



Information Technology Strategic Plan

Stephanie M. Rodriguez
Cabinet Secretary
Patricia Trujillo, Ph.D.
Deputy Secretary

NEW MEXICO
HIGHER EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT



Fostering Student Success from Cradle to Career



NEW MEXICO HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

**Fiscal Year 2027
Higher Education Department
IT STRATEGIC PLAN
September 2, 2025**

**Isaac Bush
Chief Information Officer**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Mexico Higher Education Department (HED) seeks to promote accessibility to education for all New Mexicans. The Information Technology Services Division (ITS) is key to this mission by being part of every aspect of HED operations, from obtaining and configuring agency smartphones to managing the physical door access system to deploying and administering desktop, laptop, and tablet computers to providing cloud-based services, public websites and web-based applications.

The ITS work that most effectively engages the higher education institutions and the public and which further empowers our staff and better protects our data, receives most of our attention. This includes (a) regular updates and new features for our applications, (b) offering archived school transcripts for students, (d) providing portals for uploading Capital Projects, Institutional Finance reports, and Financial Aid submissions (e) procuring and installing new network and server systems, (f) providing continuous high-level cyber security, and (g) facilitating legislative bill analysis. Therefore, the ITS work and goals are in alignment with the Higher Education Department's and the State's IT strategic goals. Specifically:

ITS is continuing to improve overall security and functionality by way of (a) robust Internet traffic management via our firewalls, (b) fully enrolling in Department of Information Technology (DoIT)'s endpoint protection and authenticated scans and (c) implementing robust controls for role and account auditing. Also, as part of our continuous integration and continuous delivery efforts, we are adding features and improving performance of all existing applications and deploying new ones. ITS continues to refine and expand services in the public cloud, increasing efficiencies, redundancy, performance, accessibility, and security.

Regarding inter-agency activity, ITS continues to work with the CIOs of all the New Mexico Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) on cybersecurity, currently focusing on performing regularly penetration testing and assessments. We also continue to collaborate with Department of Information Technology's Office of Broadband, working in concert with University of New Mexico, the Public Education Department (PED), the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD), to bring broadband connectivity to the Grants, NM region, including the Navajo Nation community. Also, we remain a key stakeholder on the New Mexico Longitudinal Data System project (NMLDS), which is a collaboration between HED, ECECD, PED, and the Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS); ITS participates on the NMLDS Project Team, secures and oversees state and federal funding, execute and manages vendor contracts, and provides project management and IV&V services. NMLDS, a certified project, is currently initiating Phase 2 of NMLDS and we are on target to have this phase completed in September 2026.

Agency leadership continues to prioritize (a) better engagement and support of the State's students and teachers and (b) widely sharing the extensive information HED has collected and which ITS manages and protects. FY26 will, therefore, see ITS expand and harden our cloud-based Business

Continuity and Disaster Recovery solution and further and more efficiently integrate our cloud-based services, primarily Microsoft 365 and Azure Active Directory.

I. AGENCY OVERVIEW

A. AGENCY MISSION

The New Mexico Higher Education Department provides financial, academic, and policy oversight to the NM public higher education institutions for the purpose of promoting efficiency, accountability and student success.

B. AGENCY GOALS

HED fosters and guides a system of higher education that best meets the needs of the citizens of the state by providing financing to and oversight of all of the state's public universities and colleges. The agency also has regulatory authority over private for-profit institutions operating within the state.

C. VISION AND PRIORITIES

HED strives to position public New Mexico colleges and universities to be more student-focused, delivering personalization that engages students and ensures their needs are seen, addressed and exceeded. Equity, therefore, is the highest priority. HED in concert with the state colleges and universities is striving to open up paths to experiences, opportunities and careers to all students, especially from marginalized communities, and help students define their goals and careers on their own terms.

The mission of ITS is to facilitate the workflow of all HED divisions and enhance the overall efficiency of the agency in support of this vision and priority

D. AGENCY DESCRIPTION AND ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

HED has a staff size of 56 and offices in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Espanola, and Taos. The agency is comprised of seven main divisions that sponsor various education-related programs. These are as follows:

1. The Adult Education Division serves adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency.
2. The Financial Aid Division is dedicated to helping students in pursuing their educational goals by educating students, parents and the community about state aid opportunities.
3. GEAR UP's mission is to increase the number of underrepresented students who are prepared to enter and succeed in Postsecondary education.
4. The Institutional Finance Division is responsible for the fiscal oversight of 32 colleges, universities and special schools.

