

Agency Operations Plan 2015-17

Agency:

North Dakota Office of State Tax Commissioner

Line of Business: (optional)

Revenue Collection

Contact:

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Technology Strategy:

North Dakota state tax administration and revenue collection is supported through the use of technology, including our integrated tax system (Gentax), webfile applications, PCs, imaging and automated data capture hardware and software, and desktop productivity tools such as Word, Excel, Access, and PowerPoint.

The GenTax system is a client server application built on the Windows .net architecture. All tax department employees have access to the GenTax system via the desktop PC. The GenTax application and database servers are hosted and supported by Information Technology Department (ITD). This application is currently being upgraded to version 9, which will now run in a browser.

The department has an Information Technology section made up of 6 staff members. The department IT staff provides the following IT services to department staff:

- Support for daily operation of the GenTax system; monitoring GenTax scheduled jobs and resolution of problems as they arise.
- Support for over 200 desktop PCs and printers.
- Support for a variety of small Access databases used to track ad hoc issues throughout the department
- Support for development, testing and implementation of internet and intranet changes.
- Modifications for GenTax configuration and modules as well as requests for enhancements, maintenance and required legislative changes with assistance from the FAST Enterprises on-site support team.
- Support and development within Teleform, which is used for imaging and forms design.

The department contracts with Fast Enterprises for on-site support services for the Gentax integrated system. FAST on-site staff provides the following support services:

- Resolve defects in ND-specific configurations and modules (defects not covered by maintenance)
- Assist with system configuration changes to implement legislative mandates such as changes to rates, line items, and compliance issues.
- Enhance the utilization of GenTax by Tax Department staff by improving related business processes, identifying opportunities for additional efficiencies, and expanding the analysis of data.
- Assist with changes and development of new interfaces to other systems (e.g. online filing, imaging requests).
- Coordinate problem resolutions and upgrade requests with Fast Enterprises Solution Center.
- Coordinate best practice recommendations with other Fast Enterprise clients.
- Analyze and install service packs and enhancements.
- Fine tune performance issues.
- Maintain, analyze and review databases.
- Provide training for developers, operators and end users

Technology Infrastructure:

IT Asset Management Plan

Hardware:

Desktop PCs are replaced every four years and Laptop PCs are replaced every three years. See below for projected PC, laptop, monitor, printer, and scanner replacements scheduled for the 2015-17 biennium.

	Qty	Cost	Total
PCs	2	\$835	\$1,670
Laptops	28	\$1,523	\$42,664
Monitors	25	\$216	\$5,400
Printers	3	\$3,000	\$9,000
Scanner	1	\$16,000	\$16,000
Total			\$74,734

We signed a lease in June 2012 for a new, high volume printer which was delivered in July of 2012, and the term is for 4 years. This will be reviewed in July of 2016.

Laser printers – There are eight monochrome HP Laser printers (purchased in August 2009) and three color HP Laser printers (purchased in March 2011, January 2007, &

January 2005), all of which the actual replacement dates are based on their total usage.

Scanners – We have four high-volume production scanners and eight workgroup desktop scanners.

The workgroup desktop scanners were all replaced in the 2011-2013 biennium due to compatibility issues with Windows 7. We don't anticipate purchasing any of these scanners this biennium.

The high volume scanners, used for processing of tax returns, are scheduled to be replaced every six years. The need for these scanners is being evaluated yearly as e-file is continuing to reduce the volume of documents being scanned.

One high-volume production scanner is scheduled for replacement next biennium.

Software:

All COTS software, which includes GenTax, is covered by yearly maintenance contracts. These contracts are reviewed each year when the maintenance contract is due to verify the software is still being used and to review the value of the software maintenance contact.

All licenses for Microsoft Office are covered via the Microsoft Software Assurance plan. This provides upgrades and fixes to the entire Microsoft Office suite for all of our PCs.

Human Capital:

The Tax Department has six IT staff and one IT Manager. Of the six IT staff, there are three Data Processing Coordinators and three Programmer Analysts at various levels. Our main focus with the IT staff is retention so we are consistently looking for ways to improve their environment and making sure we are competitive with other employers. Retention of staff enables IT to provide a better consistent service to department staff and North Dakota taxpayers. We are looking to reclassify two of the positions due to increased demand for programmers.

Job descriptions and salaries are reviewed each year during Performance Evaluations. Training opportunities for professional advancement are continually monitored and made available whenever possible.

Planned Activities:

We are currently working on our Taxpayer Access Project (TAP) approved last biennium. Throughout the project, we have been ahead of schedule and under budget. TAP will also be utilized for business registration functions and account maintenance. Once implemented, taxpayers can be more self-serving and handle their business online without having to interact directly with department staff. Paper-based forms processes will be replaced with web-based requests, which will interact directly with our GenTax system. Taxpayers will gain the ability to register their business, apply for permits, change their name/address, view previously filed tax returns, along with other types of requests that normally require a letter or phone call. This will reduce the amount of paper we handle, as well as increase the accuracy and timing of the requests. The tools used to maintain TAP are the same as our GenTax application, which will allow state IT staff to maintain more of our applications. We are also looking at having a third party vendor integrate their payment processing solution directly with our TAP program.

Technologies being considered or investigated:

Certain technology changes are being researched in order to comply with IRS Publication 1075 – Tax Information Security Guidelines for Federal, State, and Local Agencies. The requirements are continually changing, so in order for us to continue to receive federal tax information (FTI) and maintain our relationship with the Internal Revenue Service, we must attempt to comply with all safeguard procedures listed in the publication and provided to us during our annual IRS Safeguard Review. This will require all users logging into the network using VPN to use state hardware. We also plan to require multi-factor authentication for all privileged users and those using VPN.

Investigating the replacement of our validation system used to process checks. This would likely be a large IT project as it impacts many different systems.

Investigating the redesign of our html based website to a content management site, e.g. Drupal.