

# Governance of Information Technology and Public Safety Communications

Second Follow-up Report  
November 2010

Office of Performance Evaluations  
Idaho Legislature



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### **Acknowledgments**

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# Governance of Information Technology and Public Safety Communications

## *Second Follow-up Report*

### **Overview**

In 2008, we released a report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on the governance of information technology and public safety communication systems in Idaho. In 2009, we conducted our first follow-up review and found that state agencies had made some progress to implement report recommendations for public safety communications but had made little progress implementing recommendations for information technology operations. This report is our second follow-up review. We have found that agencies have made significant progress implementing the remaining recommendations.

Recommendation numbers follow the format of the initial 2008 report.

### ***Information Technology***

Management and operations of information technology systems in Idaho have seen significant improvements in the last two years. Through the collaborative efforts of several state agencies, including the Department of Administration and the Information Technology Resource Management Council (ITRMC), the state has increased its sharing of technology needs, has a streamlined governance structure in information technology, and has conducted more detailed reviews of large-scale technology projects. The recommendations that have not yet been implemented require either additional resources or action by the Legislature or the Governor.

### ***Public Safety Communications***

In our 2009 follow-up review, we found that Idaho's public safety communications agencies had implemented three recommendations. Since that

review, public safety communications agencies have implemented four more recommendations. With improvements to governance and communication, these agencies have advanced their goal of meeting the state's public safety communications needs. Public safety communication agencies have also made significant progress toward meeting the intent of the other recommendations, and one recommendation remains not implemented.

## Information Technology Governance and Costs

In our initial 2008 study, we found that Idaho's overall information technology (IT) governance structure needed to be clarified and strengthened to ensure that individual agency plans aligned with the state's long-term IT goals and to ensure that IT investments were cost-effective and appropriately managed. We made five recommendations on governance, costs, and reporting. At the time of our first follow-up review in 2009, the Department of Administration and ITRMC had implemented one recommendation, and the Office of the State Controller had implemented another. Since that time, little to no progress has been made in addressing the remaining three recommendations.

***Recommendation 2.1:*** *The Legislature should formally create the Office of the Chief Information Officer and clearly define its role, responsibilities, and decision-making authority with respect to the Information Technology Resource Management Council.*

As discussed in the initial report, Idaho does not have a Chief Information Officer (CIO) or a separate information technology agency. In 2007, the director of the Department of Administration merged its IT staff with ITRMC staff to create the Office of the Chief Information Officer within the department. However, neither statute nor executive action has officially designated a state CIO.

**Status:** This recommendation has **not been implemented**.

***Recommendation 2.3:*** *The Governor should formalize through executive order the recently established process requiring the Department of Administration to ensure that information technology funding requests are aligned with state and agency plans prior to approving the requests.*

The Governor has not formalized a process to ensure that requests for funding align with state and agency plans. The intent of this recommendation was to formalize agencies' current processes for future IT plan submissions. According to the Department of Administration, an executive order from the Governor is not needed at this time.

**Status:** This recommendation has **not been implemented**.

**Recommendation 2.4:** *The Office of the Chief Information Officer (Department of Administration) should work with the Office of the State Controller to ensure that state agencies use the features of the statewide accounting system to its fullest extent in order to comprehensively track the overall state and project-related information technology costs.*

The Department of Administration and the Office of the State Controller said that they have informally met to discuss this recommendation, but they have not established a formal process to ensure that state agencies use the features of the statewide accounting system to its fullest extent. The department has been working with the Division of Financial Management to require better reporting from agencies with IT requests. In addition, the Office of the State Controller emphasizes the importance of accurate IT expenditure reporting in its training courses.

According to the Office of the State Controller, the Governor or the Division of Financial Management should first *require* that state agencies use the detailed accounting system codes to accurately track the overall state and project-related IT costs.

**Status:** This recommendation has **not been implemented**.

## Large-Scale Information Technology Projects

During our initial study and our first follow-up review, the Department of Administration and ITRMC were beginning to develop procedures to identify and approve state IT projects. Since that time, the department and ITRMC have successfully implemented two of our three recommendations aimed at coordinating large-scale IT projects.