5. The Academic Affairs and Policy Division is involved with a number of activities, including monitoring the transfer and articulation operation and the associated General Education Core Course listings.
6. The Private Postsecondary Schools Division (PPSD) issues licenses or letters of exemptions to private postsecondary Institutions allowing these institutions to legally operate in the state.
7. The Research and Planning Division provides quality assurance, reporting and planning support to the higher education community through collaborative data collection, analysis and reporting.

The Information Technology Services Division supports the efforts of the above and facilitates and transforms the business processes of the agency and provide the highest possible value to all internal and external stakeholders.

For the organization chart and division-level staffing information, go to Appendix A-I. For the IT Division organization chart, see Appendix A-II.

II. IT ENVIRONMENT

1. Major Applications

Our primary applications deal with supporting NM higher education institutions directly and indirectly by (a) providing financial aid to students, teachers and graduates, (b) funding projects, (c) overseeing projects and finances, (d) managing course and program changes and standards, (e) collecting enrollment and graduation information, and (f) providing transcripts. All of these work with sensitive information. Therefore, along with functionality, cybersecurity is the highest priority. Secondary priorities are intuitive, easy-to-use interfaces and strong customer support.

2. Infrastructure

All physical HED network and server systems are located at the 2044 Galisteo Street HED Office complex and are comprised of a Dell x64 server system, Aruba network switches, a Palo Alto firewall, and Aruba wireless access points. Our primary infrastructure is cloud-based, including primary Active Directory domain controller, primary Palo Alto firewall. It also includes application containers and PostgreSQL and SQL Server databases.

3. Security

Security remains a high priority and takes approximately 20% of our time. It is built into every IT aspect, from application development to VPN upgrades. As such, it is a mandatory consideration when any change, purchase or request is made, and it is and has been a key driver of our move to cloud-based services. This includes redundant back-ups, deployment of Zero Trust Architecture, and required use of multi-factor authentication on applications and services.

Other aspects of our security include tiered Active Directory permissions, robust VPN and VPC services, and multi-level end-user protection, including local anti-malware and firewall services.

4. Agency IT Certified Projects

HED has one certified IT project, the NM Longitudinal Data System (NMLDS).

PROJECT NAME: NM Longitudinal Data System (NMLDS)	
Project Description	In partnership with DWS, ECECD and PED, implement a central data and reporting system containing all student and workforce information to track students' progress accurately through the education and workforce systems.
Estimated Project Costs	\$13M (FY21 – FY26)
Current Funding	\$12M (FY21 – FY26)
Certified Project Phase	Implementation
Estimated Completion	September 2026
Strategic Priority	To identify what programs, services, interventions, education practices, and other factors have an impact on student success and thereby help improve New Mexico's high school graduation rate, college enrollment and completion rates, workforce preparedness and retention, employment rate, career longevity, and ultimately broader social indicators such as poverty and health outcomes.
Agency IT Strategic Plan Alignment	Yes

5. Workforce

A. Full Time IT Employees

Classification	Positions Filled	Positions Vacant
Data Scientist	1	0
End User Support	1	0
Business Analyst	1	0
Database Administer	1	0
Applications Developer	1	0

B. Percentage of IT Full-Time Employees Teleworking, In the Office, or a Hybrid Schedule

Teleworking (%)	Working in the Office (%)	Hybrid Schedule (%)
0	100	0

C. IT Professional Services Contractors

Service Category	Contract Vendor Name	Number of Contract Personnel
n/a		

6. Challenges

[Provide a list of your agency IT challenges including possible opportunities to address them.]

