals have sufficient internet access to reach online services.

The State will work to identify and address any technological issues that prevent persons with disabilities from full access in line with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

In line with Governor Evers' Task Force on Broadband Access, the State also supports efforts to leverage state assets and expertise to extend access to broadband internet service to all Wisconsin residents through public-private partnerships and accurate data collection.

OBJECTIVE 2: MEET INDIVIDUALS AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS WHERE THEY ARE BY EASING ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES.

If we wish to successfully serve all members of the public, we must work internally to strengthen our customer-first culture to put customer needs at the center of program and service delivery. Examples of this may include shifting public hours to better accommodate working families and finding non-traditional methods to educate individuals about government services. This also means simplifying customer interactions to eliminate wasted process time and minimizing requests for additional information from customers.

The State is open to reexamining how individuals interact with government to ensure they can easily find the program they are seeking by empowering staff to resolve customer concerns and point individuals to the services they need. This may also include providing alternative means of accessing services, such as physical locations or customer service centers.

OBJECTIVE 3: EMPHASIZE THE PROACTIVE USE OF DATA TO DRIVE AGENCY DECISION-MAKING AND SERVICE DELIVERY.

The State of Wisconsin collects significant amounts of data that can be used to drive better outcomes, decrease costs, and increase efficiency. Mechanisms like business intelligence, real-time analytics, artificial intelligence, and machine learning can provide deep insights not currently available to agencies. The State supports the creation of data-focused IT classifications and the use of modern data tools to take advantage of these benefits.

OBJECTIVE 4: ENHANCE DATA SHARING AND GOVERNANCE WITHIN AND ACROSS AGENCIES.

Properly protecting, accessing, and utilizing available data requires a strong governance framework to manage and coordinate the usage of enterprise data. This includes an end goal of creating master records that bring together data about specific individuals and businesses into a single secure record.

This also includes the promotion of open and transparent data sharing to the extent allowed by law and a portal to coordinate the sharing of data maintained by the State.

GOAL 2 - SECURING WISCONSIN

SECURE STATE SYSTEMS AND DATA BY REFINING STRATEGIES TO MITIGATE RISK FOR INDIVIDUALS AND OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING OPERATIONAL CHANGES DUE TO UNEXPECTED EVENTS.

The State recognizes that maintaining strong cybersecurity means constantly evolving as an organization. Given the number of mission-critical, 24/7 operations and life, health, and safety functions provided by the State, we must ensure that these programs and services continue even in the face of potential disruption.

Security and protection of IT systems has been recognized as the top priority for state government CIOs across the country since 2014[6]. In 2019, the Identity Theft Resource Center[7] reported that government data breaches exposed sensitive information of at least 3.6 million people. The federal Cybersecurity and Incident Response Agency regularly identifies and mitigates intrusions affecting federal, state, and local government IT systems' delivery of critical services to individuals and businesses.

As digital interaction with government services continues to grow, especially considering the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a substantial increase both in the number and type of attacks against State systems and the number of individuals accessing services online. For example, Wisconsin has seen increases in novel social engineering and malware attacks since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020.

Even minimal interruption to State government services would result in negative economic, security, health, and safety impacts to individuals and other stakeholders. By reducing risk, we will save time, money, and resources which can be reinvested into other initiatives.

OBJECTIVE 1: Strengthen cybersecurity and risk management practices.

OBJECTIVE 2: Augment enterprise and agency security governance.

OBJECTIVE 3: Assess and enhance application security.

OBJECTIVE 4: Bolster enterprise disaster recovery strategy and road map.

OBJECTIVE 5: Actively manage services to minimize potential risks to data and infrastructure.

OBJECTIVE 1: STRENGTHEN CYBERSECURITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT PRACTICES.

Proactively defending our systems requires a robust framework of policies, standards, and practices to properly implement and execute cybersecurity measures. To ease this process, the State of Wisconsin has aligned with the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Cybersecurity Framework, which includes standard controls governing key risk factors.

The State has identified several areas of focus, including establishment of a cyber-specific resilience strategy to allow the State to quickly resume operations in the event of disruption; enhancement of internal and external data privacy and governance to ease secure access by individuals to their own data; consideration of additional vulnerabilities due to a remote workforce; and discussion of a comprehensive risk management program to homogenize agency security postures and mitigate cybersecurity hazards on an enterprise basis.

We also recognize the importance of hiring and retaining a high-quality cybersecurity workforce, as recruitment and retention of skilled staff is recognized as a challenge nationally among both public-sector organizations and businesses. The "Working Wisconsin" portion of this plan provides greater detail regarding enterprise and agency efforts to position the State of Wisconsin as an employer of choice for IT professionals.

OBJECTIVE 2: AUGMENT ENTERPRISE AND AGENCY SECURITY GOVERNANCE.

