MINNESOTA IT SERVICES

Q2 2020

Quarterly Report

Information Technology for Minnesota Government

Note from the Commissioner

In April, I passed my one-year mark as Commissioner of Minnesota IT Services (MNIT) and CIO for the State of Minnesota. I am incredibly proud of the work that this agency and its leaders have co-created with our partners in that year, and I look forward to all that we can accomplish in the future. Whether it is outfitting warehousing for PPE (personal protective equipment), developing new contact tracing solutions, or helping people find jobs, technology continues to be at the center of how we connect people to the services they need. We already see first-hand the role that innovative technology solutions play in supporting our customers, and we need to continue to find creative ways to support evolving needs. We can also take what we learn from our circumstances to evolve for the future – the future of our workforce, the future of our economy, and the future of our state. The need for digital services and data-driven decisions will not diminish as we move out of this crisis. We are investing in AI-based chat bots to help Minnesotans find better services, we are prioritizing online and mobile services, and we are ensuring that data is the forefront of every decision of our response.

Through the partnership with the Governor's Blue Ribbon Council on Information Technology, a focus on strategic planning, and new leadership to implement these changes across our CIO office, MNIT is committing to this new normal and new set of expectations for how the state leverages technology.

Contents

Planning

Tactical Plan

Throughout the past quarter, MNIT's COVID-19 response allowed for rapid completion of tactics from the 2020 Tactical Plan. The first tactic to be completed required MNIT to hold Town Halls in 2020. Based on the successful engagement of these town halls, we plan to expand on the original goal and increase the frequency of meetings from quarterly to bi-monthly engagements in order to match the need for increased engagement of remote workers.

In other areas, the intent of the tactic is completed, and we are expanding how the goal can move forward with our current work. For example, we made substantial growth in our Digital Estate goal area, which seeks to elevate the data behind state systems for informed decision making, through the increased use of reporting and metrics, and MNIT will now overhaul the initial solution to further improve our processes.

Strategic Plan

MNIT will finalize and release the agency's Strategic Plan in Q3 2020. Our Strategic Plan aligns our work with the vision, mission, guiding principles, and priorities laid out in the Governor's One Minnesota Plan. It establishes a framework that enables us to hold ourselves accountable for achieving our long and short-term strategic goals. Our plan is a living document that guides the actions of MNIT's leadership, management, staff and partners who all help to carry out our mission and enable our contribution to the One Minnesota Plan. The Strategic Plan will focus on five goals areas:

- Cultivate a holistic and Connected Culture of work
- Fortify the value and delivery of projects and initiatives
- Transform the citizen experience through future-focused services
- Elevate Minnesota's Digital Estate
- Bolster successful state cybersecurity efforts

Notable achievements, awards, and events

Digital Accessibility Awareness Day

On May 21, the State of Minnesota celebrated Digital Accessibility Awareness Day as proclaimed by Governor Tim Walz. MNIT's Office of Accessibility is charged with overseeing the implementation of accessibility standards for all executive branch employees and employers. MNIT uses digital accessibility to make information more useful and usable, and joins the world in to celebrate digital accessibility in conjunction with Global Accessibility Awareness Day. To showcase the state's role in digital accessibility, MNIT's Office of Accessibility conducted a live interview event: "Stories of Inclusion: State Government Accessibility." The event emphasized how the State of Minnesota ensures digital accessibility for Minnesotans and state workers across state agencies.

Blue Ribbon Council on IT

On June 30, Governor Tim Walz signed Executive Order 20-77, which extended the tenure of the state's Blue Ribbon Council on Information Technology through February 2021. Since the Council was established, its members have lent their time and expertise to develop a strong list of recommendations pertaining to state technology efforts. The Blue Ribbon Council's June 2020 report details its recommendations for state technology, focused on topics such as cybersecurity, data privacy, modernization, and the development of a strong state IT workforce. The membership of the Blue Ribbon Council is made up of IT leadership from the private sector, state representatives and senators, and public-sector IT and government leaders. Rick King, chief operating officer for technology at Thomson Reuters and previously a member of the state's Technology Advisory Committee, serves as the Chair of the Blue Ribbon Council.

