

OTTER TAIL COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES
Strategic Planning for Information Technology
Five Year Plan

May, 2007

Background

In recent years, various reports and documents have been published encouraging units of government to strategically plan for how we will utilize information technology. In the State of Minnesota, notable publications have included:

- “Local E-Government: A Best Practices Review”, a report published by the Minnesota Office of the Legislative Auditor, April 30, 2002
(See <http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/ped/bp/pe0208.htm>)
- “Getting Online Government Back on Track: How Minnesota Can Capture Savings and Improve Customer Service”, a report of the Citizens League Study Committee on e-Government Services for Minnesota, February 2003
- “Strategic Plan for Information Technology”, a report published by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, May 13, 2004 and revised in 2005 and 2006

In April 2007, the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) conducted a “County Strategic Planning Survey” of county human service agencies. The purpose of the survey is to gather information to:

Better plan for future strategic business and technology needs to help capture information about the changes counties have experienced in the past three years and the changes that will impact service delivery in the future.

In anticipation of a requirement to develop an agency and county strategic plan, this plan has been created. This plan will address how we propose to develop and expand our information technology capability so that we will be able to:

- Increase convenience and access for our agency’s customers/clients – and in the process, create savings through greater efficiency
- Expand web-based access from simple information dissemination (one-way) to:
 - Two-way communication (request and response)
 - Service and financial transactions
- Create a work environment and management philosophy that views e-government as a strategic resource rather than an agency inconvenience

E-Government: Definition and Benefits

In the OLA report referenced above, the following definition was offered:

Information or transactions provided on-line by governments to their citizens using the Internet and Web sites; it does not include government-to-business interactions, such as on-line procurement systems. Nor does [it include] “intranets” used for agencies’ internal information and communication. E-government examples range from posting board minutes to registering participants to paying fees on-line. (p. 4, Office of Legislative Auditor)

The OLA research also indicates that e-government utilization will:

1. Expand availability of information
2. Add convenience to how one can access information
3. Adds a new mode of service delivery
4. Improve the speed of delivering information or services
5. Improve timeliness and accuracy of information
6. Expose users to new information
7. Enhance civic participation
8. Save printing costs
9. Free staff to focus on more complex requests
10. Transform public services
11. Integrate data processes

Otter Tail County Human Services: Information Technology Goals

As an agency, we propose to invest more technology resources in the following areas:

- Electronic document systems management:
 - Scanning and creating digital/electronic files for all program areas
 - Purchase e-document mgmt software that will enable all data mgmt programs to interact, i.e., SSIS, MAXIS, PRISM, HealthMatch, MEC2, etc.
- Web-based access to services for clients
 - All agency application forms to be accessible on-line AND able to transact and submit this information on-line
 - Create financial/accounting systems for billing and vendor payments on-line
 - Technology/tools to help with language interpretation and forms translation
- Program and Staff Information Technology Priorities
 - Technology to support mobile workers, i.e., technology to conduct on-line transactions at client homes, court rooms and community sites
 - On-line resources/training for program and management staff
 - Data analysis and reporting tools
 - Administrative tools for tracking service contracts
- System Support
 - Additional MIS/GIS technical support and consultation
 - Close communication & collaboration between our agency, MIS and GIS, e.g.,
 - Training
 - Data entry standards
 - Database mapping
 - Use of newsletter communication
 - Emergency service alerts/information
 - Use of ITV and “web-based” training, etc.