The State will review and refine our internal security governance structure and process to emphasize collaboration, establishing clear roles and responsibilities with the end goal of ensuring that the State is providing effective oversight of security policies, standards, and procedures.

Secondarily, the State will establish outcome-based indicators to determine the effectiveness of its cybersecurity measures.

OBJECTIVE 3: ASSESS AND ENHANCE APPLICATION SECURITY.

In 2018, the National Association of State Chief Information Officers identified web applications as the top source[8] of state government data breaches. Given these issues, the development and maintenance of comprehensive application security strategies is critical to mitigate and prevent potential breaches.

Building on our efforts to modernize applications, these security efforts will further our goal of providing secure program delivery through the comprehensive integration of application security testing into the application development process, making application security tools available to State agencies, and establishing clear standards for the incorporation of innovative technologies like machine learning and artificial intelligence to further harden the State's application security posture. Further, the State must enhance its testing regimen for current applications to identify and remove potential vulnerabilities.

OBJECTIVE 4: BOLSTER ENTERPRISE DISASTER RECOVERY STRATEGY AND ROAD MAP.

Following any major unexpected event, the State identifies and implements lessons learned. Prior efforts include the adoption of an emergency notification system for state employees, increased adoption of remote devices, and the ongoing transition to digital-first services.

Over the coming biennium, the State will be reviewing and updating its business continuity plans. Critical components of these plans include identification of minimum business operations; creation of processes to mitigate disruptions to mission-essential efforts; documentation of roles and responsibilities among leaders, Continuity of Operations and Continuity of Government staff, and line staff; regular exercises to test the plan; and metrics to measure success. This also includes identification of any investments the State should make to bolster disaster recovery for DET and agencies.

OBJECTIVE 5: ACTIVELY MANAGE SERVICES TO MINIMIZE POTENTIAL RISKS TO DATA AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

Given the critical nature of many State IT systems, we must work proactively together to protect IT assets and data. When effectively utilized, IT services in the cloud provide an opportunity to reimagine and reengineer systems to increase operational effectiveness while lowering the risk of potential service disruption. Building an adaptive model that can flex and adjust to different types of threats will be critical to safeguarding the state's technology and data assets.

The State of Wisconsin has begun a vendor management program to provide greater consistency and accountability in providing contracted and vendor-managed services in an effort to minimize potential risk. Over the coming biennium, we will continue to expand and strengthen this program.

GOAL 3 - OPTIMIZING WISCONSIN

MODERNIZE STATE AGENCY LEGACY DATA AND TECHNOLOGY ASSETS TO ACHIEVE GREATER EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS IN DELIVERING GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND OPERATIONS.

The State of Wisconsin has an incredible opportunity over the coming biennium to move forward on transformational changes that will increase our ability to efficiently deliver services to individuals and other stakeholders.

In 2008, the National Association of State Chief Information Officers identified legacy modernization as a critical issue, citing numerous examples of outdated, capital-intensive hardware and software that was expensive to maintain and difficult to update. More than a decade later, many states are still struggling to modernize IT systems developed in the 1970s and 1980s. In Wisconsin, the State has historically served as an infrastructure provider and application developer, utilizing in-house staff and resources to develop and maintain services.

Over time, this has resulted in a patchwork of applications and services which have not kept up with changing technology, resulting in inflexible systems that are difficult to update and cumbersome for agency employees and members of the public.

As the private sector has already done, state governments are embracing commercial off-the-shelf solutions and contracted resources to provide IT infrastructure and application development services, minimizing points of failure and leveraging expertise to more effectively serve customers.

OBJECTIVE 1: Modernize legacy applications and infrastructure by encouraging the use of current and emerging technologies.

OBJECTIVE 2: Promote usage of enterprise contracts and off-the-shelf solutions, including cloud services, where demonstrable efficiencies can be gained.

OBJECTIVE 3: Develop measures that encourage greater agency productivity and efficiency.

OBJECTIVE 4: Develop common user experience for public-facing digital services across agencies.

OBJECTIVE 1: MODERNIZE LEGACY APPLICATIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE BY ENCOURAGING THE USE OF CURRENT AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES.

Over the coming biennium, we plan to increase utilization of an up-to-date, comprehensive, enterprise-level application portfolio and lifecycle management process to proactively assess and manage applications and IT services. This process will allow us to gauge the business value and technical condition of applications and more effectively prioritize modernization of State applications.

With modern infrastructure and applications, including appropriate use of cloud services, the State could more easily utilize emerging technologies like real-time analytics, machine learning, artificial intelligence, process automation, and natively mobile services to best serve individuals and other stakeholders in Wisconsin.

