



## 7. Modernize IT Infrastructure

*Description of issue and how recommending the agency's request furthers the agency's mandates:* Continuous system improvement is a key function of any IT department. Maintaining plans for upgrades and enhancements to the AZSOS IT infrastructure, application portfolio and system security is a priority.

AZSOS has a considerably large set of aged and non-sustainable applications built in-house. These applications range from elections-related applications like E-Qual to non-elections applications like Business Services system FACTS and the lobbyist application which is over 20 years old. In general, the office's IT infrastructure harkens from a time when it used paper records. Many components are at best, outdated and at worst, obsolete.

Dated IT systems have a wide range of impact on an agency's ability to effectively carry out its mission. Besides the immediate security threats that loom over inadequately equipped IT infrastructure, there's also the need to meet public sector expectations for focused IT strategies that take into account information flow, data storage and service delivery. Moreover, the modernization of technology in our world at large means a productive work environment for our employees goes hand in hand with updated systems that will allow them to adequately collaborate, share data, adapt to customer needs and integrate/implement new services.

The desire is to leverage a low-code, no-code platform to build sustainable applications in the cloud to minimize the technical debt and build on a modern technology stack. This platform also will enable the agency to have a quicker turnaround in updating multiple, smaller non-sustainable applications.

Additionally, AZSOS relies on many programs and applications created and maintained by internal developers. Staff turnover and retirements require dependence on certain, seasoned staff and individual contractors with very specific subject matter expertise to maintain IT systems. This is not a reliable staffing model that provides sustainability and continuity of operations for this important infrastructure.

AZSOS believes it is critical to add much needed IT staff and transition from outdated, internally developed and maintained applications to a low-code, no-code platform similar to those used by other agencies like that of the Arizona Corporation Commission, which was fully funded in FY2024.

AZSOS has requested funding for this purpose in its FY2024 and FY2025 budget submissions.

*Proposal:* Appropriate \$840,000 from the state general fund in FY2026 and three FTEs and \$690,000 and thereafter.

*Alternatives considered and reasons for rejection:* The only alternative is the status quo.

*Impact of not funding this fiscal year:* Failure to replace this outdated IT systems means they will get older, more likely to fail, more expensive to maintain, and significantly more expensive to replace.

*Statutory reference:* N/A

*Equipment to be purchased:* N/A

*Classification of new positions:* The request includes funding for three FTE positions to support the modernization of IT infrastructure. These positions will likely include roles such as:

- Principal IT Architect
- Sr. IT Engineer
- Sr. Systems Administrator

*Annualization:* \$690,000