MINNESOTA IT SERVICES

Q1 2021 Quarterly Report

Information Technology for Minnesota Government

Note from the Commissioner



The work of Minnesota IT Services (MNIT) supports our vision of an innovative digital government that works for all. The pandemic created an even deeper connection to the problems that government is trying to solve. We have had the opportunity to highlight where technology can make a big difference, and we have shifted to anticipating the future state – "what can be" – based on an intimate understanding of the needs of the state's executive branch and the vision of government. We are more proactive about bringing those ideas to the table.

In the coming months, we will continue to define the way we work, post-pandemic. Whether we are working from home, in an office, or at times from both places is going to mean that we need new ways of structuring spaces, culture, and technology. We will need to not just enable, but really celebrate, the fact that we're not going to be in the same places and spaces all the time. We have a unique opportunity to incorporate new ways of working to enhance productivity while at the same time promoting a healthy work environment for everyone.

Longer term, MNIT will figure out how to promote and build on the culture of innovation that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic. We've made incredible strides in innovation and creativity, and we need to sustain that thinking when there may not be as much urgency as the pandemic created. We are building a human-centered design approach across the executive branch and thinking about what tools we need for this mindset to endure. Enhancing a culture that embraces design thinking, coupled with innovative digital opportunities, promotes a measured approach to modernizing services.

Technology can be an incredible connector, and it is through public and private innovation that we will be able to create opportunities for people. The digital divide must be improved, but if getting more people access to a digital service is the only thing we need to work on, we have come a long way. When designed correctly, technology allows us to remove systemic biases that individuals or manual processes may hold, and it creates the ability to effectively measure our success.

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Meet MNIT 11

About MNIT 11



Planning

Tactical Plan

Throughout the first quarter of 2021, MNIT finalized work on our 2020 Tactical Plan. As of March 2021, 81% of our tactics are completed or in progress. Tactic teams will wrap up work in April 2021, as the agency prepares to release its 2021 Tactical Plan, which will be executed July 2021-June 2022.

Some outcomes and recommendations from the work of this year's tactic teams will be incorporated into next year's tactical planning cycle. A few highlights from the 2020 Tactical Plan to date include:

Tactic #7: Increase essential skill competencies and adjust supervisor/manager position descriptions to include managing team dynamics and collaboration.

The Tactic 7 team first defined essential skills and 11 core competencies to improve team dynamics and collaboration. Then, they identified 166 readily-available training opportunities and mapped them to the core competencies. Moving forward, manager and supervisor position description templates will include the top prioritized essential skills.

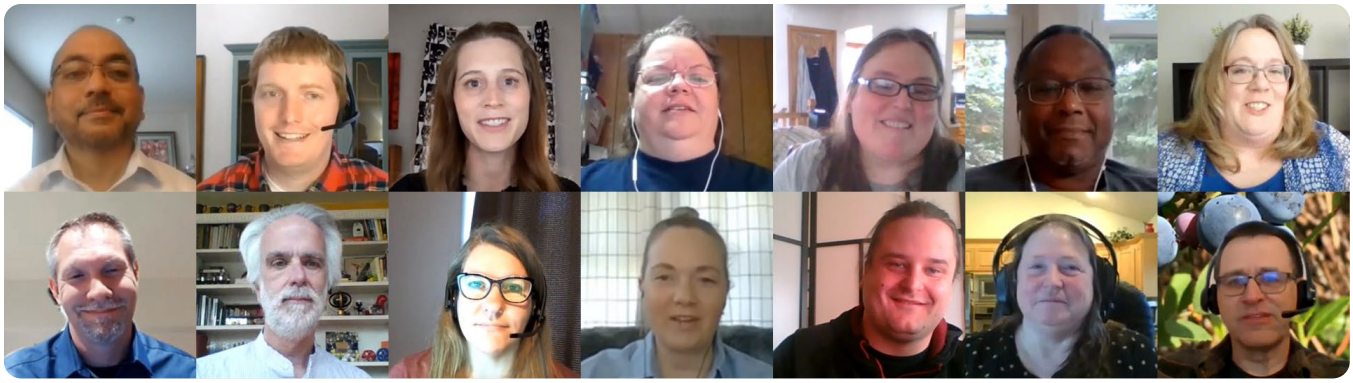
Tactic #13: Adopt the Governor's Guiding Principles with the addition of three distinct MNIT principles and formalize with training for supervisors and managers.