**Recommendation 3.1:** *The Office of the Chief Information Officer (Department of Administration) should work collaboratively with the Information Technology Resource Management Council to develop clear roles and responsibilities, as well as policies, procedures, and criteria for the review and approval of large-scale information technology projects. This process should include a formal assessment of whether projects meet the established criteria and whether projects are recommended for approval.*

In 2009, ITRMC created a task force to develop selection criteria for approving large-scale IT projects. The task force developed this criteria based on the overall project portfolio, which includes the total cost, the number and types of smaller projects within a larger project, and the fiscal year that large-scale

projects are scheduled to begin. The task force plans to meet and review the selection criteria to see if changes in criteria are needed once the projects approved in fiscal year 2010 have been completed.

**Status:** This recommendation has been **implemented**.

**Recommendation 3.2:** *The Office of the Chief Information Officer (Department of Administration) and Information Technology Resource Management Council should ensure that project evaluation criteria include compliance with agency and state information technology plans, agency strategic plans, and council standards, as well as sound analyses of lifecycle costs, benefits, risks, and project alternatives.*

ITRMC evaluated several large-scale IT projects using the criteria of this recommendation. Each project ITRMC reviewed included an assessment of the proposed timeline, risks and benefits, costs and funding, and an explanation of how the project will support the agency's overall mission.

**Status:** This recommendation has been **implemented**.

**Recommendation 3.3:** *The Office of the Chief Information Officer (Department of Administration) should create a project management office to provide oversight and assistance for large-scale information technology projects. Criteria should be developed to determine the level of oversight and assistance required for each large project, based on state agency project management needs and skills.*

The intent of this recommendation calls for a separate office to assist and oversee all of Idaho's large-scale IT projects. The project management office should work directly with relevant agencies to determine the level of assistance and oversight needed.

As discussed in recommendations 3.1 and 3.2, the Department of Administration and ITRMC have developed criteria for selecting and providing oversight of large-scale IT projects during the planning phase. However, this minimal oversight becomes almost non-existent once a project begins. Although the department agreed with this recommendation, officials said that insufficient resources have prevented its implementation.

**Status:** This recommendation has **not been implemented**.

## **Information Technology Services Consolidation**

To avoid unnecessary duplication of IT services and to ensure agency IT needs are cost-efficient, we made two recommendations, one of which has been implemented. Similar to recommendations 3.1 and 3.2, the Department of

Administration and ITRMC should work cooperatively to develop processes, procedures, and criteria for consolidating IT systems.

**Recommendation 4.1:** *The Office of the Chief Information Officer (Department of Administration) and the Information Technology Resource Management Council should develop policies to articulate the process they will use to select which systems will be consolidated or shared and clearly identify their respective roles and responsibilities.*

The status of a recommendation is considered **addressed** if the agency's solution resolved the issue of the finding.

According to the Department of Administration, the Governor has directed that government technology systems should be consolidated when appropriate. In accordance with the Governor's directive, the department and ITRMC plan to formally identify criteria when IT systems are considered for consolidation. However, instead of formally identifying criteria, ITRMC relies on a subcommittee to discuss potential projects. According to department staff and committee members, the subcommittee functions as both the established policy and process for consolidation decisions. Most consolidation efforts occur informally after the meeting when agency personnel discuss their current and upcoming projects. If the Legislature or the Governor decide to mandate more consolidation, the ITRMC subcommittee should develop written policies, similar to the process used in recommendation 3.1, when making consolidation decisions.

**Status:** This recommendation has been **addressed**.

**Recommendation 4.2:** *The Office of the Chief Information Officer (Department of Administration), with support and final approval from the Information Technology Resource Management Council, should develop a detailed plan for consolidating common IT services that should include the following criteria:*

- *Steps for collecting and verifying information and cost data for identified consolidation or shared services projects*
- *An evaluation of the costs and benefits of building on the existing infrastructure of shared services and consolidations*
- *Development of requirements and criteria for reviewing and approving consolidation initiatives that are aligned with leading practices for reviewing and approving large-scale IT projects*

The Department of Administration and ITRMC agree with the recommendation and intend to implement it within the next few years as resources become available. The department has indicated that implementation will involve extra resources and considerable work.

Additionally, the department is making efforts to consolidate technology services wherever possible within current resources. The department is trying to merge the technology support and staff of seven small agencies into the department and estimates that this consolidation will save over \$200,000 in personnel costs annually.

