Evaluation of IT Service Delivery to State Agencies

Office of Technology Services • Division of Administration

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Why We Conducted This Audit

We evaluated the Office of Technology Services' (OTS) delivery of information technology (IT) services to state agencies. We conducted this audit because of feedback and concerns we received about OTS service delivery through a survey we sent to these agencies. The survey identified issues with customer service, including poor communication, slow resolution of help desk tickets, and lack of accountability and transparency. Effective customer engagement will not only benefit OTS and its customers (state agencies), but will also benefit state operations as a whole.

What We Found

Overall, we found that OTS needs to strengthen its customer-service framework to better ensure effective delivery of IT services to state agencies. Specifically, we found:

- **OTS has not developed a comprehensive list of the services it offers to state agencies and how much each service costs, as recommended by best practices. State agency management and OTS Agency Relationship Managers (ARMs) both reported not knowing the full range of services provided by OTS.** Clearly communicating services and costs to agencies would increase transparency and improve OTS' service delivery processes.

- **OTS has not defined performance expectations for each of the services it provides, or developed formal mechanisms for receiving and responding to feedback, as recommended by best practices. This limits the ability of state agencies to hold OTS accountable. In our survey of state agencies, 29 (60.4%) of 48 respondents agreed that agency-specific benchmarks or performance measures would help OTS serve their agency better.** OTS should develop and implement formal mechanisms to collect feedback for each service it provides and create a customer feedback repository so that it can analyze this information to make adjustments to its service delivery.

On November 16, 2019, a cybersecurity attack on state of Louisiana government servers resulted in service interruptions, as OTS had to shut down state agency computer systems. This audit was completed prior to that incident and does not focus on OTS' data security function. However, our IT auditors are currently assessing the effects of the cybersecurity attack, along with OTS' response to the incident.

What We Found (Cont.)

- **OTS has reduced the amount of time it takes to resolve service requests. Service desk teams reduced the overall time it took to resolve tickets from 12.4 business days in fiscal year 2016 to 2.3 business days in fiscal year 2018, and field teams reduced resolution times from 14.9 business days to 4.6 business days during the same timeframe.** However, OTS should monitor compliance with internal targets to ensure all requests are resolved in a timely manner.

- **OTS has not developed procedures for handling complex service requests, and poor internal communication between OTS sections contributes to delays in resolving these types of requests. As a result, OTS does not always respond timely or provide status updates to agencies regarding these service requests.** Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all OTS sections regarding customer engagement would improve OTS' delivery of IT services and improve relations between OTS and the agencies it serves.

- **OTS does not track all state agencies' IT projects and has not developed a process to manage IT projects, as recommended by best practices. OTS could not provide key documentation such as project plans and schedules, or payment schedules, for projects we reviewed to determine if it managed projects according to best practices.** Effective project management is important because OTS has identified a $959 million backlog for modernizing the most at-risk applications.

- **Staffing challenges, such as the high number of retirements and vacancies, affect OTS' ability to provide IT services effectively and efficiently. According to state agencies and OTS staff, positions are vacant for long periods of time, which negatively impacts agencies' operations.**   In addition, OTS' 100% cost-recovery funding model presents challenges in terms of planning for the future IT needs of state agencies.