We will also work to make an application portfolio and lifecycle management tool available to agencies in support of these efforts.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROMOTE USAGE OF ENTERPRISE CONTRACTS AND OFF-THE-SHELF SOLUTIONS, INCLUDING CLOUD SERVICES, WHERE DEMONSTRABLE EFFICIENCIES CAN BE GAINED.

As the State of Wisconsin has steadily transitioned from agency-provided IT services to a hybrid enterprise-agency model, DET has identified numerous areas where enterprise contracts can provide significant cost savings and efficiencies to agencies, individuals, and other stakeholders.

To best determine where enterprise and off-the-shelf solutions are most appropriate, the State must establish clear criteria to guide agencies. These criteria may include not only direct costs, but could also include resiliency, redundancy, flexibility, security, sustainability, ease of use, staff time, maintenance costs, appropriateness of cloud services, and other considerations.

OBJECTIVE 3: DEVELOP MEASURES THAT ENCOURAGE GREATER AGENCY PRODUCTIVITY AND EFFICIENCY.

Integral to any successful IT program is a culture of continuous improvement and operational excellence which encourages agencies to find creative and innovative solutions to business demands. An example of this is digital self-service, which enables individuals and other stakeholders to resolve simple requests using a customer-facing application, permitting state employees to deal with complex, unique situations. This increases the number of customers who can be served with the same number of support staff.

Over the coming biennium, the State should examine its operations, including support services and infrastructure, to see how new technologies can be leveraged to promote productivity and efficiency through modernization of IT services for state agencies.

As new programs and services are brought online and new infrastructure is required, the State must utilize clear criteria to ensure that these services can withstand significant enrollment increases and still maintain high availability. Collective investment approaches should be also be explored to optimize the cost of implementing and supporting new technologies.

OBJECTIVE 4: DEVELOP COMMON USER EXPERIENCE FOR PUBLIC-FACING DIGITAL SERVICES ACROSS AGENCIES.

Individuals and other stakeholders seeking programs and services must navigate a dizzying array of federal, state, and local agencies to find the program they are seeking. Further, once they find the correct program, they must pull together the necessary documents and information to complete a successful application.

Rather than placing the burden on individuals, technology can ease this process by providing the necessary guardrails to steer them to the correct program and ensure that they have what they need to successfully receive a program or service. This includes a "no wrong door" approach to service delivery that empowers State employees to steer individuals to the correct service.

GOAL 4 - WORKING WISCONSIN

ADOPT PRACTICES THAT STRENGTHEN WISCONSIN'S STATE GOVERNMENT WORKFORCE.

The State of Wisconsin must leverage its strengths, which include the unique opportunity for all employees to have an impact in the lives of Wisconsinites. Early in his administration, Governor Evers issued an executive order[9] recognizing the value of state employees and tasking agencies to identify how they can best recognize the contributions of all employees.

Manpower Group[10] recently reported that 70% of companies are reporting talent shortages and difficulties finding qualified workers. While state government job postings[11] have risen over the last few years, the number of applicants has fallen. Younger workers[12] are choosing jobs with remote work options and flexible hours, and workplaces that value diversity, equity, and inclusion[13].

Due to accelerating innovation, employees must reskill[14] every few years to maintain critical work competencies. Further, with an average job tenure of approximately four years, employers face pressure to retain employees with in-demand skills, including key digital literacy skills.

The State's desire is to examine how we can continue to strengthen our workforce, which includes permanent remote work arrangements that allow the State to recruit from throughout Wisconsin. Our success depends on the abilities and commitment of all our employees, so it is also important to develop a knowledgeable, flexible, and proficient workforce.

OBJECTIVE 1: Integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion into all operations.

OBJECTIVE 2: Increase employee mobility and flexibility.

OBJECTIVE 3: Become an employer of choice for IT professionals.

OBJECTIVE 4: Leverage collaboration workgroups to drive innovation.

OBJECTIVE 1: INTEGRATE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION INTO ALL OPERATIONS.

The State of Wisconsin is committed to a workforce that reflects the population we serve and includes diverse talents. Key to this culture is an environment where all workers are treated with dignity and respect. In November 2019, Governor Evers issued an executive order[15] requiring the state Division of Personnel Management and individual agencies to emphasize diversity, equity, and inclusion and develop action plans that further these values.

In the private sector, numerous studies[16] have demonstrated that companies with greater diversity tend to perform better financially. To be successful, we must examine how we can ensure a welcoming environment. Ideas include the establishment of employee resource groups and the adoption of policies that encourage applicants from diverse backgrounds by widening the applicant pool beyond Dane County.

Agencies have also begun proactive outreach through the State Diversity Internship program and career fairs, as well as establishing career pathways for employees. We will also conduct a comprehensive workforce analysis, which will provide insights to develop specific strategies to build on strengths and mitigate any identified weaknesses.