No.	Agency IT Challenge Description	Potential Opportunities to Address the IT Challenge Description
	Data loss\leakage due to unauthorized genai useage	M365 Copilot through DoIT tenant
	Security breaches due to lost account credentials	Azure AD SSO integration to allow MFA

III. KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS – PRIOR FISCAL YEAR

A. STRATEGIC IT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 – Improved IT Operations and Resilience	
Over the past fiscal year, the IT department prioritized strengthening operational efficiency, reliability, and security through targeted improvements in development practices, endpoint security, organizational structure, and application modernization. These initiatives collectively improved system stability, reduced risk, and established a stronger foundation for future growth.	
Strategy 1	Build foundational DevOps practices
Accomplishments	Fully staffed the internal development unit; implemented a basic CI/CD pipeline and introduced formalized application testing for internal systems that previously lacked structured deployment or QA processes.
Outcomes/Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CI/CD pipeline operational for all internal apps by fiscal year-end Basic automated tests in place for all major internal applications Future expansion of test coverage enabled by established framework
Strategy 2	Strengthen endpoint and network security posture
Accomplishments	Deployed defender; authenticated scans with Securin; completed penetration testing with identified issues rectified.
Outcomes/Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of endpoints transitioned to defender All critical and high-risk vulnerabilities from penetration testing remediated Continuous VaaS monitoring active across the environment
Strategy 3	: Improve operational responsiveness through team consolidation
Accomplishments	Consolidated the helpdesk and sysadmin roles into a unified “Ops” role; expanded helpdesk responsibilities to include routine server and network administration; improved collaboration between development and operations.

Outcomes/Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average incident resolution time reduced (baseline vs. post-consolidation) • Increased percentage of tickets resolved at first point of contact • Documented increase in cross-team collaboration initiatives
Strategy 4	Modernize internal applications and dependencies
Accomplishments	Upgraded all internal applications from outdated frameworks to Spring Boot 3; updated or removed dependencies with known vulnerabilities.
Outcomes/Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of internal apps now running on Spring Boot 3 • Zero known critical vulnerabilities present in deployed application dependencies • Reduction in unplanned downtime due to outdated frameworks

B. OTHER KEY IT ACCOMPLISHMENTS – PRIOR FISCAL YEAR

APPLICATION	
Accomplishment	No new applications were deployed during the fiscal year
Value or Impact	
DATA	
Accomplishment	Additional QA checks for incoming data from HEIs
Value or Impact	Reports accuracy and frequency are increased
PROCESS IMPROVEMENT	
Accomplishment	Integrated the Securin platform into daily operations, providing the Ops role with a centralized dashboard to track, prioritize, and remediate security issues.
Value or Impact	Improved visibility into system risks, enabling proactive issues resolution before they escalate.
WORKFORCE	
Accomplishments	Successfully filled all positions across IT units, achieving full staffing levels within the fiscal year.
Value or Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved service responsiveness and delivery by ensuring adequate coverage and specialized expertise across teams. • Provided a stable foundation to support both current operations and planned strategic initiatives.
CUSTOMER SERVICE	
Accomplishments	Reduced average helpdesk ticket resolution times through process improvements and cross-training. Developed and delivered end-user training sessions for key internal applications, improving overall staff proficiency.
Value or Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faster issue resolution increased staff productivity and reduced downtime.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application training empowered employees to use tools more effectively, reducing recurring support requests and improving self-sufficiency.
TELEWORK	
Accomplishments	Telework is not an option at NMHED
Value or Impact	n/a
SECURITY	
Accomplishments	Implemented authenticated scans with Securin
Value or Impact	Further visibility into potential security risks increases overall readiness of the Agency.

IV. FY27 IT STRATEGIC GOALS AND STRATEGIES

[Include an introductory statement to introduce the following information.]

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 – Strategy Name	
The overarching goal is to strengthen the Agency’s security posture by reducing risk, improving visibility, and enabling safe, efficient access to critical systems. This will be achieved through targeted initiatives focused on user awareness, tighter network controls, consistent access management, and modern identity solutions.	
Strategy 1	Implement ongoing security awareness and training programs
Outcomes/Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100% of employees complete annual security training• Quarterly phishing simulations show reduced click-through rates (target: <5%)• Documented improvements in employee-reported suspicious activity
Strategy 2	Adopt whitelisting for outbound network traffic
Outcomes/Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whitelisting implemented across all core systems within 12 months• 90% reduction in unauthorized outbound connection attempts• Quarterly network audits confirm compliance
Strategy 3	Establish structured, recurring account and permission audits
Outcomes/Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quarterly audits completed and documented• 100% of dormant/unused accounts removed within 30 days of identification
Strategy 4	Transition to Azure AD Single Sign-On (SSO)
Outcomes/Metrics	Improved compliance with centralized logging and MFA enforcement