The Tactic 13 team held a facilitated session with over 100 MNIT staff. During the session, small groups crafted and prioritized new guiding principles to adopt. The tactic team analyzed the brainstormed principles and identified three major themes, refining each theme into principle statements. A random sampling of MNIT staff provided feedback on the final draft principles. MNIT will publish finalized guiding principles in May, which will be incorporated into strategic planning materials and processes.

Tactic #24: Mature project portfolio programs by itemizing methodologies and processes throughout MNIT, and establishing buy-in and direction with MNIT's Project Management Office (PMO) community.

Four workgroups are tackling the work of Tactic 24: risk-based peer review process, project hand off, financial transparency, and organizational change management. The four workgroups are cross-functional and include several business partners. Three of the four are designed to advance the objectives of the BRC-IT Modernization Playbook while the fourth one is aimed at minimizing risks to project implementation. These workgroups are running simultaneously with regular check-ins to ensure continuous collaboration, communication to meet the goals of each workgroup.

Notable achievements, awards, and events



MNIT Week

In January 2021, MNIT held its annual MNIT Week – a time for professional development opportunities and staff to connect with each other and with MNIT leadership. While we couldn't come together in person, over 1,000 MNIT staff participated in virtual training opportunities, over 450 attended expo presentations, and over 1,500 staff joined the digital town hall.

MNIT Week included a virtual Annual Awards ceremony. The agency's Employee Recognition Committee awarded employees, partners, and teams for their work delivering outstanding IT service to Minnesota and its executive government. Nominated by their peers, recipients received the highest recognition for their service excellence and for their performance in fulfilling MNIT's mission, vision, values, and priorities.



Blue Ribbon Council February 2021 Report

Minnesota's Blue Ribbon Council on Information Technology (BRC-IT) released its second report in February 2021, which builds upon recommendations from the BRC-IT's June 2020 report. The 2021 recommendations include strengthening our work culture, identifying self-service opportunities, fostering a culture of innovation, collaborating with the private and public sectors to support a remote workforce, and developing a holistic, modernized approach to the way the state delivers services.