Leadership Updates

MNIT announced the appointment of two Assistant Commissioner positions. Zarina Baber is appointed as an Assistant Commissioner for Project Portfolio Management, and Rohit Tandon is appointed as Assistant Commissioner and the State's Chief Information Security Officer (CISO). MNIT has worked collaboratively with state agency leaders and members of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Council on Information Technology to develop strategies to modernize state technology and associated business processes, strengthen the State's cybersecurity defenses, and leverage the power of technology to transform government service delivery. These leadership changes are the next step in that process, as these strategies shift from development to implementation phases.
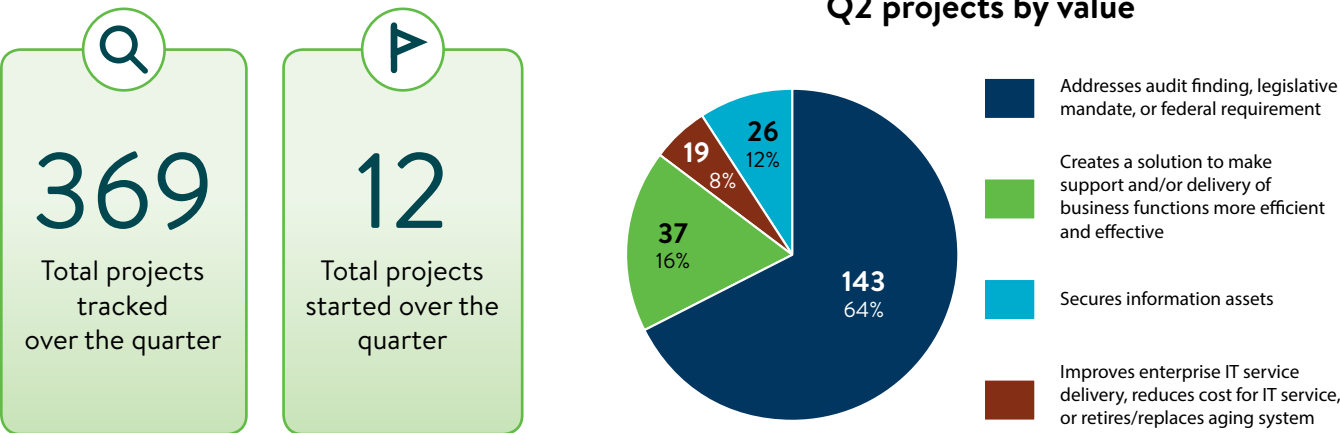
Emerging technology: Live Events

Collaborative technology allows employees to stay connected while working remotely. At the State of Minnesota, we are using the tools to hold meetings, work on shared documents, instant message, and more. At the onset of COVID-19, the state rapidly rolled out an adoption strategy for executive branch employees that included training, communication, and customer service strategies. MNIT created a short-term, multi-disciplinary team to lead the adoption and training of collaboration and conferencing tools, as well as helping agencies choose a solution that fit their needs. During the team's existence, they conducted trainings for over 7,854 individuals across 50 sessions.