**Status:** This recommendation has **not been implemented**.

## Planning for Statewide 911 Communication Needs

Idaho's public safety communications agencies continue to update the 911 capability of the public safety answering points by using grant funds appropriated by the 2008 Legislature. Public safety officials plan to move all answering points to phase II compliance by 2012 but will need to identify other funding sources before they can transition to *next generation 911*. Additionally, these officials told us that the administration of 911 fees remains at the local level with no plans to change the current system. Exhibit 1 provides an explanation for some common public safety communications terms.

***Recommendation 6.1:** The Emergency Communications Commission should develop a comprehensive strategic plan that establishes statewide goals and timelines for phase II compliance throughout Idaho and identifies specific strategies it will use to help local governments achieve these goals. This plan should be updated annually and presented to the Legislature.*

The Emergency Communications Commission published a strategic plan in July 2009. The commission presented this strategic plan as part of its annual report to the Legislature in February 2010, which detailed the 911 technologies of Idaho's public safety answering points.

As of April 2010, 33 of 46 of the state's public safety answering points have enhanced 911 (E911) capability, and 19 of those answering points are phase II compliant. The commission has obtained grant funding to move eight more answering points to E911 capability in 2010. Twenty-seven answering points still need to transition to phase II compliance. The commission anticipates all answering points will be phase II compliant by November 2012.

Commission officials said they will need to find a new funding source to transition to *next generation 911* because the revenue stream for moving all answering points to phase II compliance sunsets in 2014.

**Status:** This recommendation has been **implemented**.



**EXHIBIT 1 EMERGENCY SERVICES TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

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Term	Definition
Public safety answering points	Centers that receive 911 calls. Operators send first responders (police, fire, and emergency medical services) to a caller's location.
Basic 911	An emergency call from a land line or cell phone is automatically connected to the nearest answering point. The caller must verbally provide the telephone number and location.
Enhanced 911 (E911)	An emergency call from a land line is automatically connected to the nearest answering point and the operator receives the telephone number and address.
Wireless phase I	An emergency call from a cell phone is automatically connected to the nearest answering point and the operator receives the telephone number and the location of the nearest cellular tower.
Wireless phase II	An emergency call from a cell phone is automatically connected to the nearest answering point and the operator receives the telephone number and the location of the caller within 50 to 300 meters.
Next generation 911	Enhances the features and functions of E911. For example, someone in an emergency could text message an answering point and receive services.

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Source: Office of Performance Evaluations.

***Recommendation 6.3:*** *The Legislature should strengthen accountability over the collection, distribution, and expenditure of 911 fees. This may be accomplished by either:*

- *replacing the current local fee collection system with a central system within the Emergency Communications Commission and requiring local governments to report to the commission on their use of 911 funds; or*
- *authorizing the Emergency Communications Commission to require that local governments submit annual reports to the commission with the results of their 911 fund audits, detailing the amount of the fees collected, funds expended, and use of the funds.*

Officials at the Emergency Communications Commission said they do not anticipate recommending changes to the accountability structure for the collection, distribution, and expenditure of 911 fees for several reasons:

1. The commission does not believe it has the staffing or resources necessary to manage fees centrally.

2. The commission believes that the annual audits taking place in the counties are a sufficient accountability measure.
3. The commission believes that local governments are in a better position to understand their own unique needs and therefore, changes to centrally manage 911 fees would not be supported.

**Status:** This recommendation has **not been implemented**.

## Planning for Statewide Public Safety Interoperability

Idaho's public safety communications agencies continue to make progress toward developing a statewide communications system. In 2009, public safety officials created district interoperability governance boards in an effort to establish a governance model that includes the necessary support from local stakeholders. These officials are migrating counties and public safety agencies to more technologically advanced systems that promote interoperability; however, they have more work to do before fully integrating all radio infrastructures into a seamless system.

***Recommendation 7.1:** The Public Safety, Education and Communications Governance Council and the Statewide Interoperability Executive Council should continue efforts to formally establish their respective policy authority, roles, and responsibilities. These efforts should specify what authority each council will have in the planning effort for the statewide interoperable radio system and how decisions will be made for planning, construction, maintenance, and funding the new system.*

**Practitioner-driven governance** ensures all stakeholders participate in the decisions and allocation of interoperable communication resources for all jurisdictions.