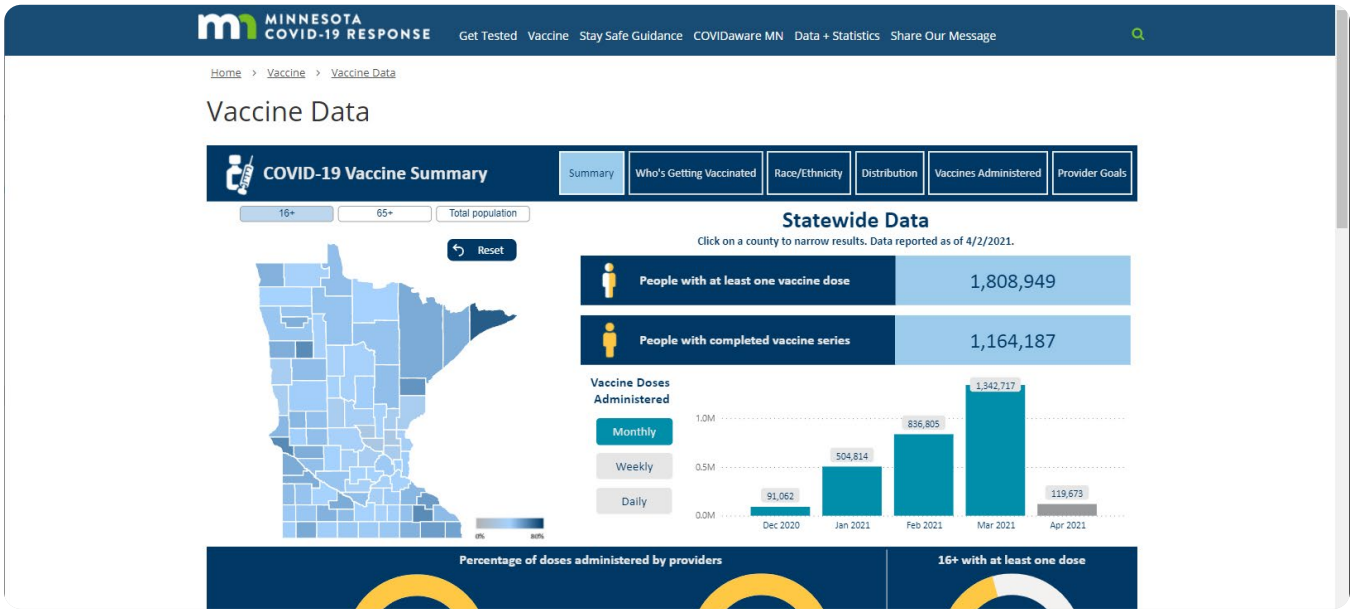
Golden GOVIT Awards

The Golden GOVIT Awards, part of the Government IT Symposium, recognizes government agencies and individuals that have advanced government technology through collaboration, innovation, service, and individual leadership. Announced on December 10, 2020, the Golden GOVIT awards recognized two awards tied to the state of Minnesota and Minnesota IT Services. Chris Luhman from Minnesota IT Services received the Individual Leader Award. The Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) project, a collaborative response from the MNIT, the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), and Code for America won the Rapid Response Award.

Emerging technology: Data visualization

On January 12, 2021, Minnesota launched the COVID-19 vaccine dashboard on the state's COVID-19 response website to detail the progress of COVID-19 vaccine allocation, distribution, and administration across Minnesota. Data visualization, like the vaccine dashboard, allows users to gain individual insight into data in a consumable way.

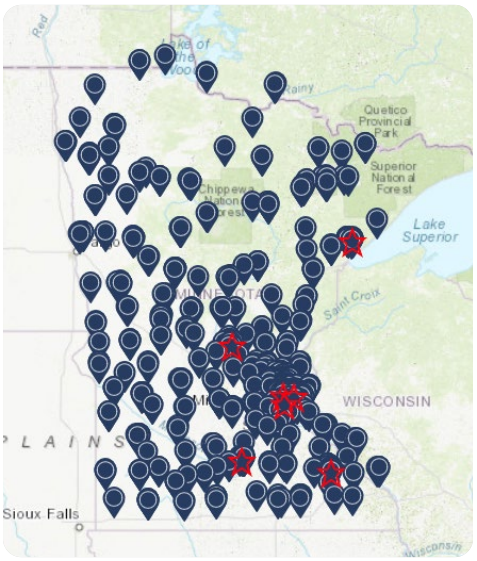
The dashboard, produced by MNIT and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), provides a visual and user-friendly way to view key vaccination data for our state. The dashboard includes information on the number of doses promised (allocated) to the state by the federal government; shipped to Minnesota providers; and administered to Minnesotans. The data was pulled together through multiple avenues, including MDH's immunization system, vaccine distribution system, and census data. The dashboard will evolve as the state continues its pandemic response. Vaccination data by race and ethnicity was first published on March 5, 2021, because of a partnership between the state of Minnesota and the Minnesota Electronic Health Record (EHR) Consortium.



Vaccine Locator Map

Throughout the COVID-19 response, the state focused on finding new and better ways to communicate critical information to Minnesotans. The Geospatial Information Office partnered with the Governor's Office and the Minnesota Department of Health to overhaul the COVID-19 Testing Site Map, launched on December 30, 2021, to automate how the information was pulled into the page and to add more user-friendly filters.