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 – Strategy Name	
Ensure all public websites are updated to meet WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards within the current fiscal year, improving inclusivity, compliance, and user experience.	
Strategy 1	Conduct comprehensive accessibility audit of all websites

Outcomes/Metrics	Baseline report documenting current compliance gaps against WCAG 2.1 AA
Strategy 2	Establish updated contract with external web development partner
Outcomes/Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor implementation plan with timelines and deliverables agreed upon • Signed contract finalized by end of Q3 2025
Strategy 3	Implement required accessibility updates across all sites
Outcomes/Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All prioritized updates completed by end of Q1 2026 • Interim progress reports reviewed quarterly to confirm milestone completion
Strategy 4	Validate compliance through independent testing and certification
Outcomes/Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent verification confirms WCAG 2.1 AA compliance for all sites • Post-launch monitoring and user feedback collection demonstrate improved accessibility experience

V. IT FISCAL AND BUDGET MANAGEMENT

Information Technology (IT) Operating Budget (C1)

(To update this table, please double click on the embedded spreadsheet and add the required information. Before exiting the spreadsheet, please make sure to scroll up. Otherwise, the entries of this table will not be fully previewed.)

Agency Name				Agency Code	
Base Request Operational Support of IT. Check one of the options below:				Flat Budget	Expansion from previous year
Yes/No					
Revenue IT Base Budget (dollars in thousands)					
Appropriation Funding Type	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 OpBud	FY27 Request	FY28 Estimate
General Fund	850.0	2,872.0	3,000.0	1,400.0	1,500.0
Other State Funds	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Federal Funds	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Internal Svc Funds/Interagency Transfer	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	850.0	2,872.0	3,000.0	1,400.0	1,500.0
Expenditure Categories (dollars in thousands)					
Category or Account Description	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 OpBud	FY27 Request	FY28 Estimate
Personnel Services & Employee Benefits	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Contractual & Professional Services	100.0	100.0	100.0	200.0	200.0
IT Other Services	140.0	150.0	150.0	150.0	200.0
Other Financing Uses	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	240.0	250.0	250.0	350.0	400.0
	Print Name	Phone	Email Address	Date	
Agency Cabinet Secretary/ Director (Mandatory)					
Chief Information Officer or IT Lead(Mandatory)					
Chief Finance Officer (Mandatory)					

