

Alaska State Legislature

Legislative Affairs Agency

Division of Technology and Information

Four-Year Technology Plan

2024 – 2027



Four-Year Plan

Legislative Affairs Agency

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Information Technology Profile

The Legislative Affairs Agency Division of Technology and Information's (DTI) mission is to provide technology as a service and support that enables legislative business. These technology solutions are a mixture of legislative branch applications such as BASIS, email, internet, and storage systems, as well as equipment to and support for individual offices and staff such as desktops, laptops, mobile devices, software, and infrastructure.

Due to increased technology support needs, in 2022 DTI staff increased to twenty-three full-time employees, including a dedicated Cybersecurity Specialist. New duties include managing telephone, satellite television, and security camera systems. There are also increasing support needs for fire alarm, building access, and heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. Current staff also support twenty-three legislative office locations across Alaska, from Ketchikan to Utqiagvik (Barrow).

While much of the support in these locations is handled by the Technical Assistance Center (formerly Help Desk), Technical Services, or Networking staff via telephone and remote support, occasional travel is required to provide on-site hardware support, upgrades, training, and improvements to workstations, servers, firewalls, network equipment, and wiring cable plants.

Overview of IT Duties and Responsibilities

Information Technology is organized into six sections to provide direct support to the legislature and the Alaskans participating in the legislative process.

Administration is responsible for IT asset management, budgeting, policy, personnel, and general administrative duties such as placing orders for hardware, software, supplies and contractual services.

Networking is responsible for managing the systems that provide legislative technology services such as email, network storage, internet access, security systems, and connectivity with other legislative locations. The networking staff also work closely with the Executive Branch to ensure compatibility between the different branches of government, and to address security and policy issues as needed.

The hardware and software systems that are most closely associated with the Networking section include Windows and Linux to deliver email, websites, databases, data storage, anti-virus, network switches, security cameras, firewalls, routers, Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), and multiple network circuits from a variety of telecommunication carriers who support connectivity within the legislature as well as to the internet.

Technical Services is responsible for hardware and operating system support for all legislative computer hardware devices. From laptops to printers, tablets to peripherals, Technical Services ensures the proper functioning of the legislature's technology equipment.

Technical Services specs, purchases, configures, breaks-down, moves, and maintains all computer hardware for the Legislature, Legislative Finance, Office of Victims' Rights, and the Office of the Ombudsman.

Technical Services specialists also support the House and Senate sound feeds and House chimes, as well as maintain wiring infrastructure in the Capitol and other legislative offices throughout the state.

In addition to supporting desktop computer equipment, staff maintain the voting board systems in the House and Senate Chambers, as well as other video

equipment such as projectors, Microsoft Teams Hubs, and digital video displays throughout the Capitol Complex, as well as statewide locations.

Media Services is responsible for video recording and subsequent archival of the committee process. This includes recording and broadcasting of committee meeting video as well as maintaining the cameras, microphones, mixers, and speakers for the audio system. Media Services also maintains the servers for encoding and live broadcasting.

In addition to the responsibilities with the production and distribution of the committee video, Media Services administers the legislature's internal and public-facing websites.

Programming is responsible for many of the critical services that the legislature uses including the bill production system, BASIS, and the legislature's websites. Programming is responsible for all in-house applications that assist with the legislature's workflow, as well as publishing the work of the legislature including bills and statutes.

Technical Assistance Center (TAC, formerly known as Help Desk) provides Tier 1 (telephone) and Tier 2 (on-site) support for all legislative computer users via Juneau and Anchorage staff. To provide the most effective support, TAC staff are trained on legislative computer software and hardware, as well as in the business of the legislature.

The TAC uses a variety of tools and techniques to provide support to legislative users. These include 'remote desktop' tools, network monitoring tools, and inventory systems to better identify and solve problems.

The TAC also provides classroom and individual training classes on the software and systems legislative staff use regularly.

Both the TAC and Technical Services staff assist with the semiannual moves between district offices and the Capitol. Each move requires that computer equipment be backed-up prior to being transported. Equipment is then reinstalled in the district or Capitol office location upon arrival.