The Statewide Interoperability Executive Council was awarded a federal grant in 2009 to create practitioner-driven governance for interoperable communications.<sup>1</sup> Based on national best practices, public safety officials organized governance authority into six district interoperability governance boards in 2009. Public safety communications officials report that the district boards have adopted their

**Interoperability** refers to the ability of emergency responders to talk to each other in real time and to coordinate efforts during a routine incident, disaster situation, or special event.

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<sup>1</sup> Under federal mandate, Idaho must have a practitioner-driven governance to continue receiving federal funding for interoperable communications.

charters, by-laws, and memorandums of understanding. They will be used to create the foundation for state governance.

**Status:** This recommendation has been **implemented**.

**Recommendation 7.2:** *Following completion of the current needs assessment, the Public Safety, Education and Communications Governance Council and the Statewide Interoperability Executive Council should complete a clear, detailed analysis of the project options (e.g., 700 MHz or hybrid system). This analysis should include the following elements:*

- *A detailed analysis of how the projects options meet the Statewide Interoperability Executive Council’s strategic goals and the operational needs of both state and local public safety agencies*
- *A detailed analysis of the life cycle costs, benefits, and risks of each project alternative*

Public safety officials have indicated that the district interoperability governance boards are assessing their respective district’s goals and needs. In turn, the Statewide Interoperability Executive Council continues to follow the recommendations of the statewide needs assessment completed in 2008. Recommendations from the statewide and district assessments will include the needs of state and local public safety agencies.

**Status:** This recommendation is **in process**.

**Recommendation 7.3:** *The Public Safety, Education and Communications Governance Council and the Statewide Interoperability Executive Council should clearly articulate how the planning, construction, funding, and maintenance of the new interoperable communications system will be divided between state and local governments. The lead planning entity should build on the planning work completed to date (Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program, I-C-A-WIN) and develop a detailed strategic plan for the selected interoperable radio system. The strategic plan should identify goals, objectives, schedules, roles, responsibilities, and strategies for planning, constructing, funding, and maintaining the statewide system. This plan should also have measures to track achievement of the plan goals, such as goals for reaching specific levels of interoperability within identified timeframes.*

The status of a recommendation is considered **in process** if it is being actively pursued by the agency.

In April 2010, public safety officials indicated that 30 of 44 counties were in various stages of transitioning to a 700 megahertz (MHz) radio frequency

system. Additionally, the Idaho State Police has been developing a 700 MHz system. The State Police is the primary public safety communications agency, and public safety officials believe that if a migration plan can be developed for the State Police, other agencies can use the same model to migrate to a 700 MHz system. These officials acknowledge that they will most likely not meet their 2012 internal goal of upgrading all agencies to level 5 interoperability.<sup>2</sup> However, public safety communications agencies continue to work toward creating sustainable interoperability.

**Status:** This recommendation is **in process**.

***Recommendation 7.5:** The Statewide Interoperability Executive Council should add more representation from local public safety agencies in smaller jurisdictions so stakeholder input is evenly balanced between large and small local governments.*

The Statewide Interoperability Executive Council is balancing stakeholder input between large and small local governments, starting at the local level. With the on-going implementation of practitioner-driven governance, representation begins at the district (i.e., local) level. The membership of the six district interoperability governance boards includes representation from local stakeholders and federal and tribal partners. Additionally, the Statewide Interoperability Executive Council reported that it plans to add members of the district governance boards to its membership and has forwarded that recommendation to the Governor.

**Status:** This recommendation has been **implemented**.

***Recommendation 7.6:** The Public Safety, Education and Communications Governance Council and the Statewide Interoperability Executive Council should continue to actively engage the federal government agencies operating within Idaho and the state's Native American tribal governments in the planning process.*

The Statewide Interoperability Executive Council reported that it receives support from both its federal and tribal partners through volunteer hours: the council plans to reseal a tribal representative by early 2011. Additionally, the membership of at least two of the district interoperability governance boards includes members of the state's Native American tribal governments.