The improvements created better ways for Minnesotans to find the information they need, and a more efficient process for the state to share updates quickly. Soon after launch, the same team repurposed the testing location site to create a Vaccine Locator Map to help Minnesotans more easily find and connect with local vaccine providers in their area.



Agency updates

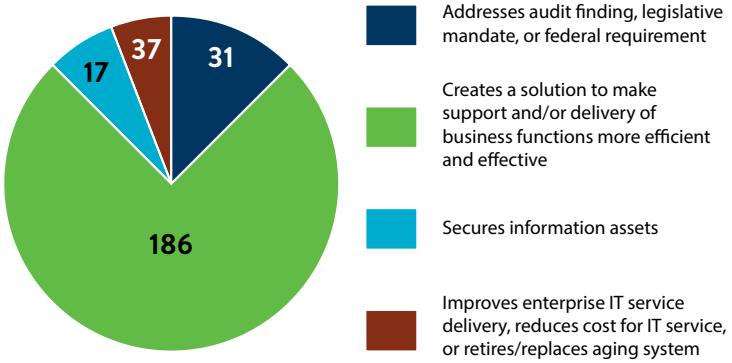
Project Management Office

Over the quarter, MNIT's Enterprise Engagement Program Management Office (EEPMO) tracked the completion of 11 projects. 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.

336
Total projects tracked over the quarter

26
Total projects started over the quarter

Q1 projects by value*



*Some projects may provide value for more than one category while others' value may fall outside of these categories.

NOTABLE PROJECTS

Mobile option for Homeless Veterans Registry



The Homeless Veterans Registry (HVR) allows housing and service professionals to efficiently assess the needs of veterans experiencing homelessness, prioritizing those that are facing the most barriers, have been experiencing homelessness the longest, or need critical care. In November 2020, the Minnesota Departments of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) and MNIT MDVA launched a mobile version of HVR, allowing people out in the field to hand the veteran an iPad or mobile device to complete the intake form for the HVR themselves. This allows the veterans, and the housing and service professionals they are interacting with, to interact in a safer manner during the pandemic. The added flexibility also will help more veterans get the services they need. The mobile version, first used in the field during winter 2020-2021, is a progressive web application which detects the type of device a person is on so that it can format the information to match the device.

Behind-the-scenes upgrade to the state's procurement and accounting system

MNIT, the Department of Administration, and Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) upgraded the state's accounting and procurements system, SWIFT. The upgrade, combining three updates into one, improved cybersecurity of the database to meet federal banking guidelines, brought the application to a more current version, and changed work processes to large quantities of work more quickly. SWIFT is used by more than 5,000 state employees and nearly 240,000 active vendors to process around 46,000 payments per week. The updates took coordination, technical know-how, and rigorous testing.



Improved cell service at Capitol complex

The Department of Administration partnered with MNIT's Infrastructure Team to improve cell phone service for employees, legislators, and visitors of the state of Minnesota's Capitol complex. The team improved cell phone signal for people who use AT&T and Verizon in 18 buildings, by adding over 1,000 antennas across the Capitol area. The improvements allow people to travel between buildings, in tunnels, and in elevators with better cell phone coverage, up to five bars. It improves the safety of the complex by allowing people to place phone calls and send text messages from the basement to the top floor of these buildings. By the end of the year, the expanded service will include T-Mobile, allowing individuals to continue to see better service as MNIT makes additional enhancements.

Vaccine Connector

On February 18, 2021, Minnesota launched the COVID-19 Vaccine Connector, an online tool that helps Minnesotans find out when, where, and how to get their COVID-19 vaccine. When a Minnesotan becomes eligible to receive a vaccine under state guidelines, the Vaccine Connector alerts them of their eligibility and connects them to online resources, such as vaccination opportunities in their area. The Vaccine Connector also notifies Minnesotans if they have been selected for an appointment through the state's community vaccination sites.

