

To: The Honorable Ralph Northam, Governor of Virginia
The Honorable Luke E. Torian, Chair, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Janet D. Howell, Chair, Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee

From: Nelson Moe, Chief Information Officer of the Commonwealth

BACKGROUND

The Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA) respectfully submits this report pursuant to [item 90\(D\) of the Appropriation Act](#), which provides for quarterly reports “on progress toward transitioning to new information technology services that will replace the information technology services currently provided by Northrop Grumman,” including “VITA’s organization and in-scope information technology and telecommunications costs,” and “options available to the Commonwealth at the expiry of the current agreements including any anticipated steps required to plan for their expiration.”

In addition to this formal report, VITA continues to report in detail through both executive reporting and ongoing oversight by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC). This report is current as of December 2020.

REPORT

VITA is pleased to report that the multisupplier model continues to mature and deliver for the Commonwealth.

Indeed, within this last quarter, VITA’s success earned national recognition. The [National Association of State Chief Information Officers \(NASCIO\)](#) awarded VITA with a top honor for the agency’s transition to a multisupplier model: [Virginia’s submission won the category of Enterprise IT Management Initiatives](#). Additionally, the 2020 edition of the [Center for Digital Government](#)’s biennial Digital States Survey, which rates states on demonstrated results in innovation, operations, governance and administration, again [ranked Virginia among the top states in the country with a grade of A-](#) and also [gave Virginia one of three awards for excellence in Connected Infrastructure](#), which focuses on computing, networks, storage and cloud capabilities.

With the multisupplier model fully in place, VITA is now focused on value creation for agency customers and building on initial, baseline performance metrics. Several focus metrics include:

- Time to market for services, which involves speeding up service portfolio life cycle management (SPLM) to enhance service introduction to customers;
- Platform cost savings, which involves close coordination with suppliers to identify cost savings on existing services;
- Demonstrated value from solutions implemented (for example, a service like robotic process automation (RPA) can deliver productivity improvements, such as waste reduction and cost savings); and
- Customer satisfaction, which is central to [the new VITA and the cornerstone of the agency's guiding principles](#).

Below are some highlights and notable updates from this last quarter.

Data center and VITA moves

As noted in prior reports, the Commonwealth's lease on its data center in Chester, the Commonwealth Enterprise Solutions Center (CESC), expires at the end of FY22, which requires both an enterprise data center move project and a move of VITA's offices. The new QTS data center went live in August, and the enterprise data center move kicked off in September. Move events continued to progress this quarter. As of December 17, move events 1-16 had been completed, with 867 servers having moved and 23 agencies having completed all of their scheduled moves. To prepare for the move of VITA's offices, the team is working with consultants to define all requirements for the new space, including accounting for any changes in work environment needs spurred by COVID-19. In the next quarter, VITA will go to market seeking that future space.

IT infrastructure re-procurement

VITA's most recent report noted that a new IT infrastructure procurement and contracts cycle has begun, starting with the release of a request for proposals (RFP) in August for the messaging tower. Because this is an [ongoing procurement](#), details are not yet public, but proposals were received in October as planned, and after evaluations and negotiations, the plan remains to replace the current messaging services contract upon its expiration in 2021.

Messaging services have illustrated that the Commonwealth is now receiving substantially better services under the multisupplier model. The modern, cloud-based messaging has enabled state government operations to continue during the ongoing state of emergency related to COVID-19 in a way that would not have been possible under the old model. VITA anticipates that the new messaging services contract will build on that success by more fully integrating into the multisupplier model. VITA is also considering whether the new messaging services contract can include offering agencies a choice of messaging platforms, further demonstrating the customization and options available to agencies through the new

multisupplier model. Costs and features under the new messaging services contract are part of the ongoing procurement negotiations. Within the messaging services tower under the current contract, licensing use has been increasing, with a corresponding rise in costs.

Network

The Commonwealth's network is key to everything that VITA and its customers do. This quarter brought some challenges – most notably, a fiber cut that disrupted connectivity statewide on the last day of voter registration for the 2020 federal election. Although the fiber cut was challenging, it highlighted how the multi-supplier model has better equipped Virginia to deal with those challenges. VITA worked directly with its Voice Data Network services supplier, Verizon, to ensure that the fiber cut was quickly repaired and to better protect against any future occurrences. Following repairs, the team immediately deployed two additional 1 Gigabit (Gb) circuits to ensure that loss of the main 10 Gb circuit would not again result in such an outage. Since October, VITA has continued to upgrade to improve and protect the Commonwealth's network, adding a new 10 Gb circuit into CESC and replacing core routers, improving resiliency. Longer term, VITA plans to move the Commonwealth's network away from an antiquated "hub-and-spoke" model and take advantage of modern network architecture technologies. Transforming our network will provide a more resilient environment with no single point of failure, fewer outages, and reduced latency issues.

Cybersecurity

This quarter's news continued to demonstrate how critical information security is to technology and our data. The SolarWinds compromise made global headlines, and security personnel from VITA and suppliers have responded and acted to protect the Commonwealth from that threat. Information security is more than headline-grabbing attacks – regular, ongoing challenges like ransomware (which hit [local government](#) and [schools](#) in Virginia and [nearby](#) in 2020) also continue to be a focus. This quarter, VITA has finished drafting the detailed ransomware study report [called for by the General Assembly](#), which will be published in January 2021. VITA has also launched a curriculum and materials for training state employees in information security awareness, [which agencies are required to do moving forward](#). Appropriate information security training has long been a critical component of protecting against phishing, ransomware, and other threats.

Budget

VITA's budget requests this year reflected the critical initiatives and needs described above. Governor Northam's administration [has included funds in his budget bill](#) that would provide ongoing support for the data center relocation project, deploy software defined network services and upgrade network infrastructure, replace the legacy virtual private network remote access solution, and add needed security personnel.

Conclusion

The VITA team remains grateful for support from policymakers. We are committed to continuing to improve and optimize services for our customers and all Virginians going forward, and we welcome opportunities to partner, assist, and share our progress.