

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
Response to the
2024-25 El Dorado County Grand Jury Report
(Case 25-05: Time to Reboot County Technology Leadership with a Chief
Info Officer)

Case 25-05: Time to Reboot County Technology Leadership with a Chief Info Officer

The Grand Jury has requested responses from the Board of Supervisors to all Findings and Recommendations.

Consistent with previous practice and pursuant to Board Policy A-11, the Chief Administrative Office is responsible for coordinating the County's response to the Grand Jury. Responses to the Grand Jury Report are directed by Board Policy A-11 and Penal Code 933.05. Accordingly, the Chief Administrative Office has reviewed and compiled the responses from all non-elected department heads into this Initial Draft Response for the Board's consideration.

FINDINGS

- F1. **Lack of Expertise in Technology Application:** The County currently lacks expertise in leveraging technology to optimize processes, reduce costs, and deliver services more efficiently.

The Board of Supervisors disagrees wholly with the finding.

The IT department's current Strategic Plan includes "Efficiency" and "Innovation" as presented to the Board during the IT budget presentation. All divisions in the IT department are focused on customer service and reducing cost for the County. The IT infrastructure is built using industry-leading hardware and software, ensuring optimal performance and reliability. The IT department adheres to National Institute of Standards Technology (NIST) best practices to maintain security and efficiency.

The Project Management Office (PMO) assesses departments' needs to find the correct solutions and streamline processes. The PMO explores all options to leverage existing technology, utilize current contacts, or do market research for new technology. Throughout this process, the PMO collaborates closely with the department to ensure alignment and effectiveness.

- F2. **Wasteful IT Spending Across Departments:** The County fails to optimize IT resources, such as data storage, or leverage shared contracts for volume purchasing, leading to increased costs.

The Board of Supervisors disagrees partially with the finding.

While it is acknowledged that the District Attorney and Sheriff have the authority to purchase technology solutions without Central IT awareness, many technical items are purchased using competitively bid cooperative agreements. Information regarding these piggyback agreements is shared between departments.

The IT Department has an Application Inventory with over 350 applications used by County departments. The PMO reviews the Application Inventory to leverage current

applications and contracts. As part of the PMO process, IT makes recommendations to departments for purchases based on the current inventory.

The IT Department is committed to improving coordination with the District Attorney and Sheriff to optimize and share IT resources throughout the County.

- F3. **Delayed Rollout of Strategic Initiatives:** Strategic IT programs, including migration from Google Suite to Microsoft 365, FENIX, and TRAKiT, have experienced prolonged implementation delays and cost overruns. This has resulted in continued use of legacy systems, delayed returns on investment, and significantly increased County costs.

The Board of Supervisors disagrees partially with the finding.

The Project Management Office (PMO) was established in 2019, incorporating lessons learned from the FENIX and Trakit implementations. The PMO consists of three Project Managers (PMs) with a combined total of over 48 years of project management experience. Additionally, two PMs on the team hold the Project Management Professional (PMP) certification. The PMO follows documented procedures and convenes monthly to discuss best practices and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.

The M365 project was delivered on schedule according to the project timeline and below budget by \$145,250. The County purchased M365 licenses in 2018 due to cost savings for Office desktop products, though at the time, there were no plans to transition away from Google. In 2021, the County made the decision to move to M365 after meetings with stakeholders and surveys. The countywide project included migrating over 3000 Google Accounts, Google Docs, Google Forms, Custom Groups, and a new intranet site. The implementation date of October 2022 was chosen by stakeholders to minimize the impact on County functions including the close of the tax roll and fiscal year-end processes. Based on the selected implementation date, the County had to renew Google licenses in Feb 2022 for a full-year amount of \$282,059; however, following M365 implementation, the County reduced Google payments to under \$7,000 to cover services for migrated email encryption and Public Records Act (PRA) requirements. The District Attorney's office went live with M365 in September 2022, followed by a county-wide implementation in October 2022.

- F4. **IT Maturity in El Dorado County:** The IT maturity level in El Dorado County is subpar due to the absence of appropriate IT leadership. The County remains one of only about a dozen in the state without a defined CIO-level role to drive technology strategy and align with varying department needs.

The Board of Supervisors disagrees partially with the finding.