One component of collaborative technology that MNIT is working with agency partners to implement across the executive branch is the use of large-audience live events. As MNIT staff are typically spread across 90 physical locations, digital town halls have been a critical component to all-staff communication. During COVID-19, and the largescale expansion of telework at the state, the need has only grown. With the recent adoption of a new live event tool in March, MNIT dramatically increased its participation in these all staff events from 600 employees in March to 1,580 employees in April. MNIT spread its expertise of these tools, ensuring that all state agencies have access to this emerging technology, with the creation of a resource guide for planning and executing live events, which has been shared and implemented, or with plans to implement, at multiple state agencies and boards. The use of collaborative technology and Town Halls also ensures that MNIT sustains its Connected Culture through the new remote work environment.
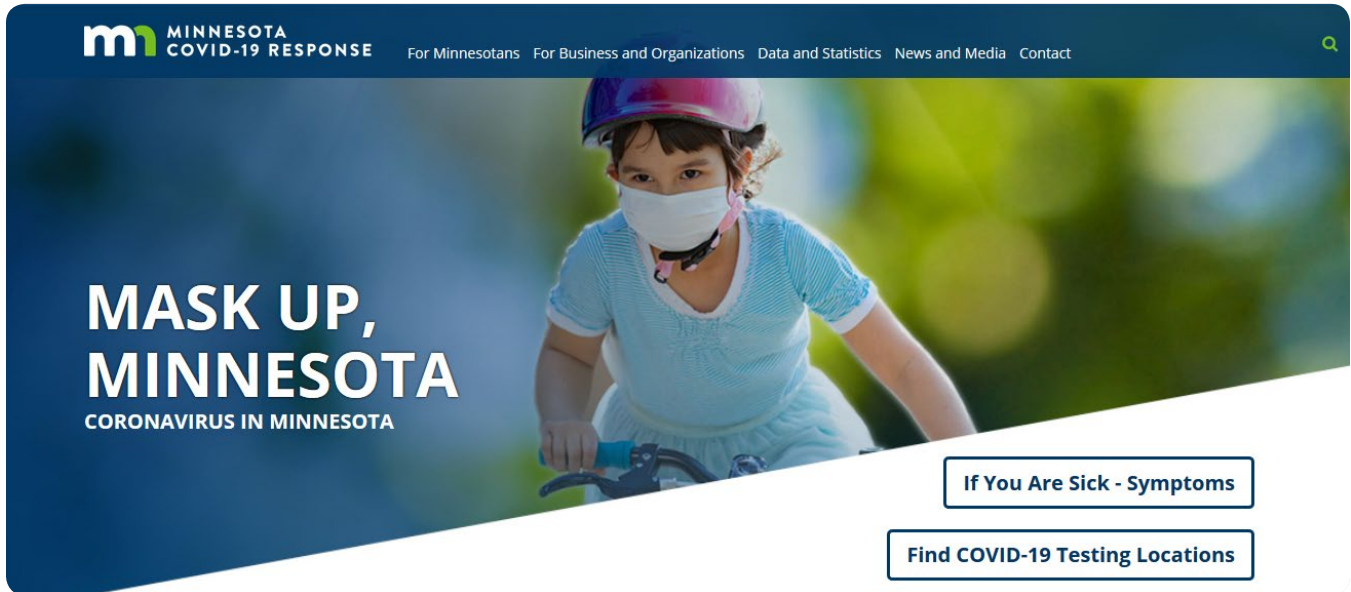
Agency updates

Project Management Office

Over the quarter, MNIT's Project Management Office (PMO) tracked the completion of 13 projects across nine Executive branch agencies, boards, commissions, and councils. MNIT defines a project as "a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service or result. It has a start date, specific goals and conditions, defined responsibilities, a budget, a plan, and end date." These projects range from public-facing applications to internal-facing IT infrastructure endeavors.

369
Total projects tracked over the quarter

12
Total projects started over the quarter

Q2 projects by value

- **143** 64% — Addresses audit finding, legislative mandate, or federal requirement
- **37** 16% — Creates a solution to make support and/or delivery of business functions more efficient and effective
- **26** 12% — Secures information assets
- **19** 8% — Improves enterprise IT service delivery, reduces cost for IT service, or retires/replaces aging system

NOTABLE PROJECTS

Website Development

Throughout the state's COVID-19 response, the executive branch strives to be transparent with data about the pandemic response and eliminate government silos, providing Minnesotans critical access to state systems and information. This access requires strong communication between government and citizens that is focused on reaching vulnerable communities with the information they need. MNIT, alongside our agency partners, brought the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic to life by rapidly collating content and systems into central online locations that provides the right information to the right constituent at the right time using a digital solution as the primary publication medium.