**Status:** This recommendation has been **implemented**.

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<sup>2</sup> The federal government has developed a continuum of different levels of communication. Level 1 means that extra radios are on hand that can work with the radio equipment of other agencies. Level 5 means that Idaho would have a seamless system that provides communication access for all agencies regardless of differences in radio technologies or

## Collaborative Efforts of Information Technology and Public Safety Communications

In our initial report, we found that questions of leadership and governance were uncertain as Idaho addressed new and emerging information technology and public safety communications issues. In our first follow-up report, we found that the Department of Administration, ITRMC, the Military Division, and the Public Safety, Education and Communications Governance Council had increased their collaboration efforts. Since the release of our initial report, various IT and public safety communications agencies have made concerted efforts to improve communications and implement both recommendations.

***Recommendation 8.1:*** *The Office of the Chief Information Officer (Department of Administration), with guidance provided by the Information Technology Resource Management Council, should lead the effort to develop a detailed strategic plan to integrate the state's current and future broadband networks. The Office of the Chief Information Officer should closely collaborate with the Military Division and the Public Safety, Education and Communications Governance Council to ensure that unique public safety communication needs are met.*

The Department of Administration is phasing out its current broadband network and plans to have a contract signed for a new network in the near future. The new network will incorporate state agencies into a single network that includes public safety agencies.

As discussed in our first follow-up report, ITRMC, the Department of Administration, the Governance Council, and the Military Division have increased their communication by adding members to each other's councils and continually discussing common needs. The discussions have included how the department and ITRMC would manage the state's broadband network. Plans were also discussed about including the Military Division and other public safety agencies in the network.

**Status:** This recommendation has been **implemented**.

***Recommendation 8.2:*** *The Information Technology Resource Management Council should establish a subcommittee (in consultation with the Office of the Chief Information Officer and the Public Safety, Education and Communications Governance Council) that is charged with monitoring changes in communications technology, assessing the long-term impact of changes on the state's communications systems, and integrating the changes into the strategic plan.*

In 2009, ITRMC reviewed the roles and responsibilities of its subcommittees and assigned the duties outlined in this recommendation to its executive advisory committee.

**Status:** This recommendation has been **implemented**.

**Recommendation 8.3:** *The Public Safety, Education and Communications Governance Council should establish a joint workgroup with the Statewide Interoperability Executive Council and Emergency Communications Commission to study the common communications needs of public safety answering points and the proposed public safety interoperable radio system in light of impending changes in communications technology. This joint workgroup should prepare a state level plan that includes recommendations for state governance of, and planning for, all current and future 911 communications functions. One objective should be to determine whether the Statewide Interoperability Executive Council and Emergency Communications Commission should be combined.*

The Bureau of Homeland Security reports that the chairs of the Public Safety Education and Communications Governance Council and the Statewide Interoperability Council will charter a working group in 2010. The bureau states that until the governance structure matures, it does not make sense to consolidate at this time.

**Status:** This recommendation is **in process**.

## Office of Performance Evaluations Reports, 2008–Present

Publication numbers ending with “F” are follow-up reports of previous evaluations. Publication numbers ending with three letters are federal mandate reviews—the letters indicate the legislative committee that requested the report.

<u>Pub. #</u>	<u>Report Title</u>	<u>Date Released</u>
08-01	Governance of Information Technology and Public Safety Communications	March 2008
08-02F	State Substance Abuse Treatment Efforts	March 2008
08-03F	Virtual School Operations	March 2008
09-01	Public Education Funding in Idaho	January 2009
09-02F	Higher Education Residency Requirements	January 2009
09-03	Idaho Transportation Department Performance Audit	January 2009
09-04	Feasibility of School District Services Consolidation	February 2009
09-05F	School District Administration and Oversight	February 2009
09-06F	Use of Average Daily Attendance in Public Education Funding	February 2009
09-07F	Child Welfare Caseload Management	February 2009
09-08F	Public Education Technology Initiatives	February 2009
09-09F	Management in the Department of Health and Welfare	March 2009
09-10F	Governance of Information Technology and Public Safety Communications	April 2009
10-01	Operational Efficiencies in Idaho's Prison System	January 2010
10-02	Increasing Efficiencies in Idaho's Parole Process	February 2010
10-03F	Use of Average Daily Attendance in Public Education	March 2010
10-04	Governance of EMS Agencies in Idaho	November 2010
10-05F	Governance of Information Technology and Public Safety Communications	November 2010

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