Top Five Strategic Technology Initiatives 2024-2027

The growth in the legislature's use of technology continues to increase the demand for advanced services and solutions. Additionally, technology advancements require hardware, software and systems be upgraded and replaced. Few things have a cadence of change as rapid as technology. While it may be difficult to predict what technologies will exist in four years, there are trends which can guide the legislature's technology plan. The intent of the plan is to provide a technology roadmap that allows the legislature to conduct its business in as cost effective and efficient a manner as possible. New technologies are continually being created and the legislature can benefit by identifying efficiencies to address increasing workloads.

The five topics below are not the only technology issues the legislature will be dealing with over the next few years. Rather, they identify focus areas that play an important part in any technology projects the legislature pursues.

1. Value, Reliability, and Support

The introduction of Legislative Council's *IT Resources Policy* states:

The best computing industry practices indicate that the Alaska State Legislature can achieve two benefits by implementing strong IT computing standards: (1) minimize the costs to support IT services; and (2) provide efficient management of the IT computing environment.

IT is a cornerstone of any legislative or government organization. IT is not simply a tool to automate existing processes, but to support organizational changes, citizen-to-government interaction, and the preservation of the legislative process. Regardless of how the technology is used, Legislative Council's hardware and software standards have allowed the legislature to procure high quality computer hardware, industry-standard software, and identify support resources for the computing environment. Adhering to Legislative and/or Executive Branch standards ensures avoidance of excessive cost overruns. Continuing to apply standards and solicit input from the IT Subcommittee helps ensure new technologies will be cost effective, reliable, and supportable.

2. Cybersecurity and Information Risk Management

Cybersecurity risk management is an ever-present concern for both the government and private sectors. States are addressing cybersecurity by allocating funds to improve security measures, implementing specific security practices, and addressing threats to critical infrastructure. Known fraudulent attempts to access legislative systems through security devices average 16,000 hits every day. Additional nefarious attempts to gain information through email, such as “phishing,” regularly exceed 500 daily attempts.

In today’s environment, protecting against the top known threat is yesterday’s news. It is too often replaced with a new undiscovered threat in a matter of minutes, even seconds. Focusing on any single area of information security will result in missing other risks across the legislature. Currently, mobile computing introduces the highest risk area. Data is no longer isolated to internal data centers and protected networks but is accessed by a host of external mobile devices. Today, computing is essentially omni-present through smart devices like phones, tablets, and laptops which allow staff to work anywhere, at any time. Arbitrating between security and usability continues to be a challenge. Security implementation must be user-friendly while adequate to protect legislative systems, data, and information. If security is too burdensome, employees will seek other methods of accomplishing their work, putting legislative information and systems at risk.

Other imminent security threats include ransomware, phishing, social engineering, and doxing. Doxing is of particular concern in the legislative environment. It is the act of searching for public and private information with the intent of causing harm to a person’s character and credibility through public shaming. Public opinion can be shifted when confidential or internally sensitive information is targeted and inappropriately published with the intent to harm the integrity or reputation of an individual.

3. Outreach and Technological Solutions

Connecting people with technological solutions is critical. To connect people with solutions, it is important to work with clients to identify needs and determine where technology can assist. DTI intends to focus more on engaging legislative stakeholders to understand each component of the legislature from the legislative

staff, committee staff, and clerks, to bill drafters and the administrative support staff from Personnel to Accounting.

After identifying situations where technology could be deployed, DTI is responsible for creating or procuring, installing, configuring, and deploying the solution. After deployment, solutions will be regularly evaluated and maintained.

4. Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a revolutionary technology and will become an important tool for the legislature. DTI is committed to understanding AI, including what it can do, how to best implement it, and the potential for abuse, so that it can be an effective, yet safe tool for the legislature.

Current AI risks include unauthorized access, data exposure, intentionally fraudulent creations, and inadvertently false answers; DTI is dedicated to protecting the legislature from these serious risks to ensure the benefits of AI as a tool for productivity are realized.