MNIT delivered two primary websites. First, the state's COVID-19 website launched on April 6, 2020, and the Stay Safe MN site launched on June 9, 2020. The sites highlight the governor's daily briefings, Executive Orders, the pandemic responses and preparations, and FAQs. These sites were developed rapidly and hold more than 4,000 pages of information. MNIT continues publishing proactive daily information for affected communities, including frequent updates about how Minnesotan's can receive economic and social support.

These websites are seeing nearly 5,000,000 visits a day, and MNIT has added additional memory, site monitoring tools, and servers to ensure that Minnesotans have access to the information they need. The websites are built to with the citizens' needs in mind. Mobile responsive, with the use of chat bots and a robust search feature, and designed to first answer the questions of Minnesotans, rather than provide information categorized by state agency. On the Stay Safe MN website, Minnesotans looking to participate safely in sports at a park will need recommendations and guidelines collated by the Governor's Office, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Health, rather than as separate entities. These sites help our citizens, visitors, and businesses navigate the systems and data that are critical for them in this challenging time.

MN Symptom Screener

A unique collaboration between Target Corp, Minnesota IT Services, and the Minnesota Safety Council created a digital tool that allows businesses to screen customers and employees for COVID-19 symptoms. The MN Symptom Screener is a web-based tool that allows businesses to enter non-personal health information to help make a determination about someone entering their facility. MN Symptom Screener uses a few simple questions and provides the option to record a daily temperature check.

By aggregating and synthesizing this anonymous data, the MN Symptom Screener tool provides organizations with a daily snapshot of the health indicators of people about to enter the workplace. The tool is available at no cost to businesses and organizations statewide. On its release date, 591 organizations signed up for the MN Symptom Screener.

IT Service Delivery for State Government Partners

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, MNIT is embracing new ways to connect with our agency partners. Having addressed the immediate needs of state partners in March, our second quarter focused on using our new ability to scale services to respond to emerging needs, while getting back to our regular projects and priorities. We already see first-hand the role that innovative technology and solutions play in supporting our customers, and we need to be creative and innovative to support evolving needs.

Hardware support and delivery continues to be a priority for our service delivery teams. MNIT's Enterprise Service Workstation Deployment evaluated how to replace computers knowing that many people would be working from home for the foreseeable future – so we turned to curbside pickup. Following a pilot deployment with the Department of Employment and Economic Development's Vocational Rehab Services, MNIT is currently deploying about 30 computers per day. We also created a set of instructions to provide safe hardware support. The service was by appointment-only, and customers had to stay behind a physical barrier, for the limited interactions with MNIT staff.
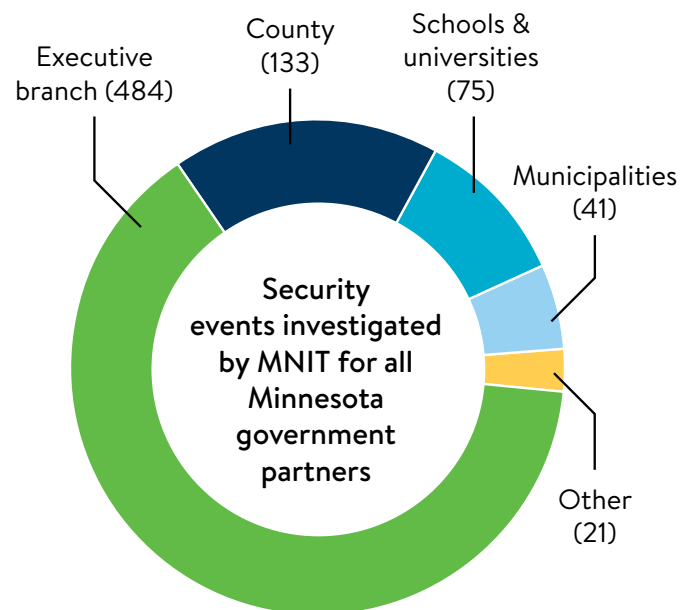
While meeting these service delivery needs, MNIT continues to work with our agency partners to meet the health care, economic, and social needs of Minnesotans during COVID-19. At over 16 different community testing events, Minnesota IT Services worked with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to ensure that the events ran smoothly. MNIT teams set up the events – running cables in tents, setting up laptops and tablets, and connecting them to WiFi and hotspots. MNIT also supported MNsure's special enrollment period, updating the system to allow citizens to select COVID as the qualifying event for the special enrollment. During the period from March 23 to April 21, 9,482 users signed up for health care.