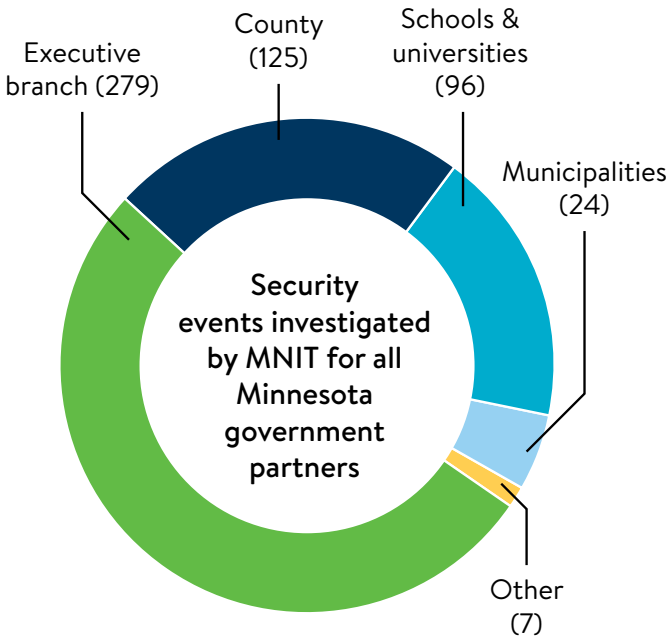


Security

To keep state government running, and to 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 January to March, our Security Operations Center (SOC) detected or received reports of 531 cyber incidents.

Type of security incident	Number reported
Malware	156
Unauthorized access attempt	60
Network attack/scan	60
Forensic investigation	97
Copyright violation	1
Social engineering	14
Denial of service	73
Lost/stolen devices	6
Unauthorized disclosure	5
Policy violation	19
Inappropriate use	2
Other	38



Security incidents detected by or reported to MNIT SOC.

Incident response

MNIT's security team manages multiple and evolving cyber threats to keep Minnesota's systems secure. In December 2020, the SOC, along with the Threat and Vulnerability Management team worked diligently to reduce and mitigate the potential impact of the SolarWinds vulnerability by conducting network scans and by creating a channel of communication between Minnesota entities to spread situational awareness and share information. Situational awareness and communication networks also aided the state's response to additional events over the past quarter, including the Presidential Inauguration, Microsoft Exchange vulnerabilities, and the trial of Derek Chauvin. MNIT's SOC collaborated with the Minnesota Fusion Center, Department of Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, and several other local and agency partners to increase monitoring efforts across the State of Minnesota and be prepared for potential cyber threats.

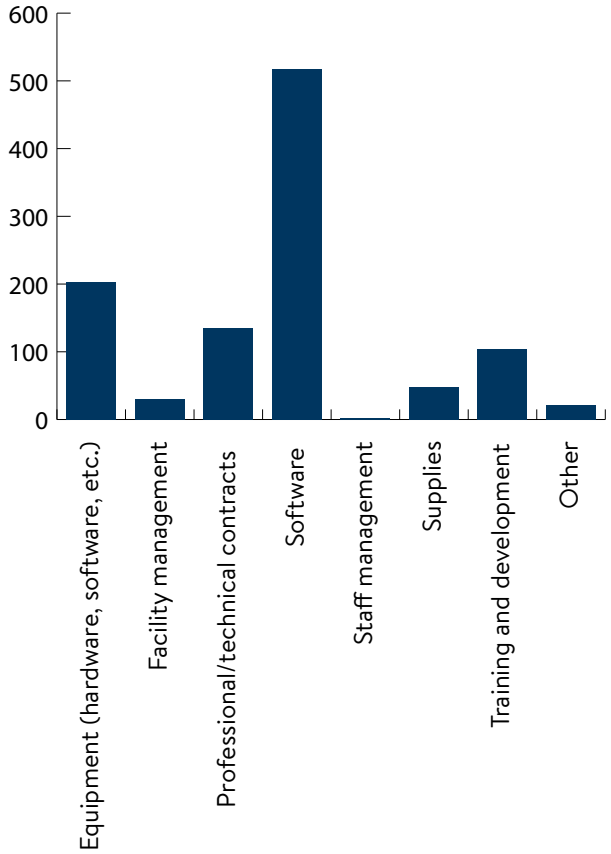
Procurement

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.

