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Memorandum

August 9, 2019

TO: Joint Technology Committee

FROM: Andrea Denka, Research Analyst, 303-866-4781
Joint Technology Committee Staff

SUBJECT: JTC Staff Analysis of JBC-Referred FY 2019-20 Supplemental Budget Request
Governor's Office of Information Technology
Colorado Digital Services

Summary of Request

The Governor's Office of Information Technology (OIT) is requesting \$1.1 million General Fund and 6.2 FTE for FY 2019-20 to implement a Colorado Digital Services (CDS) program.

Reason for Referral

This memorandum responds to the letter sent by the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) following a staff briefing on June 19, 2019, about a request for interim supplemental funding to implement the CDS program. The letter requested that the Joint Technology Committee (JTC) consider whether the request qualifies for funding through the interim supplemental process and examine the merits of the proposed CDS program.

Interim Supplemental Request Process

Pursuant to Section 24-75-111, C.R.S., in the event of unforeseen circumstances arising while the General Assembly is not in session, state agencies may make requests for supplemental appropriations.

Typically, before considering the merits of a request, a committee determines whether a request meets one of the following four criteria for interim supplemental funding: an emergency, new information necessitating immediate action, an unforeseen circumstance, or a technical correction.

OIT explains that this request qualifies for interim supplemental funding based on new information received after the 2019 legislative session concluded.

Staff Analysis

While JTC staff believes that OIT has provided ample detail and information related to the request, further clarification about the CDS program and about the amount of funding requested may be warranted.

OIT states that CDS will focus on large and complex IT projects, projects that are struggling to move forward, and state programs that need new IT solutions. OIT has not yet identified which IT projects this program will focus on and has not provided job descriptions for the 6.2 FTE. OIT states that the job descriptions will be dependent on the projects staff are assigned, but since these projects will be decided at a later time, the function of CDS is unclear. This lack of clarity may hinder the CDS program goal to improve the implementation of large-scale IT solutions and projects. It is not clear to staff that immediate funding through the interim supplemental process is necessary. OIT could instead submit a regular budget request for FY 2020-21.

Request Details

Background. OIT is requesting funding to implement a CDS program modeled off of the United States Digital Service (USDS) program. The USDS program is a federal program within the Executive Office of the President that provides consultation services to federal agencies on IT and on solving technology problems in government. This program utilizes top-tier technology experts by hiring them into short term positions within the federal government to support government IT modernization efforts.

In the spring of 2019, OIT and the Governor's Office utilized a team of volunteers from USDS for a pilot project that assessed the state's human resources information system project, or HRWorks, and evaluated if the USDS model would work for state government in Colorado. During the evaluation, the USDS team provided the state with a series of recommended steps to solve issues encountered by the HRWorks project. OIT states that the final USDS assessment, which was completed in May 2019, validated the successful progress of HRWorks, but that the USDS expertise provided many strategic "lessons learned" opportunities that the state can use when implementing new large-scale IT projects. OIT believes that the recommendations from USDS can be leveraged to create Colorado's own digital services program to improve digital solutions across the state. OIT states that this budget request qualifies for consideration for interim supplemental funding due to new information arising from the USDS assessment that was finalized after the adjournment of the 2019 session.

Justification. OIT explains that the state does not currently offer sufficient dedicated funding and resources to establish and deliver digital services effectively. Digital services refers to the electronic delivery of information, including data, voice, and content to a variety of platforms and electronic devices. OIT states that implementing CDS will improve Colorado's citizen-facing digital services. The office also anticipates that the CDS program will:

- save the government time and money by getting delayed IT projects back on track;
- allow for technical evaluation panels for vendor procurement processes;
- reduce costs and provide innovation to state government;
- improve the experience Coloradans have when interfacing with digital government services; and
- improve the state's IT workforce.

OIT states that if this request is not funded, it will continue moving forward with IT initiatives, but without the benefit of private-sector expertise and insight needed to improve and streamline technology solutions.

Options for Committee Actions

The JTC has three options for committee action when it provides a technical review of an operating budget request to the JBC. The JTC can:

- recommend the request to the JBC for funding with no concerns;
- recommend the request to the JBC for funding with concerns, as outlined in the JTC Staff Analysis section; or
- not recommend the request for funding with concerns.