



Office of Minnesota Information Technology Services (MNIT) Update to 2019 Evaluation Report February 2020

Problems Identified

- **Inadequate MNIT Oversight of Software Development.** MNIT’s oversight of software development projects has not been as well developed and rigorous as necessary, contributing to problems such as those in the state’s driver licensing and vehicle registration system (MNLARS). Also, MNIT has not complied with some laws regarding project oversight—such as requirements for MNIT commissioner approval of projects and for development of system standards.
- **Insufficient Legislative Oversight and Accountability.** The 2011 Legislature did not adopt explicit goals for its mandated consolidation of state IT services, and some of MNIT’s statutes are outdated; this has hindered the Legislature’s ability to hold MNIT accountable. MNIT has also provided inconsistent information on its own performance to the Legislature. In addition, the Legislature’s oversight of state IT activities has occurred in a fragmented manner.
- **Agency Dissatisfaction with Enterprise Rates and IT Budget Process.** A majority of state agencies said they were dissatisfied with the cost of MNIT’s services common to all agencies (“enterprise” services) and with the information they received from MNIT to help them budget for IT services.

Changes Implemented

- **Improvements in Rate-Setting Activities.** MNIT re-established a Services Governance Team, with increased representation from state agencies, to advise MNIT on enterprise service decisions. MNIT developed a “playbook” to improve agency understanding of the rate-setting process.
- **Improvements to Project Initiation and Oversight Processes.** MNIT established a project initiation policy to clarify the respective roles of agency and MNIT staff in IT projects. MNIT developed a formal executive approval process to authorize IT projects to “go live.” MNIT established a master contract to streamline the process agencies follow when procuring vendors for IT projects’ audits, risk assessments, and technical reviews.
- **Started Implementing Better Performance Measurement.** Most agencies have now adopted a MNIT system that tracks customer requests and MNIT’s responses to those requests. MNIT implemented a dashboard to provide MNIT’s agency-based leaders with better information on MNIT’s services to individual agencies. MNIT conducted a survey of agency leaders in 2019 and will conduct a more detailed customer survey in 2020.

Action Needed

- **Update MNIT’s Statutes.** The Legislature and MNIT should work together on updating MNIT’s enabling statutes, including clarification of which agencies are subject to MNIT’s authority.
- **Create Legislative Oversight Committees.** The Minnesota House and Senate should consider creating one or more information technology committees—for example, to ensure effective investment in state government IT systems and (as needed) to discuss cybersecurity risks with MNIT in a frank manner.