Agency Cabinet Secretary/Director Signature

Chief Information Officer/IT Lead Signature

Chief Financial Officer Signature

VI. SPECIAL FUNDING, SUPPLEMENTAL, COMPUTER SYSTEM ENHANCEMENT (C2) FUNDING AND REAUTHORIZATION OF C2 APPROPRIATIONS

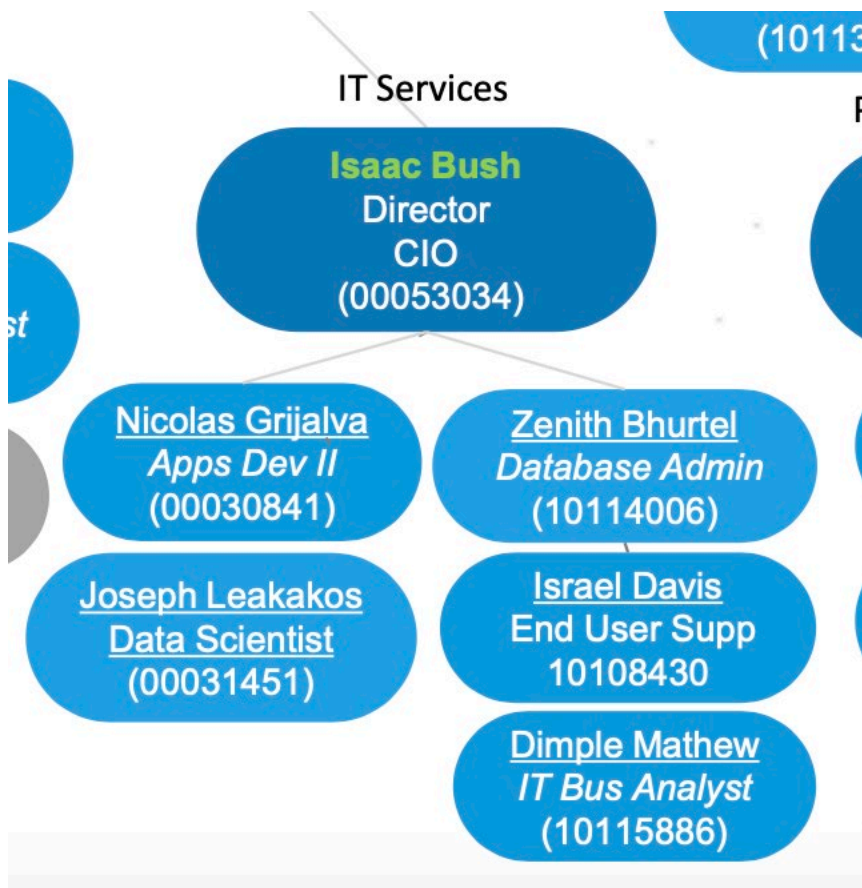
- A. Special Funding and Supplemental Request(s):** [Include narrative describing any special or supplemental funding requested. If none, note the agency has no requests.]
- B. Computer System Enhancement (C2) Funding:** [Include a list of C2 funding request(s) with the name(s) of the proposed projects. Insert a C2 Information Technology Data Processing – Computer Enhancement Fund (CSEF) form for each request as Appendix-A-III and reference Appendix-A-III in this section. If none, note the agency has no requests.]
- C. Reauthorization of C2 Appropriations:** [Include requested reauthorizations of prior C2 appropriations or note the agency is not requesting reauthorization of prior C2 appropriations.]

REQUEST FOR REAUTHORIZATION OF C2 APPROPRIATIONS

Information Technology Request for Reauthorization of C2 Appropriations			
Agency Name		Agency Code	
Lead Agency Name Listed on Appropriation		Project Name	
Source of Authorization (e.g. Laws 2022, Chapter 54, Section 7 (12) or Grant/Federal Fund #)		Appropriation Amount (in thousands)	Remaining Balance (in thousands)
		0.0	0.0
		0.0	0.0
		0.0	0.0
		0.0	0.0
		0.0	0.0
		0.0	0.0
Total amount appropriated for project life (in thousands)		Will the project be completed within the next fiscal year?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Reason for Requesting Reauthorization			

APPENDIX A-I: AGENCY ORGANIZATION CHART

APPENDIX A-II: IT ORGANIZATION CHART



APPENDIX A-III: C2 IT DATA PROCESSING CSEF

APPENDIX A-III: C2 IT Data Processing CSEF

**C2: Information Technology
Data Processing - Computer Systems Enhancement Fund (CSEF)**

Agency Name	Agency Code	Project Name			
Multi-Agency Project	Participating Agencies	Priority	Projected/Actual Start Date	Projected End Date	

Revenue Project Cost <i>(dollars in thousands)</i>				
Category or Account Description	FY25 & Prev Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Request	Total
General Fund (CSEF)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other State Funds <i>(*specify funds below)</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Federal Funds	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Internal Svc Funds/Interagency Transfer	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
*If Other State Funds, Specify Funding Source/Fund Name				

Expenditure Categories <i>(dollars in thousands)</i>				
	FY25 & Prev Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Request	Total
Personnel Services & Employee Benefits	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Professional Services	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Travel/Lodging	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
IT Hardware	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
IT Software	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

	Print Name	Phone	Email Address	Date
Agency Cabinet Secretary/ Director (Mandatory)				
Chief Information Officer or IT Lead(Mandatory)				
Chief Finance Officer / Budget Director (Mandatory)				

Agency Cabinet Secretary/Director Signature _____

Chief Information Officer/IT Lead Signature _____

Chief Finance Officer/Budget Director Signature _____