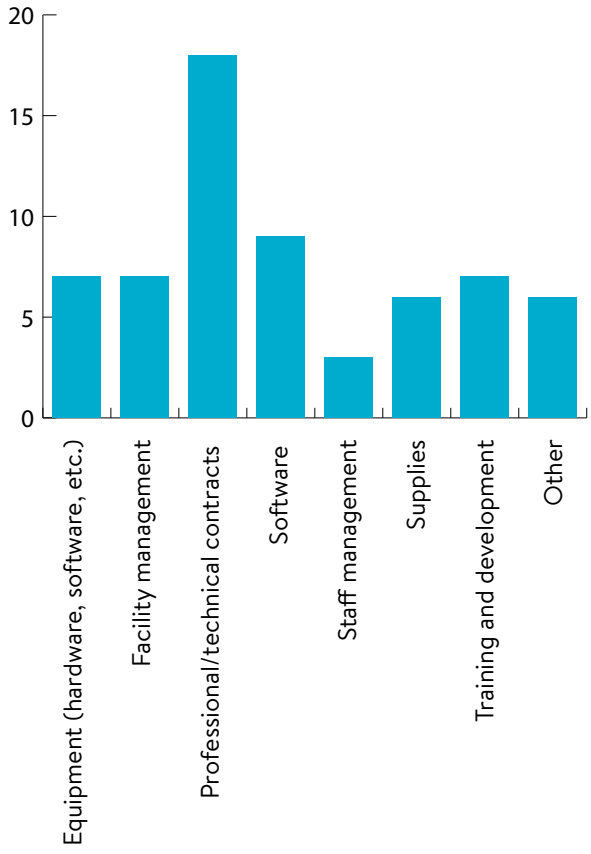
1,061
Purchase request volume

9
Average purchase request processing time (days)

Number of purchase requests

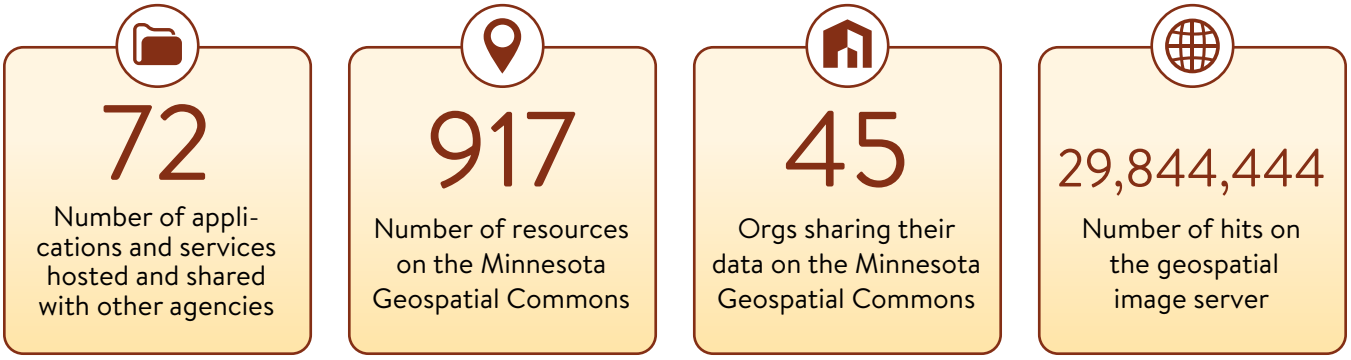


Average processing time (days)



