ECONOMIC SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Build IT Capacity

2015-17 BIENNIAL BUDGET

Request	FY16	FY17	15-17
FTE	5.0	5.0	5.0
GF-State	$281,000	$281,000	$562,000
Total	**$562,000**	**$562,000**	**$1,124,000**

DECISION PACKAGE SUMMARY

The Economic Services Administration (ESA) requests funding and FTEs in order to invest in critical information technology (IT) infrastructure and process improvements. By funding this request, ESA is expected to be better equipped to handle legislative, stakeholder, and customer demands for IT solutions.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

ESA serves as the IT steward for the application systems, infrastructure and data needed to support public assistance programs and the accurate provision of cash, medical, food, and child care benefits. The IT Solutions team provides development and maintenance of public facing websites and applications to support our business partners and stakeholders. Additionally, the team is responsible for security, disaster recovery, virtualization of our server environment, and supporting desktop support and infrastructure to over 4,500 staff within ESA.

With increasing services and demands, the team is unable to provide the level of support required from stakeholders and customers. The current capacity of the IT organization is not commensurate with the capacity needed. As high priority initiatives and change requests come through, ESA IT is forced to pull its limited resources from the day-to-day and scheduled workload to focus on new and changing projects.

High priority items often require a quick fix to a complicated process. Over time, these quick fixes have turned into long term solutions, and have required additional workload to ensure compatibility with other ESA systems. The increased demand for IT services without building capacity has hampered ESA's ability to strategically deploy its resources and forces the IT Solutions team to function in an inefficient and reactionary mode.

For years, ESA's default response to proposed legislation with IT impacts has been to delay other projects in order to meet the newly legislated need. Without additional capacity, ESA IT will be forced to continue to delay critical system maintenance and further delay or forgo scheduled improvements.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

ESA will hire five FTEs to help build IT Solution's capacity to respond to critical requests, while strategically managing its staff to perform regular required maintenance on all the systems that are supported by IT Solutions. Specific initiatives that this request will support include:

- Dedicate staff to completing modernization efforts already underway.

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- Dedicate staff resources to apply best practices to all efforts, including the quick fix efforts that often times have required a higher level of maintenance.
- Dedicate staff resources to adhere to IT system lifecycle best practices and project management principles when estimating work efforts and completing work. Often due to time constraints, IT Solutions staff are asked at times to provide a 'best case' scenario, resulting in re-work which ultimately consumes more resources and time.
- Dedicate staff resources to conduct internal quality process improvement and Lean activities to address long standing activities that would benefit from change, as well as identify specific deliverables. Currently, the focus is on external stakeholders and customer needs, which leaves minimal time for critical system maintenance and improvements for long term health.

The staff will primarily focus on building capacity for systems supporting our mission essential programs as well as systems routinely modified to meet evolving business needs. These systems include the Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES) (as well as aces.online), Washington Connection, and eJAS. ACES is the eligibility system supporting public assistance determinations for cash, medical and food programs; Washington Connection is the online portal providing electronic means for people to apply for benefits, submit reviews, report changes, and access additional information using their secure personal account; and eJAS which is the case management system for the WorkFirst and Basic Food Employment and Training programs.

The activities would include conducting in-depth system and IT processing analysis to identify existing processes that have been in place for many years, which are no longer the most efficient nor support long term goals. After completing the analysis and assessment, work will include determining the most advantageous path to perform the necessary modifications. Modifying outdated processes and creating long term efficiencies will result in an overall benefit to the organization, stakeholders, and ultimately the public ESA serves.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The budget request supports Department of Social and Health Service (DSHS) Goal 5: Public Trust – Strong management practices will be used to ensure quality and efficiency

The decision package is essential to implementing the Economic Service Administration's Strategic Objective 5.2: Application processing timeliness will meet or exceed Federal Standards of Promptness.

This request supports the Results Washington goal 5 to support an effective, efficient & accountable government. By adequately staffing ESA's critical IT systems, ESA can more adequately meet legislative needs, respond to customer and stakeholder needs, and support the DSHS mission.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACT

Stakeholders will see quicker resolution to their change requests and higher quality products from ESA IT.

DSHS VISION
People are healthy · People are safe · People are supported · Taxpayer resources are guarded
DSHS MISSION
To transform lives
DSHS VALUES
Honesty and Integrity · Pursuit of Excellence · Open Communication · Diversity and Inclusion · Commitment to Service