OBJECTIVE 2: INCREASE EMPLOYEE MOBILITY AND FLEXIBILITY.

During the current COVID -19 pandemic, we have seen huge disruptions to typical employee routines as virtually all state employees began working from home, balancing work tasks with providing childcare and facing unprecedented restrictions to protect members of the public. This situation underscores the necessity of establishing policies that give employees latitude to complete their work.

Using modern technologies like VoIP, video conferencing, and mobile technology, staff can easily work remotely. Moving forward, the State should establish clear policies and practices that eliminate obstacles to remote work and alternative work arrangements. Not only will this better position the State during the continued uncertainty in responding to the current pandemic, but job applicants increasingly look to employers that emphasize a flexible work-life balance for employees.

OBJECTIVE 3: BECOME AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE FOR IT PROFESSIONALS.

We recognize that recruiting, hiring, and retaining great talent requires a significant investment of time and resources. To excel, we must be willing to critically examine every aspect of our work experience to support employees and provide an excellent workplace for all, as the benefits associated with investing in our workforce greatly exceed any financial costs.

While State governments[17], including Wisconsin, score highly in measures like job security, employee benefits, work impact, and advancement opportunities, simply touting our strengths is not enough. To remain truly competitive, we must address areas where we can improve.

As an example, one key area is examining our current workforce composition to identify where we can develop incumbent employees to meet current and future challenges. We can also update and optimize job classifications and position descriptions to better account for the work our employees are currently doing.

Most importantly, we must look at how we reskill and train current employees, as many of tomorrow's leaders are today's entry-level employees. This includes providing avenues for technical staff who wish to continue progressing in their careers but have no interest in becoming managers.

Finally, we must reevaluate and strengthen our partnerships with high schools, colleges and universities, private-sector employers, local governments, and federally-recognized tribes, as all represent diverse and unique populations that will enrich the work we are doing.

Finding these opportunities for continual self-renewal via modern learning strategies and digital technologies will allow our workforce to become more adept in new technologies and ready them for the future.

OBJECTIVE 4: LEVERAGE COLLABORATION WORKGROUPS TO DRIVE INNOVATION.

The State has seen benefits of providing collaboration opportunities in the workplace. Existing groups like the Wisconsin Information Sharing and Analysis Center, Application Modernization Collaboration Center, Business Intelligence Collaboration Center, State Agency Geographic Information Committee, and the DevOps Center of Excellence provide invaluable forums for agency and DET employees to share information and collaborate on key initiatives.

Moving forward, the State intends to encourage and promote the utilization of these and other affiliate groups as a platform for change.

BENCHMARKS
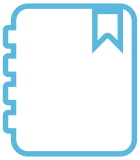
BENCHMARK 1
Renew application portfolio baseline to determine alignment with statewide strategic IT plan goals.

BENCHMARK 2
Conduct an IT workforce analysis to establish diversity, equity, and inclusion baseline.

BENCHMARK 3
80% of IT projects utilizing enterprise resources must align with one or more statewide strategic IT plan goals.

BENCHMARK 4
Complete an agency-level initial benchmark of state employee broadband internet availability to determine who is unserved, underserved, or receives adequate service to gauge telecommuting capability and aid in improving granularity in state broadband service maps.

BENCHMARK 5
Review State security policies, standards, and procedures annually with industry leaders and conduct quarterly reviews of agency compliance.

BENCHMARK 6
Complete an agency-level census of data that could be incorporated into an enterprise open data portal.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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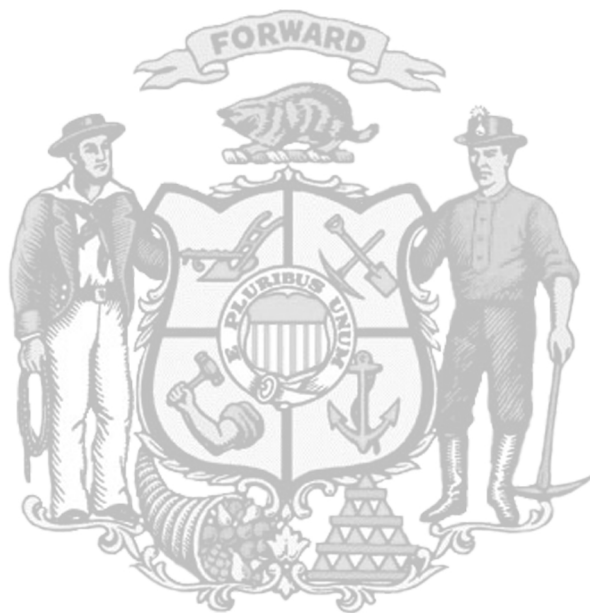
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