



KATHY HOCHUL  
Governor

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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Karen Persichilli Keogh, Secretary to the Governor  
Elizabeth Fine, Counsel to the Governor

**From:** Angelo Riddick, Chief Information Officer  
Marcy Stevens, Chief General Counsel

**Subject:** Government Transparency Initiative

**Date:** October 20, 2021; *Updated* January 10, 2023

### ITS Transparency Plan

#### I. Review of Agency/Authority's Current Public Engagement

The Office of Information Technology Services (ITS) created a working group to review agency policies and procedures on transparency, in accordance with Governor Hochul's call to action. The working group identified several opportunities for ITS to improve transparency. Those opportunities are outlined herein.

As a service provider to fellow state agencies and authorities, ITS is in a unique position as it has limited direct interaction with the public, but it has an enterprise view of projects and priorities impacting State government operations. Through its role as a technology and security service provider, ITS supports State agencies and authorities in their provision of critical services to the public. Unsurprisingly, the bulk of requests ITS receives through the Freedom of Information Law ("FOIL") relate to technology procurements and cybersecurity activities.

Currently, through its website, ITS makes available to the public the statewide technology and security policies that govern State technology operations, as well as a copy of the State Technology Law, which governs and enables ITS operations. ITS is extremely proud of the incredible work being done by the Chief Information Security Office, especially bringing public awareness and providing education on cybersecurity topics. The ITS website has a robust repository of information related to cybersecurity best practices available to the public. ITS also utilizes social media to educate the public on technology and security best practices. Additionally, the ITS website also hosts information related to technology procurements, instructions for state employees on how to get assistance with common technology issues and information on ITS services and rates.

Within the last six months, ITS has undergone an extensive, top-to-bottom overhaul of both its internal and external communications processes. As a result, the agency is communicating more often and in more relevant ways with its own employees so they can feel more empowered and engaged. Among the recent improvements in this space is a regular series from the Division of Legal Affairs reinforcing the ethical responsibilities of ITS employees and a monthly communication outlining the impact of new policies on each program area's business processes. ITS employees are also routinely encouraged to submit questions directly to the agency's Chief Information Officer, who answers those questions in a public setting with approximately 3000 agency employees.

In addition, ITS is executing a more robust communications and awareness program with its more than 50 client agencies, including sending periodic emails to top agency executives on new policies, programs or services, creation of a monthly slide deck on current and upcoming ITS initiatives that may impact them, and providing agencies with more access to data on enterprise service outages and service requests. Portfolio staff meet monthly with agency executives to provide more context and answer questions about these ITS initiatives, and every communication includes specific contact information and a path to ask questions, raise concerns or provide feedback.

ITS leadership endeavors to engage with the technology community in several ways, including through membership in organizations like the National Association of State Chief Information Officers and the New York State Forum. ITS

employees often appear as speakers and panelists at events hosted by these organizations and many others to stay informed of the latest technology and security products and trends, as well as to showcase the innovative work being done in NYS. ITS has also worked with local schools and universities to educate children and young adults about issues relating to computer privacy and careers in cybersecurity.

## II. Proposed Plan to Expand Transparency and Expected Timeline

The following is an outline of the processes and policies ITS has identified for improved transparency and public accountability within its operations:

- **Recurring Reports.**
  - ITS has recently completed an effort to identify all applicable legally mandated agency reporting requirements. It has now added those reporting requirements to its Internal Controls process to ensure proper monitoring for timely compliance.
  - Timeline: Initial project completed, compliance will be continuous and ongoing.
- **Public Information.**
  - ITS is undergoing a review of internal documents and resources to identify additional materials to be added to the ITS public website. The materials under consideration include:
    - Internal policies and procedures, particularly around ethics, records management, and procurement
    - Recurring reports
    - Procurement documents, including Bid Opening Results and Awarded Contracts
    - Organizational charts and information about ITS leadership
  - Timeline: review and publication to be completed by December 31, 2021.
- **Open Data.**
  - Pursuant to Executive Order 95 issued on March 11, 2013, ITS hosts the Open Data website and publishes the accompanying handbook for the Open Data program. While the catalogue of data hosted on the Open Data Website has increased 626 percent since it launched, ITS continually seeks opportunities to improve this program. Related to this initiative, ITS will:
    - increase outreach and training to covered agencies and authorities to promote use of the Open Data Website
    - develop an Open Data User Guide for the public to allow for increased public engagement
    - build awareness of the Open Data program through a social media campaign and increased prominence on the ITS website
  - Timeline: completion by December 31, 2022.
- **Freedom of Information Law.**
  - ITS FOIL requests predominately relate to procurements. As a proactive measure, ITS will look to begin proactively posting various procurement documents on its website, which will in turn reduce the number of individual FOIL requests that require a response. ITS is also hiring an additional resource on the FOIL team to assist with decreasing the FOIL response time.
  - State Technology Law Section 106. ITS often receives request for information related to data or systems that it hosts on behalf of other state agencies and authorities. Under State Technology Law Section 106, upon receipt of such a request, ITS is obligated to forward that information to the agency or authority that owns the subject data or system. To help educate the public on this legal requirement, ITS will develop guidance and post it on the ITS website.
  - Timeline: Completion by December 15, 2021.
- **Records Retention.**
  - ITS will identify opportunities to convert paper records to electronic records to save on storage cost and space. ITS Records Retention and Records Access teams will work together to update the list of agency records consistent with records retention schedules to ensure transparency of available records.
  - Timeline: Initial review to be completed by December 31, 2021, compliance will be continuous and ongoing.
- **Project Sunlight.** ITS will work to increase agency awareness around Project Sunlight. Through this initiative, ITS will review and update its list of covered employees on a more frequent basis. ITS will also seek to

identify administrative support personnel who would benefit from training and access to the Project Sunlight database to enter data on behalf of covered employees to further drive compliance. Finally, ITS will revamp its current tracking mechanisms to ensure training obligations for newly identified covered employees are met in a timely manner.

- Timeline: initial project completed by December 31, 2021; review continuous.
- Blueprint Development.
  - As a leader in government technology, ITS, in partnership with the Governor's Office and ITS-supported agencies, has developed many applications to solve critical issues for the State. Many of these issues are not unique to New York such that these solutions could benefit other governments across the country. To continue its role as a national leader in innovation, ITS will establish a process by which it develops blueprints that outline the steps it took and considerations involved in developing important technology solutions. Where feasible, ITS will make these blueprints publicly available to serve as a guide to other organizations looking to solve similar issues.
  - Timeline: initial project completed by December 31, 2021; review continuous.
- Communications.
  - At monthly IT governance meetings with ITS-supported agencies, ITS will provide the following:
    - Overview slides and a presentation on upcoming ITS Initiatives as well as policy and security updates
    - Trend Data on Severity 1/2 Incident Resolution
    - Trend Data on Fulfillment of IT Service Requests
  - Timeline: Overview slides are currently being provided; the trend data will be included by December 31, 2021.
- Training and Employee Development.
  - The best way to increase awareness and compliance with transparency initiatives is to ensure ITS employees are aware of important agency policies and procedures. ITS is currently reviewing its annual training program and seeks to revamp the agency's orientation of new employees and ongoing training opportunities for employees. As part of this project, ITS will ensure employees receive periodic education on important topics outlined above.
  - Timeline: December 31, 2021.

ITS has already begun work on several of the items outline above. ITS anticipates making a final decision about the outstanding items by December 31, 2021; however, some of these projects will require an additional allocation of resources and strategic planning efforts such that those program improvements are anticipated to go live in 2022 pending allocation of resources.

### III. Measures of Success and Long-term Monitoring

ITS has established a working group to lead its transparency initiative with the Executive sponsors being the ITS Chief Information Officer and Chief General Counsel. Executive sponsors will be responsible for adjusting timelines, securing appropriate resources, and driving the strategic direction of the initiative. The working group is responsible for identifying and vetting projects (completed), identifying and engaging key stakeholders for each initiative, and tracking each project to completion. The working group and stakeholders will meet regularly to develop and finalize the plan for each project. The working group will report monthly on progress to the Executive sponsors.