The IT department has many dedicated staff, and the department has evolved greatly in recent years. Many of the projects referenced in the report predate the establishment of the Project Management Office (PMO). Since its inception, the PMO has maintained a comprehensive inventory of departmental projects and initiatives, ensuring better oversight and coordination. Furthermore, the IT department holds monthly subcommittee

meetings to discuss departmental priorities and countywide initiatives, demonstrating a structured and strategic approach to IT governance

Despite the absence of a CIO title, the county's IT leadership is actively engaged in strategic planning, cybersecurity, and innovation. These efforts indicate that IT maturity is progressing.

- F5. **Frequent Turnover in the IT Director Role:** Frequent changes in the IT Director position have hindered the establishment of a consistent long-term strategic vision, contributing to subpar IT maturity. Several IT directors did not have sufficient tenure or experience to develop or implement a cohesive strategy.

The Board of Supervisors disagrees partially with the finding.

It is acknowledged that the IT Department has had turnover in the IT Director position over the past several years; however, the IT Department currently has Board-approved defined strategic goals, key initiatives, and a five-year roadmap.

- F6. **Potential Cost Savings:** The County could save a significant amount of money with a more strategic view of IT under the leadership of the CIO. Implementation of the recommendations of this report could be expected to result in an estimated annual savings of between \$1,000,000 and \$3,000,000 annually for the County.

The Board of Supervisors disagrees partially with the finding.

While strategic thinking generally leads to efficiency, the assertions in this finding can't be verified without a comprehensive review of the feasibility of consolidating data centers and contracts. This review would need to include an analysis of the specific requirements of the County, District Attorney and Sheriff. Additionally, though the data centers are not currently merged, many technology items are acquired through competitively bid cooperative agreements, and information regarding these piggyback agreements is shared among departments.

- F7. **Inability to Take a More Strategic View of IT Today:** Despite recurring failures in IT leadership, the County proceeded to replace the most recent IT Director with a person of similar job description and skill set, making it unlikely to attract candidates with sufficient skills to succeed in the role.

The Board of Supervisors disagrees wholly with the finding.

It is unclear to whom this finding refers, as the position of IT Director has not been filled with a permanent replacement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. Instruct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to deliver a Chief Information Officer (CIO) job description by September 1, 2025, ensure the job description includes measurable strategic responsibilities and specific authority for county-wide technology alignment. (Sample Job Description provided in appendix.)

The recommendation has been implemented.

The CAO and Human Resources have been tasked with revising the IT Director job description and possibly the title to reflect a more strategically focused emphasis. The Board expects to receive the revised job description and initiate a new recruitment by September 1, 2025.

- R2. Direct the CAO to hire a Chief Information Officer (CIO) to lead Information Technology (IT) by January 1, 2026.

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

As referenced above, the title of the position has yet to be determined, based on the research and recommendations the Board will receive from the CAO and HR this Fall; however, the goal is to hire a permanent head of Information Technologies by January 1, 2026.

- R3. Direct the future CIO to develop and present comprehensive storage and data center consolidation strategies by May 1, 2026.

The recommendation requires further analysis.

As noted in the response to Recommendation #2, the Board hopes to find a permanent leader for the Information Technologies Department by January 1, 2026. The Board would then work with the new department head to identify any needed changes to the department's strategic plan and work to implement those. This will include encouraging discussions with the Sheriff and District Attorney regarding efficiencies.

- R4. Instruct the future CIO and CAO to reconfigure the IT Steering Committee into a collaborative body to evaluate projects, consolidate infrastructure needs, coordinate County-wide IT purchases and report results regularly by May 1, 2026.

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

This recommendation is dependent on recommendations 1 and 2. The IT department has already begun drafting recommended changes to the ITSC structure, but a firm timeline for full implementation of this recommendation cannot be provided until a new head of the Information Technologies Department has been hired.

- R5. Establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure IT effectiveness and efficiency across county departments by July 1, 2026, and provide quarterly reports to the BOS.

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

This recommendation is dependent on recommendations 1 and 2. The IT Department has started drafting potential KPIs, but a firm timeline for full implementation of this recommendation cannot be provided until a new head of the Information Technologies Department has been hired.