Security

To keep state government running, and protect Minnesotans' private data, we must continually work to better secure Minnesota's IT systems. Cybersecurity is one of the most critical functions that Minnesota IT Services is tasked with, and it functions best when we are all working together, from the individual citizen, to our state agencies, and even to our legislators; that is how we can help protect the 35,000 users of our systems and 5.5 million Minnesotans who have private data secured by the state.

We serve Minnesotans by connecting all 87 counties, 300 cities, and 200 public higher education campuses across the state through MNET – Minnesotan's dedicated public sector network. This network provides broad visibility into cyber activity occurring across the state. From April to June, our Security Operations Center (SOC) detected or received reports of 757 cyber incidents.

Type of security incident	# reported
Malware	270
Unauthorized access attempt	162
Forensic investigation	92
Social engineering	51
Network attack/scan	34
Policy violation	15
Unauthorized access	9
Unauthorized disclosure	5
Denial of service*	4
Copyright violation	2
Lost/stolen device	2
Other	111

Security events investigated by MNIT for all Minnesota government partners

Executive branch (484)
County (133)
Schools & universities (75)
Municipalities (41)
Other (21)

*Security incidents detected by or reported to MNIT SOC.*
*Denial of service events in Minnesota were tracked as one large ticket, or security incident, rather than separate events.

Denial of service event

Keeping our communications systems secure during times of crisis is critical to protecting the Minnesotans that we serve, and we work to meet the challenging and evolving threat to those systems every day. In late May, MNIT's Security Operations Center (SOC) defended against distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) cyber-attacks aimed at overloading state information systems and networks to tip them offline. At the state, cyber threats take many forms, and DDoS is not an uncommon attack. After the murder of George Floyd, we had 14 consecutive days DDoS attempts targeting specifically state government resources. Many of these were of a higher magnitude and longer duration. As these DDoS attacks grew in complexity, the SOC expanded its purview of response, looking at the holistic security landscape. While websites remained up and available over 90% of the time, we continued to work to maximize availability and performance by bringing in new partners and solutions. We maintained our focus on ensuring the integrity and availability of these systems that Minnesotans depend on for information, services, and support.

Procurement

The Procurement Division is responsible for processing all requests to purchase everything from IT hardware, software, and mobile devices, to contractors brought in to assist on projects. Procurement follows a standardized purchasing process that can include administrative review, accessibility testing, vendor negotiation, open bidding and competitive RFP processes, among others.

1,598
Purchase request volume

10
Average purchase request processing time (days)
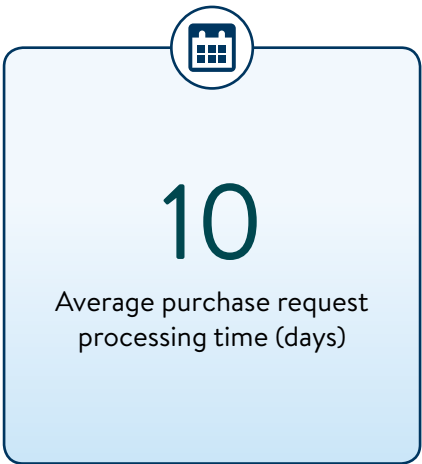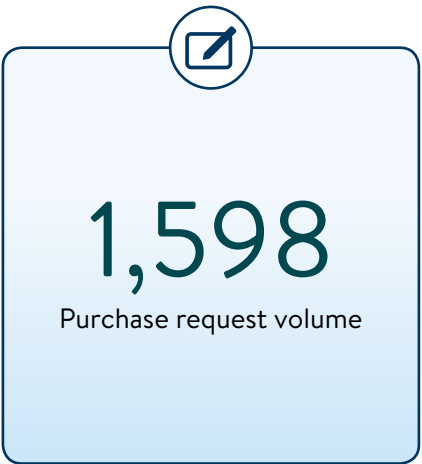
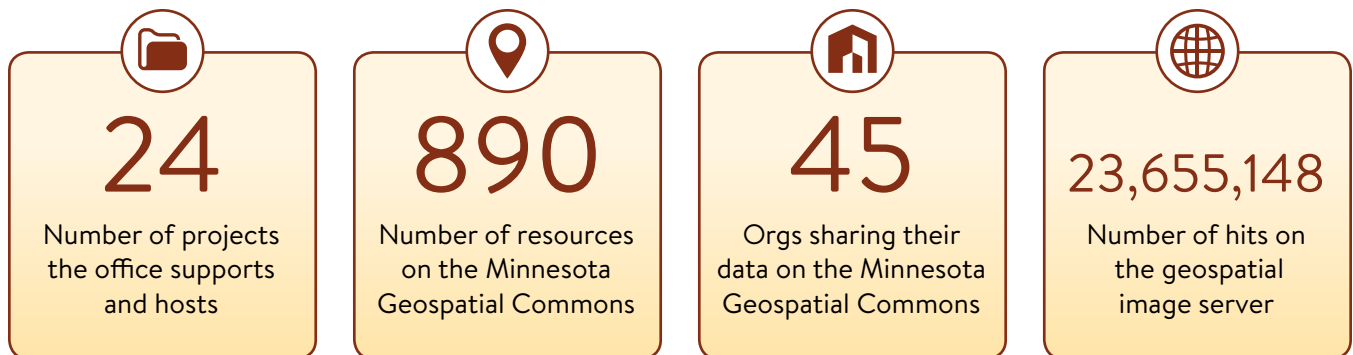### Number of purchase requests
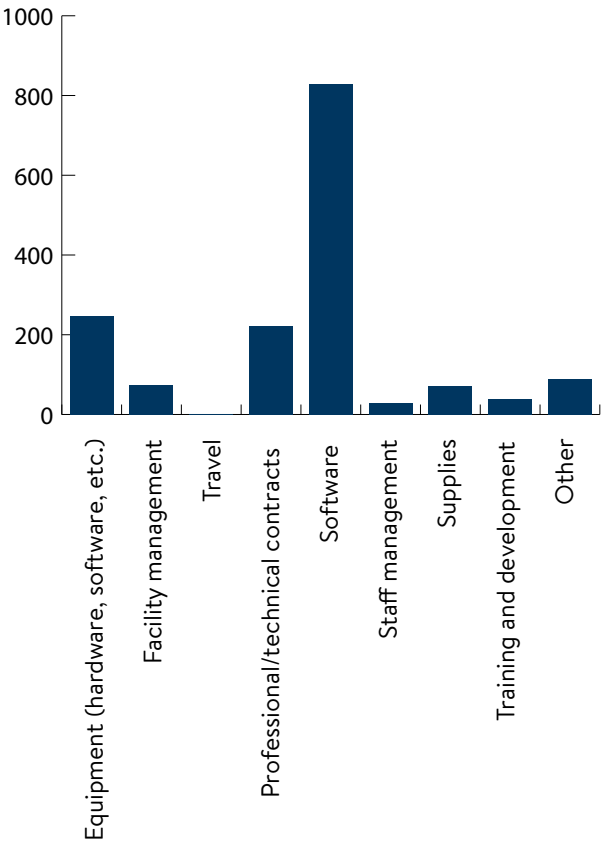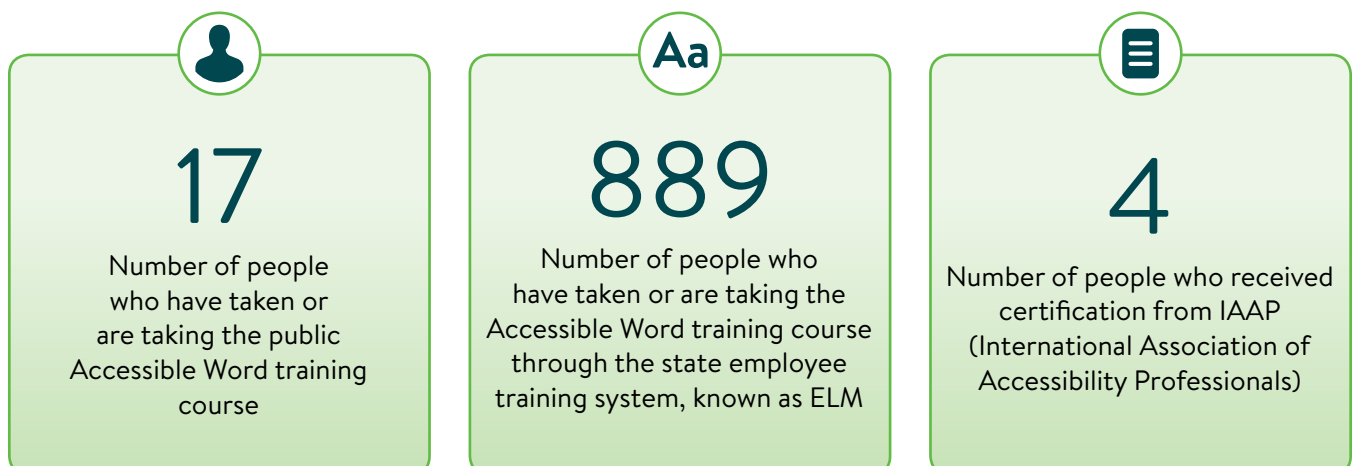

Average processing time (days)
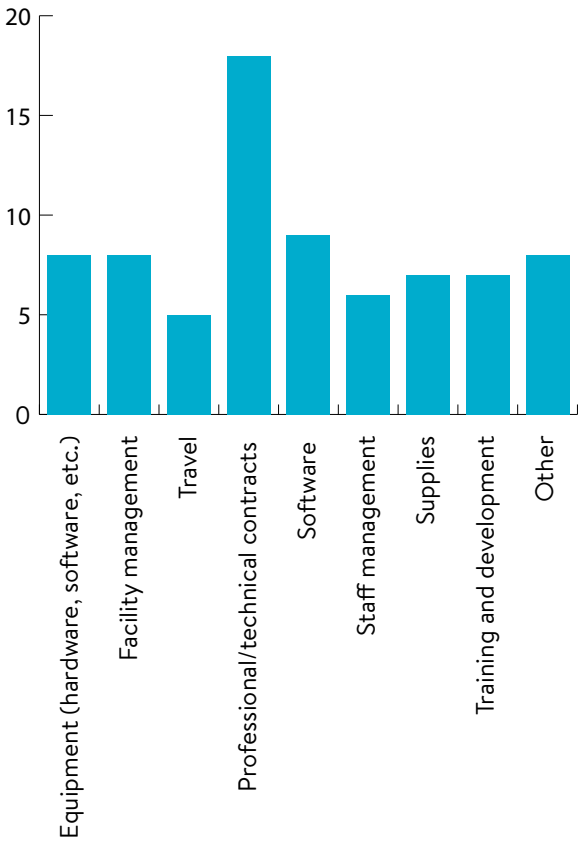
Geospatial Information Office

The Minnesota Geospatial Information Office coordinates geographic information systems (GIS) within the state, creating connections between state agencies and other stakeholders from government and non-government organizations. Using geography to inform decisions and influence outcomes, it shapes public safety, transportation planning, access to health services, the preservations of our natural resources, and much more. The Geospatial team manages the Minnesota Geospatial Commons, a collaborative public website where publishers can share, and users can access geospatial resources – data, maps, services and applications. The Minnesota Geospatial Commons is supported by operational team that includes staff from MnDOT, the Metropolitan Council and MNIT staff partnering with DNR, MDE, MDA and MPCA.

24	**890**	**45**	**23,655,148**
Number of projects the office supports and hosts	Number of resources on the Minnesota Geospatial Commons	Orgs sharing their data on the Minnesota Geospatial Commons	Number of hits on the geospatial image server

Office of Accessibility

The Office of Accessibility is charged with overseeing the implementation of accessibility standards for all executive branch employees and state agencies. This quarter, the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), required employees to take a special 2-module Accessible Word introductory training course, dramatically expanding the number of trained employees across the state.

17	**889**	**4**
Number of people who have taken or are taking the public Accessible Word training course	Number of people who have taken or are taking the Accessible Word training course through the state employee training system, known as ELM	Number of people who received certification from IAAP (International Association of Accessibility Professionals)

Service desk

Our enterprise service desk provides 24/7 IT support and services for Minnesota state government: executive branch agencies, boards, councils, and commissions; non-executive branch customers, education, tribal governments, non-profits; and MNIT staff.

73,418
Total volume of all service desk tickets across the executive branch

39,226
Number of those tickets resolved the same day

53.4%
Percentage of service desk tickets resolved in one day

──── IT optimization updates ────

As the bulk of IT consolidation activities have been completed, we are turning our attention toward the activities necessary to mature the services delivered by the Enterprise Services team. The COVID-19 response provided MNIT with the opportunity to demonstrate an ability to scale up for IT crisis response – maturing our service delivery years in a matter of months. As a consolidated agency with an enterprise lens into state government, MNIT can now transition from crisis response into daily service delivery, providing the services needed for our agency partners. For example, MNIT rapidly implemented robotics process automation and a voice-assisted chat bot to ensure that state employees' teleworking needs were addressed by our service desk. These technologies answered questions without human interaction and/or reduced customer hold times. Those resources have since been decommissioned as needs have diminished, and service desk workers are seeing greatly reduced call volumes. We also quickly created a new process for state employees to receive the hardware and software necessary for redeployment within 48 hours of notification, allowing for a smooth process that allows MNIT to get back to serving business partners: maintaining the availability and reliability of state systems, including desktop deployment, server upgrades, and optimizing data centers.

Meet MNIT

Zarina Baber

Zarina Baber joins the MNIT leadership team as Assistant Commissioner for Project Portfolio Management. Baber has 25 years of IT leadership experience that spans across both private and public sectors. Prior to MNIT, her experience included major program execution, establishing and leading Project Management Offices (PMO), and implementing portfolio management practices. Her new leadership role will focus on ensuring strategic alignment between business objectives and investment in technology projects. She will use her position to build the partnerships and relationships necessary to move forward the combined vision of the Blue Ribbon Council on Information Technology, Governor Walz's One Minnesota, and MNIT's strategic and tactical planning. Her appointment allows MNIT to build a roadmap for change to create better technology solutions for the state.

About MNIT

Minnesota IT Services, led by the state's Chief Information Officer, is the Information Technology agency for Minnesota's executive branch, providing enterprise and local IT services to over 70 agencies, boards and commissions. MNIT employs more than 2,000 people across 90 physical locations. Together, we build, maintain, and secure the State's IT infrastructure, applications, projects and services. MNIT sets IT strategy, direction, policies and standards for enterprise IT leadership and planning. We also serve Minnesotans by connecting all 87 counties, 300 cities, and 200 public higher education campuses across the state on the MNET network. Through public-private partnerships, our team proactively protects the state's information systems and the private data of 5.6 million Minnesotans.

Learn more

For questions, comments, and feedback on MNIT's quarterly reports, please reach out to MNIT_Comm@state.mn.us

You can also find more stories about the agency across our social media accounts: