STATE OF DELAWARE
GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW (GEAR)

2026 GEAR BOARD ANNUAL REPORT TO GOVERNOR MEYER

REQUIRED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER

November 1, 2026

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STATE OF DELAWARE
GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW

2026 ANNUAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Established by executive order in February 2017, the Government Efficiency and Accountability Review (GEAR) develops recommendations for increasing efficiency and effectiveness across State government, improving strategic planning and performance management, and building continuous improvement practices. These objectives support the Administration's values of Integrity, Efficiency, and Collaboration. GEAR advances these values by improving the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of government services, building sustainable improvement capability across agencies, and helping bend the arc of government spending growth downward.

GEAR serves as the statewide vehicle for continuous improvement through the GEAR Board, GEAR Program Management Team, Enterprise Services Delivery Team, GEAR Field Team, and GEAR P3 Taskforce. Since the inception of GEAR through July 2026, the Board held 52 public meetings, while the GEAR portfolio of supported projects grew to 164 spanning State agencies, the Judicial Branch, and enterprise service delivery organizations. The 2026 Annual Report marks the 10th annual report documenting this work.

The executive order directs the GEAR Board to issue an annual report to the Governor describing progress toward the objectives of the executive order, recommendations for consideration in the Governor's Recommended Budget, and policy priorities. The report emphasizes measurable outcomes, including reduced costs, faster and simpler processes, enhanced value, and improved customer outcomes.

In 2026, GEAR entered an important transition period. The State is using the relationships, methods, trained workforce, performance discipline, and delivery lessons developed through GEAR as the foundation for an emerging multidisciplinary digital service-improvement model. The following summary highlights current results and the capabilities proposed for continuity as that model is established.

I. GEAR Program Management Team

Build on GEAR through a Multidisciplinary Service-Improvement Model – The State is planning a transition that preserves GEAR's operational excellence, training, agency support, change-management, performance, and savings-measurement capabilities while adding product management, user research and service design, technology, data, accessibility, procurement, and vendor strategy. The proposed Fiscal Year 2027 bridge model uses existing State resources plus targeted time-limited capacity, limits the initial portfolio to a small number of high-priority engagements, and uses evidence from those engagements as proof of concept to inform whether or not a permanent Fiscal Year 2028 model should be funded.

Strengthen Quantifiable Outcomes – As of July 2026, the GEAR portfolio included 164 projects. Approximately 94 percent of the portfolio was participating in estimated return-on-investment reporting, with a rough order-of-magnitude lifetime value of approximately $117 million in savings. GEAR continues to balance financial estimates with qualitative measures such as customer experience, service quality, risk reduction, and agency capability.

Scale Efficiency through the Service Efficiency Blitz (SEB) Model – GEAR continued using short, data-driven SEBs to convert complex service problems into testable improvements. Across the permitting value stream, recent work includes a projected reduction of DNREC subaqueous permitting from as long as 2 years toward 6 months with approximately $435,000 in annual savings, a 5-business-day reduction in the Preliminary Land Use Service process with approximately $162,500 in annual savings, a projected 33 percent reduction in Traffic Impact Study rework plus a 3-business-day time reduction, and a 9-business-day reduction in portions of the Record and Entrance Plan process with nearly $1 million in

annual savings. A February 2026 Kent County SEB identified a further 28 percent efficiency opportunity, approximately 1,600 staff hours, and up to $120,000 in annual savings.

Advance JobsFirst Delaware from Ready in Six – The Ready in Six pilots and SEBs contributed process evidence for JobsFirst Delaware, which is designed to make State permitting more predictable, transparent, and digitally connected. The target is for completed State permit applications to be processed within 120 business days by the end of calendar year 2027 through shared information, combined application workflows where legally permissible, parallel review, and real-time status visibility. As of September 2026, 11 projects had applied through the Executive Order #18 Permitting Accelerator and 9 had been designated for accelerated coordination.

Build Continuous Improvement Capability – The First State Quality Improvement Fund continues to support Continuous Improvement Practitioner (CIP), Process and Project Leadership (PPL), and Operational Excellence (OpEx) training. By July 2026, approximately 194 State employees had completed DHR-led continuous improvement practitioner training, creating a larger internal base of Lean, project management, business analysis, and change-management skills.

Grow the GEAR Field Team as a Community of Practice – The GEAR Field Team continues to connect practitioners across 23 State organizations, including the Judicial Branch, and supports agency-led improvement through shared methods, coaching, process mapping, and project tools. The Field Team continues to evolve into a durable community of practice that preserves Lean and process-improvement fundamentals while expanding exposure to product management, service design, customer experience, data and digital delivery.

Solidify a Strategic Path for the Enterprise Services Delivery (ESD) Team – Representing most of the State's major financial, human resources, and information technology functions, ESD delivers value by monitoring and reporting on the implementation of approximately 50 cross-agency enterprise-wide projects and programs. In 2022, the framework for evaluating the strategic impact of enterprise-level projects was established with a focus on the impact of change saturation, return on investment, and risk management across agencies. In 2023 and 2024, the ESD team rechartered its efforts to better align agencies, projects, and service delivery toward a more unified State of Delaware enterprise perspective. This rechartering was implemented in 2025. The vision of ESD is to foster a culture of collaboration and success by ensuring inter-organization communication on enterprise-wide finance, human resources, and information technology projects and adequate resource allocation to sustain these projects over time. This is accomplished by having ESD meeting agendas ensure that the major finance, human resources, and information technology projects being undertaken are addressed at each meeting and that there are discussions on service delivery efficiencies, performance measurements, end-user satisfaction, cost savings and project timeliness and fiscal performance.

Expand Career Pathways for Employee Recruitment and Retention – GEAR, with support from the Department of Human Resources, established 18 statewide classifications across project management, business process analysis, Lean continuous improvement, and change management. By 2026, these classifications were being used by organizations including the Office of Management and Budget, Department of Finance, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, and the Courts, strengthening the State's ability to retain key operations management capabilities in-house.

Support Responsible Artificial Intelligence Adoption – In 2024, House Bill 333 was passed establishing the Delaware Artificial Intelligence (AI) Commission, which includes the Executive Director of GEAR as a member. This Commission was created to do the following: (a) make recommendations to the General Assembly and to the Chief Information Officer on legislative and executive actions regarding AI in Delaware; (b) develop and recommend statewide processes, principles, and guidelines for executive, legislative, and judicial agencies to follow regarding use of AI; (c) encourage agencies to utilize AI to improve service delivery, where appropriate; (d) examine, develop, and recommend legislative, executive, and judicial actions that ensure the use of AI in Delaware keeps citizens safe and does not violate any individual's rights; (e) conduct an inventory of all generative AI usage in Delaware executive, legislative, and judicial agencies and identify high-risk areas to be avoided for the implementation of generative AI. The GEAR Executive Director's involvement provides direct input on the use of this technology for business process optimization, automation, and other efficiencies over time. AI is a strategic part of GEAR's Lean business process transformation and innovation work efforts.

Enable Enterprise Project and Process Management – Planview Projectplace and ARIS remain common tools for portfolio visibility, project management, and business process analysis. The GEAR project portfolio is maintained in Projectplace, while the Field Team business process community uses ARIS to map current-state workflows, identify waste, and design future-state processes. Fiscal Year 2026 funding continued the State's investment in these shared capabilities.

Benchmark Continuous Improvement Activities Against Other States - Several of GEAR's continuous improvement activities for the State of Delaware were included in a nationally recognized state benchmarking program, Results for

America's Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence for 2023, 2024, 2025, and 2026. The Results for America's Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence demonstrates that states are increasingly using data and evidence to produce better, more equitable results for their residents. In 2023, 2024, and 2025, Delaware was noted as having six "promising examples" of state standards of excellence under the focus areas of evaluation leadership, evaluation policy and learning, data policy and practices, and performance management. GEAR has submitted the State's progress for inclusion in the 2026 Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence and is awaiting results from Results for America. GEAR leadership will continue to collaborate with other government partners who are pursuing data-driven and evidence-based best practices.

II. GEAR Public Private Partnership (P3)

Advance Permitting Reform from Ready in Six to JobsFirst Delaware – The GEAR P3 Taskforce helps translate private-sector feedback from industry partners into targeted permitting improvement work with State and local partners. Ready in Six pilots and service efficiency blitzes produced measurable gains in DNREC, DelDOT, OMB, and Kent County processes forming part of the evidence base for JobsFirst Delaware. The statewide vision is a predictable, transparent, digitally connected permitting experience built around a common application, parallel review where permissible, a 120-business-day State review target for completed applications, a dedicated point of contact, and clearer status visibility.

Incentivize Measurable Improvement and Preserve the External Customer Voice – The GEAR P3 Innovation & Efficiency and Trailblazer Awards continue to pair State and private-sector funding to recognize employees who deliver measurable results. The 2025 award cycle recognized employees on May 5, 2026, honoring two Innovation & Efficiency teams and four Trailblazer recipients or teams for work spanning child welfare, behavioral health, aging services, juvenile justice, emergency management, and social-equity grant delivery. Since 2018, 15 Innovation & Efficiency teams and 21 Trailblazer individuals or teams have been recognized. As GEAR transitions, the P3 partnership is proposed to continue as a structured source of business and external-customer perspective for service discovery, permitting reform, and employee recognition.

III. Enterprise Services Delivery Team (ESD)

Plan for Replacement of Enterprise-Wide Computer Applications - Beginning in 2022, Delaware launched an initiative to modernize the State's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, which is currently known as OneDelaware. As part of this broad ERP initiative, the State is replacing the following aging legacy systems: Comprehensive Retirement Information System (CRIS), First State Financials (FSF), and the Payroll Human Resources Statewide Technology (PHRST) system as well as Recruitment, Onboarding/Offboarding, Learning Management, and other human resources-related systems. This strategic move marked a significant step towards enhancing efficiency and innovation by replacing systems that no longer provide flexibility, automation, or data insight and are no longer supported by the original software manufacturer as they reach end-of-life. This leaves the current solutions outdated, falling short of meeting the State's requirements, and offering minimal enhancements for a mobile workforce. In addition, due to numerous customizations, support for the current systems requires a specialized workforce. Once implementation is complete, this business transformation effort focused on modernization will unify all State organizations, including the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches; K–12 schools; charter schools; and higher education institutions on one integrated platform. This transformative initiative to a modern, cloud-based ERP system represents a major step forward in promoting transparency, streamlining key business processes, improving data visibility for informed decision-making, strengthening security through cloud-based technology, and enhancing employee self-service. To date, the State has appropriated $130.5 million toward this major initiative with $25 million in both the Fiscal Year 2023 and Fiscal Year 2024 bond bills, $12.5 million in the Fiscal Year 2025 bond bill, $50 million in the Fiscal Year 2026 bond bill, and $18 million in the Fiscal Year 2027 bond bill.

Establish the Department of Finance Transformation Operations Center – The Department of Finance has created a Transformation Operations Center that is committed to a sustained initiative to ensure its business processes are optimized and has launched its first Transformation Office within the Division of Revenue positioned under the Office of the Director of Revenue. In addition, the role of Transformation Operations Leader has been established to guide and support this initiative. The Transformation Office will drive measurable improvements by reducing delays and inefficiencies, improving process design, implementing performance metrics and KPIs, identifying ways to strengthen technology utilization, recommending workforce efficiency changes, and assuring effective change management and communication.

Map OneDelaware Current-State Processes with ARIS – Since May 2026, the Division of Accounting's OneDelaware team has used the GEAR standard business process management tool ARIS to develop standardized current-state process maps across its business areas in preparation for the State's ERP modernization. The team has identified 52 process models currently needed and has created an initial ARIS model for all but 17, with approximately 12 models fully validated and finalized with subject matter experts to date and with additional models continuing through the review process. By using the ARIS Artificial Intelligence Companion tool to generate the initial framework of a process model, the team can move quickly from model construction to validation and refinement, while creating a centralized visual record of current processes for both the OneDelaware team and the system integrator.

Streamline Financial Services Workloads, Payment Flows, and Training – State organizations are responsible for preparing financial transactions and their associated documents in a timely manner, in proper sequence, and in accordance with established procedures in the State's Budget and Accounting Policy Manual (BAM). The after-the-fact waiver request application process was streamlined to reduce the number of requests that needed the approval of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and the Secretary of Finance. Their workload has been reduced by as much as 76 percent; however, in recent years the number of requests for cabinet secretary approval have been creeping upwards. Though increasing, the number of requests are still well below those prior to streamlining the approval process. Combined annual spending for the State's credit card program (PCard) and the Single-Use Account (SUA) program for vendor payments in Calendar Year 2025 was $168.9 million with a rebate of $3.14 million. The PCard contract went to RFP in 2025 and in 2026 the incumbent bank was selected to continue to serve as the vendor for the State's PCard and SUA needs. A contract was signed in July 2026. A subcommittee to develop an Accounting 201 course has been launched and the development of this course is underway. This will be an extension of an introductory Accounting 101 course for state employees that is currently offered. A subcommittee that launched last year to review and discuss potential enhancements for the Budget and Accounting course is finalizing an updated course that is expected to be launched in the fall of 2026. This course will provide updated guidance and information on the State's budgeting and accounting operations.

Drive Transparency and Accountability in State Government through Effective Internal Controls - Internal controls are a critical element of effective enterprise risk management. Establishing proper policies, procedures, and protections drives transparency and informs the decision-making of State leaders. The Delaware Office of Auditor of Accounts (AOA) instituted recommendations within its reports to State officials and personnel to strengthen internal controls that address risks associated with State business practices with the goal of increasing operational efficiency.

Ensure Greater Audit Engagement Compliance and Adaptability - The Delaware Office of Auditor of Accounts (AOA) instituted several internal initiatives with the goal of increasing operational efficiency. Leadership has focused on ensuring its mandated engagements are completed efficiently by deploying its auditors more strategically. This helped better prepare AOA to respond to matters of public interest beyond its established audit plan. By investing in its own office staff and emphasizing strategic deployment of its auditors, AOA has affirmed itself as an indispensable partner in the general operations of State government**.**

Lower Lease Costs and Restructure Lease Program - The Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Division of Facilities Management (DFM) manages one of the State of Delaware's largest operating cost categories – 121 leases totaling approximately 1.8 million square feet of occupied space with an annual lease expenditure of $34.4 million. Through strategic lease negotiations, portfolio optimization, property acquisitions, and workplace modernization, OMB/DFM has transformed the State's approach to real property management. Since the program's inception, these efforts have generated more than $36.3 million in hard dollar savings, $11.4 million in soft dollar savings through landlord-funded improvements, and an additional $28.8 million in long-term lease cost avoidance through strategic property acquisitions – representing more than $76 million in documented savings and cost avoidance. The program continues to evolve from traditional lease administration into a comprehensive enterprise real estate strategy focused on reducing operating costs, maximizing asset value, improving workforce efficiency, and ensuring responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources.

Improve the Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) through a Service Efficiency Blitz - The PLUS process provides preliminary information for coordinated land use development of a certain size and scale across Delaware that ideally positions the customer for a streamlined experience to obtain their necessary permits from State and local government. In June 2025, a Service Efficiency Blitz (SEB) led by the GEAR Program Management Team, the Office of State Planning Coordination (OSPC), and other State agency partners reexamined the customer journey, focusing on developer and local government needs. The effort and resulting actions align with the Governor's priorities on streamlined permitting and affordable housing resulting in an overall process reduction of at least 5 business days and a 20 percent reduction in the overall application time for customers.

Inventory State Land/Putting Assets to Work – In July of 2025 the State Land Inventory Management System (SLIM) was launched. This transformative initiative—born out of the GEAR program—represents a major step forward in promoting transparency, operational excellence, and a culture of continuous improvement across Delaware's State government. SLIM is a first-of-its-kind, centralized solution for how State government inventories and manages State-owned land assets across multiple agencies. SLIM data was shared with the Governor's Office and a consultant retained to realize opportunities to take underutilized State assets and put them to better use (generating revenue for the State) by adding solar energy systems to parking lots and rooftops, renting towers out to telecommunications firms, and encouraging ground leases for mixed-use developments.

Centralize and Modernize the Delivery of Human Resources Services – The Department of Human Resources (DHR) remains committed to promoting integrity, efficiency, transparency, and collaboration in addressing critical issues affecting the State's workforce. Enhancing efficiency, consistency, and overall effectiveness in delivering services to the State's most valuable resource—its employees—is essential. In 2026, DHR continued to centralize expertise, leveraging successes from previously decentralized functions to strategically enhance workforce development, service efficiency, effectiveness, and overall quality.

Drive Leadership Training Opportunities – The First State Quality Improvement Fund (FSQIF), managed by DHR in partnership with GEAR, supports the delivery of 1) Project and Process Leadership training, focusing on the people side of leadership skills crucial for fostering collaboration, driving innovation, and achieving goals; 2) Operational Excellence (OpEx) Program, designed to provide specialized skills to existing practitioners through certificate programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials in Lean Six Sigma, Design Thinking, Business Analytics, or Systems Thinking; and 3) Continuous Improvement Practitioner (CIP) Program training, developing skills in project management, change management, and lean process improvement. In Fiscal Year 2026, 24 participants enrolled in Project and Process Leadership, 10 in the OpEx program, and 38 in the CIP program. The total number of graduates in all 3 programs is now 228.

Expand Employee Recognition – The Department of Human Resources manages the Statewide Recognition Awards Program, which honors exceptional State employees through several awards. The Governor's Team Excellence Award Programs recognize continuous improvement efforts of individuals and teams across the state. These awards include the GEAR P3 Innovation and Efficiency Award, the GEAR P3 Trailblazer Award, and the Delaware Award for Excellence and Commitment in State Service, with each award recognizing individual employees or teams of employees for exemplary service. The Corporal Grade One Matthew T. "Ty" Snook Award for Heroism (formerly known as the Delaware Award for Heroism) honors acts of bravery. Under the Governor's Team Excellence Awards, the GEAR P3 Innovation and Efficiency Award and the Champions Award recognize teams of six or more for their continuous improvement work. The GEAR P3 Trailblazer Award recognizes individuals or small teams of 2 to 5 members leading continuous improvement projects. The GEAR P3 Awards were created in partnership with the GEAR P3 Taskforce, with public and private sector representatives involved in the selection process. These two awards include monetary incentives jointly funded by the State and private sector partners. In 2026, 2 teams received the GEAR P3 Innovation & Efficiency Award, each receiving a $15,000 prize shared among team members, while 11 individuals were recognized with the Trailblazer Award, with each individual receiving $1,500. In addition, five State employees were selected as recipients of the Delaware Award for Excellence and Commitment in State Service, 32 employees for the Delaware Award for Heroism, and 3 teams were selected for the Governor's Team Excellence Champions award.

Promote Respectful Workplaces – As Delaware's largest employer, the State of Delaware remains steadfast in its dedication to advancing a workplace environment characterized by collaboration, trust, integrity, fairness, diversity, equity, inclusivity, and accessibility. In support of these initiatives, the Talent Management section began updating statewide policies and procedures to facilitate broader accessibility. The Division of People and Culture continues to serve as a strategic partner to State agencies by supporting employee-led advisory committees that promote employee engagement, strengthen workplace culture, and enhance organizational effectiveness. Through leadership coaching, consultation, and collaborative planning, these committees provide meaningful employee insights that help agencies cultivate workplaces where all employees have the opportunity to contribute, grow, and thrive while advancing a high-performing, people-centered workforce.

Contain Health Care Cost Growth – As health care costs continue to increase, the Department of Human Resources' Statewide Benefits Office (SBO), under the guidance of the State Employee Benefits Committee (SEBC), continues to develop strategies to engage Group Health Insurance Plan (GHIP) members to contain the State's health care costs for employees, retirees, pensioners, and their dependents. To ensure the financial stability of the Group Health Fund and prevent future double-digit rate increases, the SEBC approved a 2.2 percent increase in State health plan premiums (rates), which

were effective July 1, 2026, for active employees and non-Medicare retirees and are effective January 1, 2027, for Medicare retirees. The State is projecting to close Fiscal Year 2026 with an ending cash balance of $160.7 million to the Group Health Fund and a surplus of $95.4 million after reserves. The State continues to review and adopt strategies to offer programs that manage and prevent the development and worsening of chronic conditions while also focusing on engaging GHIP members through education and training to encourage them to become more responsible health care consumers.

Centralize Information Technology - The implementation of the shared services cost model, in collaboration with the Office of Management and Budget, reflecting the total cost of ownership of IT service towers is crucial to scaling services and moving Information Technology Centralization (ITC) forward. Secure End User Services (SEUS) is part of a shared services cost model which supports ITC. Under the SEUS subscription model, costs are based on a per-user annual consumption rate, tied to a service agreement. At the time of this report, Fiscal Year 2027 SEUS Terms of Service for partner agencies have been put in place, and monthly billing per the shared services cost model for Fiscal Year 2027 is underway.

Deliver Digital Government (*Go DE*) – Delaware is rapidly expanding its user-centric digital government strategy to deliver a consistent and intuitive user experience. The number of government services accessible online continues to grow, allowing residents and visitors to obtain State products and services anytime, from anywhere, and on any device. Delaware implemented *Go DE* as the resident and visitor portal in June 2025. The platform combines a single sign-on solution with identity proofing, a State-standard payment engine, and custom product and service solutions to support simplified user interaction. Highlights include a comprehensive user account center, filing and service engine, intuitive enterprise reporting and reconciliation, and billing and notification functions. *Go DE* continues to evolve with input from the public and State agencies to shape an exceptional customer experience.

Streamline Through CASCADE – The CASCADE (Centralized, Accessible, Secure, Configurable, Agile, Digital, Evolutionary) Initiative is the Judicial Branch's large-scale modernization effort. The initiative has been underway for several years, following an extensive RFP and discovery process. Civil efforts kicked off in July of 2024, with Phase 1 planned for a late 2026/early 2027 release and Phase 2 to be completed in the fourth quarter of 2028. While Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the CASCADE Initiative focus on solutions for civil case management, document management, and E-filing, a similar parallel initiative is underway to evaluate the Court's criminal solution needs.

Evaluate Criminal Justice Data Systems - By leveraging funding allocated to the Criminal Justice Systems Evaluation Committee, the Judicial Branch has been able to contract with a consulting team to evaluate and report on the criminal justice systems employed by the Courts. This evaluation includes a review of current operations and processes, data sharing, partner integrations, gaps, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. Consulting is scheduled to run through 2026, and the resulting report should provide direction on how criminal justice systems modernization can be planned under the CASCADE Initiative umbrella.

Reduce Debt Burden for Ex-Offenders – The Judicial Branch has worked with the other branches of government and the community on fee reform efforts to ensure a fair system for those who are unable to pay their debts from the criminal justice system; previous successful reforms include the elimination of certain criminal fees and the write-off of aged debt. In June 2026, the General Assembly passed legislation which directs the court to presumptively waive criminal fines and fees when there is evidence of a hardship to pay, such as when receiving a public assistance benefit or being represented by the Office of Defense Services. This significant sentencing change will take effect 180 days after enactment.

IV. GEAR Field Team (GFT)

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES (DHSS)

Employ Data-Driven Decision Making by Using a Department-Wide Dashboard - Composed of 10 divisions, Delaware's Department of Health and Social Services is the largest department in the State with a wide range of services delivered, from psychiatric care to distributing food benefits to providing animal control. Historically, there has not been a single data source that leadership could leverage for data-driven decision making. This project established a centralized dashboard report showing a range of key performance indicators (KPIs)—meaningful and measurable data points—from every division. The DHSS dashboard tracks every division's monthly KPIs, aggregates the data, and extracts the information into easy-to-understand charts and graphs to guide senior leadership's decision making. The DHSS dashboard shows point-in-time, year-to-date, and year-over-year comparisons of what is happening in the department.

Save Over $5 Million by Identifying and Eliminating Underutilized Blocked Vehicles - The DHSS Planning Unit reviews the number of blocked (reserved for department use) State Fleet vehicles to determine if there is an optimal and

more cost-effective number of vehicles to be held for the department's use. Based on utilization data, a DHSS project manager conducts a monthly analysis of the blocked Fleet vehicles assigned to the department. This analysis includes the identification of all blocked vehicles, and a review of those vehicles considered underused. A calculation is performed to quantify the cost of those underused blocked vehicles. Every month, the results of the analysis are distributed to department leaders to be used as the foundation for conversations with division directors surrounding the potential to reduce their complement of assigned vehicles. Since the project's inception in 2021, DHSS has reduced the number of blocked vehicles by 109. That translates to an estimated seven-year (the average life of a Fleet vehicle) savings of $5,173,903.

Employ DUI Rehabilitation Program Screening and Referral Services at Delaware's Treatment Access Center (TASC) locations - The Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health implemented the DUI Referral Services Program at TASC locations, transitioning screening and referral services from a contracted vendor to a State-operated model. This change eliminated participant fees for DUI screening and referral services, reducing financial barriers to treatment while streamlining the referral process through a state agency specializing in justice-involved behavioral health services. As a result, cases are processed more efficiently and consistently, expanding statewide access to DUI treatment and education while increasing engagement in required rehabilitation programming. Since implementation, the program has generated an estimated $347,250 in direct cost savings for participants, demonstrating how process improvements can simultaneously enhance service delivery, increase accessibility, and reduce the financial burden on Delaware residents.

Use Continuous Improvement Tools at the Delaware Public Health Laboratory to Deliver Quality Results - The Delaware Public Health Laboratory uses process mapping and other continuous improvement tools to evaluate workflows, identify inefficiencies, eliminate waste, and improve quality and compliance. These activities engage employees in reviewing processes to identify opportunities for safer, more efficient operations, enhance communication, reduce errors, and support ongoing continuous improvement initiatives.

Improve Access to Long-Term Services & Supports Through Strategic Resource Usage - The Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities is carrying out strategic efforts to ensure timely access to community-based long-term care services and supports by improving efficiency and reducing the cost of service provision. Long-Term Care Medicaid enrollment specialists embedded within the division have assisted over 300 Delawareans with their applications, resulting in over 200 individuals successfully transitioning to Long-Term Care Medicaid.

Implement Inter-Resident Assessment Instrument (RAI) Check-Up Assessment - The Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD) continues to modernize services to improve operational efficiency while establishing a strong infrastructure to support the individuals served in the community. The implementation of the InterRAI Check-Up Assessment has strengthened the division's ability to address wait lists for services and ensure the appropriate funding source for home and community-based services. The InterRAI Check-Up Assessment provides a person-centered, data-driven process that determines eligibility and establishes service packages by offering input on care planning, outcome measurement for quality management, and participant safety. The Check-Up Assessment utilizes algorithms that assist DSAAPD case managers by identifying and flagging care needs to support service planning and participant outcomes. DSAAPD is also exploring train-the-trainer opportunities with the provider to support knowledge transfer, staff development, and the long-term sustainability of this initiative.

Partner for Healthy Aging through Senior Centers - The Delaware Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities has partnered with 22 senior centers across the State of Delaware to support healthy aging programs. This partnership has allowed senior centers to identify what healthy aging looks like in the local communities, and to implement programming to best support older Delawareans. This program has allowed centers to provide transportation, health and wellness, nutrition, and other community services that promote healthy lifestyle choices to further healthy aging and serve active older adults. In early 2025, the division posted a Request for Proposals (RFP) for another grant opportunity based on the success of the partnerships that took place with Delaware senior centers. As a result of the RFP, the division has granted 13 Senior Centers funding to implement or continue programming that best supports older Delawareans, and these grantees will continue programming into Fiscal Year 2027.

Evaluate Longitudinal Analysis of National Core Indicators for Aging and Disability - The Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD) and the Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance (DMMA) collaborate biennially on the National Core Indicators - Aging & Disabilities project. This consumer survey provides both divisions with valuable data regarding the impact of their programming on participants' quality of life. In 2026, DSAAPD's data team consolidated the survey's findings over the years for both divisions and identified several areas for development, such as needs for transportation. These insights, stratified by Managed Care Organizations, were shared with DSAAPD's partners at DMMA for their review and potential action.

Deploy Modifications Initiative for Aging in Place - The Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD) distributed $3,500,000 of awarded American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to address the current need for home, vehicular, and assistive technology supports. With these ARPA funds, DSAAPD worked with 7 community partners to evaluate over 400 Delawareans for these essential services. To date, the program has directly provided 108 home modifications, 5 vehicle modifications, and Assistive Technology to 14 participants.

Strengthen Sustainable Peer-Led Behavioral Health Supports in Long-Term Care - The Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD) advanced the sustainability of the Peer Services Liaison Program in 2026 by establishing a long-term operational model following the expiration of the original Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health grant. In addition to launching recruitment for permanent Certified Peer Recovery Specialist positions, DSAAPD implemented a new partnership with a statewide mental-health organization to introduce the *WElcome Circle*, a bi-weekly, resident-led, peer-informed wellness group integrating mental and physical health. Early outcomes include a 78 percent increase in resident participation from the inaugural session, expanded access to non-pharmacological behavioral health supports at no cost to the State, and strengthened resident engagement and leadership. These results demonstrate measurable improvements in emotional wellness, social connection, and program sustainability, with plans underway to replicate this model across additional group offerings.

Ensure Therapeutic Programming in Secure Dementia Care - At the Delaware Hospital for the Chronically Ill (DHCI), 71 percent of residents have some form of dementia, with 32 percent residing on the secure Lakeview unit. Recognizing the unique needs of individuals with advanced dementia, DHCI continues to focus on strengthening therapeutic programming, promoting person-centered care, and supporting a dementia-friendly environment. In 2025, the original Quality Assurance Performance Improvement (QAPI) Process Improvement Project (PIP) achieved its intended goals and is now in the process of being formally closed. The PIP provided valuable data and helped guide foundational improvements in staffing, training, therapeutic engagement, and environmental support for residents living with dementia. As DHCI moves into the new year, the focus is shifting toward sustaining these improvements while further enhancing dementia-specific programming, meaningful engagement, and environmental design.

Expand the Connect Community at Delaware Hospital for the Chronically Ill (DHCI) - The Connect Community at the Delaware Hospital for the Chronically Ill (DHCI) is an innovative, relationship-centered initiative designed to reduce loneliness and social isolation among long-term care residents by leveraging existing staff and volunteer resources. Recognizing loneliness as a significant social determinant of health that contributes to poor physical, emotional, and cognitive outcomes, DHCI created a structured program that connects residents with volunteers and staff from both clinical and non-clinical backgrounds. The program currently engages more than 100 volunteers who provide companionship, social engagement, and support to residents. Despite experiencing a 20 percent decline in membership due to staff turnover, the program continues to attract new participants and maintain strong resident engagement. With more than 242 documented visits already completed this quarter and annual utilization projected to exceed 800 visits, the Connect Community continues to demonstrate measurable value for residents, staff, and the organization.

Partner with Vendor to Develop a New Learning Management System - The Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD) uses a centralized case management system for its community programs. Previously, all new DSAAPD community staff members were trained by a single DSAAPD trainer on the use of this complex system. Follow-up training is completed by coworkers when needed. This resulted in inconsistencies in training and limited retraining opportunities. DSAAPD's Continuous Quality Improvement unit partnered with the vendor to redesign this training process. The Learning Management System recently went live. It combines interactive video lessons and visual aids to ensure consistent, asynchronous training which standardizes onboarding for all Community Service employees. This not only reduces the workload burden of training new hires but enables on-demand retraining on specific workflows whenever needed.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (DDA)

Advance Department-Wide Strategic Planning – The Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) has begun the first phase of a department-wide strategic planning initiative. Working with program managers, DDA will review existing performance measures and develop long-term goals aligned with Department priorities. With support from Continuous Improvement Practitioner (CIP) graduates, managers are building their strategic planning skills while following a consistent process that encourages collaboration across programs. As individual program goals are developed and integrated into a department-wide plan, the initiative will provide a clear framework for measuring progress, strengthening coordination, and supporting the Department's long-term success.

Engage with Farm Stands and Increase Program Visibility – The Delaware Department of Agriculture's Food Products Inspection (FPI) Section has launched a new outreach initiative to strengthen relationships with farm stands and other small agricultural retailers throughout the state. By taking an "educate before regulate" approach, the initiative focuses on helping retailers understand regulatory requirements, improve compliance, and view the Department as a trusted resource. Through ongoing outreach and support, the program aims to enhance food safety, encourage long-term compliance, and create a regularly updated directory of Delaware's farm stands and agricultural retail locations.

Improve Processes and People Management for Aglands Staff – DDA continues to modernize the Aglands Preservation Program's application process, staff workflows, and web applications to improve efficiency and reduce administrative burden. The transition to an online fillable application, initiated in January 2024, was completed in early 2026, and online applications are now available through the Aglands Preservation Program website. Development is also underway on a staff-specific fillable application for processing paper-submitted applications. Unlike the public version, the staff application will provide greater control over automatically populated fields, allowing staff to manage application-specific information more efficiently. In addition, updated public-facing and staff web applications were launched in late 2025, and work began in late 2026 to modernize the Aerial Imagery Inspections web application. Together, these efforts continue to replace outdated technology while providing staff with modern, reliable tools that improve efficiency and support the long-term sustainability of the program. Following the results of the 2024 employee engagement survey, the Aglands Preservation Program began developing a more focused survey to assess staff comfort with its web applications. Although the survey is still in development, it will evaluate staff members' familiarity with the applications, their confidence in using them, and their ability to assist members of the public in navigating the applications. The results will help identify training needs and guide future improvements to ensure staff are well equipped to support both internal operations and public users.

Create a Delaware Farm Lending Program – The Department of Agriculture and Department of State's Division of Small Business, are working together to repurpose an existing, underutilized irrigation finance program to create the Delaware Agricultural Finance Program which will more broadly serve the needs of farmers. Existing revolving loan funds were reauthorized to fund the new program. The new program takes advantage of existing finance knowledge and authority housed at the Division of Small Business and the Delaware Economic Development Authority, requiring far less administrative overhead than creating a new agricultural finance authority. The new program provides loans for agricultural equipment, up to 50 percent of costs, at a fixed low interest rate with favorable repayment terms. In addition, it offers lower interest rates to beginning farmers and the aquaculture industry to support priority areas of State focus. Applications to the new program started on September 3, 2024.

Strengthen Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program with Digital Payments - DDA was awarded a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant in 2018 to aid income-eligible seniors (age 60+) to purchase fresh, locally grown fruits, vegetables, cut herbs and honey directly from Delaware farmers at farmers markets and farm stands. Initially, the program utilized a paper voucher system which required a great deal of manual work with a contracted bank to sort payments from DDA and the farmers. In 2022, the USDA made American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding available to transition from the paper vouchers to digital payments. DDA, in tandem with the Department of Health and Social Services which operates a parallel initiative through the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, researched available options and chose a contractor to operate a QR-code based electronic payment system beginning with the 2023 program. After implementation, the program achieved a 10 percent increase in usage along with other benefits.

Reboot Employee Recognition to Align with Agency Goals and Continuous Improvement – In 2025, the Department of Agriculture rebooted its employee recognition program with a new award structure intended to celebrate contributions our employees make to the success of DDA and Delaware Agriculture. We wanted to increase our recognition for work that makes a lasting difference through dedication to constituents, continuous improvement, and collaboration. We also made changes to the awards and annual timeline to improve the pathway for DDA staff to be nominated for statewide recognition programs. Response to the new program has been positive. For the first time, a team from DDA won the Governor's Award for Team Excellence in 2026.

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL (DNREC)

Modernize Online Services – The *Go DE*/Fiserv payment migration has moved from planning into active implementation. Sample payloads are being tested, Point of Sale/virtual terminal testing is underway, and the team is working through configuration issues. This is the mechanical follow-through on last year's Merchant ID consolidation work and directly touches ePermitting/Vanguard. Water & Wells User Acceptance Testing (UAT) completed with a large-group testing pass in

June, and Allocations user acceptance testing is proceeding in parallel, both aiming toward a November 1, 2026, go-live target for the Wells and Allocations module. Well permitting is close to launch-ready but requires additional work.

Additionally, a future Okta Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) integration for Vanguard/ePermitting has been identified, likely targeted for early 2027, aligned with the State's broader *Go DE* citizen-identity direction. The enterprise-account governance work (routing account requests to divisions rather than centralized review) is an operational scalability improvement tied to enterprise accounts. The Division of Water is expanding the Digital DNREC ePermitting platform through the planned launch of the Wells ePermitting Portal, continued development of the Water Allocation ePermitting application, and implementation of a new SSO Reporting Portal to support Environmental Protection Agency eRule requirements. Throughout these initiatives, the division has prioritized stakeholder engagement, user testing, and change management to ensure successful adoption. Collectively, these efforts reduce manual processes, improve data quality and transparency, and establish a scalable foundation for future digital services across the division.

Implement the Ready in 6 (Ri6) DNREC Subaqueous Permitting Improvement Prototype - The DNREC Division of Water's Wetlands and Waterways Section successfully completed a pilot permitting modernization initiative that streamlined workflows, standardized business processes, and introduced digital tools to improve efficiency, transparency, and customer service. Key outcomes include the launch of a Permitting Wizard to help applicants identify eligibility for expedited permitting through a new General Permit and expanded Statewide Activity Authorization. Through strong stakeholder engagement and change management, the division has successfully implemented these enhancements while establishing a scalable, repeatable framework for future permitting modernization. The success of this pilot is now being leveraged to develop additional General Permits and drive process improvements across the Division of Water.

Improve Chemical Inventory Reporting in Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) Program – The Division of Waste and Hazardous Substances (Waste) Emergency Response and Strategic Services Section EPCRA Program is carrying out strategic efforts to improve the timely submission of accurate chemical inventory reports by facilities through training workshops and a concurrent report review process. In 2026, the program received roughly 98 percent of EPCRA reports by the due date of March 1 compared to approximately 95 percent in 2023 and approximately 90 percent in past years. Continuous follow-up with delinquent facilities increased submission of EPCRA reports to approximately 99 percent by May 2026.

Streamline the Clean Vehicle Rebate Program Through Third-Party Administration - The Division of Climate, Coastal and Energy (CCE) Climate and Sustainability Section manages the Clean Vehicle Rebate Program, which provides incentives for Delaware residents and businesses to purchase or lease new battery electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles. CCE continues to partner with a third-party administrator to support program implementation, allowing staff to focus on other clean transportation initiatives while efficiently processing a growing volume of rebate applications. The program includes rebates for eligible used electric vehicles and enhanced incentive amounts for lower-priced vehicles to improve affordability, expand access, and ensure program funds are distributed more equitably.

Improve Stakeholder Communication in Remediation – The Remediation Section of the Division of Waste and Hazardous Substances launched this project to improve the consistency and efficiency of responses to external stakeholder inquiries. Key project deliverables included the implementation of an internal SharePoint knowledge repository containing standardized, pre-approved responses to frequently asked questions and the development of a flowchart to guide staff through a consistent inquiry response process. These tools were designed to improve response consistency, reduce staff effort, and decrease response times by 50 percent, resulting in estimated annual cost savings of $250,000. The project is now in its final phase, during which staff will be resurveyed to measure results against the original objectives and evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented improvements.

Track Online Permitting through an External Dashboard - The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, through its Division of Water, has launched a new online permit tracking dashboard aimed at improving transparency, efficiency, and public access to environmental permitting information. This initiative aligns with DNREC's broader modernization strategy and reflects a commitment to responsive, data-driven service delivery. At launch, the dashboard includes tracking for Class H wastewater and disposal system inspections, septic system site evaluations, septic permits, well permits, and Wetlands and Waterways Section permits. Plans are underway to expand the dashboard to include additional permit types such as Letters of Authorization, Statewide Activity Approvals, Water Quality Certifications, and Subaqueous Permits. In conjunction with the dashboard rollout, the Division of Water has also created a centralized Digital Resources webpage, designed to house all publicly available digital tools in one location. This hub simplifies access to permitting systems, data platforms, and other online services. The DNREC Division of Water continues to advance transparency and customer service through its online permit tracking dashboard and centralized Digital Resources webpage. Launched in 2025, these digital tools provide the public with 24/7 access to permitting information, application status

updates, related documents, and online resources, reducing reliance on manual inquiries and improving access to information. Since implementation, the platform has received more than 22,000 website visits, demonstrating strong customer engagement and adoption. By expanding self-service capabilities and continuing to enhance online services, the division is improving efficiency, increasing transparency, and supporting a more accessible, data-driven permitting experience.

Provide a Constituent Concerns Tracker - The DNREC Division of Water is launching the Constituent Concerns Tracker initiative to modernize how public concerns are received, managed, and addressed. The initiative will establish a centralized, transparent, and efficient process for tracking constituent inquiries through an online intake form, automated notifications, and geographic information system (GIS) reporting tools. By improving visibility, standardizing workflows, and enhancing communication, the system will enable staff to respond more effectively, optimize resource allocation, and strengthen engagement with communities across Delaware. This effort supports the division's commitment to responsive public service, continuous improvement, and building trust through transparent and consistent communication.

Launch HARBOR-DE - The DNREC Division of Waste and Hazardous Substances developed HARBOR-DE (Hub for Applications, Reimbursements, Billing, Oversight & Reporting), a user-facing web-based system designed to initially modernize and streamline the administration of the Brownfield Grant Program. The secure, invitation-only portal replaces email-based processes with a centralized platform for managing brownfield grant reimbursements, site reporting, and communication between the department and external stakeholders. HARBOR-DE improves transparency by allowing users to submit reimbursement requests, upload required documents, track funding balances, and communicate directly with program staff. Internally, the system standardizes workflows, enhances tracking, and reduces administrative burden through centralized data management. Future phases will expand HARBOR-DE to support online program applications, cost recovery and billing for remedial programs, and federal grant management, creating a scalable enterprise solution for environmental program administration.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE (DOS)

Grow Delaware Communities of Excellence: Year 6 – Governor Meyer declared a Literacy Emergency in Delaware as a top priority to address for his administration. Forty-two percent of Delaware students were proficient in English Language Arts in the 2024-2025 school year, and 20 percent of Delaware adults read below a third grade reading level. Delaware Communities of Excellence's goal is e*quity through literacy,* and the initiative established the Delaware Literacy Alliance, a collaborative of all State agencies and non-profit organizations that support literacy to produce a statewide literacy ecosystem across the lifespan. During Fiscal Year 2026, the Delaware Literacy Alliance continued increasing public awareness of the issue by expanding its website, delawareliteracyalliance.org, and updating its strategic plan, while its subcommittees coordinated early learning, adult literacy, and health literacy activities.

Install Radio Frequency Identification Infrastructure in Delaware Libraries – Book circulation (check-in and check-out) and inventories are time- and resource-intensive activities at Delaware's libraries. Starting in 2022, public libraries' collections and Delaware Library Catalog participating school libraries' collections were tagged with radio frequency identification tags and scanning/self-check equipment installed to reduce the time needed to check items in and out, as well as perform inventories. The project's goal is to improve the technology infrastructure. Where libraries' collection items are tagged, staff are trained to effectively use the scanning equipment, with self-checkout available to patrons. Participating public libraries are fully functional with new materials tagged as acquired. School libraries' collections are tagged, and equipment installed as they join the Delaware Library Catalog. Staff, patrons, and students are adopting the new circulation and inventory processes, leading to improved productivity.

Integrate School Libraries into the Delaware Library Catalog and Consortium – School-age children need access to an abundance of current books to support literacy and learning. School libraries struggle to keep their collections up to date and relevant. In 2016 the Division of Libraries began a successful pilot project with Colonial School District libraries to join the Delaware Library Catalog and expand their students' access to current materials. After seeing proof of concept, other school libraries began to join. Starting in Fiscal Year 2023 the division received State funding for school library integration into the catalog and to update school library book collections. This work is augmented by a funding incentive for school libraries to join the Delaware Library Catalog using $1.9 million in congressionally appropriated federal funds available between 2025 and 2027 to upgrade school library collections. As of September 2026, 69 school libraries will be members of the Catalog and Consortium. This overall effort provides equity and bridges the "last mile" to books for children who do not typically access their local public libraries, as well as creates efficiencies by enabling improved circulation of new books.

Innovate Social Services in Delaware Libraries - Delaware Libraries continue to leverage technology, partnerships, and library facilities to help Delawareans access employment, social services, health resources, and workforce development opportunities. In Fiscal Year 2026, library specialists helped 2,493 unique patrons during 4,521 interactions related to employment, benefits, housing, technology assistance, and entrepreneurship, a 23 percent increase over Fiscal Year 2025. The most requested services included employment and training, generic assistance, computer assistance, housing and food resources, and employment/income support. Libraries also expanded workforce readiness efforts through Artificial Intelligence education and Grow with Google programming. The Delaware Libraries Social Innovation Team Teleservices project includes a statewide network of 15 private soundproof spaces in public libraries, providing free and trusted access points for telehealth, legal, workforce, and other virtual services.

DEPARTMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND THEIR FAMILIES (DSCYF)

Standardize PCard Guidelines and Repayment - DSCYF has a large number of PCard (the State's purchasing credit card) users across its 4 divisions. The Fiscal Accounting Services (FAS) unit had struggled to reconcile an acceptable percentage of PCard transactions, due to employee cardholders failing to document or substantiate their charges. FAS identified a need for a uniform set of instructions to be written, shared, and enforced across divisions. This project blossomed from a short document of simple instructions into an exhaustive set of PCard Guidelines which have now been converted into a required Delaware Learning Center training, as well as a new "PCard Repayment Form" which has been successfully utilized to provide repayment to the State of Delaware by payroll deduction when and if all other avenues to reconciliation have been exhausted. In the 2025 GEAR Annual Report, DSCYF was pleased with the improved reconciliation rate of nearly 97 percent through the second quarter of calendar year 2025. DSCYF has tracked the reconciliation rate for another year and is proud to report sustained improvements to its PCard reconciliation rate.

Strengthen the Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) Process Life Cycle - In 2025, the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families, Division of Management Support Services (DMSS), piloted a COOP program to document essential functions, provide staff with the tools needed to respond effectively during emergencies, and ensure timely updates to COOP materials. That same year, DMSS conducted a division-wide mock emergency drill to evaluate the effectiveness of its COOP plan and identify opportunities to strengthen emergency response capabilities. In 2026, the DMSS COOP Team completed quarterly updates to the DMSS Business Case in the Cloud COOP document, conducted Go-Bag audits, and observed staff demonstrating emergency readiness during an evacuation drill. The team also shared guidance, tools, and lessons learned with the other 3 divisions and supported the Division of Family Services through COOP workshops, Go-Bag preparation, and a COOP drill. Planning meetings, workshops, and drill schedules have been established or are underway with the 2 remaining divisions.

Improve Timeliness of Provider Incident Reporting - The Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families, as part of the effort to promote the safety and well-being of youth, requires contracted providers to submit an incident report whenever there is an adverse event affecting youth served by the department. The Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (DPBHS) reviews and monitors incident reporting for the youth it serves to ensure appropriate follow-up, provider compliance with reporting requirements, and the provision of additional training or corrective action for providers when needed. DPBHS's Continuous Quality Improvement and Consultation Unit and the Provider Administration unit collect, review, report, and respond to incident reports. While reviewing the timeliness of providers' incident reports, DPBHS observed that, for some providers, there were significant lags between initial notification of adverse events and the submission of the required written report. While the division has a 72-hour report submission requirement, some providers were struggling with this requirement, occasionally submitting written reports 2-3 weeks after their initial notification of DPBHS of the event occurrence. A performance improvement plan was implemented in Fiscal Year 2026 to further identify barriers and support providers in gaining compliance and improving provider timeliness of reportable events. During Fiscal Year 2026, providers submitted 1,710 reportable events, with 83.9 percent meeting the 72-hour standard. Performance demonstrated an overall upward trend, with timely reporting exceeding 90 percent in April and May 2026.

Provide a Landing Point for Youth - The Division of Family Services (DFS) is committed to ensuring children in foster care have safe, appropriate placements that promote stability and minimize additional trauma. When no placement is immediately available, youth historically remain temporarily in DFS offices under the supervision of staff working voluntary overtime while an appropriate placement is sought. In Fiscal Year 2025, staff logged more than 2,020 overtime hours providing this supervision. To address this gap, DFS developed a plan to repurpose an existing building on the DSCYF Administration campus into Landing Point, a fully staffed emergency youth shelter. Landing Point will provide youth with

a safe, home-like environment while reducing staff burnout and allowing employees to focus on their primary responsibilities. Landing Point is scheduled to begin serving youth in January 2027.

Strengthen Contract Monitoring through Continuous Improvement - DSCYF convened a Contract Monitoring Continuous Improvement work group to discuss department-wide contract monitoring frustrations and impediments, brainstorm ideas for continuous improvement of the process, and engage in blue sky thinking for the future state. The work group, representing all 4 divisions and composed of 15 members, met 8 times throughout 2024. All meetings were recorded, and a Teams channel was created to share documents and store meeting recordings. In early 2025, improvements were identified that could be implemented immediately and long-term goals were established to achieve over time. In alignment with the long-term goals, a critical reclassification for an auditor role was submitted in late 2025 once a position became available. The reclassification was approved in early 2026 and created an Internal Auditor III position, the first of its kind at DSCYF. DSCYF's inaugural Internal Auditor III, who will be exclusively committed to contract monitoring support, starts in July 2026.

Modernize Background Check Forms – The electronic background check forms project aims to modernize and streamline the process to submit a background check application for those seeking employment with child-serving- entities by replacing a manual, paper-based- workflow with a more efficient, accurate, and user-friendly- electronic submission system. The effort reduces the need for follow-up- on incomplete or illegible forms, automates the issuance of fingerprinting code(s) and instructions, and eliminates the need for Criminal History Unit staff to manually enter data from a paper background check form into the department's For Our Children's Ultimate Success (FOCUS) case management system. By enhancing efficiency, consistency, and data quality, the project will reduce processing time, improve staff productivity, eliminate customer waiting times, and create a more reliable experience for both applicants and the Criminal History Unit.

Transform Family Connections by Implementing the Ameelio Communication Platform Across Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services Residential Facilities - The Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services is implementing the Ameelio communication platform to modernize and expand family engagement across juvenile justice facilities. Following a successful pilot, the project will provide an integrated solution for secure phone calls, video visitation, and online scheduling for in-person visits through a single platform. The current telephone system charges families for communication services and offers only telephone calls. Ameelio will allow the division to cover the cost of youth communications, eliminating financial barriers and promoting equitable access for all families. The platform improves service delivery by streamlining visitation scheduling, increasing opportunities for meaningful family contact through secure video and voice communication, reducing administrative burden on staff, and providing a more user-friendly experience for families. By increasing consistent family engagement, a key protective factor in youth rehabilitation, the project is expected to strengthen family relationships, improve youth well-being and behavior during placement, enhance reentry planning, and ultimately support better long-term outcomes for justice-involved youth.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION (DOC)

Improve Employee Well-Being, Recruitment, and Retention through DOCares – The Department of Correction continues to prioritize employee wellness through the development of initiatives designed to support the overall well-being of staff. As part of this effort, DOC is establishing an employee wellness coordinator and peer support team focused on promoting mental health, stress management, physical wellness, and emotional resilience among Department of Correction employees. The program is designed to provide employees with additional support resources, strengthen workplace morale, and encourage a healthier work-life balance across the department.

Scale Performance Evaluation and Goal Setting – Public safety is a key priority of the State of Delaware. Probation supervision protects the public by monitoring compliance and effectuating behavioral change. When done effectively, DOC supervision supports efforts to reduce recidivism and DOC's mission to protect the public and promote successful reentry. The DOC recognizes a connection between employee performance and its ability to protect the public effectively. The DOC proposes developing a multi-tiered action plan to evaluate its current performance review process, determine if employees understand how their performance and tenure could affect DOC's mission, and explore incorporating goal-setting objectives that better align with desired outcomes.

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DelDOT)

Improve Land Use Permitting Processes – In 2025, the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT), in partnership with GEAR team members, executed two Service Efficiency Blitzes (SEBs) targeting key permitting processes: the Traffic Impact Study (TIS)/Traffic Operational Analysis (TOA) and the Record and Entrance Plan reviews. The TIS SEB streamlined workflows and introduced new templates, with savings to yield an estimated $112,500 annually. The Record and Entrance Plan SEB introduced a "recheck lane" and streamlined peer review pathway that is estimated to generate approximately $992,250 in annual savings by eliminating over 13,000 hours of non-value-added rework. In 2026, DelDOT continued implementing improvements from these efforts, including PDCA technology enhancements, development of the streamlined Recheck Lane process, and staff training for an expanded pilot in fall of 2026. The department also consolidated development-related reviews and permits within its new Economic Development Coordination Division, strengthening coordination, accountability, and support for faster permitting. Both projects directly support the State's JobsFirst initiative toward a broader goal of fostering affordable housing and economic growth through more predictable and efficient permitting processes.

DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY (DSHS)

Advance Project 25 (P25) Interoperable Land Mobile Radio (LMR) Compliance – Project 25 develops standards for interoperable LMR systems, which allow emergency responders to exchange critical communications across agencies and jurisdictions. P25 standardizes interfaces between the various components of the LMR systems emergency responders use. This is a large-scale project that involves modernizing all state, county, and local radio systems to meet modern encryption standards, eliminate congestion over communication channels, and ensure that first responders can communicate efficiently across public safety organizations.

Strengthen Law Enforcement Recruiting and Retention – The Department of Safety and Homeland Security (DSHS) continues to assist the Delaware Association of Chiefs of Police (DACP) and multiple municipal agencies in the acquisition of a recruiting and retention platform and professional service for the acquisition of law enforcement personnel. The recruitment numbers for future police candidates are declining to critical levels due to various "social, political, and economic forces." This project between DSHS and DACP is ongoing to ensure Delaware can attract and retain law enforcement personnel in the future.

Implement Permit to Purchase – Delaware Senate Bill 2 was signed into law in May 2024. The enactment of the law places the development and administration of an application process to obtain a handgun qualified purchaser permit with the DSHS through its Division of State Police, specifically the State Bureau of Identification (SBI). The Delaware State Police (DSP) SBI has an average workload of 55,000 applicants annually. In 2020, there were 42,941 handgun purchases. Upon enactment, the SBI projects that the average workload will increase to 113,000 applications (including fingerprinting and criminal histories) annually. There is also the potential that since the card is valid for 180 days, some individuals may want to purchase handguns throughout the year, which would require two criminal histories to be conducted annually. Additionally, it expands upon the duties and responsibilities of the SBI. It estimates that it would require an expansion of 29.0 FTE civilian and 10.0 FTE sworn personnel positions to implement and enforce this Act. Last, this Act would require the Delaware Criminal Justice Information System to make significant programming and system modifications to the Criminal Justice Information System to ensure compliance.

Develop the Delaware Integrated Data System (DIDS) – The Department of Safety and Homeland Security seeks to prevent, deter, and respond to the increased violence and crime by establishing a data integration platform for safety and law enforcement. In addition to strategic planning and tactical resource deployment, the data will be used for budget planning, identifying crime trends, proactive policing, supporting the violence reduction strategy, criminal analysis, and performance measurement. At this time, detailed business requirements for the operational dashboard have been completed along with the identification of the initial data that will be pulled into the DIDS.

Improve State Video and Building Access Control – It became evident after recent events that State agencies have a significant problem with multiple access controls that do not interface. This includes both building entries and video surveillance systems. This creates limitations in responding to the needs of the public in State facilities and State employees. Given the current limitations, DSHS is launching a project to migrate to one common structure for these various security systems.

Implement Department of Safety and Homeland Security Carry Concealed Deadly Weapons (CCDW) Licensing – The current CCDW approval process is slow, cumbersome, and is barely able to keep up with the number of requests that

have vastly increased since the beginning of the pandemic and politicization of gun rights groups. Further, the lack of digital input makes tracking and data analysis needlessly difficult. The Department of Safety and Homeland Security is currently working on creating process efficiencies in the CCDW approval procedure to improve responsiveness and customer/stakeholder satisfaction.

Develop the Firearm Transaction Approval Program (FTAP) / NICS Point of Contact (POC) – In June 2022, House Bill 423 established the Firearm Transaction Approval Program (FTAP) and designated the State Bureau of Identification as Delaware's National Instant Criminal Background Check System Point of Contact (NICS POC). Once fully implemented, FTAP will enable the State Bureau of Identification to conduct firearm background checks currently performed by the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System in accordance with federal and Delaware law.

Expand Delaware State Police Statewide Drone Responses – The Delaware State Police is exploring the implementation of tactical drones as first responders and as investigative tools related to crime prevention, evidence gathering, and real-time data sources. A Drone as a First Responder program deploys automated or remotely piloted uncrewed aircraft from strategic docking stations directly to 911 incidents. Key components include rapid aerial deployment, real-time situational awareness, and reduced ground response times.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ)

Advance Transparent, Ethical, and Effective Government Through the Delaware DOJ Data-Driven Decisions Lab - In 2026, the Research, Planning and Special Projects Unit moved the Data-Driven Decisions Lab (D3L) from concept to an operational justice-data resource that advances the State's commitment to transparent, ethical, and effective government. By standardizing data, automating reporting, and publishing public-facing dashboards, D3L makes justice information more accessible and understandable while protecting information that cannot lawfully be disclosed. By July 2026, 5 of 11 planned public dashboards had been published, 2 internal dashboards were supporting training compliance and prosecution operations, and a major legislative data request was completed in 5 business days rather than approximately 3 weeks. These outcomes demonstrate measurable improvements in transparency, responsiveness, data consistency, and government effectiveness.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL)

Modernize Core Unemployment Insurance Processes - The Department of Labor's Division of Unemployment Insurance (UI) originally completed Value Stream Mapping (VSM) to support full modernization of the Unemployment Insurance Benefits system; as priorities shifted toward an interim Actionable Case Management (AICM) solution, that VSM work remains valuable and will inform AICM implementation—including workflow automation, case management, document management, business rules, system integrations, reporting, and workload balancing—maximizing prior investment while accelerating delivery. Targeted for deployment on November 15, 2026, AICM will streamline workflows, improve case tracking and workload management, reduce manual effort, increase process visibility, strengthen program integrity, and provide a scalable platform for future operational improvements.

Modernize Division of Industrial Affairs Legacy Applications – The Legacy Application Modernization Program is a strategic initiative led by the Division of Industrial Affairs (DIA) within the Delaware Department of Labor (DOL). Its purpose is to modernize and unify DIA's fragmented, outdated, unsupported legacy applications by replacing them with a centralized, State-managed cloud solution that supports all 6 units within the division. The program addresses critical operational, technical, and compliance challenges identified in the DIA Modernization RFP. The program supports DIA's mission to enforce labor laws and protect Delaware workers, DOL's LaborFirst Strategic Enterprise Modernization initiative, and statewide goals for interoperability, transparency, and digital transformation.

STATE OF DELAWARE
GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW

[ESTABLISHED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER]

REPORT TO GOVERNOR MEYER

FROM THE GEAR BOARD
NOVEMBER 1, 2026

The Government Efficiency and Accountability Review (GEAR) Board was established by executive order in February 2017 to develop recommendations that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of State government, strengthen strategic planning and performance management, and build continuous improvement practices. Nearly a decade later, GEAR helped create a statewide improvement infrastructure connecting executive leadership, agency practitioners, enterprise service organizations, and private-sector partners around measurable results and better service delivery.

As of July 2026, GEAR supported a portfolio that included 164 agency-based projects, with approximately 94 percent reporting estimated return on investment and a rough-order-of-magnitude lifetime value of approximately $117 million in cost savings. More than 190 State employees had completed DHR-led continuous improvement training through the Continuous Improvement Practitioner, Process and Project Leadership, and Operational Excellence programs. GEAR, with support from the Department of Human Resources, also established 18 statewide classifications in project management, business analysis, Lean continuous improvement, and change management, while the GEAR P3 awards have recognized more than 150 State employees for innovation and measurable improvement since 2018.

During 2026, GEAR also helped move the State forward in the Ready in Six permitting improvement effort into JobsFirst Delaware, a broader model centered on a common application, a single 120-business-day State review clock for completed applications, a dedicated point of contact, and transparent status information. Service Efficiency Blitzes led by GEAR in various permitting agencies have produced measurable reductions in processing time, rework, staff effort, and projected cost across State and local permitting processes.

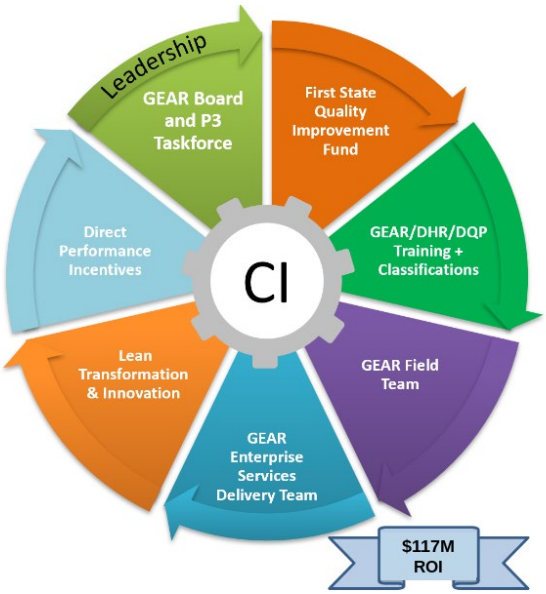
The Board recommends that the State build on this foundation by transitioning GEAR's strongest capabilities into a multidisciplinary service-improvement model that combines operational excellence with product management, user experience and service design, technology, data, accessibility, and vendor-management expertise. The Fiscal Year 2027 transition will be deliberately bounded, preserve agency ownership, continue the GEAR Field Team as a community of practice, sustain enterprise coordination and the P3 customer voice, and use evidence from a limited set of priority engagements as proof of concept to inform whether or not a permanent Fiscal Year 2028 operating model should be funded.

The Board supports transitioning the work of the following communities within GEAR:

- GEAR Program Management Team
- GEAR Public-Private Partnership (P3) Taskforce
- Enterprise Services Delivery Team
- GEAR Field Team

GEAR PROGRAM MANAGEMENT TEAM

Continuous Improvement (CI) Cycle



The graphic above depicts the continuous cycle of GEAR activities reported to the Board during the year. The cycle begins with sponsorship and leadership from the GEAR Board and P3 Taskforce and is supported by the First State Quality Improvement Fund, GEAR/DHR training and classifications, the GEAR Field Team, the Enterprise Services Delivery Team, Lean transformation and innovation work, and performance incentives for State employees such as the GEAR P3 awards. The same operating disciplines are now informing the State's transition toward a broader multidisciplinary service-improvement model.

Scale Efficiency through the Service Efficiency Blitz (SEB) Model in Support of JobsFirst

GEAR uses both predictive and adaptive project management methods based on the characteristics of the service problem to be solved. An SEB is a targeted improvement engagement that combines sponsorship, customer and frontline input, current-state data, process mapping, and rapid solution development. The model includes several weeks of preparation followed by an intensive multi-day event focused on producing at least one implementable improvement and a roadmap for additional work. During 2025 and 2026, the model was applied across the land use permitting value stream and expanded to local government. Documented opportunities include approximately $435,000 in projected annual savings associated with a DNREC subaqueous prototype; a 5-business-day reduction and approximately $162,500 in annual savings for the Preliminary Land Use Service process; a projected 33 percent reduction in Traffic Impact Study rework and an additional 3-business-day reduction; a modified Record and Entrance Plan recheck process that eliminates 9 business days of work per application reviewed and saves nearly $1 million annually; and a Kent County permitting redesign estimated to improve efficiency by 28 percent, save about 1,600 staff hours, and generate up to $120,000 in annual savings. GEAR recently conducted a SEB with DNREC's Public Hearings team to generate efficiencies that will be implemented in early 2027.

2024/2025	June 2025	August 2025	September 2025	November 2025	February 2026
• **DelDOT Regulatory Pilot** • **DNREC Subaqueous Pilot with GEAR**	• **OMB Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) SEB**	• **DelDOT Traffic Impact Study (TIS/TOA) SEB**	• **DelDOT Record and Entrance Plan SEB**	• **Housing Taskforce Workshop**	• **Kent County Permitting SEB**
Outcomes: DelDOT regulatory alignment DNREC subaqueous turnaround time increase +70% from 2 years to 6 months saving $435K annually (projected for 2026)	Outcomes: Process time reduction for applications of -20% Overall process time reduction of 5 business days saving $162,500 annually	Outcomes: Consolidating two internal process steps into one step that is projected to reduce rework by -33% saving $112,500 annually Overall process time reduction of 3 business days saving an additional $42K annually	Outcomes: Implementing a modified "recheck lane" process that eliminates 9 business days of work saving nearly $1 million annually Evaluating impact fee models to save $1.3M annually	Outcomes: Examined the viability of a Virtual One-Stop Solution. Affirmed GEAR's coordination with Counties to conduct additional SEB events.	Draft Outcomes: Designed a standardized fee schedule, online status check tool, and checklist for applications to increase process efficiency by 28% and save 1,600 staff hours annually resulting in $120,000 in savings

Evolve the State's Culture of Continuous Improvement

GEAR's mission is to improve the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of government services, build a sustainable culture of continuous improvement statewide, and bend the arc of government spending growth downward. During 2026, the program increasingly emphasized a shift from treating continuous improvement as a collection of tools toward using it as a durable operating capability: understanding the whole service, identifying the customer and desired outcome, simplifying work before digitizing it, using evidence to prioritize improvements, and strengthening agency ownership after an engagement ends.

That evolution builds on the culture GEAR has developed through practitioner training, the Field Team, enterprise coordination, shared project and process-management tools, P3 partnerships, and measurable service-improvement projects. A newly emerging service-improvement model for GEAR is intended to retain these foundations while adding complementary disciplines such as product management, service design and user research, technology, data, accessibility, procurement, and vendor strategy.

As part of a 2026 transition planning process, the GEAR Program Management Team is working with State leadership and stakeholders to identify which capabilities should be preserved and where the model should evolve. The recurring themes are:

A. Preserving statewide improvement infrastructure – Maintain a durable forum and common standards for sharing knowledge, coordinating major improvement work, and connecting practitioners across agency boundaries.

B. Expanding internal delivery capability – Continue practical training and career pathways so the State can rely more heavily on its own employees for project management, Lean, business analysis, change management, product delivery, service design, and related skills.

C. Integrating process, technology, and vendor decisions – Address whole services rather than optimizing one process or technology component in isolation, with the State retaining ownership of priorities, acceptance criteria, measures, and vendor decisions.

D. Using verifiable evidence over status reporting – Measure whether promised benefits are live and experienced by customers and staff, and use those measures to decide what should continue, change, pause, or scale.

During the Fiscal Year 2027 transition period, the GEAR program along with our State partners are prioritizing the following actions:

1. Establishing a bounded bridge model using existing State resources and targeted time-limited capacity, with no more than 2 to 3 major concurrent service engagements during the initial period.

2. Preserving continuous improvement training and evolve the GEAR Field Team into a supported statewide community of practice that remains rooted in agency ownership.

3. Continuing Ready in Six support through Service Efficiency Blitzes, and other high-value service improvements that provide visible evidence of reduced delay, rework, cost, or customer burden.

4. Establishing common service-delivery standards and multidisciplinary practices that connect operational excellence with product management, service design, technology, data, accessibility, procurement, and vendor management.

The results of the Fiscal Year 2027 bridge period are intended to inform a permanent Fiscal Year 2028 operating model, including staffing, governance, funding, portfolio priorities, within a long-term home for GEAR's most valuable capabilities.

Strengthen Quantifiable Outcomes

GEAR supports operational excellence initiatives that reduce or temper State government spending growth, improve service quality, and free resources for higher-value activities. As of July 2026, the portfolio contained 164 projects. Approximately 94 percent were participating in estimated return-on-investment reporting, with rough-order-of-magnitude lifetime value of approximately $117 million. These figures are planning estimates rather than booked savings and are used alongside qualitative outcomes such as customer experience, quality, risk reduction, staff capacity, and process reliability.

Department	Number of Projects
Health and Social Services (DHSS)	31
State (DOS)	6
Department of Transportation (DelDOT)	1
Judicial	7
Education (DOE)	8
Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC)	16
Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families (DSCYF)	12
Labor (DOL)	2
Correction (DOC)	1
Safety and Homeland Security (DSHS)	8
*Enterprise Services Delivery (ESD)	60
GEAR P3 (Public-Private Partnership)	2
GEAR	8
State Housing Authority (DSHA)	2
Total	**164**

***Enterprise Services Delivery Team includes:**

- State Treasurer (OST)
- Finance (DOF)
- Technology and Information (DTI)
- Human Resources (DHR)
- Management and Budget (OMB)
- Auditor of Accounts (AOA)

Drive Continuous Improvement Training and Development

Based on recommendations made in the 2018 GEAR Annual Report, the First State Quality Improvement Fund (FSQIF) was reinstated in Fiscal Year 2020 and is administered through the Department of Human Resources (DHR) with input from GEAR. The fund supports the Continuous Improvement Practitioner (CIP) program as well as expanded Process and Project Leadership (PPL) and Operational Excellence (OpEx) trainings. These programs develop practical capability in Lean process improvement, project management, business analysis, Agile methods, leadership, and change management.

By July 2026, approximately 194 State employees had completed DHR-led continuous improvement training. The training model has continued to evolve from a single practitioner pathway toward a broader set of development opportunities that can support practitioners, managers, and leaders at different levels of maturity. DHR provides program administration, while GEAR helps connect the training to applied agency work, the Field Team community, and statewide continuous improvement priorities.

Grow the GEAR Field Team (GFT)

Established in 2020, the GFT supports continuous improvement practitioners who previously graduated from the Continuous Improvement Practitioner training program. This group includes over 190 graduates across 23 State organizations, including the Judicial Branch. The community supports agency-led improvement through shared methods, peer learning, process mapping, project management, facilitation, and change leadership. A business process management workgroup continues to deepen this capability through value-stream mapping and use of ARIS software to identify waste, clarify handoffs, and design future-state workflows.

During the 2026 transition, the Field Team is poised to sustain and grow as an engaged community of practice. Members will remain accountable to their agencies while gaining access to common standards, coaching, templates, training, and exposure to complementary disciplines such as product management, service design, customer experience, data, accessibility, procurement, and digital delivery. Existing resources such as the GEAR Project Management Playbook and emerging business process playbooks provide a foundation for this community.

Solidify a Strategic Path for the Enterprise Services Delivery Team

The GEAR Board's initial seven focus area teams were organized by agency affiliation until 2020 when consolidated focuses on financial services delivery, human resources, and information technology emerged. Beginning in 2021, these three focus area teams with statewide responsibilities were reorganized into the single Enterprise Services Delivery (ESD) Team. Representing most of the State's major financial, human resources, and information technology agencies and functions, ESD has been delivering value through the oversight of over 50 cross-agency enterprise-wide projects and programs. In 2022, the framework for evaluating the impact of enterprise-level projects used the Strategic Project Roadmap, which addressed the impact of change saturation, return on investment, and risk management across agencies. Though ESD was dealing with statewide projects, there was a silo mentality dominating the presentation of these projects. In 2023 and 2024, the ESD team worked on rechartering its efforts to better align the agencies, projects, and service delivery toward a more unified State of Delaware perspective. These efforts were led by an 11-member Enterprise Services Delivery Team Charter Drafting Sub-team to prepare the revised mission, vision, role, guiding principles, stakeholder, and preliminary goal statements for the ESD Team. A new spreadsheet aligned with Projectplace portfolio data elements replaced an Excel-based Strategic Project Roadmap. The final versions of these statements and the spreadsheet were approved by the members of the Enterprise Services Delivery Team in April of 2024. In 2025, ESD began using the new spreadsheet and a new standing agenda that focuses discussion on statewide projects. ESD meeting agendas ensure that the major finance, human resources, and information technology projects being undertaken are addressed at each meeting (ERP Modernization/OneDelaware, *Go DE*/Digital Government, expansion of broadband access, CASCADE, AI-related projects, and human resources endeavors) and that there are discussions of service delivery efficiencies, performance measurements, end-user satisfaction, cost savings, project timeliness, and fiscal performance.

ESD's purpose and function have crystallized to be a clearinghouse where business and technical experts talk together to understand the business processes, technical solutions, and resource requirements (personnel and funding) for statewide finance, human resources, and information technology projects and communicate these requirements externally so that the resources, time, and capacity necessary to sustain and complete these projects can be prioritized. The key concept is that these projects are enterprise-wide in scope, not just agency-specific, and will impact all of State government.

The ESD mission is to "support, promote, monitor, and strategically guide statewide, multi-organization, financial services, human resources, and information technology projects to facilitate inter-organizational collaboration on these projects and elevate communication of project details and outcomes to stakeholders." The vision of ESD is "to foster a culture of collaboration and success by ensuring inter-organization collaboration on enterprise-wide finance, human resources, and information technology projects and adequate resource allocation to sustain these projects over time." The role of ESD is fivefold: 1) emphasize inter-organizational collaboration over competition; 2) enhance efficiency of State operations and identify opportunities for economies of scale; 3) identify enterprise needs, devise solutions, and advocate for resources; 4) serve as a forum for collaboration of experts and communication to stakeholders; and 5) formulate enterprise strategies, provide reporting on change capacity, risk management, integration, resources, and assess the return on investment and quantitative and qualitative outcomes. ESD meeting agendas ensure that the significant statewide projects are addressed at every meeting, essentially functioning in a manner similar to the now sunset Technology Investment Council.

Foster Career Pathways for Employee Recruitment and Retention

State agencies historically had limited classifications for hiring experienced project managers, business process analysts, Lean continuous improvement specialists, and change-management professionals, increasing reliance on external resources for capabilities that are increasingly central to major State programs and service modernization.

Consistent with the GEAR executive order, 4 classification series were developed with career ladders: project management, business process analysis, change management, and Lean continuous improvement. The 18 resulting statewide classifications became available in 2024 and, by 2026, are being used by agencies including the Office of Management and Budget, Department of Finance, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, and the Courts. These classifications provide an important workforce foundation for the State's next generation of continuous improvement and operations management delivery.

Support the Delaware Artificial Intelligence (AI) Commission

In 2024, House Bill 333 passed establishing the Delaware Artificial Intelligence (AI) Commission, which includes the Executive Director of GEAR as a member. This Commission was created to do the following:

(a) Make recommendations to the General Assembly and to the Chief Information Officer of the Department of Technology and Information on legislative and executive actions regarding AI in Delaware.

(b) Develop and recommend statewide processes, principles, and guidelines for executive, legislative, and judicial agencies to follow regarding use of AI.

(c) Encourage agencies to utilize AI to improve service delivery, where appropriate.

(d) Examine, develop, and recommend legislative, executive, and judicial actions that ensure the use of AI in Delaware keeps citizens safe and does not violate any individual's rights.

(e) Conduct an inventory of all generative AI usage in Delaware executive, legislative, and judicial agencies and identify high-risk areas to be avoided for the implementation of generative AI.

The GEAR Executive Director's involvement provides direct input on the use of this technology for business process optimization, automation, and other efficiencies over time. AI is a strategic part of GEAR's Lean Transformation and Innovation work efforts.

The Delaware AI Commission has established a Training subcommittee and Models subcommittee to provide thought leadership in these two areas. In addition, House Joint Resolution 7 as amended by House Amendment 1 directs the Artificial Intelligence Commission to work in collaboration with the Secretary of State to create a regulatory sandbox framework for the testing of innovative and novel technologies that utilize agentic artificial intelligence. AI Commission members have also reviewed two draft bills relating to 1) the creation of artificial intelligence companies (the formation, registration, and control of companies run by agentic AI programs with little to no human interaction) and 2) updates to the artificial intelligence regulatory sandbox program (in which AI developers of AI companies agree to operate their businesses in the sandbox with its guardrails and other restrictions). Following this review, the two bills were combined into one bill and the AI Commission recommended that the bill be presented to the General Assembly before the end of the legislative session. One major change to the legislation was to explicitly deny artificial intelligence companies the right to vote in federal, state, or municipal elections.

Enable Enterprise Solutions for Project and Process Management (Planview Projectplace and ARIS)

Planview Projectplace remains the cloud-based portfolio platform used to improve visibility into GEAR supported agency-based projects, project health, lifecycle status, risks, and measurable outcomes. As of July 2026, the portfolio contained 164 projects across State agencies, the Judicial Branch, enterprise services, and GEAR-supported initiatives. The shared platform also supports closer alignment with broader State technology portfolio practices.

ARIS remains GEAR's primary shared business process management tool for practitioners who map current-state work, analyze performance, identify waste, and design future-state processes. A dedicated business process analysis workgroup continues to meet and apply the tool across agency use cases. Fiscal Year 2026 funding maintained approximately $52,000 for ARIS and Projectplace software licensing, preserving the common infrastructure needed for applied project and business process management.

Benchmark Continuous Improvement Activities Against Other States

Several of GEAR's continuous improvement activities for the State of Delaware are included in Results for America's Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence, a national state benchmarking program. Results for America is a non-profit organization with over 10 years of experience promoting data-driven, outcome-oriented leadership at every level of government, from every region, to deliver better results. The information gathered by the Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence demonstrates that states are increasingly using data and evidence to produce better, more equitable results for their residents. The GEAR Program Management Team completed surveys provided by Results for America in 2023, 2024, and 2025 and Delaware was noted as having six "promising examples" of state standards of excellence. For the 2026 Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence Submission, the GEAR Program Management Team listed activities, practices, policies, and organizations under the following topic areas:

1. Evaluation Leadership – establishing the Government Efficiency and Accountability Review (GEAR) Board per Executive Order.
2. Data Leadership – having a Director of Enterprise Data in DTI and a Delaware Open Data Council to promote data sharing.
3. Evaluation Policy and Learning – having a statewide partnership between State officials and external researchers and connections between State agencies and these external researchers per operating budget epilogue language and appropriations to institutions of higher education.
4. Data Policy and Practices – coordinating and collaborating through the Family Services Cabinet Council (FSCC) to develop the Delaware Integrated Data System (DIDS) and supporting the Open Data Portal with over 400 datasets available.
5. Performance Management – pursuing amendment of the Delaware Governmental Accountability Act that would mandate agencies, the Governor, and the legislative budget writing committees to include performance measures in budget process decision-making.
6. Results-Driven Contracting – encouraging results-focused contracts and active contract management with pay for success contracts authorized by the Delaware Code.

Detailed information for the participating states can be found on Results for America's website.

GEAR PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (P3)

Strengthen and Grow the GEAR P3 Innovation & Efficiency and P3 Trailblazer Awards

The GEAR P3 Taskforce was created in 2018 to bring private-sector perspective, expertise, and resources into State continuous improvement efforts. In partnership with Department of Human Resources, the Taskforce established the GEAR P3 Innovation & Efficiency and Trailblazer Awards within the Governor's Team Excellence Award program. The awards recognize State employees and teams whose work demonstrates innovation, collaboration, and measurable improvement in the quality, efficiency, or effectiveness of government services.

The awards continue to be supported through a $25,000 annual private-sector contribution matched by $25,000 from the State. A subset of P3 partner organizations co-funds the awards, and public- and private-sector representatives participate in the recognition process. The 2025 awardees were recognized on May 5, 2026. Since 2018, 15 Innovation & Efficiency teams and 21 Trailblazer individuals or teams have been recognized, representing more than 150 State employees overall.

2025 GEAR P3 Award Recipients	Measurable Impact
Innovation & Efficiency Award Continuous Quality Improvement Post-Permanency Success Committee —Christine Weaver, Tobi Appelman, Susan Burns, Moira Dillon, Stephanie Guiswite, Megan Hendrick, Belvie Herbert, Tracy Matthews, Amanda McFarland, Alana Moffa, Angela Palmer, Ana Prosceno, Trinette Redinger Ramsey, Joseph Smack, Kimberly Warren, and Tracy Whitehouse —Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families	Awareness of post-permanency supports increased from 47 percent in 2020 to 73-74 percent in 2025, while foster-care re-entry after adoption declined from 45 children in late 2019 to 17 in early 2025.
Innovation & Efficiency Award Delaware Treatment and Referral Network Care Coordination Platform (DTRN360) Team —Michelle Singletary Twyman, Karen Records, Rosario Carandang, Lisa Colterelli, Trevlyn Jerrick-White, Lezley Sexton, and Stacey Simon— Department of Health and Social Services	Created a unified behavioral-health coordination platform connecting clinical, crisis, justice, social-service, and prescription data. Client Reporting Form processing was reduced from months to approximately 48 hours, with faster coordination and follow-up.
Trailblazer Award Systems Integration with Meal Providers Team — Dortris Downs, Allison Hendrickson, and Amy Maguire — Department of Health and Social Services	Integrated meal-provider data with the division case-management system, improved federal reporting and outreach, and identified billing corrections with potential annual savings exceeding $50,000.
Trailblazer Award Juvenile Civil Citation Team — Joanna Campbell, Ginny Franklin, Marie McLaughlin, Georgia Vaughn, and Emily White — Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families	Reduced average referral-to-case-manager assignment from 25 days to 3 days, eliminated contracted roles for $68,510 in annual savings, and achieved an 18.1 percent recidivism rate compared with 47.1 percent for eligible nonparticipants.
Trailblazer Award Smart Simple Implementation Team — Christine Beste and Thomas Schultz — Department of Safety and Homeland Security	Digitized 9 grant workflows and 1 administrative program, reducing processing from weeks to days and improving real-time transparency for a portfolio that managed $18.9 million in grants during 2025.
Trailblazer Award Taylor Shannon — Social Equity Financial Assistance Grant Program — Department of Safety and Homeland Security	Launched a milestone-based digital grant process that awarded $495,000 after its September 2025 launch and established a scalable framework for $6 million in assistance to 47 social-equity licensees from historically impacted communities.

GEAR P3 Taskforce Organizations



Advance Ready in Six into JobsFirst Delaware

The GEAR P3 Taskforce expanded its focus to business permitting in 2020, using recommendations from Delaware's business community to identify opportunities to make State, county, and local permitting processes faster and easier to navigate. In 2022, GEAR worked with P3 leadership and the Governor's Office to survey more than 1,500 industry partners. The resulting feedback helped target initial work in DelDOT and DNREC and created the foundation for Ready in Six permitting pilot projects.

The initial pilots and subsequent GEAR Service Efficiency Blitzes generated measurable evidence that process changes could reduce cycle time, rework, and administrative burden without weakening regulatory protections. Outcomes include a DNREC subaqueous process targeted to move from as long as 2 years toward 6 months with approximately $435,000 in projected annual savings; a 5-business-day reduction in the OMB Preliminary Land Use Service process with approximately $162,500 in annual savings; a projected 33 percent reduction in DelDOT Traffic Impact Study rework plus an additional 3-business-day time reduction; a modified Record and Entrance Plan recheck process that eliminates 9 business days per application reviewed and saves nearly $1 million annually; and a Kent County permitting redesign estimated to improve process efficiency by 28 percent, save approximately 1,600 staff hours, and generate up to $120,000 in savings annually.

In 2026, this work evolved into JobsFirst Delaware. The statewide vision is built around one permit application that can route information across agencies, one clock that begins when an application is complete and targets final State determinations within 120 business days, one point of contact for priority projects, and one transparent status view. Executive Order #18 provides a practical fast-track environment for testing parallel review and coordination, while shared digital tools are being developed for knowledge sharing, combined application workflows, and coordinated permit review. As of September 2026, 11 projects had applied through the Permitting Accelerator and 9 had been approved for being fast-tracked.

Preserve the Public-Private Customer Voice in GEAR's Next Chapter

The P3 Taskforce has served as a bridge between State government and the businesses, community partners, and other organizations. This role remains relevant as GEAR transitions into a broader service-improvement model. The emerging approach is expected to preserve structured external input through service discovery, customer research, testing, business-facing initiatives such as permitting reform, and continued support for employee recognition. The formal governance of the P3 function should be developed with direct input from Taskforce leadership and members so that the State retains a trusted mechanism for translating external perspective into practical delivery improvements.

ENTERPRISE SERVICES DELIVERY TEAM (ESD)

Financial Services Delivery

Advanced Planning for Replacement of Enterprise-Wide Computer Applications

Many of the financial, human resources, and information technology projects that are coming to GEAR's attention are enterprise-wide in scope and affect multiple agencies and branches of State government. Two such financial management projects are ERP Modernization (now known as OneDelaware) and the recently completed Integrated Revenue Administration System (IRAS). The implementation of enterprise-wide solutions often requires long implementation timelines; changes to these systems often require long-term projects on the scale of 5 to 10 years. ESD adds value through its purpose and function, to be a clearinghouse where business and technical experts talk together regarding understanding business processes, technical solutions, and resource requirements (personnel and funding) for statewide finance, human resources, and information technology projects and communicate these requirements externally so that the resources, time, and capacity necessary to sustain and complete these projects can be prioritized. The key characteristic is that these projects are enterprise-wide in scope, not just agency-specific, and will impact all of State government.

OneDelaware Modernization Project for Pensions, Financials, Payroll, and Human Resources

A contractual partnership was formed with a consulting firm to provide resources and assist in the modernization of the State's ERP systems (Pensions, Financials, Payroll, Human Resources, Learning Management, Recruitment, Onboarding/Offboarding, and Employee/Labor Relations). Resources from the consulting firm, together with State subject matter experts, documented system and business processes, key performance indicators, and user stories. In addition, State experts and ERP project administrators established the overall project goals. The consulting firm analyzed all areas within each module of the ERP systems and, in accordance with the statement of work, quantified the level of customizations and potential approaches for ERP modernization. The firm recommended a proposed scope of work for a technology solution based on business requirements and the State's objectives to modernize operations, standardize business processes, utilize a configurable out-of-the-box solution to reduce total cost of ownership, improve security, and enhance service outcomes. The State, in coordination with the contracted firm, developed Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for ERP Modernization of the Pension Administration system and for a replacement of the Financials, Payroll, and Human Resources systems.

The OneDelaware ERP Modernization project envisions a connected State government powered by modern, integrated technology to unify finance, human resources, payroll, and pension systems - streamlining operations, strengthening collaboration, and enabling more efficient, responsive services for Delaware. A formal governance framework across the OneDelaware project initiative was recently approved by the project administrators. The governance defines the structure, authority, roles, decision rights, and accountability boundaries to ensure successful adoption of the new solutions for Pensions, Financials (FMS), and Payroll and Human Resources (PHCM), and ensures consistent enterprise alignment across operations while maintaining clear separation between business ownership and vendor platform responsibilities. The goal of the OneDelaware Modernization Project is to achieve meaningful business transformation through effective change management, user adoption, and realization of measurable outcomes. Tracking and measuring business value will be an integral component throughout the project lifecycle.

Pension Administration

The Office of Pensions selected a pension administration solution with a proven, scalable, cloud-based platform designed for flexibility and configurability, enabling the Office of Pensions to efficiently support evolving business requirements without extensive customization. The robust solution reduces dependency on vendor source-code changes and provides a sustainable foundation for long-term growth and operational stability that stands out due to its efficient system and automated, customer-focused processes available through member, employer, and administrator portals. This investment reflects the ongoing commitment to serving Delaware's public retirees with the highest standards of efficiency, accuracy, and security, while advancing the State's mission to improve the lives of all Delawareans by delivering advanced, innovative, and collaborative technology solutions that modernize government services. The State, in coordination with the contracted

firm, published an RFP and signed a contract with the selected vendor, and the project kickoff was September 30, 2025. Fit/gap discovery and workshops have been completed. The Independent Verification & Validation (IV&V) vendor is fully engaged, actively reviewing project artifacts. The project team is focusing on Phase 4 through the end of 2028 and Phase 5 will begin with the production implementation milestone "Go Live" scheduled for the first quarter of 2029. The Organizational Change Management (OCM) team is working with 312 organizations demonstrating strong statewide engagement and continued expansion of the network.

Financials, Payroll, and Human Resources

The State, in coordination with the contracted firm, published a solution provider RFP in the fourth quarter of Calendar Year 2024 for the Financials, Payroll, and Human Resources ERP modernization initiative. Selection of the solution vendor was completed and on February 13, 2026, the State formally entered into a contract with the solution vendor to implement a modern, cloud-based ERP system. A solution integrator RFP to select a solution integrator (SI) was published and the selected SI partner was approved by the ERP Executive Steering Committee on June 26, 2026. Execution of a signed contract with the selected SI vendor is targeted to be completed by the end of October 2026 and the project kickoff meeting is targeted for the fourth quarter of 2026. A separate RFP for the IV&V vendor was published, a vendor was selected, a contract was signed, and the vendor has started working with the project team.

The full implementation of the new system is expected to take a minimum of 3 to 4 years and will require considerable State resources, both internal and contractual staff, along with support from all levels of government to document business process standardization efforts, identify functional impacts, support ongoing future-state planning with selected vendors, and support organizational readiness. Preparing for change leadership engagement is critical to project success. To support readiness, the Organizational Change Management Team has partnered with the State organizations to identify change champions who will serve as communication liaisons between organizations and the project team, support readiness activities, prepare employees for upcoming changes, and promote engagement. A strategic tracking scorecard was developed, aligned with Delaware's operational priorities and strategic goals, to capture key business outcome categories expected to be advanced through the OneDelaware Modernization Project. The scorecard includes quantitative measures that will be used to establish baselines, monitor progress, and evaluate outcomes over time. Because many improvements associated with large-scale transformation initiatives are realized incrementally, measurable outcomes may not be immediately evident during the early phases of the project. Accordingly, this framework is designed to establish baseline metrics, track progress throughout implementation, and support long-term measurement of realized value following go-live.

ERP Executive Steering Committee

The ERP Executive Steering Committee, comprised of the Director of OMB (Chair), Secretary of Finance, Secretary of the Department of Human Resources, and the Chief Information Officer, Department of Technology and Information, continues to meet semi-monthly for a review of the project. This initiative represents a comprehensive business transformation, and the scale of this initiative requires sustained leadership, prioritizing defined escalation pathways, refining and approving change control requests, issue escalation, and supporting governance and decision-making processes.

State Funding

The State appropriated a total of $130.5 million toward this major initiative with $25 million in each of the Fiscal Year 2023 and Fiscal Year 2024 bond bills, $12.5 million in the Fiscal Year 2025 bond bill, $50 million in Fiscal Year 2026 bond bill, and $18 million in Fiscal Year 2027 bond bill. It is anticipated that the total cost of this project may exceed $150 million.

Implement an Integrated Revenue Administration System (IRAS)

The Delaware Department of Finance, Division of Revenue (DOR) is responsible for collecting more than $3.6 billion in annual State taxes, processing more than $350 million in tax refunds, ensuring compliance with the State's tax laws, and providing taxpayer services. The Delaware Department of Finance, Division of Revenue had been using a tax processing system that was more than 30 years old, mainframe-based and consisted of over 100 client-server applications. The new IRAS system fully modernizes DOR's processing systems to create a web-based, real-time, and integrated user experience

that automates processing capabilities, optimizes the efficiency and effectiveness of DOR staff, and strengthens security and internal controls. IRAS improves DOR's ability to mitigate fraud and increase revenue with new audit programs and better technology to assist with the collection of delinquent taxes. IRAS has enhanced the user experience for taxpayers through the development of a modern public-facing portal that provides taxpayers access to online filings, account information, service requests, and the ability to delegate access to tax preparers (tax.delaware.gov). The third and final IRAS release was implemented in October 2025. Currently, all taxes administered by DOR are fully implemented in the IRAS system and DOR retired the 30-year mainframe system and all applications from the traditional website and moved these functions to DOR's secure tax portal.

Department of Finance Transformation Operations Center

The Department of Finance created a Transformation Operations Center committed to ensuring the department's business processes are optimized and has launched its first Transformation Office within the Division of Revenue positioned under the Office of the Director of Revenue. In addition, the role of Transformation Operations Leader has been established to guide and support this initiative. The initial Transformation Office is responsible for leading a comprehensive and structured improvement program rooted in the American Productivity & Quality Center (APQC) Process Classification Framework (PCF) and modeled using ARIS software, the GEAR standard business process management tool. The initiative began by documenting all current state operational workflows across taxpayer services, audits, compliance, revenue accounting, and support functions. Through policy and procedure reviews, and by benchmarking against best-practice state revenue agencies, the team is identifying duplicative activities, bottlenecks, outdated processes, and areas where policies are not aligned with operational realities. These findings guide the development of future-state- process designs that leverage Lean, Six Sigma, and other continuous improvement methodologies to reduce delays, strengthen consistency, and improve end-to-end-- process efficiency.

As future-state models are completed in ARIS, the Transformation Office is also establishing a performance management framework that includes Key Performance Indicators and measurable goals aligned with the mission of the Division of Revenue. New dashboards and tracking systems will provide timely visibility into operational performance, taxpayer service levels, and processing cycle times. These tools will support continual process evaluation and informed decision-making by leadership. In parallel, a comprehensive review of technology utilization is underway to identify opportunities to modernize taxpayer interactions, automate manual work, and enhance the reliability and availability of performance data. Workforce efficiency assessments, including staffing reviews, documented roles and responsibilities, and identification of under-utilized or duplicative functions, will result in recommendations to the Director of Revenue for organizational restructuring or role realignment where appropriate.

To ensure lasting impact, the Transformation Office is implementing an integrated communication and change management strategy. This includes providing written recommendations to the Director, assisting teams in developing or updating policies and procedures to match redesigned workflows, and ensuring leadership-approved improvements are clearly communicated, kept current, and consistently adopted across all Division of Revenue operational units. Together, these efforts establish a sustainable transformation program that strengthens the division's operational capacity, enhances taxpayer service delivery, and supports the broader Department of Finance and State priorities for enterprise process improvement.

OneDelaware Current-State Process Mapping with ARIS

The Division of Accounting began its current-state process mapping effort in May 2026 to document and better understand the accounting processes that will help inform the OneDelaware ERP implementation. Depending on the process, the team either develops the initial process documentation directly with subject matter experts (SMEs) or uses existing reference materials to create an Excel-based process outline that is then reviewed with the appropriate SMEs. That information serves as the source for creating an event-driven process chain (EPC) model in ARIS. The model is subsequently reviewed and refined with SMEs, with final adjustments able to be made directly in ARIS during review sessions.

As of August 2026, the team has identified 52 ARIS models currently needed and has created an initial model for all but 17 of them. Approximately 12 models have completed the full SME review process, with additional models progressing toward final approval. ARIS Companion has significantly reduced the effort required to construct an initial process model: based on the team's experience, a model that could take approximately an hour to construct manually can often be generated and initially refined in approximately 10 minutes. This allows the team to spend less time constructing individual process-flow elements and more time validating the process, identifying undocumented or manual activities, determining where

additional processes need to be captured, and discussing areas where existing PeopleSoft customizations may warrant further evaluation.

The resulting models provide a consistent, visual representation of current-state processes that can be maintained in a shared ARIS environment and exported to Word or PDF for review by SMEs and the system integrator. The goal is to give the system integrator an accessible high-level understanding of Delaware's current accounting processes before future-state design sessions, allowing those discussions to focus on how processes should operate in OneDelaware rather than first reconstructing how they operate today. The mapping effort is also helping identify meaningful manual processes that may present opportunities for automation as the State evaluates its future-state design.

Procurement Card (PCard) Program

The combined total spending of the State credit card program (PCard) and the single-use account program for vendor payments continue to produce rebates to the State to help fund the State's financial management systems. The table below shows the PCard spend and the resulting rebate amount the State received for calendar years 2020 through 2025. An RFP for credit card services was posted in 2025, and the incumbent bank was the selected vendor. A contract extending their services was signed in 2026. The calendar year 2026 PCard spend and rebate amount is on track to be aligned with the calendar year 2025 amounts.

Calendar Year	PCard Spend	Rebate Amount
2020	$162.9 M	$3.1 M
2021	$177.0 M	$3.4 M
2022	$177.0	$3.4
2023	$189.2 M	$3.6 M
2024	$186.2 M	$3.5 M
2025	$168.9 M	$3.1 M

Financial Services Delivery Onerous Processes – After-the-Fact Purchase Order Approval Process

Per the Budget and Accounting Policy Manual, when a purchase order is established or approved after the delivery of goods or services, an after-the-fact situation is said to exist. State organizations finding themselves in this situation must apply for, and receive approval for, an after-the-fact waiver to get the purchase order approved and the vendor paid. To process and approve after-the-fact waiver request applications, it previously took a minimum of 7 people. Three of the 7 people (42 percent) reviewing and approving these waiver request applications were Cabinet secretary-level leaders. Further, all after-the-fact waiver requests were historically reviewed and approved by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Secretary of the Department of Finance (DOF). Overall, it was projected that this workload could be reduced by 76 percent (based on the Fiscal Year 2020 after-the-fact waiver request workload for OMB and DOF cabinet secretaries and their staffs).

On March 1, 2021, the Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) subcommittee for onerous paper processing requirements implemented changes to streamline the after-the-fact waiver request application approval process. These changes: 1) increased the purchase order threshold from $5,000 to $10,000, 2) permitted cabinet-level leaders of State organizations to internally approve after-the-fact waiver requests between $10,000 and $50,000, and 3) required Director of Management and Budget and Secretary of Finance approval only for those waiver requests over $50,000. The changes have been successful in reducing the approval workload for the cabinet secretaries and their staff with the targeted reduction being met. While the number of after-the-fact waiver requests reviewed by the Director of Management and Budget and the Secretary of Finance is still well below that of Fiscal Year 2020, the recent trend is that the number of approvals has been increasing. Some of this increase is attributable to turnover in agency fiscal staff, and an associated lack of knowledge of financial processes, and understaffed fiscal offices.

July 1 to June 30	Fiscal Year 2020	Fiscal Year 2021	Fiscal Year 2022	Fiscal Year 2023	Fiscal Year 2024	Fiscal Year 2025	Fiscal Year 2026
OMB/DOF Approval Totals	105	76	18	41	65	55	49
Percent Workload Change		(28 percent)	(76 percent)	128 percent	59 percent	(15 percent)	(11 percent)

Financial Advisory Committee (FAC)

The FAC continued regular meetings with the subcommittee for the Budget and Accounting course nearing completion after revamping the course structure. The subcommittee overseeing the Accounting 201 course continues to make progress. This new accounting course will be an extension of the introductory Accounting 101 course that is currently offered. The FAC also continues to provide OneDelaware updates to ensure all agencies are aware of the status of the project and to open communication between agencies as the project progresses. The summer 2026 meeting was held in person, garnering significantly more collaboration and discussion. The Division of Accounting will continue to host at least one in-person meeting each year moving forward.

Drive Effective Internal Control System(s) in State Government

Internal controls are a critical element of effective risk management throughout State government. Establishing proper policies, procedures, and protections drives transparency and informs the decision making of State leaders. These internal control systems require informed judgment to monitor and assess effectiveness and provide insight. The Delaware Office of Auditor of Accounts (AOA) has prepared State personnel to exercise this judgement by emphasizing the sharing of best practices and documentation procedures with AOA and other State agencies.

In its work with the agencies that it audits, AOA instituted a range of initiatives with the goal of increasing operational efficiency. By hosting training sessions, AOA has helped instill base level standards for internal controls in the State government. These training sessions included information specifically on compliance with the Federal Uniform Guidance, where internal controls are paramount. AOA also continued to follow uniquely strict internal controls for department spending, helping AOA continue to demonstrate best practices for State fiscal management.

These practices ultimately achieve more effective AOA work product by making State agencies easier to audit. When documentation is readily available, AOA is able to audit agencies more efficiently. This has the downstream effect of increasing transparency once reports are released and interpreted by the public.

Ensuring Greater Audit Engagement Compliance and Efficiency

The Delaware Office of Auditor of Accounts instituted several internal initiatives with the goal of increasing operational efficiency. With its office fully staffed, AOA leadership has focused on ensuring its mandated engagements are completed efficiently. This has led to reevaluation and refinement of how engagements are conducted.

The Delaware Office of Auditor of Accounts has adjusted the way that its auditors are assigned to engagements. In the past, auditors were tasked with balancing many engagements at once as the audit workload was shared widely throughout the office. The office has instead shifted toward assigning fewer engagements to each auditor. Allocating staff more deliberately allows each auditor to dedicate more of their attention and energy to each of their engagements. This has led to more efficient reporting as auditors become more intimately familiar with the subject of each engagement, which eases communication to the public upon release and builds rapport with audit subjects.

The Delaware Office of Auditor of Accounts has also worked to build out an additional audit team. This team will improve efficiency by further easing the load on the existing audit teams. The office will also have greater adaptability by conducting audit engagements that may not be included in the annual audit plan or mandated by law. When issues of great public interest arise, AOA is more readily able to respond to that interest with an audit engagement, even if one were not originally planned.

Increasing Public Engagement with Audit Reports

In addition to being a tool for government self-evaluation, AOA's reporting also provides insight to the public on how well government is serving its community. The work of the State Auditor is meant to be read by the public to further government transparency and accountability. To achieve this, AOA prioritizes public engagement in the publication of its reports and other resources.

The beginning of every report published by AOA includes a clear and concise summary. These summaries highlight the most important information included in the report and are divided into two sections. The first section provides background information on the engagement. The background information includes additional context for the reader that may be out of place in the report itself. The second section of the summary presents key information and the engagement findings in plain language. This section often contains visual data that may not be included in the full report, including graphs, charts, tables, and infographics, when appropriate. This aids in data legibility and accommodates different learning styles. These summaries allow members of the public to develop a basic understanding of the engagement without having to digest many pages of technical information.

Additionally, AOA is working to expand the resources on offer to the public. The AOA website currently hosts three trackers (on dashboards) where members of the public can review how State funds are allocated. These trackers help to illuminate State government programs and inform Delawareans of how their tax dollars are being budgeted and spent in general areas. AOA is working to refine existing trackers and add an additional dashboard this year that will allow the public to track other State spending.

Fostering Cooperation and Collaboration with the Office of the Inspector General

With the appointment and confirmation of Delaware's first Inspector General for the newly established Office of the Inspector General (OIG), AOA has begun the work of collaborating with this important new office. The office's leadership is focused on establishing clear lines of communication and expectations between both agencies. Over the next year, AOA will be working closely with OIG to cultivate a meaningful working relationship and finalize a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), as mandated by State law.

Because OIG is a new State agency, establishing roles and setting processes is essential to providing value to Delaware taxpayers. It is important that both the public and those throughout State government understand the distinct function of these offices. The Delaware Office of Auditor of Accounts, working in concert with OIG, will provide clarity of purpose to the agencies and individuals that both offices interact with.

In approaching the collaboration with OIG, AOA is focusing on efficiency, coordination, and avoiding duplication of work. These will be guiding principles of the MOU, which is in the early stages of being drafted. Leadership in both offices is committed to building a relationship that is additive and can deliver greater government accountability to Delawareans.

Equipping State Government with Information and Data Necessary for Pragmatic Governance

Delaware, like many states, has experienced fluctuations in federal financial and programmatic support in recent years. This circumstance has necessitated increased flexibility with how the State allocates resources within its jurisdiction. State leaders must make important decisions on which funding gaps to fill and which programs to fund, particularly at a time when federal support may be uncertain. In these situations, having reliable documentation and data on the efficiency of State programs and agencies is imperative.

The Delaware Office of Auditor of Accounts is dedicated to its role in this process by providing State leaders with the reporting they need to make fully informed decisions regarding State funding. When difficult choices must be made, leaders need not make them without contextual information. Reports and resources published by AOA provide a snapshot on how State-funded programs are operating, either effectively or with findings and recommendations. This provides valuable context and insight as the State's leading decision makers deliberate how to allocate Delawareans' tax dollars.

In recent years, AOA reporting has led directly to legislative action on multiple occasions. Reporting on a Delaware fire company, which included several findings that raised questions about oversight, led to conditions being placed on the company's future grant funding. The office's reporting on dual employment of State personnel and officials and its lack of documentation at the State higher education institutions has also resulted in legislation strengthening reporting requirements. In both instances, the public is now better served because of AOA's reporting.

Lower Lease Costs and Restructure Lease Program

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Division of Facilities Management (DFM) Real Property Management Program oversees a portfolio of 121 leases comprising approximately 1.8 million square feet of occupied space at an annualized cost of $34.4 million. Given the magnitude of these expenditures across State government, the program was established to strategically manage the State's leased portfolio, reduce occupancy costs, and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of real property management.

Historically, leasing activities were decentralized across numerous State agencies, resulting in duplicated efforts, inconsistent lease negotiations, limited market leverage, and fragmented long-term planning. Recognizing these challenges, OMB/DFM implemented a centralized, enterprise-wide real estate strategy that enables the State to negotiate from a position of strength, capitalize on market opportunities, consolidate operations where appropriate, and align occupancy decisions with broader operational and fiscal objectives. Today, OMB/DFM manages the State's leased portfolio as a single enterprise asset rather than a collection of independent agency leases, creating greater consistency, accountability, and value across government.

Following a competitive procurement process, OMB/DFM partnered with a professional real estate services firm in 2018 to conduct a comprehensive review of the State's lease portfolio. The initial focus targeted 78 leases that were scheduled to expire within the following 5 years. Since then, all 78 leases have been successfully addressed through renewal, relocation, termination, or transfer. Out of the 78 leases, 65 were strategically renewed or relocated to improve lease terms and operating efficiency, while 13 leases were eliminated through termination or transfer. Due to the program's demonstrated success, the professional services contract was renewed to continue expanding these efforts across the State's real property portfolio.

To date, 77 leases have been optimized through renegotiation, relocation, consolidation, or transition into newly constructed build-to-suit facilities. These efforts have produced more than $36.3 million in hard dollar rent savings over the life of the negotiated lease terms. In addition, the State has realized more than $11.4 million in soft dollar savings by securing landlord-funded tenant improvements, including interior painting, carpeting, restroom renovations, signage, parking lot improvements, and other leasehold enhancements that otherwise would have required State funding. On average, restructured leases have been extended for approximately 10 years, generating annualized savings of approximately $3.1 million in rent and $1.4 million in capital improvements.

Beyond cost savings, OMB/DFM has strengthened the State's lease portfolio by standardizing lease language and improving contractual protections. Renewed agreements incorporate consistent provisions related to maintenance responsibilities, environmental health and indoor air quality, operating expense controls, insurance requirements, renewal options, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, accessibility improvements, and other operational safeguards. These enhancements reduce long-term risk, improve facility quality, and create greater consistency across the State's lease inventory.

The program has also expanded beyond lease negotiations to include strategic portfolio optimization. OMB/DFM continually evaluates opportunities to relocate agencies into more efficient facilities, pursue build-to-suit developments where financially advantageous, and acquire properties when ownership provides greater long-term value than continued leasing. Since October 2022, the State has acquired 10 strategically selected properties that are projected to eliminate future lease obligations while generating approximately $28.8 million in long-term lease cost avoidance. These acquisitions also increase the State's owned asset base, provide long-term appreciation, improve operational flexibility, and create future opportunities for agency consolidation.

As agencies continue implementing hybrid work schedules, OMB/DFM is leveraging opportunities to reduce the State's real estate footprint by consolidating operations and repurposing underutilized space. To date, 5 agencies have reduced their leased footprint through hybrid workplace initiatives, producing recurring annual lease savings of approximately $361,809, while improving overall space utilization. Portfolio decisions are increasingly informed by occupancy data, market analysis, workforce trends, and long-term lifecycle costs, allowing the State to make strategic real estate decisions based on enterprise-wide needs rather than individual lease expiration dates.

Recognizing that workplace needs continue to evolve, the Division of Facilities Management (DFM) entered a partnership with a nationally recognized workplace strategy and space planning firm in June of 2024. The firm is conducting a comprehensive assessment of the State's workplace utilization, operational efficiency, and space allocation practices. The study will provide recommendations for modern workplace standards, flexible work environments, improved space utilization, and long-term portfolio optimization. Final recommendations are expected by the end of 2026 and will establish the foundation for future workplace planning initiatives.

Looking ahead, OMB/DFM will continue transitioning from traditional lease administration to a fully integrated enterprise real property management program. The next phase will combine leased facilities and State-owned property assets into a unified portfolio strategy that evaluates leasing, ownership, acquisitions, dispositions, redevelopment opportunities, and agency consolidations through a single decision-making framework. This initiative supports the State's broader goals of fiscal responsibility, operational efficiency, workplace modernization, and responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources.

By combining strategic lease restructuring, property acquisitions, workplace modernization, portfolio analytics, and enterprise-wide planning, OMB/DFM is creating a more efficient, flexible, and financially sustainable real property portfolio. The program has evolved well beyond lease negotiations into a long-term strategy that positions the State to reduce occupancy costs, maximize public assets, adapt to changing workforce needs, and deliver greater value to Delaware taxpayers for decades to come.

Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) Service Efficiency Blitz (SEB)

The Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) process plays an advisory role in coordinating land use development across Delaware by organizing guidance from State agencies and providing this preliminary information to developers. This guidance provided by the PLUS process is associated with land use proposals above a certain size and scale defined by State statute and local ordinances. Projects reviewed through PLUS typically include comprehensive development plans, residential subdivisions with more than 50 units, non-residential plans with more than 50,000 square feet of floor area, and annexations and rezoning proposals that are not in compliance with a certified comprehensive plan. Recognizing opportunities for greater efficiency and value delivery, the State of Delaware's Government Efficiency and Accountability Review (GEAR) Program Management Team and the Office of State Planning Coordination (OSPC) launched a three-day Service Efficiency Blitz (SEB) in June 2025 to analyze the end-to-end customer experience, evaluate system performance, and initiate immediate efficiencies. Using Lean and Agile practices, the team examined the process from a customer perspective through key PLUS personas. The PLUS value stream was mapped to identify pain points, implement immediate solutions, and establish a framework for further efficiency efforts. This rapid improvement event was timely given the focus by the Office of the Governor on overall business permitting process efficiency and the need for these efficiencies to positively impact affordable housing development and economic development in the State of Delaware.

As a result of last year's GEAR Service Efficiency Blitz of the PLUS process, OSPC implemented a new internal workflow and schedule for the meetings. The new procedures have been in place for about 7 months. In that time OSPC has reduced the total process time by about 5 days each month and also achieved time savings for the agency reviewers, which have improved their responsiveness and the quality of their comments. One of the ways this has been achieved is by creating a collaborative workspace using Microsoft Teams, which was a recommendation from the SEB. Next month OSPC is implementing the PLUS 2.0 software upgrade package which will shift that collaborative workspace into the ArcGIS environment, which is the core application used for both the application and review process. In addition to this, OSPC has been engaged with the Governor's Office as it implements Executive Order #18, permit streamlining. The main focus of this effort is concurrent review and streamlining of State permits. PLUS happens early in the development process, long before an applicant is far enough along to apply for permits. Even so, OSPC has been able to identify some permitting issues and some projects that meet the criteria for "Priority Projects" and refer them to the Governor's Office for consideration as a result of the PLUS reviews. The Office of State Planning Coordination is also working with the permitting software vendor to integrate into their "Forum" feature, which will be a part of a more comprehensive software package for permitting. Discussions continue with the Governor's Office regarding how OSPC and PLUS can support the Governor's vision for permit streamlining and efficiency.

Establish a State Land Inventory/Putting Assets to Work

In July of 2025 the State Land Inventory Management System (SLIM) was launched. This transformative initiative—born out of the GEAR program—represents a major step forward in promoting transparency, operational excellence, and a culture of continuous improvement across Delaware's State government. SLIM is a first-of-its-kind, centralized solution for how State government inventories and manages State-owned land assets across multiple agencies. Designed with sustainability and interagency collaboration in mind, the SLIM system serves as the authoritative, centralized database for State-owned land assets and empowers agencies with improved insight into land utilization, property status, and shared opportunities. A diverse project team created the SLIM application. OMB/OSPC, as the sponsor, working in partnership with DTI for project management support and other key sections, was instrumental in the design and development of the application. The project vendor created a custom user interface that stands on existing technology infrastructure. It was truly a team effort in

collaboration with agency partners. SLIM is now in active use by 14 State agencies that manage the ownership of real property, easements, and leases.

The Office of State Planning Coordination and Division of Facilities Management has been discussing the Governor's "Putting Assets to Work" initiative with GEAR and the Governor's Office. The Governor's Office previously hired a consultant to review the State's real property assets with the goal of creating additional value through more efficient use and other revenue-generating or beneficial uses of these assets. The Office of State Planning Coordination has shared access to SLIM with the Governor's Office and the consultants, and they evaluated parcels within the State's real property inventory as a part of their study. Discussions to date related to SLIM have focused on leveraging the SLIM database as the system of record that includes all State-owned properties. The consultant's report and recommendations included next steps for advancing this project. Some of these recommendations included suggestions to upgrade the data capabilities in SLIM, which would need to be scoped as an IT project and involve OSPC's software vendor and funding.

Treasury Management

Comply with Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS)

After analyzing agencies' current business processes involving how payments are handled, the Office of State Treasurer's (OST) Merchant Services team has completed improvements that can reduce an agency's information technology (IT) and business vulnerabilities when handling credit and debit card payments. The office's primary strategy for ensuring all agency merchants are PCI DSS compliant is to reduce the scope of potential vulnerabilities within agencies' payment environments by providing Point-to-Point Encrypted (P2PE) payment devices for in-person payments, and vendor-hosted online payment pages with secure checkout environments. These efforts ensure that payment best practices are being implemented, the PCI DSS burden is minimized, and that the State's data systems are secure. The consequences of failing PCI DSS compliance include the State's loss of credibility, fines, and no longer being able to accept credit card payments. The office has met all PCI DSS stipulated remediation timelines, having promptly and effectively addressed internal and external quarterly IT environment scans. In a collaborative effort with DTI and a contracted Qualified Security Assessor, OST will continue to work with State agencies to ensure that payments are being handled in a manner that is compliant with PCI DSS as well as similarly defined security procedures from NACHA (National Automated Clearing House Association) for ACH transactions.

Implementation of a New Treasury Management System

The Office of the State Treasurer has completed the implementation of a cloud-based treasury management system, to replace manual workflows and consolidate bank connectivity, cash data, and treasury functions into a single platform.

The system strengthens compliance and security with standardized approvals, signatory controls, and centralized bank account management. As a SOC 1/SOC 2 Type II certified SaaS platform, the new treasury management system offers enhanced fraud prevention and mitigates cyber and compliance risks. Ultimately, the treasury management system shifts focus from manual tasks to strategic analysis, enabling faster, more accurate decisions. It supports scalable reporting and collaboration, leading to improved liquidity management and a more resilient, audit-ready treasury function.

Human Resources Modernization

Centralize and Modernize Human Resources Delivery

By investing in technology and centralizing core human resources functions, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) is transforming the management and delivery of human resources services for the State. Modernization accomplishments in 2026 include:

- Completing a three-year project to digitize personnel records and human resource central compensation, classification, and employee labor relations documents. 6.6 million total documents were scanned and imported

into an electronic enterprise document management system to strengthen security and risk management of human resources records.

- Redesigning the Fiscal Year Annual Workforce Report into a more accessible report, presentation, and video.
- Sustaining a centralized employee onboarding system, Delaware Launchpad, across Executive Branch agencies to ensure consistent and streamlined preboarding, onboarding, and offboarding processes.
- Serving as an integral team member of the OneDelaware Project Team The department is one of three project administrators, functional project managers, and change management coaches, providing critical insight into human resource processes, systems, and payroll requirements, governance, and overall project execution.

In 2026, the team member responsible for implementing the Delaware Paid Family Medical Leave program, Aaron Schrader, was named DHR Employee of the Year for his exemplary work.

Effective Use of Technology

The department made significant progress in 2023 by implementing an enterprise document management system. This transition from physical filing cabinets to an electronic system has modernized human resource records management. In 2026, over 6.6 million documents were digitized and scanned into the DHR electronic enterprise document management system, eliminating paper documents and enabling over 2,200 square feet of filing room space to be converted to office or meeting space. This transition enables automated processes, enhances user access, minimizes risk, improves record management and retention, and bolsters security and confidentiality.

The department is key in the State's effort to select a solution implementor for Workday (the system that will replace the State's legacy human resource and payroll, learning management, recruitment, onboarding/offboarding, and workflow systems) through a statewide contract. This includes participation in requirements gathering, drafting vendor demonstration scripts, scoring proposals and vendor demonstrations, and coordinating input from human resources subject matter experts.

Staff actively reviewed and provided feedback on vendor proposals and system demonstrations to ensure alignment with operational requirements and documented current service delivery needs provided by existing systems that are not integrated into the legacy system. Additionally, the team is mapping all current business processes, determining security requirements, and validating data for DHR business needs. The DHR project team is contributing to evaluating configuration options and shaping implementation strategies to support a smooth transition and long-term functionality of the new system. The implementation of the new solution is targeted to begin in January 2027 with a solution implementor.

Drive Leadership Training Opportunities

Since 2021, DHR and GEAR have partnered to support the State's vision to enhance internal capacity to promote, facilitate, and implement continuous improvement efforts by developing leadership and specialized operational excellence skills to lead and support those efforts. In Fiscal Year 2024, the First State Quality Improvement Fund (FSQIF) expanded to support the implementation and ongoing delivery of: 1) Project and Process Leadership (PPL) training, focusing on the people side of leadership skills crucial for fostering collaboration, driving innovation, and achieving goals; 2) Operational Excellence (OpEx) Program designed to provide specialized skills to existing practitioners through certificate programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials in Lean Six Sigma, Design Thinking, Business Analytics, and Systems Thinking; and 3) continuation of the Continuous Improvement Practitioner (CIP) Program training.

The PPL program, managed and administered by DHR, is a comprehensive program designed to equip participants with the knowledge, skills, and strategies to lead projects and teams effectively. The program focuses on the key areas of continuous improvement leadership to understand core leadership principles such as communication, motivation, conflict resolution, and decision-making; facilitation skills to cultivate high-performing teams through effective meeting facilitation, presentation skills, managing information, and building stakeholder engagement; and strategic thinking to align project goals with organizational objectives, anticipating future challenges, and identifying opportunities for innovation and improvement. In Fiscal Year 2026, 15 employees completed the program, and there were 24 new enrollees.

The OpEx program, collaboratively managed and administered by DHR and GEAR, enables existing GEAR Field Team members to complete one of 4 certificate programs in Lean Six Sigma, Design Thinking, Business Analytics, and Systems Thinking. This advanced coursework provides the opportunity to achieve industry-recognized credentials and advance the

State's culture of continuous improvement. In 2026, a new contract was established with a university to provide this training, and 10 State employees are currently enrolled in one of those 4 certificate programs.

In 2026, 2 cohorts of the CIP Program, managed and administered by DHR, were offered, increasing the total number of graduates to 194 since its inception. This training is for employees seeking knowledge and skills necessary to lead efforts with training in project management, Lean process improvement, and change management, serving as a feeder program into the GEAR Field Team.

The iLEAD Delaware Leadership Program, designed to develop future leaders, offers opportunities for employees who lead teams and those who lead projects and process improvement initiatives. To date, 1,205 active State employees have completed the Leadership Essentials training curriculum, and 1,807 are currently enrolled. For employees leading teams, the State provides a Frontline Leadership Certificate focusing on team leadership, communication, performance management, coaching skills, and building a productive workplace environment. Fifty employees have completed the program requirements to date, and 115 new and aspiring leaders are actively enrolled in this certificate program, which requires over 40 hours of training and 12 – 36 months to complete.

The department's Administrative Professional Curriculum continues to be popular, covering critical areas, such as professional compliance, communication, interpersonal skills, time management, and technology proficiency, to empower participants to excel in their roles and contribute effectively to their State organizations. To date, 413 employees have enrolled in or completed the streamlined program, consisting of 64.5 hours of training and 38 training courses. This customer-focused training provides valuable knowledge to an underserved group of employees. It benefits not only administrative professionals but also State agencies and their leadership, with 95 percent of the participants indicating that the program better equipped them to handle the administrative tasks after completing the program and that they would recommend the program to others.

Recognition of State Employees' Accomplishments

The Department of Human Resources manages statewide award programs to celebrate the accomplishments of State employees. Among these awards are the GEAR P3 Innovation and Efficiency Award and the Trailblazer Award to honor exceptional State employees and teams who employ continuous improvement methodologies and effective project management techniques. Annually, these awards celebrate employees' use of continuous improvement tools to excel in leadership, team dynamics, and communication, ultimately enhancing customer service and achieving tangible results. Award-winning projects showcase innovative, sustainable, and efficient business processes and services.

The GEAR P3 awards include monetary incentives made possible through a partnership between the State and the private sector through the GEAR P3 Taskforce. In 2026, the GEAR P3 Innovation & Efficiency Award recipients were awarded $15,000, shared among team members, while those employees receiving the GEAR P3 Trailblazer Award each received $1,500. The annual financial support for these awards includes $25,000 in funding from the State and an equivalent matching fund of $25,000 from the private sector.

This year's GEAR P3 Innovation & Efficiency Award winners included 2 teams: 1) the Continuous Quality Improvement Post-Permanency Success Committee from the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families who implemented data-driven improvements to transform post-adoption support services to reduce foster care re-entries and help more families successfully remain together, and 2) the Delaware Treatment and Referral Network Care Coordination Platform (DTRN360) Team from the Department of Health and Social Services who designed and implemented an innovative statewide care coordination platform that connects providers with comprehensive, real-time information to deliver faster, more effective, and better-coordinated behavioral health services.

The GEAR P3 Trailblazer Award recipients in 2026 included: 1) Taylor Shannon from the Department of Safety and Homeland Security who created the Social Equity Financial Assistance (SEFA) Grant Program to close a critical gap in Delaware's cannabis market by delivering capital to social equity licensees; 2) The Systems Integration with Meal Providers Team from the Department of Health and Social Services who streamlined data integration between meal providers and the case management system from the Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities to improve service delivery, enhance data accuracy, and generate significant cost savings; 3) The Juvenile Citation Team from the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families, who modernized their civil citation program in order to accelerate service delivery, reduce costs, and improve outcomes for youth through continuous improvement and collaboration; and 4) The Smart Simple Implementation Team from the Department of Safety and Homeland Security who digitized and

standardized DEMA's grant management processes, reducing processing times, improving compliance, and enhancing service for both staff and external partners.

The Champions Award is provided to teams that demonstrate superior use of continuous quality improvement tools to achieve exceptional results in process efficiency, customer service, or cost savings. These teams' nominations were not at the level of the apex award but have notable team processes or results. Three teams were selected for the Champions Award, including 1) the Alternative Fuel Vehicle Team from the Department of Transportation, who successfully implemented critical DMV system, process, and customer service changes required by House Bill 164, ensuring a seamless statewide transition to Delaware's new transportation revenue structure; 2) the Avian Influenza Response Team from the Department of Agriculture, whose swift coordination and effective disease control measures helped contain Delaware's avian influenza outbreak, safeguarding the poultry industry, and restoring affected operations with minimal disruption; and 3) the Blackbird Creek Bridge Replacement Team from the Department of Transportation for delivering an innovative bridge replacement project that restored critical infrastructure ahead of schedule while reducing traffic impacts and improving long-term roadway performance.

The department has continued to streamline the Statewide Recognition Award Program, which includes the Delaware Award for Excellence and Commitment in State Service, the Corporal Grade One Matthew T. "Ty" Snook Award for Heroism (formerly, the Delaware Heroism Award), and the Governor's Team Excellence awards, which encompass the GEAR P3 Innovation and Efficiency Award, the Champions Award, and the GEAR P3 Trailblazer Award. With tight timelines for execution, DHR continues to streamline the application and selection processes. In addition, DHR is implementing a process to restore monetary incentives for each recipient of the Delaware Award for Excellence and Commitment in State Service and provide medals for the Corporal Grade One Matthew T. "Ty" Snook Award for Heroism recipients.

Promoting a Respectful and Inclusive Workplace

The Department of Human Resources is committed to advancing a workplace environment characterized by collaboration, trust, integrity, and respect across all levels. DHR is dedicated to developing impactful and equitable statewide policies and procedures supporting enacted legislation and the Governor's initiatives. During Fiscal Year 2026, the Division of Talent Management developed and updated 44 policies, operating procedures, templates, and forms to support Executive Branch agencies and employees. A major accomplishment was the successful implementation of the State's Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) Policy and Procedures. In partnership with the Statewide Benefits Office (SBO) and other key stakeholders, Talent Management developed and launched supporting resources, including the PFML Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), PFML Toolkit, and Employee and HR Checklists. The implementation effort also included presentations to the Governor's Cabinet, coordination with the Delaware Department of Labor (DOL) and other State organizations, and the delivery of multiple educational town halls for State employees and human resources representatives. Talent Management also reestablished and enhanced the DHR Policy and Procedures Workgroup to review and modernize statewide policies and procedures, making them clearer, more concise, and easier for employees and agencies to understand. In addition, Talent Management partnered with the DHR Communications Team to successfully transition DHR's policies and procedures to the State of Delaware's new Lighthouse Common Look and Feel, improving accessibility, consistency, and overall user experience.

The statewide Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) section of DHR continued to build and strengthen the State's ADA program through collaboration, training, and resource development. During the past year, the ADA Section collaborated with Talent Acquisition and the Delaware Department of Labor to review applicant hiring programs and help ensure compliance with disability-related employment requirements and accessibility for applicants. The ADA Section also expanded its focus on training and education by increasing professional development opportunities for ADA coordinators, supervisors, and employees. The State of Delaware's ADA coordinators were well represented at the Delaware Public Employer Labor Relations Association Annual Conference in March, where a nationally recognized ADA expert provided specialized training on ADA compliance and accommodation. In addition, the ADA section is collaborating with other State of Delaware disability-related agencies to strengthen partnerships and develop resources that better support ADA coordinators, supervisors, and employees across State government. To further promote consistency and compliance, the ADA section launched a mandatory ADA overview training for all new employees. The section is also developing mandatory ADA training for supervisors and a comprehensive ADA coordinator curriculum to provide standardized guidance and support for consistent administration of the ADA program statewide.

The Employee and Labor Relations team has revised both the Respectful Workforce and Anti-Discrimination (RWAD) policy and Standards of Conduct policy to provide a more user-friendly understanding of the policy and its requirements. These policies are provided to the State workforce to provide a direct mechanism to address discrimination issues of protected classes in the workforce (RWAD) or to address workplace issues not based upon protected class. These tools continue to help address discriminatory and nondiscriminatory issues in the workplace.

The Division of People and Culture continues to partner with State agencies to strengthen organizational culture through employee-led advisory committees across the Executive Branch. By providing strategic guidance, leadership coaching, and operational support, the division empowers these committees to serve as trusted forums for employee voice, collaboration, and continuous improvement. Their insights and recommendations help agencies enhance employee engagement, strengthen workplace culture, improve organizational effectiveness, and cultivate environments where every employee has the opportunity to thrive and contribute to the State's mission.

Contain Health Care Costs

As health care costs continue to climb, the DHR Statewide Benefits Office (SBO), under the guidance of the State Employee Benefits Committee (SEBC), continues to develop strategies to engage Group Health Insurance Plan (GHIP) members to contain health care costs for State employees, retirees, pensioners, and their dependents. To ensure the financial stability of the Group Health Fund and prevent future double-digit rate increases, the SEBC approved a 2.2 percent increase in State health plan premiums (rates), which were effective July 1, 2026, for active employees and non-Medicare retirees and are effective January 1, 2027, for Medicare retirees.

The State projects that health care costs will increase between 5.5 percent and 12.0 percent in Fiscal Year 2027. Pharmaceutical costs are expected to increase between 10.0 percent and 25.0 percent in Fiscal Year 2027, primarily due to the coverage and continual expansion of weight loss medications and other GLP-1 drugs. The State first began covering weight loss medications on July 1, 2023, and since that time, has seen a significant increase in utilization of GLP-1 medications. In Fiscal Year 2026, the gross spend for GLP-1 weight loss medications reached $84.1 million, with the gross spend for GLP-1 diabetic medications reaching $32.7 million, increases of 56.0 percent and 5.0 percent, respectively, over Fiscal Year 2025. These trends continue to increase with Fiscal Year 2027 projecting $127.5 million in gross spend for GLP-1 weight loss medications and $38.5 million in gross spend for GLP-1 diabetic medications, an increase of 52 percent and 18 percent, respectively, over Fiscal Year 2026.

In the fall of 2024, the SEBC approved a new incentive-based Diabetes Prevention Pilot Program called TheraPay, through Clutch Health and Highmark Delaware, which launched on July 1, 2025. Eligible State employees who are Highmark members and are at risk for developing type 2 diabetes can enroll and earn up to $275 for participating in the free 12-month YMCA Diabetes Prevention Program, which also includes 4 months of a free YMCA family membership. This pilot was limited to the first 100 enrollees and following its conclusion, the State will evaluate the results and determine any next steps. The State offers multiple free diabetes prevention and management programs and continues to monitor the diabetes trend closely.

The State implemented the Hinge Health virtual physical therapy program effective January 1, 2023, for Group Health Insurance Plan (GHIP) non-Medicare members to address the growing cost and prevalence of musculoskeletal conditions and provide an additional resource to members experiencing acute or chronic pain. During Fiscal Year 2026, Hinge Health successfully engaged 1,551 members. Of the engaged members, 47 percent saw positive outcomes in pain reduction with 78 percent reaching a minimal clinically significant difference in documented pain. Hinge Health projects a program net savings of $6.6 million for GHIP and has recently expanded to include women’s pelvic health therapy and migraine care.

The State must continue its strategies to offer programs to manage health and chronic conditions and engage GHIP members through education and training because health care costs cannot be addressed solely through rate increases. In Fiscal Year 2026, SEBC adopted the Fiscal Year 2026-Fiscal Year 2029 Strategic Framework to outline GHIP goals, strategies, and tactics designed to advance the GHIP mission of offering State of Delaware employees, retirees, and their dependents adequate access to high-quality health care that produces good outcomes at an affordable cost, promotes healthy lifestyles, and helps them be engaged consumers. The SBO creates a work plan from the goals, strategies, and tactics established in the Strategic Framework and develops action items that are relevant, measurable, and time-bound that guide the work of the Office. The Fiscal Year 2026-Fiscal Year 2029 Strategic Framework establishes four primary goals:

1. Improving the health of GHIP members

2. Ensuring members receive high-quality and safe care that is cost-effective and improves outcomes
3. Managing health care costs for the GHIP and members
4. Ensuring transparency and continuous improvement toward achieving goals by monitoring, measuring, and reporting progress

Managing health care costs for the GHIP and members, Goal 3, includes strategies such as: optimizing benefit design to promote cost-effective and high-value care; managing specialty pharmacy and high-cost drug spend; identifying high-cost conditions and implementing solutions; optimizing vendor management, contracting, and performance oversight to manage spend; engaging members to use care appropriately to reduce preventable costs; and using demographic and actuarial insights to manage cost trends. Each of those strategies is further broken down into tactics and action items that have measures and reporting timelines.

A workplace is an important setting for supporting health and wellness. The State continues to prioritize member communications and engagement, such as providing educational materials and resources on the management of prevalent chronic conditions and preventable diseases in a monthly newsletter sent to all benefit-eligible employees, a biannual newsletter sent to all benefit-eligible retirees, as well as working with health plan administrators to ensure members are aware of the numerous resources they have available to them through their benefits to manage conditions and provide support. Health plan administrators continue to communicate with members about appropriate care sites and prioritized educating them on their ability to lower out-of-pocket expenses, as well as expenses to the State, by visiting preferred locations for laboratory testing, imaging, Centers of Excellence, and acute medical episodes. In addition to these efforts, the State experienced another successful benefit open enrollment period for 2026, with 82.5 percent of benefit-eligible State employees actively participating in the open enrollment process by changing or confirming their benefits selections.

The department's SBO has an annual initiative to share workforce health profiles with State Executive Branch agencies. These profiles help agency leaders to understand the health and wellness of their workforce and provide recommendations about health indicators they may want to focus on such as preventive screening rates, primary care utilization, or improving engagement with condition management programs. In Fiscal Year 2026, SBO met with 13 agencies to review their data. Out of those meetings, agency leaders expressed that having communications templates to share would be helpful to them in promoting health and wellness. In response, SBO began sending out monthly email templates, newsletter articles, and graphics in May. Templates included topics such as mental health awareness, hypertension awareness, joint and muscle health, and preventive screening. Many agencies have reported using these materials and a positive response from their staff.

The State Benefits Office developed and implemented training and communication strategies to engage GHIP members, including educating enrolled members about benefit plans, appropriate care sites, member testimonials, high-quality/high-value providers, preventive care, and wellness/care management programs. Communication strategies included education through online and instructor-led training, monthly newsletters, targeted emails, and various webpages featuring condition prevention and management resources on topics such as diabetes, heart health, weight management, behavioral health/emotional well-being, cancer, and musculoskeletal pain. In Fiscal Year 2026, SBO sent more than 122 emails to State employees and more than 83 memos/alerts to HR/benefits/payroll representatives. The SBO offers 25 computer-based training courses about benefits that are self-paced and typically take less than 20 minutes to complete. In February 2026, SBO launched a virtual website navigation assistant called "Benny." Benny is a chatbot intended to help visitors navigate the SBO website by providing links to pages that may contain the information the individual is searching for on the website. In order to encourage awareness and engagement, SBO continues to provide "Get the Facts on What's Happening" communications to increase transparency among employees and retirees regarding discussions related to the GHIP at the SEBC and SEBC subcommittee meetings, as well as actions taken by the SEBC. These communications are sent monthly to benefit-eligible State employees, HR/benefits representatives, as well as to legislators and their staff.

Technology Innovation

Information Technology Efficiency

Delaware has adopted a standardized Information Technology (IT) services delivery model with shared services either delivered or brokered by the Department of Technology and Information (DTI) to maximize the benefits of Information

Technology Centralization (ITC). The department developed a plan that defines the delivery strategy for moving State government to commoditized enterprise IT services while maintaining a system for supporting agency-specific needs. The goal is a secure State computing environment maintained by right-sized IT resources and solutions that are financially supported in an equitable way, which also funds future investments in IT innovation.

The following sections highlight the move toward a shared services cost model that establishes an annual rate per user for Secure End User Services (SEUS). This model streamlines the delivery of core IT commodities, increases visibility, enhances controls for risk prevention and mitigation, and provides employees with equitable access, support, equipment, software, and security to do their work in an evolving, IT-driven environment.

IT Centralization (ITC)

In 2021, DTI refocused its strategy from an agency-by-agency ITC effort to concentrate on how best to deliver a highly secure, equitably provisioned computing environment. The resulting comprehensive SEUS strategy and associated cost model provide stable technology and predictable billing to State agencies based on actual usage. In April 2022, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Department of Human Resources served as the pilot agencies for SEUS. As part of this effort, DTI established a repeatable process and standard templates for data gathering and communication, including lessons learned. Beginning in 2023, centralization efforts for the Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA) were launched and completed by the end of 2024. This effort ensures the DSHA network is secure and functioning in a manner that is aligned with DTI Architecture Standards and best practices. The implementation of the shared services cost model, in collaboration with OMB, reflecting the total cost of ownership of IT services, is essential to moving ITC forward. It forms the basis of a strategy for continued IT service improvement and is crucial for Delaware centralized IT to be self-sustaining and right-sized to support digital government. Considerations were made to the product, service, and personnel costs driving the fixed annual rate for the consumption of SEUS and the fiscal impact on agency consumers.

Secure End User Services (SEUS)

SEUS (which currently includes email/collaboration, enterprise voice, and security services) is the first IT package to transition to the new shared services cost model with the following benefits and features:

- Maximizes security compliance.
- Uses Microsoft Office 365, SEUS's productivity and collaboration tool, which is central to transitioning from a capital expense (device-based software) to an operating expense (per-user-per-year subscription Software-as-a-Service) model, which makes IT service costs more predictable and scalable. Delaware completed Phases 1 and 2 of onboarding agencies to Microsoft Office 365's Government Cloud-based modern suite of collaboration, communication, and productivity tools this year, and it is a feature of SEUS.
- Includes cybersecurity monitoring, training, and authenticated user identity and access management.
- Provides licensing, support, and access to enterprise voice devices and applications.
- Assures a predictive, consumption-based cost model for budget planning.

Under the SEUS subscription model, costs are based on a per-user annual consumption rate, tied to a service agreement that provides agencies with clear performance metrics. At the time of this report, Fiscal Year 2027 SEUS Terms of Service for partner agencies were put in place and monthly billing per the shared services cost model for Fiscal Year 2027 is underway. Over the next fiscal year, DTI will be evaluating the current suite of SEUS offerings to determine a viable approach for addressing legacy ITC and scaling services across the enterprise.

Enterprise Digital Government: Single Sign-On for State Workers, Residents, and Visitors

Delawareans have a view that State agencies collectively are "the government" and thus have a corresponding expectation that they will be able to access services in a seamless and integrated manner. Digital services have historically been deployed at an agency/division level in a non-integrated manner. The State has migrated services to the Internet but without an enterprise strategy. Instead, services were sought out online from various agencies. Opening government to individuals and businesses, and breaking down the traditional barriers, encourages innovation while increasing efficiency and productivity for everyone.

Delaware implemented a single sign-on identity and access management solution with identity proofing to facilitate the launch of a single portal, called *Go DE*, for resident and visitor access to digital State services, like the Delaware One Stop portal for businesses. The vision was a universal directory where anyone can register and prove their identity to conduct business with State agencies under that authenticated profile. Initially, Delaware onboarded State and school employees to *Delaware ID*, the access and identity management tenant for State workers. A larger initiative made the resident and visitor solution *My Delaware* available for the public to create and maintain authenticated digital identities to consume State digital government services.

DTI and the Department of State's Government Information Center worked together, along with others, as collaborative partners to develop a strategy to integrate existing systems and deploy new systems into a modern enterprise platform. This included several technology projects that supported the digital government platform: an underlying customer relationship management application, single sign-on authentication and identity proofing, resident and visitor platform, email and notification solution, data management and analytics tool, and centralized online payment tool that can assume responsibility for the legacy payment solution being sunset in 2026. An enterprise digital government access model built on a cloud platform that easily connects and interfaces with existing backend systems enterprise-wide was key to enabling increased resident and visitor self-service and overall satisfaction. This approach is leading Delaware from the legacy brick-and-mortar government services model to digital government experiences that meet current and future customer expectations. The department continues to partner with the departments of State, Finance, and Human Resources, and the Office of the State Treasurer to further the digital government strategy, with support from the Office of the Governor.

Digital Government *Go DE* Platform Foundation

Go DE provides an opportunity for all State agencies to participate on Delaware's enterprise digital government platform. Partnering with business, technology, external vendors, and consumers is key to the program's success. Innovative solutions and best practices applied by both Delaware State agencies and various states throughout the country provide direction for the development of new technology and service offerings.

Delaware wants residents and visitors to be at the center of everything it does. The design and functionality of Delaware's digital government experience are well-crafted, intuitive, accessible, and offer fast and focused transactions that result in a satisfying experience. Delivering on this outcome requires commitment to the ongoing evolution of Delaware's digital platform, consumer interests, and needs. Agency programs highlight both the demand for an improved digital experience and an increase in customer usage and satisfaction. In addition, user experience research, application and transactional data analysis, and resident dialog drive priorities and expectations.

Making the delivery of products and services easier for Delawareans and visitors, and simplifying maintenance for agency staff, improves the quality of interactions for all. *Go DE*'s architecture is cloud-based, scalable, and secure, supporting real-time reporting and metrics to ensure both robust performance and future adaptability. Reacting to the needs of state consumers, agencies, and schools, *Go DE* provides hosted forms and integrated applications with payment integration. In addition, transaction invoicing can be generated directly to the consumer from the platform. Advanced options such as pre-authorized, recurring, and scheduled payments are now available for greater flexibility, and non-payment filings offer the ability for residents and visitors to upload required documents. Integration with point-of-sale devices for use across agencies is planned for release in September 2026.

In addition to the implementation of *Pay with Go DE and the Go DE resident and visitor portal*, production results and data substantiate the opportunity and outcomes made available through digital solutions. *As of July 2026:*

Transactions & Revenue

- Cumulative Payments Processed: Over 243,000 transactions across participating State agencies
- Cumulative Dollar Volume: Exceeds $65 million in total processed payments
- Growth Rate: Year-one growth rate included a 529 percent increase in transactions with an average of 20,000 additional transactions per month in 2026
- Contract Cost Avoidance: $2.1 million+ saved by migrating 120 agency use cases to *Pay with Go DE*, avoiding individual agency application contracts (average savings of $17,000 per use case)

Users & Adoption

- Active Users: Over 132,000 unique users
- Growth Rate: Year-one growth rate of 785 percent with an average of 11,000 new users per month in 2026
- Administrative Users: *Go DE* administrative portal supports the work of over 250 agency and school fiscal and support staff in reconciling data and financials
- Digital Transformation: Thousands of paper-based forms and payments now completed via secure online methods
- User Satisfaction: With over 4,100 responses, users ranked their *Go DE* experience 4.26 out of 5 for third-party applications and 4.5 out of 5 for on-platform services.

Service Reach & Integration

- Applications Onboarded: *Go DE* now includes 122 live payment applications and 163 configured applications across 132 State organizations represented in adoption tracking. Through July 2026, the platform processed more than 243,000 transactions totaling approximately $64.8 million.
- Submission and Filing Engine: *Go DE*'s reusable form framework is operational across 106 hosted form use cases and has supported nearly 39,000 submitted filings. Capabilities include multi-step applications, save-and-resume, conditional workflows, document collection, integrated payments, submission tracking, agency review and activity management, and configurable PDF generation.
- Onboarding time and Flexibility: Agencies considering a new digital application, filing, registration, or document-intake service should evaluate *Go DE* as the first option before developing or procuring a separate solution. The platform provides a secure, accessible, and reusable foundation that can shorten implementation timelines, avoid duplicative technology investments, and deliver a consistent experience for residents, businesses, and agency staff.
- APIs Available: *Go DE* provides more than 30 documented application programming interface (API) operations and callback interfaces supporting payment initiation and status, scheduled payments, tokenization, captures, voids, refunds, payment links, Point-of-Sale terminals, funding and reconciliation, application configuration, and transaction reporting.
- Account Center: *Go DE* Account Center is available through *My.Delaware.gov* single sign-on. Participating users can access payment history, saved payment methods, filing and submission history, payment requests, profile and address information/management, and personalized service features through a common statewide experience.

Efficiency & Modernization

- Shared-Service Savings: *Go DE'*s reusable onboarding model eliminates the need for each agency to independently procure and implement a payment gateway, checkout experience, reporting platform, identity integration, and administrative tools. Integrations can often be completed in days or weeks and at a fraction of the cost of a standalone processor-led implementation.
- Fiscal Reconciliation: Agency fiscal teams have direct access to transaction, funding, settlement, refund, ACH return, Point-of-Sale, and payment-purpose reporting. This provides a consistent operational view across online payments, hosted forms, payment links, and in-person transactions.
- Accessibility and Mobile Experience: *Go DE* services are designed for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 AA (WCAG 2.1 AA) accessibility and responsive use across desktop, tablet, and mobile devices. The platform uses a shared design system to provide consistent and accessible experiences across participating services.
- Operational Efficiency: Standardized integrations, hosted forms, self-service payment links, centralized reporting, automated notifications, and reusable administrative tools reduce custom development, manual reconciliation, and agency-specific support processes.

Scalability & Security

- Single Sign-On: My Delaware identity services, powered by Okta, provide secure authentication and a consistent sign-on experience across participating agencies and *Go DE* services.

- Cloud-Based Architecture: *Go DE* uses a modular Salesforce and Microsoft Azure architecture that supports payments, filings, workflows, reporting, identity, document storage, and agency integrations as reusable platform services.
- Application and Network Protection: Public portals and APIs are protected through managed web application firewall, traffic monitoring, and Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) mitigation services operated in coordination with the Department of Technology and Information.
- Secure Document Handling: *Go DE* supports Azure-backed document storage and malware scanning through Microsoft Defender for Storage, enabling agencies to securely collect and manage supporting documentation for digital applications and filings.

Continuous improvement and creative solutioning remain at the forefront of the Digital Government Platform Foundation Program and its associated deliverables. With each new agency or school engagement, DTI seeks to deliver a positive outcome that increases confidence in State service delivery. In addition, the program team guides the direction of this Governor's initiative to close the gap between customer expectations and government's ability to consistently provide customers with trusted digital experiences. This year, community engagement was largely focused on the continuous growth and improvement of the platform. User engagement surveys and direct feedback gathered by the user experience program manager will direct the priorities and enhancements to *Go DE*, with requested paths to include more citizen-focused use cases such as employment assistance, public health and safety, and the modernization of social services support. Public outreach is also planned to expand over the next year, with an increased social media presence as well as grassroots promotion opportunities with local community spaces. The team is committed to meeting the needs of state consumers by ensuring *Go DE* features meet the criteria of being useful, usable, equitable, and enjoyable.

Closing the Digital Divide in Delaware

Digital Accessibility is an important part of the digital government strategy. The U.S. Department of Justice (the regulatory and enforcement agency of Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act) promulgated *Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability; Accessibility of Web Information and Services of State and Local Government Entities*, effective June 24, 2024, which set requirements for digital accessibility compliance by April 24, 2026, (a date later extended to April 26, 2027) for State websites and mobile application content that is not exempt from remediation. Removing barriers for persons with disabilities to ensure access to digital content is a priority and the State is moving forward with digital accessibility compliance efforts through an investment of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. In coordination with the Office of the Governor, Department of State Government Information Center, and the State Council for Persons with Disabilities, DTI developed a plan to improve inclusiveness and access to digital government services.

Delaware has established a coordinated enterprise approach to digital accessibility that has matured into an active statewide program supporting governance, testing, remediation, workforce development, reporting, and agency accountability across State government. During this reporting period, the Digital Accessibility Program transitioned from initial implementation into sustained enterprise operations. The enterprise program currently supports 35 Level Access workspaces, monitoring 587 public-facing websites and applications, providing centralized accessibility oversight, implementation support, and statewide coordination across participating agencies.

The department leads the enterprise Digital Accessibility Program by providing governance, technical guidance, shared accessibility tools, automated monitoring, manual evaluation support, training, reporting, vendor coordination, and implementation resources. Agencies remain responsible for the accessibility of the websites, applications, documents, systems, and digital services they own or manage, while DTI provides the statewide framework, standards, enterprise reporting, and coordination necessary to support consistent implementation across government. The program continues to be implemented in collaboration with the Office of the Governor, the Government Information Center, the State Council for Persons with Disabilities, and agency partners to support a coordinated statewide approach to digital accessibility.

Accessibility testing and remediation are active operational functions. Automated monitoring identifies accessibility issues across digital properties and is supplemented by manual evaluations that validate barriers automated tools cannot reliably detect. Delaware's enterprise inventory identified more than 88,000 public-facing PDF documents, providing the State with its first enterprise-wide understanding of document accessibility and supporting statewide prioritization efforts. During the reporting period, 3,282 PDF files were submitted into the statewide remediation program. The enterprise manual evaluation program includes 50 evaluation credits, with 8 manual evaluations completed, 6 additional evaluations scheduled, and the

next 15 digital properties identified for manual evaluation after meeting the established 85 percent automated conformance threshold. PDF and document remediation continue through internal capability and specialized vendor support, with DTI facilitating scanning, testing, and remediation of DTI-owned digital assets while coordinating enterprise remediation resources available to agencies.

Training has expanded beyond general awareness into sustained workforce development and role-based technical capability. During the reporting period, DTI delivered more than 25 accessibility training sessions, with technical training sessions regularly attracting 33–88 participants. Weekly Accessibility Office Hours continue to provide ongoing technical assistance and implementation support to agencies. The Digital Accessibility Academy supports structured self-paced learning with 47 enrolled learners completing 165 course enrollments, while the enterprise Accessibility SharePoint Hub has recorded 2,482 unique viewers and more than 18,000 site visits, demonstrating broad adoption of centralized accessibility resources, implementation guidance, collaboration tools, and self-service learning opportunities. To support continued implementation, DTI scheduled 12 additional accessibility training sessions in August 2026 and 14 additional training sessions from September through December 2026, complemented by ongoing weekly Accessibility Office Hours that provide technical guidance, agency support, and knowledge sharing. Current training includes accessible document creation, PDF testing and remediation, web accessibility, accessibility testing practices, enterprise accessibility tools, and creating accessible content at the source. These efforts continue to build internal accessibility capability while reducing reliance on downstream remediation.

The program has also strengthened reporting and accountability through standardized enterprise workflows supporting accessibility testing, PDF remediation, manual evaluations, training, vendor coordination, and agency implementation. Enterprise reporting provides greater visibility into testing results, remediation activity, manual evaluation progress, training participation, agency engagement, and accessibility trends, enabling agencies to prioritize identified barriers and measure progress over time. The program has further strengthened collaboration through a statewide network of agency accessibility liaisons, regular accessibility meetings, weekly office hours, and shared implementation resources that support consistent adoption across State government.

The current phase is focused on expanding manual testing, advancing priority remediation, increasing internal remediation capability, validating completed corrective work, strengthening agency ownership, improving reporting, and integrating accessibility earlier into procurement, development, publishing, and technology processes.

This enterprise approach reduces risk through earlier identification and correction of accessibility barriers; strengthens Delaware's compliance posture through documented testing, remediation, training, reporting, and defined ownership; improves operational efficiency through shared enterprise tools, standardized workflows, centralized training, and vendor resources; and improves public impact by increasing independent access to State information, programs, benefits, and digital services for Delawareans with disabilities.

Expansion of Broadband Access Across Delaware

Expanding access to high-speed internet across Delaware is a priority for DTI and the Delaware Broadband Office (DBO). There are 3 federal funding streams at work in the State. These funding streams include:

- $33 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to support wired broadband infrastructure expansion to be continued through the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program. This work began in the summer of 2022 and was completed in the summer of 2026. The department connected 6,935 previously unserved or underserved broadband serviceable locations (BSLs) using this funding. The Delaware Broadband Office is supporting ARPA closeouts and preparing to continue construction through BEAD.
- $107 million from the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment program, created by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to plan and implement broadband expansion. The BEAD program can be used to connect unserved homes and to upgrade connections to homes with a lower-speed connection. In June 2025, the federal government officially rescinded all approved BEAD plans and required a new application and approval process under revised program rules. The office successfully reopened the competitive application process and submitted revised plans to preserve $107 million in federal infrastructure funding. DBO successfully attracted an additional $75 million in private match funding through BEAD’s competitive application process with internet service providers, leaving nearly $80 million in remaining BEAD funds awaiting further federal guidance expected this

summer. Delaware's approved BEAD plans will deploy internet infrastructure to 4,728 of Delaware's hardest-to-reach households and businesses, significantly expanding access to reliable, high-speed broadband service.

- $13 million awarded by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to the federal Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) to connect homes to broadband in designated geographic rural areas. This funding is directly administered by the FCC without involvement by DTI or the Delaware Broadband Office. The program plans to connect approximately 3,100 currently unserved BSLs. The RDOF-funded construction is intended to be completed by 2028, but the FCC allows for timeline extensions if necessary.

Enterprise Voice Modernization: Statewide Migration to Cisco Webex Cloud Calling

Delaware's state telephone service has relied for years on on-premises Cisco call processing equipment and Cisco 7900 series desk phones. Those phones reached end of life in June 2023, which means Cisco no longer develops or releases security patches for them and leaves the devices on the State network exposed. A second deadline moved the schedule up further. Cisco field notice FN74365 confirms that beginning October 1, 2026, Cisco Unity Connection will no longer synchronize voicemail with Microsoft 365, because Microsoft is deprecating Exchange Web Services for Exchange Online. Employees who count on voicemail arriving in their email inbox would lose that function, so DTI expedited the migration to Cisco Webex Cloud Calling to stay ahead of both the security exposure and the loss of voicemail integration.

DTI is migrating agencies location by location rather than all at once, working through 257 agency locations grouped into 40 reporting units. Each migration moves users to the Webex application as a softphone on the computer they already use, with a supported physical handset provided where the work requires one, such as shared work areas, front counters, and public safety facilities. Early adopter groups helped DTI work through call handling details such as shared lines, hunt groups, and coverage for administrative staff before the larger agency rollouts began. As of late July 2026, 124 of 257 locations were complete, 11 location groups had finished entirely, and 6 more were actively in progress. DTI publishes a website regarding the project and plans to include a progress dashboard every 2 weeks so agency leadership can see where each agency stands.

The project produces savings in three ways. First, DTI is collecting the retired 7900 series handsets, identifying the currently supported Cisco models among them, and redistributing those phones to agencies that still need a physical device. Sharing existing State assets instead of buying new hardware is projected to save the State approximately $3 million. Second, DTI is auditing telephone usage with each agency to determine whether employees still require a dedicated line, since Microsoft Teams chat and meetings already cover most communication needs for many roles. Retiring lines that are no longer needed reduces recurring monthly carrier charges, with the potential for several million dollars in statewide savings as agencies complete their reviews. Third, moving to cloud calling allows DTI to decommission the session border controllers, associated software, and legacy SIP trunking the on-premises system requires, which removes an ongoing maintenance burden and avoids a planned $600,000 Fiscal Year 2028 capital investment to replace that equipment.

Judiciary Reform

CASCADE: Integrated Enhancement(s) to Judicial Systems Applications and Processes

Phase 1 of the CASCADE (Centralized, Accessible, Secure, Configurable, Agile, Digital, Evolutionary) Initiative includes new civil case management solutions and E-filing solutions for the Justice of the Peace Court, Court of Common Pleas, and Superior Court. Additionally, in July of 2025, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) entered into an additional agreement to include the Court of Chancery in Phase 1 of the implementation. Now 2 years since project kickoff, Phase 1 has progressed significantly and is nearly ready for go-live. However, in July of 2026, the Courts and their vendor partners acknowledged that a combination of outstanding system configuration and timing for things like testing, training, and public outreach will require a bit more time to do it right. As a result, Phase 1 is now expected to be completed no later than January 2027, with an official date to be announced in summer of 2026.

The Judicial Branch remains poised to kick off Phase 2, which will focus on Family Court and its modernization needs. Today, Family Court operates on a custom-built mainframe case management system and does not have document management or E-filing capabilities. These are essential solutions both for the efficiency of the court, and the convenience of the public it serves.

Judicial Branch Criminal Modernization (formerly Criminal Justice Systems Evaluation Committee)

The criminal justice universe in Delaware is complex and affects several agencies and entities across the State. While the Criminal Justice Systems Evaluation Committee looked broadly at current solutions and operations, it is clear that each organization is at a different stage and with different perspectives and priorities around what (if any) modernization is needed. Leveraging the opportunity presented by the Criminal Justice Systems Evaluation Committee, and acknowledging the Courts' need for change, the Judicial Branch secured funding to conduct a detailed evaluation focused specifically on the Courts' systems, integrations, data sharing, processes, partner dependencies, and capacity for change.

An RFI and RFP were conducted in June, leading to a consulting contract in early July and a project kickoff on July 8. While the project is focused on the needs of the Judicial Branch, it is engaging its criminal justice partners to participate in interview sessions, so it can best understand their needs and any existing data sharing agreements. In addition to interviews, the consulting team is reviewing and analyzing documentation from across the Judicial Branch and conducting a "fit analysis" of its new civil solutions to see if they can be a fit for its criminal justice case needs.

Similar to the civil efforts under the CASCADE Initiative, the report produced by the Judicial Branch's consultants will advise how it can move forward with new case management with digital document management and E-filing for the criminal courts. The consulting engagement will run through the end of 2026, at which point the Judicial Branch will develop a project plan, gather costs, and seek support for the criminal leg of the CASCADE Initiative.

Reducing the Debt Burden on Ex-Offenders

Reducing the debt burden for ex-offenders has been a goal for the Judicial Branch since the advent of the GEAR Board. Support from the General Assembly and the Executive Branch has resulted in significant and continuing progress. It is not only inefficient to spend resources on the collection of fees from people who cannot afford it, but the imposed debts can add challenges to the lives of average citizens, rather than supporting those who may be trying to reform, rehabilitate, or otherwise improve their lives.

Many statutory fees were added over the years to fund State and local services with the courts imposing and collecting these fees. Revenues support many critical State and local services such as volunteer ambulance services, court security, transportation, and law enforcement. These fees can quickly add up for those who find themselves in the criminal justice system. People who are indigent or of modest means often face the unrealistic requirement to pay off overwhelming fees while struggling to pay for housing, food, childcare, or other necessities of life.

Previous Year Successes

House Bill 244 with House Amendment 2 of the 151st General Assembly was signed on October 3, 2022, which sought to help those struggling with the negative impacts of criminal justice fees. The bill repealed the supervision fee for probation and parole, the public defender fee, late fees, convenience fees, and criminal fines and fees for juveniles in Family Court; House Bill 244 also eliminated the suspension of licenses for non-payment of criminal justice fines and fees. Finally, this bill created the Criminal Legal System Imposed Debt Study Group to review best practices and continue reform efforts.

In Fiscal Year 2024, the General Assembly passed Senate Bills 282, 283, and 284 of the 152nd General Assembly. These initiatives were recommended by the Criminal Legal System Imposed Debt Study Group. In brief, these bills repealed the Senior Trust Fund Fee, the Interstate Compact Fee, the Substance Abuse, Rehabilitation, Treatment, Education and Prevention (SARTEP) Fund Surcharge and the DELJIS Fund Fee, along with outstanding balances of eliminated fees.

The Judicial Branch updated its Operating Procedures (AP006 Direct Write-Off) to write off aged debt over 10 years in 2021, amending the aging limit to 7 years effective July 2025. No payments may be accepted, voluntarily or otherwise, once any non-restitution judicial debt portion has been written off; payments may continue to be accepted in those cases for any outstanding restitution. The policy excludes any outstanding restitution for victims of crime. The Executive Branch updated the State of Delaware's Budget and Accounting Manual (9.4.4 Write-Offs) to reference the Judicial Branch policy.

Ability to Pay

House Bill 133 with House Amendment 4 passed the 153rd General Assembly in June 2026. Once signed, House Bill 133 will create a presumptive hardship waiver for criminal fines and fees when a defendant shows evidence of certain conditions, including receiving a public assistance benefit or being represented by the Office of Defense Services. The court retains discretion to impose monetary penalties in the interest of justice even when the individual would otherwise qualify for hardship waivers but must document the reason in the sentencing order.

Victim restitution, victim compensation, offenses that are eligible for voluntary assessment, toll violations, and electronic monitoring violations are ineligible for hardship waivers. The impact on revenue is assumed to be significant; for Fiscal Year 2027 there is a $5 million contingency fund in the Office of Management and Budget to cover lost fines and fees revenue to critical State services. The Judicial Branch has 180 days to implement the provisions of this bill upon enactment.

GEAR FIELD TEAM (GFT)

Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS)

Employing Data-Driven Decision Making by Using a Department-Wide Dashboard

The DHSS dashboard report collects metrics from the department's 10 divisions and presents the data in easy-to-understand data charts, including year-over-year data when available. Key operational measures have been reported over the prior year including staff vacancy rates, Fleet vehicle usage, IT support provided, Medicaid reimbursements, facility maintenance requests fulfilled, the census at the State's acute and long-term care facilities, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) enrollment, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) enrollment, and child support payments. The DHSS Secretary and other department leaders receive the monthly report.

The project originated with the desire to employ data-driven decision making using key performance indicators (KPIs) in the form of a departmental dashboard. The scope of the project includes:

- Engaging every DHSS division.
- Identifying key metrics that tell the story of the work being performed.
- Building and maintaining the data repository in the dashboard where data is captured and reported monthly using a shared Microsoft Teams workspace.
- Packaging the report and distributing it monthly to the cabinet secretary and other leaders.

The project is ongoing and has assisted decision makers in spotting trends as to what's happening in the department, which has been a valuable resource to leadership.

Before the DHSS dashboard project was initiated, the secretary and other leaders would need to review multiple data sources from each division to understand the department's current state conditions. The DHSS dashboard project used continuous improvement thinking by bundling key performance indicators from each data source into one report, thus creating resource efficiencies.

Save Over $5 Million by Identifying and Eliminating Underutilized Blocked Vehicles

The DHSS Fleet optimization project identifies underused blocked (assigned) vehicles, calculates their expense, and as part of a department-wide push to control expenses, persuades leaders to change their cost designation from blocked to pool vehicles. A blocked vehicle is not shared among operational units and is billed for a full month's use regardless of how often it is used. A pool vehicle is shared among operational units and is billed only when it is used. If a vehicle is driven very often, the better cost designation is to designate it as a blocked vehicle. If a vehicle is not driven often, the more cost-effective choice is to designate it as a pool vehicle.

When the DHSS Fleet optimization project began, DHSS had more than 400 blocked vehicles. The project manager began a monthly review of the blocked vehicle inventory and reporting to leadership those vehicles that were underused. As a result of reviewing the vehicle needs and showing DHSS leaders the excess capacity of blocked vehicles, the number of blocked vehicles has been reduced from 406 to 297, a reduction of 109 vehicles.

Because blocked vehicles are retained for 7 years, the reduction of blocked vehicle inventory by 109 since project inception translates into cost savings. Using a conservative average vehicle cost, the estimated savings is $739,129 annually, or $5,173,903 over a 7-year lease period. This is significant because money saved can be reinvested toward delivering services to Delawareans in need.

Employ DUI Rehabilitation Programs Screening and Referral Services at Delaware's Treatment Access Center (TASC) Locations

The Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) modernized Delaware's Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Rehabilitation Program by transitioning DUI screening and referral services from a contracted vendor to the State-operated DUI Referral Services Program administered through the Treatment Access Center (TASC). While community providers continue to deliver DUI education and treatment services, DSAMH now manages the screening and referral process, creating a more standardized, transparent, and efficient system for individuals required to complete DUI rehabilitation to restore their driving privileges. Because TASC specializes in serving justice-involved individuals and already maintains the necessary access to court and Division of Motor Vehicles systems, the transition was implemented seamlessly while expanding statewide access to both virtual and in-person services across all 3 counties.

A key improvement was the elimination of the $150 dollar screening and referral fee previously charged to participants. Individuals completing DUI rehabilitation often face significant financial obligations associated with court proceedings, legal representation, probation, and Division of Motor Vehicles requirements. Removing this additional cost reduced a financial barrier to treatment and made the required rehabilitation process more accessible. From January through May 2026, TASC processed 2,315 DUI referrals, resulting in an estimated $347,250 in direct cost savings for individuals required to complete Delaware's DUI Rehabilitation Program. During the same period, referral volume averaged 463 referrals per month, compared with monthly averages ranging from 288 to 329 referrals during 2022–2025, reflecting substantially greater utilization of the program following implementation of the State-operated model.

This initiative demonstrates how process redesign can improve both operational performance and customer experience. By leveraging existing State expertise and infrastructure, DSAMH streamlined service delivery, reduced costs for participants, improved consistency in screening and referral decisions, and expanded access to critical rehabilitation services. The enhanced referral process helps more individuals successfully engage in required DUI programming, supporting safer communities while improving access to behavioral health services throughout Delaware.

Use Continuous Improvement Tools at the Delaware Public Health Laboratory to Deliver Quality Results

The Delaware Public Health Laboratory (DPHL) is a high-complexity laboratory that provides comprehensive testing and scientific support for public health programs throughout Delaware. The laboratory performs testing for infectious diseases, environmental and water quality monitoring, and rabies and other zoonotic diseases, while also supporting emergency response efforts and statewide disease surveillance activities.

Continuous improvement aligns closely with laboratory testing and is essential to sustaining high-quality performance in a regulated and highly complex environment. Laboratory operations depend on consistency, accuracy, traceability, and strict adherence to standardized procedures, making them particularly well suited to structured improvement methodologies such as Lean and Six Sigma. Ongoing evaluation and refinement of laboratory processes support the identification and elimination of inefficiencies, reduce errors in sample collection, handling, and testing, and improve overall turnaround times for results. These efforts also strengthen compliance with regulatory and accreditation standards, enhance workflow standardization, and promote a safer and more controlled working environment. Maintaining these high standards is critical for successful outcomes, particularly when laboratory results directly influence partners' decision-making and impact public health.

DPHL staff have actively applied Lean and Six Sigma tools to conduct detailed, data-driven evaluations of daily workflows, enabling a deeper understanding of process bottlenecks and opportunities for improvement. These efforts have improved operational handoffs, clarified roles and responsibilities, and strengthened communication across teams and functional areas. In addition, the implementation of visual management systems, including process maps and real-time status displays (Kanban Boards), has enhanced transparency by providing timely and accessible information on daily operations, workload status, and special projects throughout the organization.

The use of these continuous improvement tools has also contributed to increased staff engagement by encouraging participation in cross-functional teams and problem-solving initiatives. As a high-complexity laboratory, the DPHL performs multi-layered testing across multiple disciplines and sections, making a strong Quality Management System essential to ensuring consistency, accuracy, and coordination throughout operations. Through involvement in these initiatives, staff members have gained a stronger understanding of how their individual contributions directly support the overall success and mission of the DPHL. As a result, these efforts have not only improved operational efficiency and quality

outcomes, but have also fostered a more collaborative work environment, strengthened organizational alignment, and contributed to improved employee morale.

Improve Service Delivery to Customers by Using the *Go DE* Digital Platform Model

Using the *Go DE* digital platform improves a customer's experience with making payments and tracking activity through a consistent and secure experience. *Go DE* allows for a centralized reporting dashboard that gives administrators a secure place to access submissions, service requests, payments, and other essential services.

The Division of Public Health (DPH) is a division leader in using this digital platform. Food and Bedding permits are top performing with applications by transaction volume steadily increasing each month. Cemetery Registration was launched in June 2026. Additional *Go DE*/DPH partnerships are expected to launch in the *Go DE* platform in July 2026 including Animal Welfare, Vital Statistics, and Drinking Water.

The Planning Unit continues to collaborate with stakeholders to identify other DHSS partnerships that will align well with *Go DE's* digital platform.

Improve Access to Long-Term Services & Supports Through Strategic Resource Usage

The Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD) is carrying out a strategic effort to ensure timely access to community-based long-term care services and support by improving efficiency and reducing the cost of service provision. Through consultation with national experts in the field of aging and disabilities, DSAAPD has developed a multi-tiered action plan to infuse person-centered practices in its work, ensuring services meet the goals and needs of older adults and persons with physical disabilities while being provided from the most appropriate funding source.

DSAAPD partnered with the Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance (DMMA) to utilize American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to hire Enrollment Specialists to assist in processing Medicaid applications for eligible DSAAPD participants. Through this partnership, DMMA has provided training on the Medicaid application process to DSAAPD's Community Service Program team in addition to the newly hired Enrollment Specialists. The assistance provided to Delawareans through this collaboration results in speedier receipt of services if approved for Long-Term Care Medicaid (LTCM).

This initiative results in significant long-term savings to the State of Delaware, since LTCM has a federal match of 50 percent, relieving some of the cost of care from Delaware's Older Americans Act dollars and Delaware's General Fund. Due to the fiscal success demonstrated, DSAAPD will continue the program through general funding even after ARPA funding sunsets.

Implement Inter-Resident Assessment Instrument (InterRAI) Check-Up Assessment

The Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities previously utilized homegrown assessment tools in the community to determine the amount of personal care, attendant services, and other in-home services for adult Delawareans with a physical disability and for those who are age 60 and older. To strengthen and improve operational efficiency and establish a strong infrastructure, the division has implemented the InterRAI Check-Up Assessment. This person-centered, data-driven tool determines eligibility and establishes service packages by offering input on care planning, outcome measurement for quality management, and participant safety.

The InterRAI Check-Up Assessment supports greater consistency in service determinations and service hour allocations while providing DSAAPD Case Managers with algorithms that identify and flag care needs. The implementation of this tool enhances the division's ability to deliver equitable, participant-focused services and supports informed decision-making for individuals receiving home and community-based services.

DSAAPD staff and participants benefit from the objective, evidence-based tool using the existing structure and technology. Results include more consistent service hours, improved efficiency within the division for all services, and appropriate prioritization of needs. The integrity of the tool allows for consistent capturing of data across all services.

The tool also supports the collection of data on an individual level to establish at-risk areas, while empowering Delaware to review data at a population level to identify gaps and trends across people, zip codes, and services. The division can use the

data collected to identify service gaps and participant needs and look to implement programs that support a more focused, data-driven approach. The tool can also export reports that feed into national and international best practices as reviewed, analyzed, and established by the InterRAI Fellows.

Partner for Healthy Aging through Senior Centers

The Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities partnered with 22 senior centers across Delaware to support healthy aging programs. Upon implementation of the program, senior centers were provided with the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) framework, which describes conditions in the environments where individuals exist that affect their health, functioning, and quality of life. The SDOH includes 5 domains: Economic Stability, Social and Community Context, Education Access and Quality, Health Care Access and Quality, and Neighborhood and Built Environments. The senior centers were provided these determinants as a resource to identify conditions that may impact proposed programming.

A few of the new programs that were implemented included the Language Exchange Adult Program, Hope and Healing for Widows, and New Year, New You! These programs empowered individuals to participate and socialize with other older adults, as social isolation is associated with a higher risk of dementia and other serious health problems. Approximately one-quarter of community-dwelling Americans aged 65 and older are socially isolated, and a significant proportion of adults in the United States report feeling lonely.

The senior centers also had the opportunity through this program to improve existing wellness programs which include nutrition enhancement and education, art programs, field trips, and exercise programs. Bingocize® is an evidence-based program approved through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) and the National Council on Aging (NCOA) that combines exercise and health education through bingo and has been implemented in various centers throughout this program period. Bingocize® promotes social engagement of older adults, information on falls education, improved nutrition, and mobility improvement.

Based on performance evaluations completed, DSAAPD has seen significant improvement in emotional health and quality of life among all participants. Qualitative data has emphasized the importance of social connection that was a motivating factor for over 500 participants.

In early 2025, the division requested proposals for a second opportunity for senior centers and community centers to receive funding for State Fiscal Year 2026. The division awarded grant funding as of July 1, 2025, to 13 senior centers and community centers to expand their current programming for the senior population.

As of July 1, 2026, these senior centers and community centers will continue their programming into the summer of July 2026. Senior centers and community centers will continue to provide programming including health and fitness, cultural education and experiences, field trips, and more that may not be able to be offered if the funding was not available.

Through these initiatives, DSAAPD has served over 3,000 individuals in the programs offered. A final impact report will be submitted after the contract period is completed on June 30.

Evaluate Longitudinal Analysis of National Core Indicators for Aging and Disability

The Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities and the Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance collaborate biennially on the National Core Indicators - Aging & Disabilities (NCI-AD) project. This consumer survey provides both divisions with valuable data regarding the impact of their programming on participants' quality of life. This year, DSAAPD's data team consolidated the survey's findings over the years for both divisions to identify potential opportunities for development and increased collaboration. By consolidating the validated National Core Indicators - Aging & Disabilities data from across surveys, the DSAAPD Continuous Quality Improvement Unit identified areas for growth as well as areas in which DSAAPD's services are particularly strong. The results were shared with DMMA, stratified across Managed Care Organizations.

The NCI-AD uses sound data principles to aggregate data across recipients which has been helpful in identifying areas for development, such as emergency planning. Additional questions have been added over the years to capture the impact of COVID-19 on the participants. By exploring trends in the data, DSAAPD found even more insights to help direct future projects and enable data-driven decision making.

Areas of high performance for the DSAAPD population included the management of chronic conditions, satisfaction with current home and life, reduced need for Emergency Response Systems, and fewer participants than before skipping meals due to financial worries.

Areas flagged for development included the availability of transportation, language access, emergency planning, service plans not fully meeting current needs, the rising need for home modifications, decreased access to healthy foods, reduced ability to contact case managers, limited knowledge of how to complain about services, and limited knowledge of how to report potential abuse.

These efforts are expected to result in a return on investment, as the analysis allows both divisions the opportunity to target their limited resources in ways most impactful to their participants. The divisions will also be able to review the efficiency and impact of prior interventions that were created in response to previous NCI-AD findings.

Deploy Modifications Initiative for Aging in Place

The Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities recognizes the importance of aging in place, which means maintaining independence for as long as possible by staying in the individual's own home. To age in place, it is important to maintain safety and accessibility. Using $3,500,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funds, DSAAPD redesigned its modification program to best meet the needs of aging Delawareans and those with physical disabilities.

Between September 2024 and June 30, 2026, this initiative served low-income Delawareans statewide, both Medicaid and non-Medicaid, with functional accessibility or daily living needs, including older adults and individuals with disabilities. Through the program, participants received a professional accessibility needs assessment and up to $40,000 in modifications designed to meet their needs. The initiative was inclusive of both homeowners and renters, an uncommon, community-informed feature that expanded access beyond traditional home modification programs. The initiative was able to serve 133 participants across all 3 counties. Of these participants, 82 percent were aged 60 and older, 75 percent had three or more deficits in activities of daily living, and 20 percent were renters or lived with a caregiver or relative. DSAAPD invested $3.9 million in this program to assess 129 individuals for home and vehicle modifications, and assistive technology, with almost 500 referrals made in the first year of the program.

Results from participant surveys and testimonials indicate meaningful improvements in daily life, including greater independence, increased confidence in performing everyday activities, enhanced ability to remain safely at home, and reduced caregiver strain. These outcomes reinforce the role of home accessibility interventions as a critical component of community-based care. In pre- and post-modification surveys completed by 51 participants, 16 individuals reported needing full assistance with daily tasks before the modifications; after the modifications, none of the participants required full assistance. Common challenges included difficulty with bathing, toileting, mobility, and safely entering or exiting the home. The most frequently requested modifications were concentrated in high-risk, high-traffic areas affecting safety and independence, particularly bathrooms and home entryways. Bathroom modifications were the most requested service type with the assessment specialists identifying that 72 percent of participants needed grab bars, 68 percent needed a walk-in or roll-in shower, and 43 percent needed a comfort-height toilet.

As DSAAPD completes the initiative, its achievements have included the following from March 2024 to June 2026 including:

- Designing and delivering 100+ program tools and assets including policies, templates, tracking and reporting tools, job aids, communication, and training materials.
- Facilitating a statewide home modification advisory committee to guide program design, alignment, and continuous improvement across 10 meetings.
- Implementing the pilot home modifications initiative alongside DSAAPD, providing surge staffing, operational support, and advisory services to serve 133+ aging Delawareans and Delawareans with disabilities statewide.
- Strengthening cross-sector partnership through active collaboration with providers, state staff, and community partners.

Strengthening Sustainable Peer-Led Behavioral Health Supports in Long-Term Care

The expiration of the original DSAMH grant to pilot peer support in December 2025 created an immediate need for a sustainable operational model to maintain peer-informed behavioral health supports at Delaware Hospital for the Chronically Ill (DHCI, now known as the Eleanor Crain Center). The pilot Certified Peer Recovery Specialist position demonstrated strong resident engagement, but the program lacked a long-term staffing and service-delivery framework. Building on DHCI's solid base of behavioral health programming, the operationalization of recovery-oriented, peer-led, and whole-person wellness approaches has enhanced the program's alignment with national best practices and broadened its impact.

To ensure continuity and sustainability, DSAAPD developed a long-term operational structure for the Peer Services Liaison Program and initiated recruitment for permanent Certified Peer Recovery Specialist positions. As part of this strategy, DSAAPD launched a partnership with a statewide mental-health organization to replicate a community-based support group model that integrates mental and physical wellness. Working collaboratively with partners, the team co-created the *WElcome Circle*, a bi-weekly, one-hour, resident-driven support group emphasizing empowerment, mutual support, and practical skill-building. The group's name, with "WE" capitalized, reflects resident ownership and leadership. This model expands access to structured, non-pharmacological behavioral health resources at no cost to DHCI, strengthening long-term sustainability.

The *WElcome Circle* launched in May 2026 and has rapidly become a core component of DHCI's emotional-wellness programming. Participation increased from 9 residents at the inaugural session to 16 residents at the most recent session, representing a 78 percent increase in engagement within the first month. Sessions have included resident-facilitated discussions, peer-to-peer problem solving, and activities that support resilience, social connection, and adaptation to physical and emotional changes. Early qualitative outcomes include improved resident activation, reduced isolation, and increased peer leadership. The initiative demonstrates a clear shift from illness-focused programming toward a sustainable, recovery-oriented model that supports residents with mental-health needs as well as those experiencing grief, chronic illness, life transitions, or mood changes associated with aging. Based on early success, DSAAPD plans to revamp additional group offerings using this same peer-informed, evidence-aligned framework, further strengthening long-term sustainability and resident well-being.

Ensure Therapeutic Programming in Secure Dementia Care

At the Delaware Hospital for the Chronically Ill, now known as the Eleanor Crain Center, 71 percent of residents have some form of dementia, with 32 percent residing on the secure Lakeview unit. Recognizing the unique needs of individuals with advanced dementia, DHCI continues to focus on strengthening therapeutic programming, promoting person-centered care, and supporting a dementia-friendly environment.

In 2025, the original Quality Assurance Performance Improvement Process Improvement Project achieved its intended goals and is now in the process of being formally closed. The PIP provided valuable data and helped guide foundational improvements in staffing, training, therapeutic engagement, and environmental supports for residents living with dementia. As DHCI moves into the new year, the focus is shifting toward sustaining these improvements while further enhancing dementia-specific programming, meaningful engagement, and environmental design.

To support staff training and development, all staff are expected to engage meaningfully with residents as part of their daily routine, helping to build connection, trust, and a sense of safety. The CARES® Dementia Training Program was introduced in phases, beginning with staff assigned to the Lakeview unit as part of a planned rollout. The next phase will continue to expand dementia training to team members across departments, ensuring staff are better equipped to provide compassionate, person-centered dementia care regardless of their role or location.

Therapeutic programming enhancements to support the residents include spiritual support such as worship services, music engagement, pet visits, meditation and wellness programming, multisensory stimulation, and interactive technologies tailored to individual needs.

Looking ahead, DHCI will continue to focus on key enhancements that support a calm, engaging, and home-like environment for residents living with dementia. Priorities for the new year include:

- Developing and implementing a structured daily schedule to provide consistent, predictable routines tailored to individual needs.

- Adding soothing lighting, natural elements, and personalized spaces where residents can display cherished items that reflect their identity and life history.
- Expanding opportunities for socialization during meals and activities while continuing to honor and support each resident's unique preferences, routines, and comfort level.
- Reinforcing staff training with a stronger focus on recognizing and responding to individual emotional, cognitive, and behavioral needs.
- Continuing to build community partnerships and volunteer engagement to enhance the variety and consistency of programming.

With a strong foundation in place, DHCI remains committed to advancing best practices in dementia care. The continued goal is to support not only resident safety and supervision, but also meaningful connection, dignity, comfort, and quality of life for all residents living with dementia.

Expand the Connect Community at DHCI

The serious adverse effects of loneliness on physical health are well documented, particularly among older adults residing in long-term care facilities. Research has linked chronic loneliness and social isolation to increased risks of cardiovascular disease, cognitive decline, depression, weakened immune function, and premature mortality. As a long-term care facility committed to maximizing quality of life for every resident, DHCI recognizes that psychosocial well-being is as important as physical health.

To address this challenge, DHCI established the Connect Community, a structured volunteer engagement program that intentionally fosters meaningful relationships between residents and staff. Through the creative use of existing resources, the program invites employees from non-clinical departments, including housekeeping, environmental services, administration, quality assurance, and other support areas, to spend dedicated time with residents during their regular work hours. Volunteers may be paired with individual residents for ongoing relationship-building or participate in group activities and resident engagement opportunities throughout the facility.

To support participants who may have limited experience in a long-term care environment, DHCI developed the Connect Community Ambassador Program. Ambassadors are experienced team members who work directly with residents and provide guidance, mentorship, and support to Connect Community participants. This structure helps volunteers build meaningful relationships while ensuring resident needs, preferences, and care considerations are respected.

Since its inception, the Connect Community has grown into a sustainable and impactful initiative. The program currently maintains a network of more than 100 active volunteers. Although membership declined by approximately 20 percent due to staff turnover, ongoing recruitment efforts have successfully attracted new participants and helped stabilize volunteer capacity. The program continues to demonstrate resilience and adaptability while maintaining strong levels of resident engagement.

Program utilization remains robust. During the current quarter, volunteers have documented more than 242 resident visits. Based on current utilization rates, the program is projected to achieve more than 800 visits annually and may exceed this benchmark if current participation trends continue. These interactions provide residents with companionship, emotional support, recreational engagement, and opportunities to form meaningful social connections that enhance overall quality of life.

DHCI continues to collect and analyze program data through volunteer story sheets and visit documentation. While reporting delays occasionally occur, with some volunteers submitting records several weeks after visits take place, the available data likely understates actual program activity. Efforts to improve reporting compliance and timeliness are underway to strengthen program evaluation and support continuous quality improvement.

Partner with Vendor to Develop a New Learning Management System

The Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities uses a centralized case management system for its community programs. Previously, all new DSAAPD community staff members were trained by a single DSAAPD trainer on the use of this complex system. Follow-up training was completed by coworkers when needed. This resulted in

inconsistencies in training and limits retraining opportunities. Outside service providers were also trained by a single member of DSAAPD's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) unit. DSAAPD's CQI team partnered with the vendor to overhaul this training process.

In early 2026, the new Learning Management System (LMS) went live. It includes interactive video lessons with quizzes to ensure retention of information. Any module can be repeated as needed. The LMS has significantly reduced the workload burden on both the Training and CQI teams and standardized the training of all new hires and service providers.

DSAAPD's Community Services team completed a pre-survey prior to go-live, and a post-survey will be completed in early fall 2026 so that the impact of the LMS can be quantified. As work processes evolve, the modules will be updated annually and remain current.

Department of Agriculture (DDA)

Department-Wide Strategic Planning

The Delaware Department of Agriculture is working to lay the foundation for a department-wide strategic planning process. The initial step is to engage with individual managers to review current performance measures and brainstorm how they can be updated to reflect the goals of the programs, and Department overall, over the next few years. The individual managers, with support from CIP graduates within the Department, will outline goals and objectives for the next 3-5 years while gathering experience in the planning process.

The initial work will layout the goals of each manager and program and ensure they align with Department objectives. There is varied experience among the management team in the Department, from new managers and others that have not done strategic planning previously, to CIP graduates and others with experience in the processes that will be employed for department wide evaluation and planning. Those with more experience, particularly CIP graduates, will be leveraged to assist programs and managers who are new to the process. The collaboration between managers, along with guidance from Department leadership, will help ensure a cohesive process that allows seamless integration as program goals are identified.

As programs develop their goals, and the managers gain more experience and confidence in the strategic planning process, the goals will be incorporated into the Department's Plan. The development of the goals independently will allow each program to focus on their specific needs, while using a consistent format and process will allow for cleaner integration. The integration of the individual goals into the overall plan will provide opportunity for collaboration on common objectives while producing a coherent plan for the Department as a whole.

Engaging with Farm Stands and Increasing Project Visibility

The Delaware Department of Agriculture, Food Products Inspection (FPI) Section is embarking on an initiative to better engage with farm stands and other small retailers of agricultural products in Delaware. The aim is to ensure consistent application of relevant regulations, compliance among the various retailers and to establish FPI as an informational resource within the agricultural community.

The initiative will begin with visits to retailers throughout the state in August 2026. The initial visit will determine if they sell any regulated products, ensure they are aware of requirements and provide an opportunity to ask questions and discuss their operation with FPI staff. The initial visit will not immediately result in compliance action, unless egregious violations that compromise health or safety are observed, but will begin a discussion and supportive process for the facility to be compliant. Follow-up communications and visits will help gauge progress towards compliance and provide further support to the retailers.

FPI is focused on customer service and will employ an educate before regulate approach when engaging with the retailers. This approach has proven effective in establishing connections that help prevent future non-compliance. Facilities will be encouraged to reach out, ask questions and interact with FPI staff to ensure they are taking the right steps to maintain, expand or update what they are selling and how they are managing food safety. The bonus, for both the facility and Department, will be a regularly updated website listing all the farm stands and retail options in Delaware.

Streamlining the Aglands Application Process

Historically, the Aglands Preservation Program required applications to be submitted on paper forms. This process reflected the needs of many landowners, who were more comfortable with traditional paper applications than online technologies. Over time, however, an increasing number of applicants began submitting scanned applications electronically, demonstrating a growing level of digital literacy. At the same time, staff identified opportunities to simplify the application by eliminating unnecessary questions and reducing administrative redundancies. In response, DDA launched an initiative in January 2024 to modernize the application process and improve operational efficiency.

Previously, separate application forms were required for Agricultural Land Preservation, Forestland Preservation, and contingent sale applications. Each form contained unique questions and requirements, resulting in multiple versions that were difficult for applicants to navigate and time-consuming for staff to process. The modernized application consolidates these forms into a single online application that dynamically adjusts questions based on the applicant's responses. This approach reduces confusion for applicants while ensuring only relevant information is collected.

The transition to the online application was completed in early 2026, and the application is now available through the Aglands Preservation Program website. Online submissions eliminate the need to manually digitize handwritten applications, reducing processing time and improving data accuracy. As part of this initiative, automated workflows generate notifications and populate application information for staff, further streamlining internal operations. Development is also underway on a staff-specific fillable application for processing paper-submitted applications. Unlike the public version, the staff application will provide greater control over automatically populated fields, enabling staff to efficiently process applications that continue to be received in paper format.

Modernization efforts have also extended beyond the application process. Updated public-facing and staff web applications were launched in late 2025, and work began in late 2026 to modernize the Aerial Imagery Inspections web application. These projects replace outdated and deprecated technology with modern, maintainable solutions that improve efficiency, enhance user experience, and support the long-term sustainability of the Aglands Preservation Program.

Create a Delaware Farm Lending Program

Farming is a vital activity in Delaware that supports food production and approximately $9 billion in economic activity. Yet agriculture is a challenging industry requiring expertise, equipment, access to land, cash flow due to crop cycle volatility, as well as risks including commodity prices, pests, and weather. The Department of Agriculture seeks to increase support for farming by creating an agricultural lending program. Lending programs tailored to the needs of agriculture have been used in other states to support farmers, especially new farmers, and to build markets for local agricultural products. Commercial loans are difficult to obtain for farmers with less experience and collateral, while state agricultural finance programs report low default rates on loans.

The Department of Agriculture worked with the Department of State, Division of Small Business to reauthorize an existing farm lending program, the Delaware Rural Irrigation Program (DRIP). DRIP provided partial loans to install irrigation systems using a dedicated revolving fund but had not funded new loans recently. The new program expands this to include equipment loans for any agricultural purpose, including aquaculture. The aquaculture industry has had trouble getting past the initial stages of the overall program’s development and equipment loans were listed as a barrier given that existing banks often have trouble underwriting specialty equipment. All program loans will be at a fixed rate of 4.25 percent, which is lower than prevailing rates through traditional commercial and farm lenders. In addition, loans for beginning farmers and the aquaculture industry will be at 3.25 percent, recognizing the department’s interest in supporting those constituents. Loans are provided for up to 50 percent of equipment costs.

Expanding this existing program to include more farming activities will support agriculture without creating a new finance authority, while also leveraging existing resources for loan administration at the Division of Small Business. The existing revolving loan fund was reauthorized by the Council on Development Finance to provide funds to launch this program.

Department of Agriculture and Division of Small Business have drafted program guidelines, finalized the loan review process and began accepting loan applications for the program on September 3, 2024.

Modernize Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program with Digital Payments

Delaware distributes $45,000 each year in Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program benefits for low-income seniors in Delaware. Each senior receives $50 to purchase fresh local fruits, vegetables, and honey directly from farmers at farmers markets and farm stands. As previously reported in 2024, DDA initially issued $10 paper vouchers (five per senior), but tracking paper vouchers was complicated and slow. This led to delays in reimbursing farmers, theft and loss were possible, and DDA had limited insight into usage. American Rescue Plan Act funding allowed DDA and the Department of Health and Social Services – Women, Infants and Children's (WIC) program, which operates a parallel program for its recipients, to transition to an electronic payment system. The program was implemented in June 2023.

First year response was very positive. In 2022, seniors spent $33,270 of the $45,000 distributed. Reimbursements improved 10% to $36,496 in 2023 with the electronic payment system. In 2024, usage of Federal funds increased again to $39,759. $7,500 in non-Federal funds was also provided to seniors bringing total 2024 program usage to $47,259. This benefited 1,400 seniors as well as 44 Delaware farmers enrolled as market vendors.

In 2025, DDA estimated the usage rate based on previous years' experience and over-distributed funds to seniors. As a result, 1,300 participating seniors spent 100% of the $45,000 USDA grant and used $2,292 in state funds for a total of $47,292 paid out to 48 participating Delaware farmers through the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

Other improvements to the program with electronic payments include:

- Farmers are paid weekly, with no waiting period.
- DDA monitors reimbursements in real time.
- Sales can be in any amount.
- The ability to send email and text reminders to participants.
- Farmers are not required to handle large stacks of checks.
- Security features allow DDA to deactivate and replace lost or stolen cards.

A September 2026 USDA Management Review of this program included this praise. Three noteworthy initiatives were observed. Delaware SFMNP's adoption of the SoliSystems eSolution enables participants to access benefits via QR code or payments card and simplifies reimbursement for farmers through real-time transactions. Outreach via text is provided to participants to remind them to use their benefit and encourage them to visit a market, resulting in DDA's food grant utilization increasing from below 80 percent in FY 2022 to 100 percent in FY 2025. DE SFMNP is bridging community gaps by bringing local farmers and fresh produce directly to senior centers for easy access. This initiative boosts nutrition, supports local growers, and fosters community connections for older adults.

Rebooting Employee Recognition to Align with Agency Goals and Continuous Improvement

The Department of Agriculture had used a standard recognition program for decades, consisting of Employee of the Quarter and Employee of the Year awards. While these awards were capable of recognizing staff, they felt dated and nominations tended to be for one-time special acts rather than process improvement, customer service, collaboration, efficiency, or other work that makes a lasting impact. In contrast, DDA can find many examples of program improvement at DDA which were not nominated because that work was "part of their job." DDA also lacked consistent pathways for nominations to statewide awards. The criteria didn't match some statewide awards, and the annual timeline was poorly aligned to meet statewide recognition deadlines. Lastly, DDA wanted to recognize new staff that show high potential.

DDA completely rewrote its recognition program with the following goals:

- Recognizing activities that provide lasting improvements in DDA programs, increase efficiency, reduce costs, or improve the quality of DDA services.
- Recognizing employees who make a difference for DDA constituents.
- Celebrating collaboration between DDA and other organizations that improves government services.
- Aligning DDA recognition with statewide programs to provide a pathway for DDA employees to win statewide recognition.

- Encouraging continuous improvement and innovation in DDA programs.
- Recognizing new talent.

Through a series of internal meetings and with input from DDA managers and the Department of Human Resources, DDA's new recognition plan includes quarterly awards in 3 categories:

- Innovation and Collaboration – recognizing continuous improvement and efficiency, team collaboration, problem solving, or best practices.
- Service to Agriculture – dedication to constituents through customer service, transparency, or advocating for agriculture and DDA programs.
- Employee Excellence – dedication to State service and excellence.

An additional, non-competitive "Rising Star" award was created for staff who are new, or in a new role, that demonstrate potential for future growth and leadership.

DDA used change management principles to encourage managers and staff to embrace its new recognition plan and increase their nominations. DDA especially wants managers to see recognition as a normal part of compensating their staff and changing what they think is worthy of recognition. DDA also wants staff to see recognition as a way to celebrate their peers. DDA will measure success in the number of nominations received, awards, and nominations for statewide recognition. DDA also hopes to see improvements in turnover and satisfaction, though those may be more difficult to measure and determine causes.

Since introduction in 2025, DDA has received 34 nominations in all categories. Many nominations were for new staff, made by co-workers, or for teams. Previously, team nominations were extremely rare. DDA has increased the number of quarterly awards granted from 4 to 12 annually and provided increased recognition for "best of the best" awardees at its annual retreat. In addition, DDA met the timeline to submit a nomination for Excellence in Statewide Service. And for the first time, a DDA team was nominated for and won the Governor's Award for Team Excellence.

Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC)

Modernize Online Services

The DNREC Modernization of Online Services project has continued to expand, providing a single portal into DNREC services. Through 2023, permits and licenses previously added to the portal include water licensing, non-hazardous transporters, and open burn submissions. Recent additions include asbestos, gasoline tank truck air pollution, outdoor water tank paint removal, and watershed coastal construction permits. As new applications are brought online, business processes are reviewed and optimized to improve customer experience, reduce manual effort, increase data quality, and integrate with enterprise systems including DNREC's Enterprise Content Management solution, EQuIS, and the State's Open Data Portal.

As these processes are digitized, they're optimized for efficiency and integration with the department's enterprise content management solution. These changes allow the department to better track and archive records without additional manual steps. Further, modernizing applications like asbestos registrations supports mobile submissions and requires mandatory data fields, improving the accuracy of information. The antiquated asbestos application, created in 2017, is now being retired.

The project team also added business permits. These new profiles allow businesses operating in Delaware to have a single window into their permits and licenses, status, renewals, and compliance information.

Since Digital DNREC was first introduced, over one million online applications have been processed. The ability for customers to access a digital permit or license for storage on their phone or local reprinting has reduced calls for assistance by 75 percent. Further, DNREC's process review and optimization that precedes digitizing the functionality has reduced duplication of staff efforts by 60 percent, improving the overall efficiency and predictability of services.

The platform continues to expand with online services across multiple DNREC programs. Business enterprise accounts remain a key enhancement, providing organizations with a single location to manage permits, licenses, renewals, payments, and compliance information. Since the implementation of enterprise services, over 700 businesses have created their

accounts in Digital DNREC. An average of 5 new accounts are added per week. The following business permits are currently available:

Air Quality Programs:

- Air Quality Open Burning Approvals
- Asbestos, Notification of Demolition and/or Renovation
- Auto Body Source Category Permit
- Gasoline Tank Truck Air Pollution Control Operating Permit
- Removal of Exterior Coatings from Outdoor Water Tanks
- DAQ Natural Minor Permits

Water Programs:

- Non-Hazardous Liquid Waste transporter permits
- Water Contractor licenses
- Water Permits for Wells/Allocations
- Water Sanitary Sewer Overflow Reporting

Watershed Stewardship Programs:

- Watershed Coastal Construction Permits

Further, over the past year the Digital DNREC project team has worked closely with the Digital Government *Go DE* team. This initiative moves the dashboard payment engine from Velocity Payments to Fiserv in alignment with the Office of the State Treasurer contract for merchant processing. In addition to updating application code, much effort has been required to change DNREC's use of merchant IDs (MIDs). Moving from over 60 MIDs to roughly 20 will allow a more efficient market-basket approach so customers can pay for multiple DNREC services with a single payment authorization. This significant groundwork will improve customer experience and simplify payment validation both within DNREC and with First State Financials.

Within the Division of Water, significant progress has been made toward expanding ePermitting services. The division is on schedule to launch the Wells ePermitting Portal by the end of Calendar Year 2026. To support successful deployment, licensed well contractors and consultants have participated in user acceptance testing, and the division will conduct statewide outreach and training to ensure effective change management and adoption.

The division is also completing internal testing of the Water Allocation ePermitting application, which will further modernize permit processing and improve service delivery for water allocation customers.

In addition, the division is partnering with its software vendor to develop a Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) Reporting Portal. This new application will replace the current manual reporting process by enabling electronic submission, tracking, and management of wastewater overflow notifications. The portal supports the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's eRule reporting requirements while improving data quality, reducing duplicate data entry, strengthening regulatory compliance, and significantly reducing staff processing time.

The Division of Water also successfully launched an online licensing examination platform that modernizes professional certification testing through secure digital exams, streamlined administration, improved accessibility, and enhanced reporting capabilities.

Advance Ready in 6 (Ri6) DNREC Subaqueous Permitting Improvement Prototype

The DNREC Division of Water successfully completed a pilot initiative to improve the permitting processes associated with boat docking facilities on both private and public subaqueous lands. The division is responsible for issuing roughly 600 subaqueous permits and leases annually for various projects, with approximately 300 permits/leases dedicated to boat docking facilities. This permitting process is crucial for managing Delaware's water resources and ensuring compliance

with environmental regulations. However, the division faces significant challenges in efficiently processing these applications, resulting in delays and unpredictability in permit issuance.

The concept for this project is informed by the Ready in Six (Ri6) initiative, which included a consulting report sponsored by the Delaware Business Roundtable that evaluated the time taken to issue business permits across Delaware's government agencies. The report recommended a reduction in total permit processing time to 6 months, compared to the estimated baseline of 24 months. Following this, GEAR conducted a survey within the business community to identify specific processes affecting permitting delays. This survey highlighted numerous inefficiencies in government processes, including those within DNREC's subaqueous permitting processes, leading DNREC to target this area as a scalable prototype for future process improvements.

The process for issuing certain wetlands and subaqueous permits is often lengthy and unpredictable, due to a combination of procedural complexity, a recent backlog of applications, and multiple required steps—including pre-application requirements, administrative intake, scientific review, and public notice periods. For lease applications, the process also includes a final review and approval by the DNREC secretary, adding an additional layer to an already intricate system. Acknowledging the potential for improvement, the division and department are dedicated to streamlining the process to enhance efficiency, transparency, and predictability.

The project utilized a three-phased approach to analyze existing processes, define future-state workflows, and implement solutions to improve efficiency, consistency, transparency, and stakeholder engagement. Over the course of the project, the team completed current-state mapping, implemented standardized work templates, performed data cleanup, and developed digital tools to support improved permitting outcomes.

A key outcome of the pilot was the implementation of a new General Permit, expansion of the Statewide Activity Authorization, and development of a permitting wizard to assist applicants in determining the appropriate permitting pathway for their projects. These tools provide clearer guidance to the wetlands contractor and consultant community, reduce incomplete applications, and support expedited permit reviews.

The program has continued to support successful implementation through stakeholder outreach, education, and change management efforts to ensure the regulated community is prepared to utilize the new processes and tools. Building on the success of this pilot, the division is leveraging the methodologies and digital tools developed through the project to support additional General Permits and future permitting modernization efforts across the Division of Water.

Improve Chemical Inventory Reporting in Emergency Planning and the Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA)

The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control Division of Waste and Hazardous Substances Emergency Response and Strategic Services Section EPCRA Program is carrying out strategic initiatives to improve the timely submission of accurate chemical inventory reports by facilities and enhance community outreach through the development of an online public information portal and participation in community events. In 2025 and 2026, the program received approximately 98 percent of EPCRA reports by the due date of March 1 compared to approximately 95 percent in 2023 and approximately 90 percent in past years. Ongoing follow-up with delinquent facilities further increased submissions to nearly 99 percent by May 2026. The number of facilities has increased from approximately 2,700 in 2025 to approximately 2,900 currently, representing an overall increase of over 7 percent. Reporting may also be impacted by factors such as facility staff turnover rate, internal training programs, and LEPC interaction with such facilities.

The EPCRA Program implemented several strategic initiatives such as modified training workshops, feedback surveys, a concurrent report review process, and the launch of an online public portal to improve the timely submission of chemical inventory reports by facilities and to enhance the community outreach efforts. Training workshops were split into four shorter but focused sessions for improved engagement. In December 2025, the EPCRA team conducted the first workshop focusing on a regulatory overview of the program to educate facilities on reporting requirements. In January and February 2026, the team provided two training workshops to facility personnel on reporting procedures. The fourth workshop was dedicated to a live question and answer session with a demonstration of the reporting process. Workshop surveys were conducted to gain insight into Tier II reporting, which is required by organizations that store hazardous chemicals or substances over a certain threshold, from users throughout the state, and to improve the workshop in the future. Participant attendance increased, with approximately 230 attendees participating in the workshops. Notably, over two-thirds of participants reported feeling better prepared for EPCRA reporting after attending the workshops.

The program also worked closely with the Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) to review the status of unreported facilities, which led to the resolution of approximately 20 percent of the 19 delinquent fee-paying facilities. In addition, the program has resolved approximately 85 percent of 13 fee-exempt facilities. The program initiated a simultaneous report review process to identify any errors in submitted reports and correct them in a timely manner. This approach reduced reporting errors and enhanced the credibility of program administration. Additionally, the program works closely with the provider of the Tier II database to improve features in the database to manage the chemical data efficiently.

The objective of the Community Right-to-Know provisions of the Act is to increase the public's knowledge and access to information on chemicals at individual facilities, their uses, and releases into the environment. This information enables local governments, emergency responders, and community members to better understand the presence of hazardous substances and prepare for potential risks.

To strengthen these provisions, the program conceptualized and developed the EPCRA Public Portal, with the approval from the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC). This online portal was designed in 2024 to provide the public with convenient access to relevant EPCRA information, including facility name and location, chemical name, and physical and health hazards. Sensitive information is not available through the public portal and must still be requested via the FOIA process. The new online portal complements the FOIA process by making key information readily available to the public in real time.

Several efforts were undertaken to promote awareness about the portal and to encourage public engagement with the information it provides. EPCRA flyers were developed in multiple languages (English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole) and distributed at public events throughout the year. Approximately 3,000 flyers were provided to all 33 state libraries for their public display. Additional promotional materials such as EPCRA posters, tabletop displays, and giveaways were also prepared to support outreach activities.

The program actively participated in the Delaware State Fair, and numerous community events across the state, including University of Delaware Ag Day, Family Emergency Preparedness Day, the Hispanic Heritage Community Health Fair, the Community Preparedness and Resiliency Event, and many others. These outreach efforts fostered direct community engagement and heightened public awareness of the information available through the portal. These events also offered valuable opportunities to connect with the public and raise awareness about resources for learning about chemicals present in their neighborhoods.

A newsletter article titled “Meet Your Chemical Neighbors: DNREC’s New Portal Reveals Local Chemical Hazards” was published in the February 2025 issue of Outdoor Delaware and received about 1,400 pageviews to date. The program also utilized social media in 2025 and 2026 to expand public access to the portal, with social media efforts generating the most engagement and resulting in more than 100 public users registering on the portal.

Presentations were delivered at the EPA Region 3 and State Directors’ Caucus and various community meetings, including the Croda Community Advisory Council (CAC), the Route 9 Monitoring Committee, and the Neighborhood Planning Councils in Wilmington. These presentations were led by interactive sessions, encouraging participants to ask questions and engage in discussions about chemical information and the resources available through the EPCRA Public Portal. Through these presentations, the program was able to share valuable information, gather community feedback, and build stronger connections with local stakeholders. The program plans to continue similar outreach efforts.

Since its launch in June 2024, approximately 300 users have registered for and accessed the portal, demonstrating growing public engagement and enhanced transparency. Community events offered opportunities to interact directly with the public and raise awareness, while social media efforts effectively encouraged users to register and explore the chemical information available on the portal. Moving forward, the program will continue expanding outreach efforts, further enhance the portal’s features, and incorporate user feedback to improve usability and accessibility. These ongoing efforts will help ensure that communities remain informed with the information about chemicals present in their neighborhoods, supporting public safety and environmental protection.

Streamline the Clean Vehicle Rebate Program through Third-Party Administration

The Division of Climate, Coastal and Energy (CCE) Climate and Sustainability Section manages the Clean Vehicle Rebate Program, which provides incentives for Delaware residents and businesses to purchase or lease new battery electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles. CCE continues to partner with a third-party administrator to support program implementation, allowing staff to focus on other clean transportation initiatives while efficiently processing a growing volume of rebate

applications. The program includes rebates for eligible used electric vehicles and enhanced incentive amounts for lower-priced vehicles to improve affordability, expand access, and ensure program funds are distributed more equitably.

The Delaware Clean Vehicle Rebate Program continues to demonstrate strong performance under the administration of a third-party administrator. Over the past year, more than 1,500 rebates have been issued and, notably, EVs now account for approximately 30 percent of all rebates issued, up from 20 percent the previous year, indicating that recent program updates aimed at improving equity and expanding access are having a measurable impact.

Improve Stakeholder Communication in Remediation

The Remediation Section's process improvement project was designed to improve the consistency and efficiency of responses to external stakeholder inquiries by providing staff with standardized tools and guidance. Project deliverables included the implementation of an internal Microsoft SharePoint knowledge repository containing pre-approved responses to frequently asked questions and the development of a standardized inquiry response flowchart to promote consistent handling of stakeholder inquiries.

The project was completed in 4 phases: Needs Assessment, Draft Implementation Plan, Implementation Pilot, and Implementation and Maintenance. During the initial phase, a staff survey identified opportunities to improve communication consistency, documentation, and access to standardized information. These findings guided the development of the SharePoint repository and response flowchart, which have since been deployed for section use.

The project is now beginning its final maintenance/evaluation phase. A follow-up staff survey will be conducted to measure results against the project's original objectives, including establishing a consistent turnaround time for external stakeholder inquiries of within 24 hours, when feasible, and no longer than 7 days, eliminating duplicative work, reducing response times and staff effort by 50 percent, and achieving an estimated annual cost savings of $250,000. Survey results will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented improvements and support project closeout.

Tracking Online Permitting through an External Dashboard

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, through its Division of Water, continues to enhance transparency, efficiency, and public access to environmental permitting information through its online permit tracking dashboard and centralized digital resources webpage. Launched in 2025, these resources support DNREC’s broader modernization strategy by providing customers with convenient, self-service access to permitting information and digital tools.

Developed using Microsoft Power BI, the dashboard integrates directly with the Division Environmental Navigator (DEN) database and provides users with daily updates on permit status, review queue position, and related documents. Complex relational data structures were simplified into user-friendly formats, allowing customers to easily navigate and understand permitting information without needing to contact staff directly. The dashboard currently provides tracking for Class H wastewater and disposal system inspections, septic system site evaluations, septic permits, well permits, and wetlands and waterways permits, with future expansion planned for additional permit types.

The division’s digital resources webpage continues to serve as a centralized hub for publicly available digital tools, permitting systems, and data resources. Since implementation, the webpage and dashboard have received more than 22,000 website visits, demonstrating continued public engagement and adoption of these online services. By providing 24/7 access to permit information and available records, these resources improve customer service, increase transparency, and have the potential to reduce routine status inquiries and Freedom of Information Act requests by allowing customers to independently access information when needed.

The division will continue to expand dashboard capabilities and enhance the digital resources webpage as additional online permitting services and tools become available, further supporting efficient, transparent, and customer-focused service delivery.

Provide a Constituent Concerns Tracker

The DNREC Division of Water is launching a Constituent Concerns Tracker initiative to improve responsiveness, transparency, and engagement with residents, communities, and stakeholders across Delaware. The division receives a significant volume of public inquiries each year while also managing approximately 12,000 permits and regulatory

responsibilities. Currently, technical staff responsible for permitting and compliance activities also manage constituent concerns, creating challenges in providing timely responses and proactive community engagement.

The Constituent Concerns Tracker will establish a centralized, standardized process for receiving, tracking, and responding to public concerns. The system will include an online intake form integrated into the Division of Water website, automated notifications to appropriate staff, and an Experience Builder dashboard to support Geographic Information System-based tracking, status management, and reporting. This structured approach will improve visibility into constituent concerns, support more effective resource allocation, and enable staff to identify trends and opportunities for proactive outreach.

Successful implementation will include staff training, standard operating procedures, and change management strategies to ensure consistent adoption across the division. The project will also include a public outreach plan to increase awareness and encourage community participation.

By creating a unified framework for managing constituent concerns, the division will improve response times, enhance internal coordination, strengthen stakeholder trust, and establish a scalable model that can support future process improvements across DNREC.

Launch the Hub for Applications, Reimbursements, Billing, Oversight & Reporting (HARBOR-DE)

The DNREC Division of Waste and Hazardous Substances developed HARBOR-DE to modernize the administration of the Delaware Brownfields Grant Program and improve customer service to external stakeholders. HARBOR-DE is a secure, invitation-only web-based platform that brings key program functions into one streamlined, user-friendly environment by centralizing grant management, reimbursement processing, site reporting, and communication. Historically, reimbursement requests and supporting documentation were managed primarily through email, while reimbursement approvals required staff to verify legal agreements, technical reports, and other project requirements maintained across multiple program areas and databases. This fragmented process required significant manual coordination and often relied on outdated or potentially inconsistent information. HARBOR-DE consolidates these critical project requirements into a single platform, providing a comprehensive view of each site's lifecycle from brownfield designation and legal agreements through site investigations, report submissions, reimbursement processing, expense pre-approvals, and project closure. By integrating project documentation, workflow, and communication into one system, HARBOR-DE improves data accuracy, increases transparency, reduces administrative burden, accelerates reimbursement processing, and enables more efficient and consistent decision-making, resulting in improved administration of the Brownfields Development Program and more effective stewardship of taxpayer-funded resources.

The initial phase of HARBOR-DE replaces email-based reimbursement processing with standardized digital workflows that allow developers and environmental consultants to submit reimbursement requests, upload invoices and technical reports, track grant funding balances, and communicate directly with DNREC project staff through a centralized portal. Internally, the system provides staff with a single workspace to manage project information, coordinate approvals, monitor required documentation, and automate workflow tracking. These improvements reduce duplicative effort, improve accountability, and provide timely access to accurate project information, allowing staff to focus more time on program delivery and customer service.

HARBOR-DE was designed as a scalable enterprise platform that will expand beyond the Brownfields Development Program over the next two calendar years to support online program applications, cost recovery for Hazardous Substance Cleanup Act) sites, and federal grant management. By transforming manual, decentralized business processes into a modern digital platform, HARBOR-DE advances the State's goals of improving operational efficiency, strengthening transparency and accountability, enhancing customer service, and creating a sustainable foundation for future environmental program administration.

Department of State (DOS)

Delaware Communities of Excellence (DECOE) – Year 6

Governor Meyer declared a Literacy Emergency in Delaware as a top priority for his administration. Delaware is almost last in the nation for reading scores. Forty-two percent of Delaware students were proficient in English Language Arts in

the 2024-2025 school year, and 20 percent of Delaware adults read below a third-grade reading level. Children with lower literacy skills struggle in school and to graduate. Adults with low literacy skills are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed, lack resources for housing, transportation, and other essentials, and disproportionately rely on social safety nets including government subsidies.

The rebranded national Communities of Resilience and Excellence employs a collective impact approach within the Baldrige Framework, because large-scale social change requires broad, cross-sector coordination. Delaware Communities of Excellence's goal is e*quity through literacy,* and the initiative established the Delaware Literacy Alliance, a collaborative of all State agencies and non-profit organizations that support literacy to produce a statewide literacy ecosystem across the lifespan. This ecosystem will coordinate literacy services that are easier to access, equitable, cost-effective, and create measurable, impactful results to improve literacy. The Delaware Literacy Alliance is committed to improving literacy levels for all through a 2-pronged approach:

1. Bringing literacy organizations together to collaboratively build systems and capacity.
2. Aligning, linking, and expanding programs and services to replicate successes in communities throughout the state.

The Delaware Literacy Alliance collaboratively builds systems and capacity by:

- Creating equitable literacy systems, replicating successful systems in other communities throughout the state.
- Identifying literacy services across geographic areas, as well as gaps and duplications.
- Aligning, integrating, and expanding these services into scalable systems.
- Creating a literacy dashboard of services across the lifespan of Delawareans among all partners and identifying appropriate performance measures and indicators.

The Delaware Literacy Alliance Advisory Council was formed in the spring of 2023, with the Delaware Division of Libraries/Delaware Libraries (DDL) as the backbone. Members include the Department of Education, other governmental units, higher education, and organizations from the literacy, early childhood, health care, housing, social services, and philanthropic funding sectors.

In Fiscal Year 2024 the Delaware Literacy Alliance released its report, *The State of Literacy in Delaware,* and associated strategic plan. Fiscal Year 2025 saw the launch of the Delaware Literacy Alliance's website Delawareliteracyalliance.org and other activities. The 2024 strategic plan was updated in Fiscal Year 2026. Examples of literacy solutions supported by Delaware Libraries with statewide impact include:

- For preschoolers birth to 5 years old:
    - Delaware Libraries provide free English language or bilingual books monthly to every Delaware child under 5 registered through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. Almost 36,000 children were enrolled in June 2026, and more than 29,000 have graduated since 2020 (more than 6,600 in Fiscal Year 2026).
- For kindergarten through grade 12:
    - Free year-round access to eBooks for children is available through Delaware Libraries' OverDrive and Delaware Department of Education Sora student mobile device app.
    - School libraries are joining the Delaware Library Catalog/Consortium with Division of Libraries' technology and infrastructure support to complete the "last mile" to ensure every child has access even if they are not taken to their public library.
- For adults:
    - The Northstar Digital Literacy online program provides free digital literacy training to all Delawareans.

The Delaware Literacy Alliance continues to grow in membership and impact with all participants recognizing that this is a multi-year effort to improve literacy and the lives of Delawareans.

Build Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Infrastructure in Delaware Libraries

Checking books in and out and performing inventories at Delaware's libraries are time- and resource-intensive activities. Starting in 2022 with public libraries, and continuing with school libraries, a library vendor placed radio frequency identification (RFID) tags in most public libraries and participating school libraries' collections and installed scanning and self-check-out equipment. The project's goal was to create a system where libraries' collection items are RFID-tagged, staff are trained to effectively use the scanning equipment, and self-checkout is available to the public and students. These efforts have reduced the time staff use to check items in, as well as for staff, the public, and students to check items out. Reducing the time required by these activities frees up library staff to work on other priorities, such as assisting the public and students with inquiries, instructing the public through programs and community outreach, and increasing overall productivity. It is important to emphasize, however, that self-checkout units do not replace the need for professionally trained school librarians as part of school instruction teams.

While public library staff have widely adopted the RFID scanning equipment in their daily workflows, public library patrons have been slower to utilize the self-checkout machines. Usage may improve when original 2022 models are replaced with a modular design which can be configured to meet space and service needs in Fiscal Year 2027. Patrons report being pleased with the increased speed of staff check-out service with the RFID scanning equipment. Students at school libraries that are members of the Delaware Library Consortium and Catalog use self-checkout units at a higher rate (more than 50 percent) compared to public library patrons (less than 20 percent). Self-checkout enables busy school librarians to focus on instructing students rather than handling materials and gives students a sense of empowerment.

Real-time inventory management has been an elusive goal of this project until this year. DDL searched the RFID industry landscape for a real-time, consortia setting-compatible RFID inventory solution for several years and finally found a model this year that can be transported and easily used statewide. Inventory is one of the most labor-intensive tasks within the library, yet one of the most crucial. To keep the collection accurate, it is necessary to reconcile physical items on the shelf with database records. Offering a real-time solution utilizing RFID will save hours of staff time and labor as the pilot project begins.

School Libraries Join the Delaware Library Catalog and Consortium

School-age children need access to an abundance of current books to support literacy and learning. School libraries struggle to keep their collections up to date and relevant. A successful pilot project started in 2016 between Colonial School District and the Delaware Division of Libraries to integrate the school libraries into the Delaware Library Catalog, to analyze their school libraries' collection and processes, as well as install new radio frequency identification and self-check technologies. As a result, the average publication year of books in Colonial School District's library collections has improved from 1994 to 2018, and the circulation of books by students has increased significantly. This project addresses one of the recommendations from the 2016 Delaware School Libraries Master Plan.

In Fiscal Years 2023-2025, school library funding was established for the Delaware Division of Libraries to enable school libraries to join the Delaware Library Catalog/Consortium with no upfront costs, along with significant support and training to adapt their processes. Participating schools as of September 2026 include all school libraries in 5 school districts (Capital, Colonial, NCC Vo Tech, PolyTech, and Seaford) as well as significant numbers of school libraries in other districts, charter, and private schools:

Cohort	Participating Schools
Pilot/Previously Enrolled	17 schools
Cohort 1 (9/2022-1/2023)	3 schools
Cohort 2 (2/2023-6/2023)	5 schools
Cohort 3 (6/2023-1/2024)	3 schools
Cohort 4 (2/2024-6/2024)	8 schools
Cohort 5 (8/2024-1/2025)	6 schools
Cohort 6 (5/2025-10/2025)	11 schools
Cohort 7 (11/2025-4/2026)	6 schools
Cohort 8 (5/2026-9/2026)	10 schools
Future Plans	Additional cohorts will be determined as discussions continue with interested schools and districts.

The Delaware Division of Libraries has focused on the following activities as part of this project: coordination with school administrators and librarians to understand their needs, planning the transition, analyzing and organizing the collection, assisting with weeding the collection, integrating the collection into the statewide catalog in a way that accommodates the school's individual policies in accordance with existing consortium policies, re-barcoding and RFID tagging all library materials, training staff on new circulation and cataloging systems, and providing ongoing support to school librarians.

After a 6-month settling-in period, school libraries may begin to circulate their materials and receive materials from other consortium libraries through the statewide library transit system if the school desires to participate. In Fiscal Year 2026, 11 schools engaged in open borrowing with the other libraries in the catalog/consortium. Together they lent 2,440 items to member libraries.

Sharing resources with other consortium libraries provides both students and staff with a much larger set of learning resources than any individual library can support. The Delaware Division of Libraries continues to collaborate with school librarians to help them maximize the opportunity in support of improved literacy and learning for students in the coming years.

Innovate Social Services in Delaware Libraries

The Delaware Division of Libraries and Delaware libraries have a long history of leveraging technology, partnerships, and innovative services to address workforce, health, legal, and social service needs across the state. Through the Social Innovation Team, trained specialists and community partners aid public libraries, demonstrating a responsive and progressive approach to community service. They help Delawareans access employment opportunities, benefits, housing and food resources, technology support, entrepreneurship assistance, and other critical services. Recognizing the barriers faced by Delawareans, especially in rural areas with limited broadband, libraries are critical access points for health consultations, employment help, and legal advice.

Workforce development and employment assistance are currently provided in public libraries throughout Delaware by trained specialists and partners on the Social Innovation Team. In Fiscal Year 2026, specialists provided 4,521 interactions on employment, social service, and workforce-related topics, a 23 percent increase over Fiscal Year 2025. Employment and Training was the most requested service category with 1,342 interactions, followed by Generic Assistance (559), Computer Assistance (483), Housing and Food Resources (319), and Employment/Income Support (286). Delaware Libraries also expanded digital workforce readiness efforts through AI education and Grow with Google programming, helping Delawareans build skills needed for today's workplace and economy.

The Social Innovation Team Teleservices project, launched in 2020, has grown into a statewide network of 15 private soundproof spaces located in public libraries. These spaces provide free, accessible, and trusted locations where Delawareans can attend confidential telehealth, legal, workforce, and other virtual appointments, particularly in communities where access to broadband, private space, or technology may be limited. Trained specialists assist patrons with technology and service navigation before, during, and after appointments. During Fiscal Year 2026, specialists assisted 2,493 unique patrons, demonstrating the growing demand for library-based access to essential services.

The Delaware Libraries Social Innovation Team approach not only addresses immediate employment, health, and legal needs but also strengthens community resilience by ensuring that Delawareans have access to trusted support, technology, and resources through their local libraries. The Social Innovation Team meets Delawareans in times of need and is well positioned to help bridge gaps in State-provided services as well as to recognize where systems may be broken.

Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families (DSCYF)

Progress with PCard Uniform Guidelines & Repayment

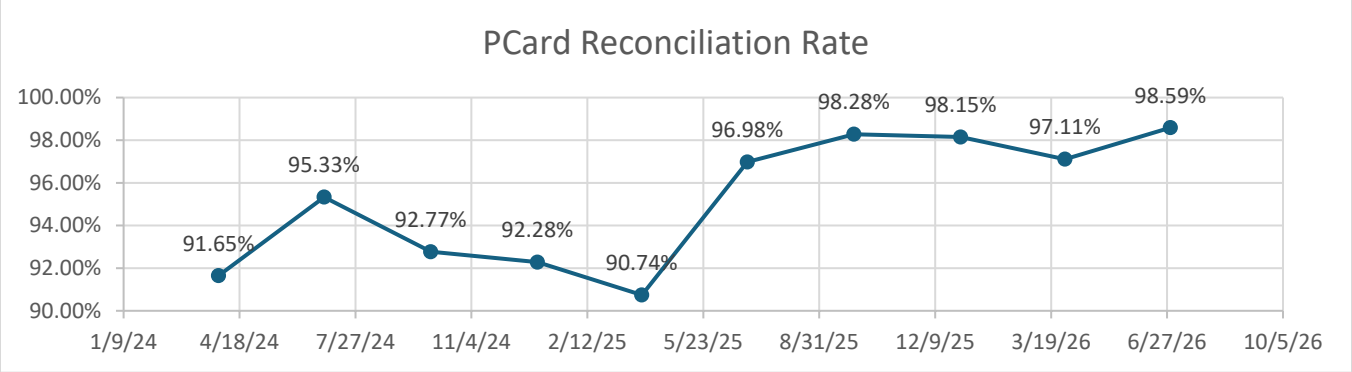
In Calendar Years 2023 through 2025, DSCYF processed more than 11,000 PCard transactions annually. Fiscal Accounting Services must reconcile each transaction within 30 days using an itemized receipt, an approved missing receipt affidavit, or repayment to the State. In 2023, DSCYF's quarterly reconciliation rate ranged from 90.05 percent to 98.63 percent,

averaging 94.81 percent and leaving nearly 600 transactions not timely reconciled. Performance remained low in 2024, with a first-quarter rate of 91.65 percent and an annual average of 93 percent.

The fiscal team determined that DSCYF needed standardized guidance and consistent enforcement across divisions, particularly regarding repayment of undocumented or unsubstantiated charges. What began as a brief set of instructions developed into comprehensive PCard guidelines, mandatory Delaware Learning Center training, and a required policy acknowledgement. Cardholders must complete these requirements to retain or obtain a PCard. The project also created a PCard Repayment Form, developed by the fiscal team, drafted by a DSCYF deputy attorney general, and approved by the Payroll Compliance Group. The form authorizes payroll deductions when other reconciliation options have been exhausted, supporting State and DSCYF requirements for repayment of unauthorized charges.

Following the official rollout in September 2024, DSCYF used the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) model to evaluate results and adjust internal processes. With the PDCA cycle in mind, DSCYF checked the reconciliation rate after first quarter 2025 and saw that it was still in decline and completed further evaluation. The fiscal team identified several specific internal process issues that were negatively affecting reconciliations and made quick corrections. In the 2025 GEAR Annual Report, DSCYF was pleased to report that the second quarter 2025 reconciliation rate was 96.98 percent. DSCYF pledged to continue to iterate through the PDCA cycle, concentrating on the Check and Act steps.

DSCYF has now completed an additional full year of tracking its PCard reconciliation rate. DSCYF is proud to see sustained improvements in its rate over the past year. When implementing both major change and continuous improvement using the ADKAR (Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement) and DMAIC (Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, Control) models, it is often the Reinforcement (R) and Control (C) phases that are the most difficult to cement and sustain. It is affirming to see its improvements have "stuck."



2026 Continuity of Operation Planning (COOP) Process Life Cycle

In 2017, Governor John Carney issued Executive Order 15, directing all executive departments and agencies to develop plans that ensure continuity of operations during emergencies and sustain essential government functions following natural, man-made, or technological disasters. A 2025 Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families return on investment (ROI) estimate, based on department salaries, identified savings of $998 for each minute of prevented productivity loss following an agency-wide emergency. Planning and restoration times matter not just in terms of lost productivity, but also to the children, families, and public that DSCYF serves.

In 2025, the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families, Division of Management Support Services (DMSS), launched a pilot to establish a long-term strategy for identifying essential functions across its operating units, equipping staff with the knowledge and tools necessary for effective emergency response, maintaining the DMSS Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) as a living document, and creating a process that could be applied across the department's remaining divisions. This included the development of communications, templates, resources, preparing and distributing Go-Bags including unit-specific resources, planning for quarterly audits, quarterly business case in the cloud updates, and an annual COOP drill. Aligning with the DSCYF Strategic Plan goals of improved divisional collaboration, enhanced data quality and collection, and continuous quality improvement, in 2026, this project expanded to the three DSCYF service divisions. To meet the operational needs of the Division of Family Services (DFS) and the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (DPBHS), the DMSS COOP Team relied on its experience and adapted training approaches. Ongoing leadership support strengthened staff engagement and ensured participation from personnel key to the divisions'

COOP development. To date, the workshops held with DFS and DMSS have enhanced staff understanding, supported completion of data-collection templates, and provided opportunities for collaboration among managers and supervisors.

DMSS, in October 2025, and DFS, in July 2026, conducted mock emergency drills to assess readiness, determine whether collected data would effectively support post-emergency operations, identify additional information needed for restoration efforts, validate the criticality of essential functions, and encourage staff to reflect on their ability to respond in an emergency. These exercises allowed the divisions and DMSS COOP Team to refine and streamline the program and identify opportunities to expand resources, training, and tools. Participants demonstrated strong collaboration and initiative and offered valuable feedback. Additionally, DMSS staff have demonstrated emergency readiness by bringing their Go-Bags to unannounced emergency drills held following the initial mock emergency drill. A workshop and drill are scheduled with the DPBHS for later this year, and scheduling for the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services is underway. After completing COOP drills with each division, the DMSS COOP Team hopes to work with all divisions to develop a comprehensive department-wide COOP plan and conduct a department-wide drill in 2027.

Timeliness of Provider Incident Reporting

In Fiscal Year 2023 the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services enhanced its tracking of provider timeliness, reviewing data on both a weekly and monthly basis. The Continuous Quality Improvement and Consultation Unit (CQICU) reported this information to division leadership, identifying any notable trends for specific providers or across the entire group. In response to any deficiency areas, the team developed measures to assist providers in meeting the division expectations, such as offering additional training on reportable events and incident reporting to the division's provider network in the division's quarterly provider forums, including reportable event training in provider onboarding, and requiring additional training when a specific provider was not meeting the timeliness standard or was not completing reports thoroughly and accurately. It was discovered that some provider agencies did not know if, over time, their reports were being submitted on time; thus, the CQICU and program administration teams began providing this feedback directly to providers during routine periodic check-in meetings and provider monitoring visits, in addition to ad-hoc calls if a problem was identified. This feedback loop was designed to assist providers in meeting the DSCYF reportable event policy and contract requirements as laid out in the DSCYF operating guidelines. When DPBHS started this quality improvement project, only 56 percent of all submitted reports met the 72-hour requirement. Monthly timeliness improved from 73.14 percent in July 2025 to 93.06 percent in May 2026. The continued distribution of monthly performance infographics also helped providers track their results and improve reporting practices.

DPBHS also refined its analysis of third-party reports to account for incidents that providers learned about after the event occurred. Of the 449 third-party events (26 percent of all reportable events) reported during the review period, 89 percent were reported within 72 hours of the provider's date of discovery. Third-party reporting also improved substantially in Fiscal Year 2026, with date-of-discovery-to-report timeliness reaching 96.23 percent in April and 95.92 percent in May.

DPBHS will continue using the performance improvement process to address providers falling below expectations, including timely outreach, training and process consultation, corrective action plans when improvement is not demonstrated, and potential referral pauses for continued noncompliance. The division will also continue recognizing consistently compliant providers, reviewing when providers report no events in a given month, and refining its measures for first-hand and third-party reports. These efforts are intended to move provider performance closer to full compliance while ensuring that timeliness measures accurately reflect circumstances within providers' control.

Creating a Landing Point for Youth

The Division of Family Services is committed to ensuring children in foster care have safe, appropriate placements that support stability and minimize further trauma. When no placement is immediately available, youth historically remain temporarily in DFS offices under the supervision of staff working voluntary overtime while an appropriate placement is sought. In Fiscal Year 2025, staff logged more than 2,020 overtime hours providing this supervision. To address this issue, DFS is repurposing an existing building on the DSCYF Administration campus into a new short-term shelter known as Landing Point. DFS launched a multidisciplinary workgroup in March 2026 with representatives from across the department who have experience in residential care. Over a multi-month implementation period, the group met biweekly to develop the policies, procedures, and staff training necessary to support shelter operations.

At the same time, DFS identified existing vacant positions that could be repurposed to permanently staff the shelter, eliminating the need for existing employees to work extensive overtime supervising youth. In partnership with the Center for Professional Development, a comprehensive training curriculum was developed to prepare new staff for their roles. A separate cross-functional team coordinated the facility's renovations and operational readiness, including technology upgrades, HVAC improvements, building enhancements, and office relocations to support shelter operations.

Landing Point will begin serving youth in January 2027. The shelter provides short-term, emergency care for children in DFS custody when no immediate placement is available, offering a safe and supportive environment until a longer-term placement can be secured. By filling this critical service gap, Landing Point is expected to improve outcomes for youth while reducing the operational strain associated with urgently locating temporary placements. It will also allow the Foster Care team to dedicate more consistent time to recruitment and retention strategies that increase the availability of foster parents, kinship caregivers, and other supports. Over time, an emergency placement option will also help reduce staff overtime and burnout, creating greater capacity for staff to focus on their primary responsibilities.

Contract Monitoring Continuous Improvement Group

In February 2024, DSCYF formed a 15-member, cross-divisional work group to strengthen contract monitoring. Since DSCYF engages a vast array of contractors in every division, the department must have robust and consistent contract monitoring in place to ensure the safety of children and families, the fidelity of programs and services, and the effective stewardship of State and federal funds. The group identified the need for consistent procedures and tools, clearer roles, stronger review of program and fiscal performance, improved coordination and training, closer adherence to Policy #105 (Bids and Contracts) timelines, and better tracking of Performance Improvement Plans and Corrective Action Plans. Using the blue-sky thinking methodology, members also envisioned a long-term centralized monitoring unit dedicated to program fidelity, contract deliverables, and fiscal accountability that may come to fruition in the future.

By early 2025, the work group identified several practical, potential improvements which are in varying stages of implementation.

- Under a “one provider, one DMSS Contract Administrator” model, all contracts and services associated with the same provider should be assigned to one administrator, creating a central point of coordination, improving cross-divisional information-sharing, and allowing multiple contracts to be monitored together when feasible.
- To eliminate inconsistent and negotiated roles, each monitoring review should use a completed RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed) chart along with a Work Breakdown Sheet to clarify roles and responsibilities.
- The standardized DMSS Contract Administrator role should include coordinating scheduling and logistics; engaging divisional subject matter experts; connecting cross-divisional program managers; selecting or developing monitoring tools; completing required human resources and criminal background reviews; compiling and uploading reports in the For Our Children’s Ultimate Success (FOCUS) case management system; coordinating provider follow-up meetings; and tracking Performance Improvement Plans and Corrective Action Plans.
- Recorded contract monitoring training should be made available through the Delaware Learning Center.
- The DMSS Contracts unit should report overdue monitoring to leadership, coordinate with subject matter experts to determine next steps when contract deficiencies are identified and centrally track corrective actions.
- A greater onus should be placed on providers to demonstrate compliance with their contractual obligations through required reports that document progress toward performance measures and outcomes. When appropriate, receipt of these reports should be confirmed before payment is released, such as requiring a year-end report before approving June invoices.

In 2026, DSCYF strengthened contract monitoring reports to leadership and provided more detail on barriers and actions taken to ensure compliance with required timelines. A newly created Internal Auditor III position, dedicated exclusively to

contract monitoring support, began in July 2026. The Internal Auditor establishes monitoring schedules in accordance with Policy #105 and helps implement more of the work group recommendations. DSCYF will use the Plan-Do-Check-Act model to evaluate and sustain these improvements.

Electronic Background Check Forms

The electronic background check forms project focused on modernizing the background check application submission process for those seeking employment with child-serving- entities. This process had been dependent on paper forms submitted via fax or email and manual review, which often resulted in the need to return incomplete or illegible forms to applicants. Upon acceptance of a completed form, the Criminal History Unit (CHU) staff then provided required IdentoGO Service Codes, No Charge Authorization Codes (if applicable), and instructions to schedule a fingerprinting appointment via email. This manual approach required significant staff time and often led to waiting times that affected both applicants and hiring entities. After the fingerprinting was completed, staff then had to manually enter each applicant's information into the FOCUS case management system before a background check determination could be entered, and a determination letter issued to the prospective employer.

The project streamlined, automated, and improved the applicant and staff experience. Key areas of focus include reducing reliance on paper submissions, minimizing manual data entry, strengthening the communication processes, and improving the accuracy and completeness of submitted information. By addressing these inefficiencies, the project reduced processing times by 5 to 8 minutes per background check, improved data quality, and allowed CHU staff to dedicate more time to analysis and decision-making- rather than administrative tasks. With an average of 8,000 background checks processed per year, this equals 40,000 minutes of productivity saved (more than 600 hours per year). Upon submission of an electronic background check form, applicants instantly receive the required codes and fingerprinting instructions. Additionally, required information flows directly into FOCUS, thereby eliminating the need to manually enter information to generate a determination letter. These efficiencies are expected to reduce the overall time applicants spend completing the process, allowing hiring entities to receive determinations and move qualified applicants through the hiring process more quickly.

Ultimately, the project builds upon the existing safeguards that support child safety by creating a more modern, reliable, and scalable background check process that better meets the needs of applicants, child-serving- entities, and the department. Through improved workflows and FOCUS system enhancements, the department will be better equipped to manage growing demand, process background checks efficiently, and support the workforce needs of child-serving entities.

Transforming Family Connections: Implementing the Ameelio Communication Platform Across Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services (DYRS) Residential Facilities

The Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services is implementing the Ameelio communication platform to modernize and expand family engagement across juvenile justice facilities. To ensure a successful and sustainable implementation, DYRS has adopted a phased approach to deploying the Ameelio Communication Platform across its residential facilities. The 5 phases are: (1) Contracting, (2) Orientation and Resource Assessment, (3) Infrastructure, System Customization, and Policy Development, (4) Staff Training and Communication, and (5) Implementation and Evaluation. Phase 1 concluded in March 2026 with a fully negotiated and executed contract with the vendor. Additionally, DYRS opted to roll this project out one facility at a time, beginning with a pilot at the Residential Cottages, which were intentionally selected for the pilot because their size, operational structure, and resident population provide an ideal environment to evaluate workflows, identify opportunities for improvement, and refine implementation processes before expanding the platform to larger and more complex DYRS facilities. Following completion of a 3-month pilot at the cottages, phases two through five will be repeated for each remaining DYRS facility, allowing the system to be tailored to each site's operational needs while maintaining consistency across the division. The pilot will evaluate both operational performance and outcomes for youth and families before expansion. Phase 4 is underway at the Residential Cottages, with staff training and communication in progress. The go-live occurred on July 29, 2026, commencing a three-month pilot.

The project requires a significant collaborative effort between multiple stakeholders, including DYRS leadership, facility operations staff, the contracted vendor, and the Division of Management Support Services' Information Technology (IT) team. Throughout the planning and implementation process, the project team worked closely with IT to establish the technical infrastructure necessary for secure deployment, including project approval through the Department of Technology

and Information, network configuration, identity and firewall security requirements, and facility roster automation. Additionally, this project included evaluation and streamlining of current operational workflows and procedures such as facility visitation and phone call procedures for youth, inventory and storage practices, behavior management practices, and a variety of other relevant procedures. The ability to schedule, manage, and collect data on in-person and video visits and calls for youth is not currently available and will greatly improve oversight, accountability, and operational efficiency.

Overall project success will be measured through several key performance indicators, including a 100 percent reduction in communication costs to families for calls facilitated through the Ameelio platform, increased utilization of video visitation, higher rates of family engagement, increased efficiency in scheduling in-person visits, reduced staff administrative time associated with coordinating visits, increased access to oversight tools for video visits and phone calls, and high levels of user satisfaction among staff and families. The project also seeks to strengthen protective factors associated with positive youth outcomes by increasing meaningful family connections during placement, supporting continuity of family relationships, enhancing reentry planning, and improving the overall quality and accessibility of communication services across Delaware's juvenile justice system.

Department of Correction (DOC)

Employee Well-Being, Recruitment, and Retention through DOCares

In 2025, Department of Correction leadership enhanced its recruitment efforts by implementing an initiative that allowed new hires to select their preferred work location based on operational needs and available vacancies. This employee-centered approach improved recruitment experience, increased candidate acceptance rates, and supported workforce stability across the department.

Following the 2025 initiative, the Department of Correction launched a third survey in April of 2026 that focused on DOC employee wellness. This survey was intended to assess employees' interest in the development of a peer-support program within the facilities. The survey consisted of 8 questions focused on employee wellness, mental health, and support services. Employees were asked to identify which wellness resources would be most beneficial, rate the potential value of a peer support program, and assess their overall well-being. The survey provided valuable insight into the needs and concerns of staff across the department. The responses help identify key areas where employees are seeking additional support, including stress management, mental health resources, work-life balance, and peer-to-peer engagement. The data collected will be used to guide the development of the peer support program and ensure the wellness initiatives are aligned with the needs of DOC employees.

In addition, the Employee Recognition Committee that was established in 2025 for Probation and Parole continues to remain active throughout the probation offices as the employees continue to identify cost-effective strategies to strengthen morale, promote teamwork, and enhance workplace culture. Initiatives have included staff appreciation events, food truck partnerships, and employee breakfasts.

These activities are funded through committee-led fundraising efforts, requiring no additional agency resources while fostering employee engagement and camaraderie. To improve transparency and strengthen communication across all levels of the organization, senior leadership conducted forums in each district office with management, officers, and support staff. These forums provide opportunities for employees to share feedback, discuss challenges, and contribute ideas for improvement. Based on the positive response and value of these discussions, leadership plans to continue these meetings as part of an ongoing commitment to employee engagement, accountability, and continuous improvement.

These efforts demonstrate the department's commitment to cultivating a high-functioning, adaptive, and people-centered organization by integrating Lean tools and change management practices into its workforce engagement strategy.

Performance Evaluation and Goal Setting

Evaluating the effectiveness of performance reviews means looking beyond whether reviews were completed on time. The goal of this project is to determine whether reviews improve employee performance, support development, and help support this department's desired outcomes. This project will take a multistep approach.

Phase 1

This phase includes standardizing evaluations with rubrics, gathering supervisor input before and after changes, and agreeing on what success looks like before measuring it.

- Use a continuous improvement process that includes refining rating scales, evaluation forms, training, goal-setting methods, and frequency of feedback.
- Create a rubric for the core tasks the employees perform. Each rubric will set clear expectations, standardize the evaluation of core tasks, and guide feedback.
- Survey supervisors to identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement within DOC's current evaluation system at the beginning of this process. Complete a post-implementation survey to understand if they felt they had sufficient training to support their ability to complete evidence-based evaluations, confidently provide feedback, and have meaningful discussions.
- Define what 'effective' evaluation means. For example, does it mean better employee performance, fairer and more consistent evaluations, improved engagement and retention, and better promotion decisions?

Phase 2

- Evaluate supervisor follow-through on completing development plans and conducting coaching sessions.
- Collect employee feedback to understand if conversations and feedback were useful, if the feedback was clear, if they understood the expectations, if they felt the process was fair, and if they left with concrete development plans.
- Measure the quality of evaluations. Determine whether supervisors are providing specific, evidence-based feedback; whether goals are clear and measurable; whether employees receive actionable development plans; and whether feedback is balanced and constructive, which could include auditing a sample of completed reviews.
- Monitor process metrics such as evaluation completion rates, on-time completion rates, average time spent completing evaluations, and percentage of employees receiving follow-up meetings.
- Analyze consistency and fairness to determine if ratings were under- or over-inflated, and whether similar performance receives similar ratings.

Phase 3

- Track business and people outcomes to understand how productivity and goal completion were impacted, and if there was an impact on employee engagement and retention, promotion, and internal mobility.
- Review whether employees are meeting the goals established during evaluations.

Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT)

Improve Land Use Permitting Processes through the Service Efficiency Blitz (SEB) Model

In alignment with Governor Meyer's Ready in Six initiative that supports the State's focus on accelerating affordable housing and economic development, DelDOT, in partnership with the GEAR Program Management Team, conducted two Service Efficiency Blitzes in 2025. These SEBs focused on improving the efficiency and predictability of the Traffic Impact Study (TIS)/Traffic Operational Analysis (TOA) and the Record and Entrance Plan processes—critical land use development review functions for the department.

The TIS SEB, held in September 2025, brought together DelDOT's TIS Section and GEAR team members to examine current workflows and identify rework, handoffs, and pain points in this section's processes. Immediate outcomes included the consolidation of two internal steps—traffic counts and preliminary TIS reporting—into one streamlined step, resulting in a potential 33 percent reduction in rework and an estimated annual savings of over $40,000. Additionally, TOA process

time is being reduced by 3 business days, and two standardized templates are being developed to improve stakeholder alignment and reduce inquiries from developers. These enhancements contribute to a more transparent and collaborative environment for both DelDOT staff and external applicants.

In October 2025, a subsequent SEB targeted the Record and Entrance Plan process. Led by DelDOT's Development Coordination, Traffic Signal and Lighting, and Central District Maintenance and Operations teams, the project developed a "recheck lane" process and peer review pathway for plans that meet minimum submission criteria. This approach is projected to save approximately 1,764 days—or 13,230 work hours—annually by reducing the average rework cycle from 26 to 17 days.

In 2026, DelDOT continued advancing improvements identified through the Traffic Impact Study (TIS) and Record/Entrance Plan Service Efficiency Blitzes. For TIS, the department completed key technology updates within the Planning and Development Coordination Application (PDCA) to support the combined traffic count and preliminary TIS submission workflow. Implementation of House Bill 450 also increased the TIS warrant threshold to 500 vehicles per peak hour, which is expected to reduce the number of development projects requiring a traditional TIS and affect the overall impact of the redesigned process. For Record and Entrance Plans, DelDOT made substantial progress documenting the new "recheck lane" process and is now developing the supporting technology and training staff, with an expanded pilot planned for fall 2026 and full implementation targeted for early 2027. DelDOT also consolidated development-related engineering reviews, approvals, permits, and field operations within its new Economic Development Coordination Division under a single Division Director, strengthening accountability and coordination. In parallel, DelDOT continues working with the Governor's Office to develop and integrate streamlined application forms with existing permitting systems.

Department of Safety and Homeland Security (DSHS)

Project 25 (P25) Interoperable Land Mobile Radio (LMR) Compliance

As a joint effort of the Association of Public Safety Communication Officials and the National Association of State Technology Directors, Project 25 is a longstanding partnership between the public safety communications community, standard development organizations, and industry manufacturers. Each group's goal is to satisfy the complex and evolving mission-critical communication needs of users for interoperable LMR equipment and systems. Following recent national emergencies, first responders have needed to respond to surrounding municipalities, counties, and states to assist. Historically, agencies responded with their own equipment, including LMR systems and quickly found that the systems were incompatible and could not be programmed. This became a communications and control issue, requiring self-dispatching, redeploying resources to the same area, and, in some cases, rescuing the rescuers.

This project was completed in early 2026. All police agencies, fire services, hospitals, Delaware Emergency Management Agency, Department of Health and Social Services, DelDOT, and the Delaware National Guard in all 3 counties have been moved to the P25 radio system. The Division of Communications has upgraded the system from its original contractual agreement to Time Division Multiple Access (TDMA). TDMA has nearly doubled its capacity in all 3 counties. (New Castle County from 14 to 24 talk paths, Kent from 10 to 20, and Sussex from 10 to 20). This was to accommodate the ever-growing need to add additional users with 18,000 end users currently on the 800 MHz radio system.

Law Enforcement Recruiting and Retention

The DSHS continues to assist the Delaware Association of Chiefs of Police (DACP) and multiple municipal agencies in the acquisition of a recruiting and retention platform and professional service for the hiring of law enforcement personnel. The recruitment numbers for future police candidates are declining to critical levels due to various social, political, and economic forces. This project between DSHS and DACP is ongoing to ensure Delaware can attract and retain law enforcement personnel in the future.

The Delaware Association of Chiefs of Police acquired professional services through two contracted service providers to address recruitment and retention of law enforcement personnel. The DSHS initially obtained funding of $1.2 million for the project. It was in operation in July 2024. Several marketing videos have been created that bring attention to the State, highlighting each county's attributes. The video also focuses on the positive impact of policing and the collaborative

relationships between law enforcement agencies. An app, unique to Delaware, was created for agencies to communicate with potential candidates interested in policing. Marketing campaigns have been designed to connect candidates to a statewide landing site where more videos and marketing tools are located. Each participating agency is identified on that site, and, with the click of a link, the candidate can get specific information about any department. The candidate can apply to as many agencies as they want. Once they apply, they receive an invitation to take a basic pre-screening questionnaire. Recruiters from the participating agencies can see the candidates who have passed the pre-screen and move them into the Guardian system for additional screening. Guardian Alliance Technologies also created an innovative platform for background investigations. Candidates are sent a link to Guardian where they are invited to complete a comprehensive Personal History Questionnaire (PHQ). A fully completed PHQ initiates the agency's vetting and hiring process. Candidates who have applied to multiple departments only need to complete the PHQ once. DSHS acquired another $1.2 million for year 2 to sustain the platform to recruit and retain future law enforcement personnel for the State of Delaware.

Permit to Purchase

In May 2024, Senate Substitute No. 1 for Senate Bill No. 2, as amended, was signed into law, requiring the Department of Safety and Homeland Security through the Delaware State Police (DSP) and the State Bureau of Identification (SBI), to develop and administer the Handgun Qualified Purchaser Permit (P2P) program. The legislation significantly expanded SBI's responsibilities by establishing a permit application process for the purchase of handguns in Delaware. Implementation required the development of application procedures, applicant fingerprinting, manual State and federal criminal history record checks, firearms training verification, permit issuance procedures, public-facing resources, internal policies and procedures, operational workflows, and supporting technology. The permit is valid for 2 years. Successful implementation required close coordination among the Delaware State Police, the State Bureau of Identification, the Delaware Criminal Justice Information System, the Department of Technology and Information, and the Department of Justice. At the time the legislation was enacted, the accompanying fiscal analysis projected a significant increase in SBI's workload and identified the need for additional civilian and sworn personnel to administer the program.

The Handgun Qualified Purchaser Permit program successfully processed its first permit application on October 28, 2025, demonstrating operational readiness, and was officially launched statewide on November 16, 2025. As of July 19, 2026, the State Bureau of Identification has processed 1,594 permit determinations, issuing 1,569 Handgun Qualified Purchaser Permits, denying 25 applications, and revoking 7 previously issued permits in accordance with Delaware law. The Delaware State Police successfully developed and implemented the application process, policies, procedures, forms, applicant resources, and training necessary to support the program. The Handgun Qualified Purchaser Permit program is fully operational and administered by the State Bureau of Identification.

Delaware Integrated Data System (DIDS)

The Delaware Integrated Data System (DIDS) platform will integrate data from multiple DSHS law enforcement sources and provide a complete, accurate, and up-to-date dataset for business intelligence and data analysis. In addition to strategic planning and tactical resource deployment, the data will be used for budget planning, identifying crime trends, proactive policing, supporting the violence reduction strategy, criminal analysis, and performance measurement.

The initial use case for the DSHS DIDS is budget planning and operations analytics. Detailed business requirements for the operational dashboard have been completed along with the identification of the initial data that will be pulled into the DIDS. The vendor will integrate only the data from the DSHS divisions in support of an operational dashboard. The data will be first loaded into a data lake where it will be prepped. The data will then be loaded into an analytical schema specific to the operational dashboard. Automated jobs will refresh the data in the DIDS based upon the production data availability (e.g., daily, quarterly, or annually).

The operational dashboard will be made available to approved DSHS users. All users will be able to view the entire dashboard. There is no requirement to secure portions of the dashboard to selected users. No personally identifiable information data is used for the dashboard. Funding and whether DTI or DSHS will lead the project remain unresolved issues. With recent Executive Branch and cabinet secretary changes, the project has reverted to a pending position. It will be revisited soon.

State Video and Building Access Control

The State has multiple departments and divisions occupying many locations and buildings. It also employs several different security systems with many different vendors. These security systems include both video surveillance and building access. The programming of these different systems is problematic with changing personnel and varying threat assessments.

Therefore, this has become a problem for DSHS. Most prominently, the Capitol Police Department (CPD) is affected because it is responsible for security for these departments and does not always have access to the buildings, offices, and/or video surveillance. This impedes rapid response and conducting investigations. However, CPD is not the only affected division. The Office of Management and Budget, Division of Facilities Management, Delaware State Police, Office of the State Fire Marshal, and other departments and divisions are required to respond to emergencies or complete investigations.

Access control programming (doors, credential holders, time zones, holiday schedules, databases/servers, and IT infrastructure) can be complicated and time-consuming using multiple systems, causing frustration and interruption of services, which is neither efficient nor effective. Given the limitations and lack of existing systems integration, DSHS is starting a project to improve on the present system in place. Funding continues to be an issue with this project. Along with recent Executive Branch and cabinet secretary changes, the project has reverted to a pending position and will be revisited in the future.

Department of Safety and Homeland Security Carry Concealed Deadly Weapons (CCDW) Licensing Reconstruction

The elimination of several steps in the CCDW process will increase customer satisfaction and reduce workload (time and money) for the State. Digitizing the process will increase efficiency and ensure uninterrupted operations in emergency situations such as a pandemic. In turn this will eliminate the number of required personnel and complaints from stakeholders and applicants. Expected benefits include quicker response times to applicants, reduced backlogs for the Department of Justice (DOJ) and DSHS, and process reduction or elimination for courts. The goal is to provide a thorough review of current CCDW licensing processes and identify the feasibility of creating a new workflow and digital system that will best serve the needs of DOJ, Delaware State Police, DSHS, and the citizens collectively served. In addition, this project seeks to resolve timeliness issues while utilizing existing software wherever possible.

This has been an ongoing joint initiative with the DOJ to improve the process. However, it has stalled numerous times due to the focus on Permit to Purchase legislation. Pending Supreme Court decisions regarding the legality of Delaware's gun laws could influence the path forward as well.

Firearm Transaction Approval Program (FTAP) / NICS Point of Contact (POC)

The FTAP system is being developed as a comprehensive firearm transaction platform capable of conducting State and federal firearm background checks, applying Delaware and federal statutory prohibitors, communicating with federally licensed firearms dealers, and integrating with numerous State and federal criminal justice information systems. In addition to supporting firearm transaction background checks, the system is being developed to perform the same background checks that are currently conducted manually by State Bureau of Identification personnel for Handgun Qualified Purchaser Permit (P2P) applications, creating a single, consistent background check process for both permit applications and firearm transactions.

Development of FTAP requires extensive collaboration among the Delaware State Police, DELJIS, the Department of Technology and Information, the Department of Justice, the FBI Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division, the FBI National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Section, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and Delaware federally licensed firearms dealers.

The Handgun Qualified Purchaser Permit program is fully operational; however, the required background checks for permit applications are currently conducted manually by State Bureau of Identification personnel. Development of FTAP remains ongoing to automate those background checks within the DELJIS system while also enabling Delaware to fulfill the operational responsibilities of the State's NICS Point of Contact for firearm transaction background checks. The Delaware State Police continue to work in partnership with DELJIS to complete the remaining programming, system integration, testing, and validation necessary to ensure the system accurately applies both Delaware and federal firearm prohibitors and satisfies FBI NICS operational requirements before statewide implementation. Upon completion, FTAP will provide a unified background check platform for firearm transactions and Handgun Qualified Purchaser Permit applications,

improving efficiency, consistency, and operational effectiveness while supporting Delaware's statutory responsibilities as a NICS Point of Contact state.

Delaware State Police Statewide Drone Responses

A Drone as a First Responder (DFR) program deploys automated or remotely piloted uncrewed aircraft from strategic docking stations directly to 911 incidents. Key components include rapid aerial deployment, real-time situational awareness, and reduced ground response times. Automated "drone-in-a-box" docking hives are secured on rooftops or structures to keep aircraft charged and ready 24/7. Linking directly with Computer-Aided Dispatch enables remote FAA-certified pilots to launch the nearest drone the moment an emergency call is logged. They arrive at incidents within minutes to relay video feeds, assess threats, and clear false alarms before ground units arrive. They identify armed suspects, hostile environments, or structural hazards prior to officer arrival. This enhances officer and public safety by bypassing ground traffic to verify incidents, allowing agencies to cancel unnecessary dispatches or reallocate units. On specialized missions the drone deploys thermal imaging for missing person searches, maps out disaster zones (wildfires, floods), and delivers emergency payloads like Automated External Defibrillators or Narcan.

Unmanned aircraft systems or “drones” have become a critical tool for providing real-time situational awareness in public safety operations. Additionally, drones can be utilized at crash scenes to gather needed data enabling roads and highways to be opened faster. Drones can also be employed at crime scenes to locate critical evidence.

The Delaware State Police has entered into a contract with a vendor to begin the process of implementing drone technology. This will not only benefit DSP but the entire statewide law enforcement community. This is expected to reduce aviation missions and costs, reduce in-person responses to calls for service, enhancing safety for the public and officers, reduce fuel costs and wear on divisional vehicles, decrease the closing of roadways and highways following motor vehicle crashes, and improve evidence detection.

Department of Justice (DOJ)

Advancing Transparent, Ethical, and Effective Government Through the Delaware DOJ Data-Driven Decisions Lab (D3L)

The Delaware Department of Justice historically relied on manually maintained spreadsheets, trackers, disconnected data systems, and labor-intensive review to answer operational, legislative, and public-information questions. Data definitions and reporting practices also varied across counties and systems, limiting statewide comparison, increasing the risk of inconsistent results, and making it difficult for policymakers and members of the public to obtain timely, understandable information. The proposed solution was to establish the Data-Driven Decisions Lab (D3L), a dedicated function responsible for standardizing justice data, building repeatable processes, developing public- and internal-facing dashboards, and expanding the department's capacity to use evidence in policy and operational decision-making.

The project directly supports the Governor’s Executive Order No. 3, which calls for State government to be ethical, transparent, and effective and directs agencies to be as transparent with policies, data, and information as the law allows. D3L puts that principle into practice by converting complex justice data into accessible public dashboards, creating more consistent reporting standards, documenting methodologies, and reducing reliance on one-time manual analyses that are difficult to reproduce or explain. The implementation was scaled to a smaller technical team than originally planned, requiring the Research, Planning and Special Projects Unit (RPSPU) to prioritize high-value projects while strategically combining grant-funded personnel, upgraded data infrastructure, and targeted technical support. By July 2026, 5 of 11 planned public dashboards were available through the DOJ's website, 2 internal dashboards were in use, and additional dashboards were completed or under development for victim services, the Fraud Division, and other operational areas. The D3L also expanded interagency reporting capacity, including the collection of asset-seizure information from 17 law enforcement agencies.

Measurable outcomes include reducing one major legislative request from an estimated four-week process to 5 business days, automating training-compliance monitoring for 571 employees, and replacing repeated manual compilation with reusable reporting and visualization tools. These improvements make government activity easier to examine, shorten response cycles, improve the consistency and reproducibility of reported information, and give decision-makers and the public clearer access to justice-system data within legal and confidentiality limits. Because the D3L's initial development

and staffing were supported entirely through grant funding, the RPSPU built this capacity without relying on State General Funds for the initial investment, while creating a scalable infrastructure that can continue to strengthen transparency, accountability, and operational value across multiple divisions and future reporting cycles.

Department of Labor (DOL)

Modernize Core Unemployment Insurance Processes

The Department of Labor's Division of Unemployment Insurance (UI) previously launched a business process mapping initiative to streamline the appeals process and other key functions, including Benefit Payment Control (BPC), while supporting development of a modernized electronic UI system. Initial current-state mapping of the appeals process estimated approximately 6 hours of work performed over 21 days across 26 process steps. Engaging UI staff throughout this effort provided greater visibility into existing operations, encouraged staff ownership of process improvements, and enabled a comprehensive review of policies, procedures, inputs, outputs, and workflow dependencies.

Building on this foundation, the division initiated an Application Case Management (AICM) discovery and scoping effort in 2025, conducting a comprehensive review of the BPC value stream, including case creation, investigations, fact-finding, determinations, fraud referrals, appeals, and case closure. This analysis documented system interactions, manual processes, operational bottlenecks, and opportunities for automation and standardized workflows, informing the design of an AICM solution capable of automated workflow routing, task and document management, configurable business rules, system integrations, dashboard reporting, and workload balancing. Although the initiative was temporarily paused after several months of business analysis, process mapping, and requirements gathering, it has since resumed, with the previously completed value stream mapping and business requirements documentation serving as foundational resources to accelerate implementation.

The division is currently working toward deployment of the AICM solution on November 15, 2026. Once implemented, AICM will enhance case management by streamlining workflows, improving workload distribution, increasing process visibility, reducing manual effort, and strengthening program integrity. Modernization of the UI system remains a long-term, enterprise-wide effort, and the division continues to build on prior investments in business process improvement to deliver more efficient, effective, and customer-focused services.

Division of Industrial Affairs Legacy Application Modernization Project

The Legacy Application Modernization Program (LAMP) is a strategic initiative led by the Division of Industrial Affairs (DIA) within the DOL. Its purpose is to modernize and unify DIA's fragmented, outdated, unsupported legacy applications—Office of Labor Law Enforcement Application (OLLEA) and Scheduling Case Management Accounting Reporting System (SCARS) by replacing them with a centralized, State-managed cloud solution that supports all six units within the division. The program addresses critical operational, technical, and compliance challenges identified in the DIA Modernization Request For Proposals.

The program supports:

- DIA's mission to enforce labor laws and protect Delaware workers
- DOL's LaborFirst Strategic Enterprise Modernization (SEM) initiative
- Statewide goals for interoperability, transparency, and digital transformation

The division concluded contract negotiations and onboarded the selected vendor in June, 2026. The project moved from kickoff and onboarding into structured discovery, governance, and technical planning. By late June, the program had established a working set of management artifacts including the project management plan, integrated schedule, risk-assumption-issue-dependency (RAID) log, decision log, monthly financial reporting, meeting minutes format, requirements management approach, and deliverable expectations. This created a stable operating model for ongoing reporting, issue escalation, and stakeholder review.

Discovery activities made the most visible progress across the six status reports. Current-state workshops were completed for the entire division. These sessions established the baseline understanding of existing processes, systems, handoffs, and

pain points. By late July, the program had shifted into future-state preparation. Additional stakeholder engagement was completed by the Change Management and Customer Experience teams, including interviews across all six business units. This positioned the team to move from discovery toward solution design and target operating model definition in August.

The next phase of work is centered on future-state workshops, continued technical planning, and stakeholder review of in-flight deliverables. The August workshop schedule provides a clear path into target-state process design for Wage and Hour, Workers' Compensation, Construction Enforcement, Fiscal, Safety & Health, and Integrations. At the same time, upcoming decision forums and deliverable reviews will be important to maintain schedule confidence and reduce uncertainty in the technical architecture.