5. Hybrid IT and Secure Government Cloud Services

Legislatures and state governments continue to pursue private cloud services as well as government-restricted commercial cloud solutions. For example, the Legislature and the Executive Branches procured government cloud services from Microsoft. This allowed commodity email services to be migrated from expensive internal systems to a subscription-based model, reducing the need for further capital investments in infrastructure. The main objectives pushing cloud adoption have been to reduce costs, accelerate procurement and deployment and allow better allocation of support resources.

The expectation is to increase productivity with fewer staff while supporting secure engagement across all devices and applications. It is no longer acceptable for legislators and staff to be office-bound to access information and communicate electronically. Externally, it is no longer acceptable for citizens to experience delays

due to distance or system processing and information availability. When, where, why, and how people work is changing. IT must continue to enhance and improve computing platform capabilities to ensure secure access to information anytime, anywhere, from any place.

Key Information Technology Projects for 2024 – 2027

1. Telephone Replacement Pilot

In 2021 the Executive Branch’s Office of Information Technology (OIT) began a process to retire the Cisco call manager phone system that also services the legislature’s phones and replace it with a statewide Microsoft phone system. The legislature is unable to use the OIT Microsoft phone system due to the rules surrounding Microsoft licensing and maintaining separate accounts. Because they must remain separate, the Division of Technology and Information shall investigate, develop, configure, install, and provide training on a replacement phone system.

2. IT Infrastructure Improvements

IT infrastructure is comprised of software, hardware, network resources, and services necessary for the operation, management, and existence of the IT environment. The infrastructure enables LAA to provide IT services and solutions to legislators, staff, and the public. If any part of the IT infrastructure is performing poorly, the legislature will struggle to move and share data in an efficient way, impeding the legislative process. Maintaining IT infrastructure at acceptable levels requires planned capital investments to ensure technology works anytime, anywhere.

3. Desktop Computer, Laptop, and Printer Refresh

Since 2003 Legislative Council has funded the acquisition of replacement computer hardware for legislative offices and support staff. Each year, DTI has replaced the oldest computers, laptops, and printers in legislative offices based upon an annual equipment review. Typically, desktop computers are replaced every four to five years; laptops are replaced every four years; and printers are replaced approximately every seven years. Suitability for replacement is based on equipment performance, serviceability, features, and repair records.

In Fiscal Year 2023, tablets were added to the hardware replacement cycle. Additionally, it was discovered that certain sections of the legislature were left out of the annual replacement umbrella. With no budget for replacement hardware, outlying Legislative Information Offices (LIOs) and the Legal Services Division were expected to use operating funds for capital expenditures to replace aging hardware. In FY2025, these sections were added to the annual hardware refresh request.

Equipment purchases are made through the Western States Contracting Alliance (WSCA) program, ensuring the best pricing and service agreements for Alaska and the other fourteen member states. In addition, the state leverages federal GSA discounts and negotiates individually with vendors for additional cost savings.

FY2025 Computer Hardware, Printer, iPad Refresh Plan

FY2025	Description	Quantity	Total
	Lenovo Tiny	25	\$30,625
	Laptop	74	\$100,492
	Monitor 27inch TiO	20	\$7,120
	Monitor 27inch T27I	90	\$21,060
	Monitor 27inch T27H	30	\$10,680
	HP Color LaserJet Printer	20	\$30,700
	iPad	15	\$12,990
Total.....			\$213,679

Refresh Year	Description	Investment
FY2024	Computer/Laptop/Printer/iPad Refresh	\$176,642
FY2023	Computer/Laptop/Printer Refresh	\$146,846
FY2022	Computer/Laptop/Printer Refresh	\$152,350
FY2021	Computer/Laptop/Printer Refresh	\$150,342
FY2020	Computer/Laptop/Printer Refresh	\$149,836
FY2019	Computer/Laptop/Printer Refresh	\$146,846
FY2018	Computer Mobility Initiative	\$0
FY2017	Computer Mobility Initiative	\$416,000
FY2016	Computer/Laptop/ Printer Refresh	\$140,000
FY2015	Computer/Laptop/Refresh	\$120,000
FY2014	Computer/Laptop/Printer Refresh	\$177,000
FY2013	Computer/Laptop/Printer Refresh	\$136,000

FY2012	Computer/Laptop/Printer Refresh	\$118,925
FY2011	Computer/Laptop/Printer Refresh	\$177,795
FY2010	Computer/Laptop/Printer Refresh	\$170,000
FY2009	Computer/Laptop/Printer Refresh	\$175,000

4. Planned Data Center Servers, Storage, and Switch Replacement

To ensure the legislature can perform its duties, equipment needs to be maintained, supported, and upgraded as necessary. Network support equipment includes devices such as:

- Network servers and software (web servers, database servers, email servers, etc.)
- Network storage
- Network switches
- Network firewalls
- Ethernet wiring
- Air-conditioning systems
- Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS) units

Each of these devices requires upgrades, repairs, and replacement over time. DTI Networking supports equipment and monitors the device’s ‘health’ as well as the equipment’s suitability to the job (specifications, features, and security).

Funding for network equipment ordinarily comes from the DTI annual budget or capital funds. DTI is currently completing a network equipment upgrade cycle, replacing network switches over ten years old and upgrading the connection from 1Gbps to 10Gbps.

DTI is in the process of upgrading network storage with more dependable and performant hardware to better serve the legislature.

5. Upgrades to Standard Computer Software Releases (Microsoft, Apple iOS, Adobe)

The legislature must maintain software at current version levels to receive critical security updates and protection from daily attempts to compromise computing assets. In 2023 the legislature began a two-year process to upgrade Microsoft Windows to the current version of Windows 11.

DTI must ensure the legislature is kept current with the latest standards and most current and appropriate version of the software on which the legislature depends for productivity.

6. Capitol Audio Visual Upgrade

Each of the committee rooms and chambers have microphones and speakers for audio recording and cameras for video. Each room system was built and added to over time and, as a result, each room has a different custom setup with different hardware of varying capabilities and age. Some equipment is older than twenty years and some room systems are failing altogether such that audio is hard to capture correctly. DTI has begun a project to refresh and standardize the equipment in all these rooms. In 2022 Legislative Council approved funding for design specifications to create an RFP to retrofit each committee room and House and Senate Chambers. This RFP will go out for proposals in the summer of 2024, with construction to be complete prior to the 2025 session.

7. Access Control Upgrade

The Capital Complex and the Anchorage Legislative Office Building (ALOB) have electronic entry access control. The ALOB has individual offices controlled through this electronic system, but the Capitol does not. DTI and LAA Maintenance have begun a project to add electronic access control to all offices in the Capitol. This will assist with physical security, as individual people can have access immediately revoked without affecting other building occupants and will allow Security to audit entry into offices as needed. This upgrade will make the need to rekey the Capitol, with its largely transient population, less urgent. This project is in the design phase and will likely be completed during the 2025 interim.

In addition, due to widespread duplication technology DTI has started a process to upgrade security on the current access control system to prevent duplication of electronic access keys, cards, and fobs. This will require the legislature to reissue new key fobs but will be a much more secure system for the future.

8. Legislature Web Presence Upgrade

When released in 2016, the new website for the Alaska Legislature gained critical attention and awards. Since then, it has received updates and added features; however, there are still sections of the website that lack uniformity and features that could be added to help the public in accessing information. DTI hopes to

update the website and some of the community features while maintaining the award-winning ease of access to information. This will be a long process with a completion goal of the beginning of the Thirty-fifth Legislature in 2027. The current stage is seeking experts to review features for inclusion and design assistance.

9. Ongoing IT Subcommittee Projects and Ideas

Legislative Council's IT Subcommittee has been and will continue to be responsible for promoting several IT initiatives to include the following: committee room enhancements, workstation mobility, enhanced Wi-Fi access, internet/intranet website improvements, annual IT hardware refresh requests, and enhanced constituent tracking services.