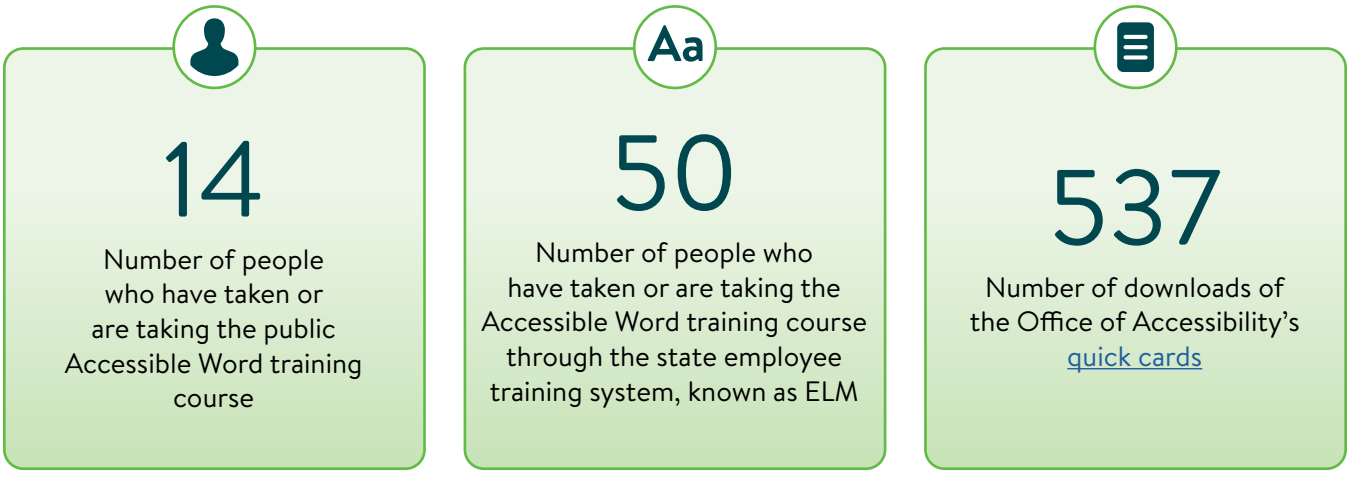
Geospatial Information Office

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 preservation 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.



Office of Accessibility

The Office of Accessibility is charged with overseeing the implementation of accessibility standards for all executive branch employees and state agencies.



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.

94,895
Total volume of all service desk tickets across the executive branch

49,965
Number of those tickets resolved the same day

49.5%
Percentage of service desk tickets resolved in one day

Statewide IT services updates

In 2020, MNIT learned that Microsoft would decommission Skype for Business, a communication and collaboration tool used by most state agencies, in July 2021. The State of Minnesota needed to shift to Microsoft Teams, a tool that has chat, meeting, calling, and collaboration capabilities in a single application. To transition 39,000 state employees to using only Teams, MNIT coordinated technical changes, user adoption, and communications across the executive branch.

The team's detailed planning, preparation, and user adoption efforts ensured a successful transition on January 25, 2021. Less than 1% of all users experienced an issue that required technical support. The executive branch is now serving Minnesotans from a single, secure collaboration platform.



Meet MNIT



Betty Urban

Betty Urban is an IT Service Support Supervisor for MNIT Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). In February 2021, Urban received the Patriot Award after being nominated her employee, Jim Lane, who is a 15-year veteran of the United States Army. Patriot Awards recognize the supervisor of an employee serving in the National Guard or Reserve for support provided directly to the Service member and his or her family. Urban received the award for her support while Lane was called up for active duty in 2020.

Urban has been with the State of Minnesota since 2012, starting as an Office Manager. Previously, she worked for the private sector at Rels, First City Financial Corp, and U.S. Bank. Urban's team at MNIT MnDOT supported the agency's remote work transition in March 2020, and it continues to support how MnDOT connects with technology to serve Minnesotans.

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: