

# DODD IT Staff Augmentation

How is this related to their overall IT strategy, and how can their methods be applied to other agencies?



Department of  
Developmental Disabilities

## Money on Our Minds

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# DODD IT Staff Augmentation

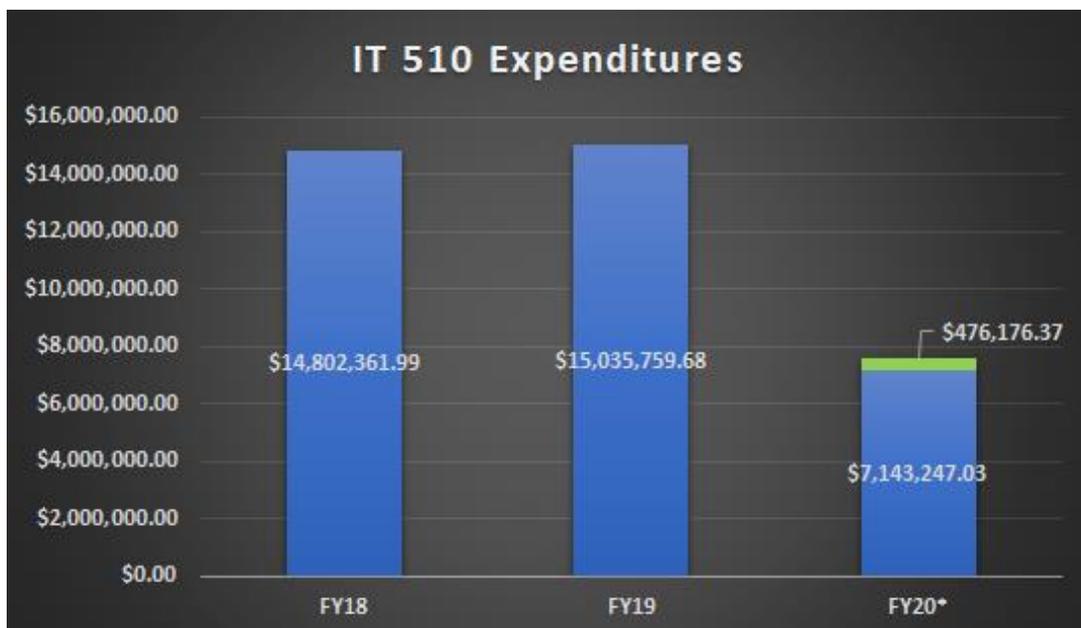
## Executive Summary

Effective use of technology can provide savings and better services to taxpayers and clients. However, technology can also quickly become a large part of an agency's budget and may not produce the desired results. This project will examine these and other similar issues through a case study of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Historically, state agencies have often used contractors in on-going roles alongside state staff. These contractors are often referred to as staff augmentation. The advantages and disadvantages of IT staff augmentation through the use of contract staff versus the hiring of permanent state staff will be a special focus in this paper. While this group was charged with examining the use of contractors at DODD, during our research we discovered that this was just one component of a broader series of changes that are moving the agency in a direction of reduced spending on IT while sharpening the effectiveness and responsiveness of the IT area.

Ed Carr is the current Chief Information Officer (CIO) of DODD. He started in this position in March 2019. At that time, there were 85 staff augmentation contractors and 80 state staff in the IT division. The development of this part of the organization had been somewhat reactive without a close focus on control. In some cases, non-technical managers had put technical people into roles that needed different skill sets than the individuals had. Ed recognized that there were cost savings that could occur for DODD through changes in the IT Division.

There was a 42% headcount reduction in IT staff augmentation by the end of Fiscal Year 2019. This was part of the transition from a reactive mode that was driven by the IT part of the agency to an approach that was driven more by business needs. The programmatic areas started to become more involved in the shaping of the IT area as well as IT projects and plans.

Below is a table which shows the 510 account expenditures (purchased personal services) for DODD IT for the three previous fiscal years. Please note, for Fiscal Year 2020 there are \$476,176.37 of outstanding encumbrances as of September 25, 2020. Even with those potential additional funds, the overall IT contract services expenditures are still well below previous years.



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A governance committee has been a key factor in the initiative to better help prioritize and justify various IT projects. This is part of the shift to have the program or business side of the agency drive the IT decisions and strategy of which Ed is not a voting member.

This governance committee meets monthly and is comprised of the director, deputy directors, in addition to a representative that serves on behalf of all county boards. As each county has a designated board of developmental disabilities and are tasked with using many of the same systems, this is a key outside perspective.

For various projects, the committee utilizes Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed (RACI) charts. Creating this chart identifies each person involved with a project and their role. Doing so identifies the people accountable as well as the ultimate decision makers.

As part of the governance committee Ed has created a scoring template that is completed for each project request. This template helps OIT determine the need, impact, cost, longevity, etc., which is used to decide where each project is prioritized within the hierarchy of current and future projects.

Carol Harp, one of Ed's deputy directors, has encouraged her project managers to work alongside their business users to better identify their needs and objectives for each project. This is another way DODD IT has helped to bridge the gap between IT and their customers.

For those situations when contract services are still a good solution, DODD is working towards using deliverable based contracts. This is less focused on the individuals who are doing the work and more on the results that should occur. However, when using these types of contracts, it is important to build knowledge transfer into that contract as part of the hand off to the state. This may be particularly important after the development or upgrade of a system when state staff will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and operation of the system.

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## Introduction

IT staff augmentation is essential to many state agencies. Our task was to specifically examine the Department of Developmental Disabilities' (DODD) use of IT staff augmentation. The goal is to determine whether the organizations policies and procedures currently in place by DODD could be utilized by other state agencies in an effort to cut costs, but ultimately improve IT effectiveness.

In an effort to ensure the most responsible use of taxpayer dollars, the Money on Our Minds team was asked to review some fresh, innovative ways DODD is changing their IT strategy, staffing and spending in ways that could help improve efficiencies and reduce costs in other agencies.

## Background

While information technology in the private sector is often considered innovative, there are some factors in government that complicate similar innovations. Certain features or technologies may not be feasible due to compliance restrictions with local, state, and federal government. Additionally, communication with legacy systems belonging to other agencies or levels of government may limit solution options.

IT staff augmentation is essential to many state agencies requiring a specific skill set or expertise that current staff do not possess. They are meant to be employed for a limited duration to assist the state team in creating the product and building the needed skill set, which can reduce risk and long-term costs.

Staff augmentation, although effective, can be extremely costly and consume a considerable portion of a budget. Many projects take longer than initial projections and require contracted staff to be employed for many years. State staff often work alongside contracted staff to complete projects however there can be a discrepancy in knowledge transfer.

During the last administration change, DODD IT Deputy Director Ed Carr was appointed and made some key changes which have had a considerable impact on the IT budget, organization of IT projects and staffing mix.

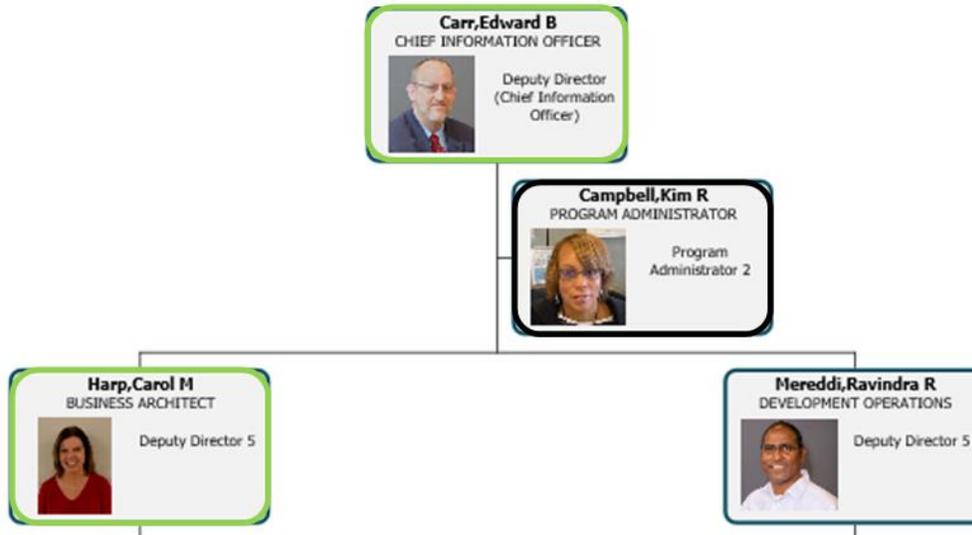
There are two deputy directors that report to Ed Carr: Carol Harp and Ravi Mereddi.

Carol is the business architect and manages groups that are responsible for project management, IT training, Database and Business Intelligence (BI), and the Quality Assurance Center of Excellence.

Ravi is responsible for the operational side of DODD IT and manages teams in charge of security, development, vendor management, infrastructure, and the call center.

## DODD IT Staff Augmentation

For ease of the reader, we have included a section of the Information Technology Table of Organization below:



## Research Strategies

Since capstone research assignment focused on a case study, our research was primarily within DODD sources. We conducted interviews using Microsoft Teams with DODD staff. Our group also developed and distributed a questionnaire using Survey planet. To provide some additional context, we briefly explored how other states structure IT.

While the interviews were conducted with high level staff in the IT and finance parts of the agency, the questionnaires were sent to individual contributors. Our research included the review of operating budgets and the tables of organization for the IT portion of the agency.

We examined the DODD table of organization and chose to engage staff at various levels in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the various initiatives and their impact. We felt it was imperative to understand as many perspectives as possible. Often a process appears effective to someone at the top of the hierarchy, however frontline staff may feel there are major issues and challenges that render the process ineffective.

We interviewed a variety of people at DODD: CIO Ed Carr, IT procurement specialist Kim Lewis, Information Technology Consultant 3 Karen Turnau; Deputy Director Carol Harp, and a group Finance interview with CFO Kimberly Mowry and Budget Manager Michael Popa. Additionally, we sent a survey out to other staff to gain additional perspective.

To gain perspective outside of the state, we also looked at other state IT procurement or employment websites. The state of California has a more general set of position descriptions than the State of Ohio (CA HR). This may allow for greater flexibility in hiring and placement as well as quicker onboarding for new types of positions. The state of Wisconsin has a centralized IT structure which limits their need for staff augmentation.

## Findings

### Interviews

To improve the services DODD provides to their customers, an IT project governance was implemented. The establishment of this function helped shift the focus from technological advancements to meeting business needs. The focus on governance helps justify to the business the expense of IT with the goal of treating it as an investment to achieve the priorities of the organization. DODD now has a governance committee that has representatives from across the agency where the CIO serves as a non-voting member. The governance function establishes a list of project ideas, both new and on-going.

The group prioritizes the projects by importance, by evaluating the needs, cost savings involved and other factors. Projects receive a score based on impact, cost, and complexity, to come up with a score to rank and prioritize the projects. The governance review is a monthly meeting that includes outside stakeholders. This has improved communication and management of projects with the business areas. This information is shared not only within the agency, but also on an IT project dashboard published on the DODD website. The dashboard can be filtered for ease of use. A small segment of this dashboard is included below:

Project Priority #	Discretionary/Non-Discretionary	Project	Project Phase	Project Health	Planned For Fiscal Year	Division	Target Release	Start Date	Expected End Date
4	Non-Discretionary	PASRR Rule Changes	Test	Green	FY 2021	Medicaid Development & Administration	December 2020	2/24/2020	
5	Non-Discretionary	COVID-19 Emergency Releases	Release	Green	FY 2021	Medicaid Development & Administration	September 2020	3/12/2020	
7	Non-Discretionary	PCW Migration to ODA	Initiation	Green	FY 2021	IT Services	March 2021	5/8/2020	
8	Non-Discretionary	Ohio Medicaid Enterprise System	Build	Red	FY 2021	Medicaid Development & Administration	March 2021	8/1/2019	
9	Non-Discretionary	ODA PCW Enhancements for PNM	Test	Green	FY 2021	IT Services	March 2021	5/27/2020	
10	Non-Discretionary	Maintenance of Effort	Approved	Green	FY 2021	Fiscal Administration	March 2021	7/1/2020	

This is an overall management tool for the agency. Individual projects require an on-going process to work directly with business sponsors. At the project level, one of the management tools used is a RACI chart – to identify those who are responsible, accountable, consulted, and/or informed. This concept is illustrated below using the various roles of key characters in the Lord of the Rings (The Digital Project Manager).

	 FRODO	 SAM	 GANDALF	 ARAGORN	 ELROND
Decide on what to do with ring	C	I	A	C	R
Create Fellowship	R	C	A	C	R
Get the ring to Mount Doom	R	C	A	C	I
Distract and defeat enemies	I	R	C	R	I

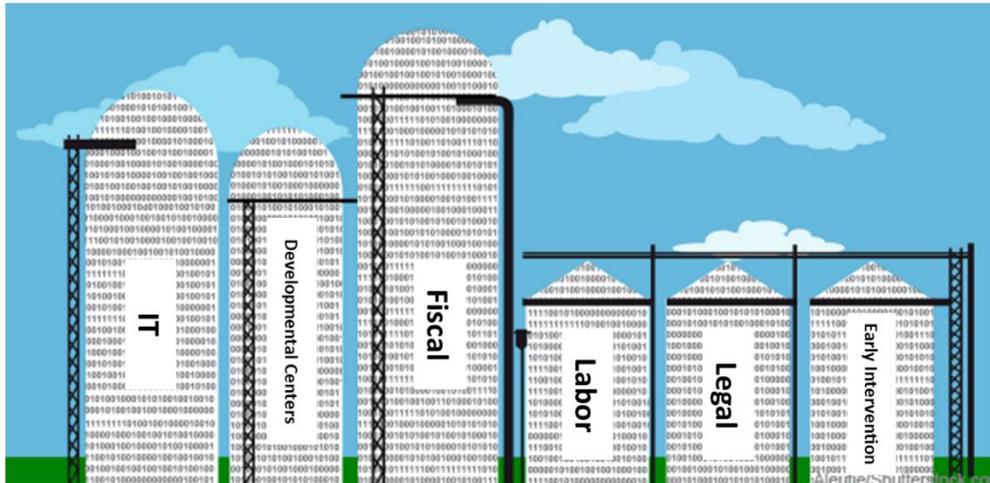
**R-Responsible**
**C-Consulted**  
**A-Accountable**
**I-Informed**

These tools help communication with the business areas. Additionally, the IT staff who work on these functions have new assignments. The business analysts (BA) and project managers (PM) were restructured to focus on lines of business which allows the BAs and PMs to better know their customers. By understanding these needs, they are better able to provide technological recommendations and solutions. This also gives business areas one focal point to contact and helps them to work together. This Ohio Fiscal Academy Group argues it is likely that this close partnership will result in cost savings for the agency. While this is not as easy to quantify as a reduction in contractor costs or other service costs, better tailored IT solutions will help reduce costs throughout the agency as departments are able to use technology that best fit their unique needs. Agencies can reduce additional costs from re-work. This in turn will improve staff morale that can suffer from failed or less than successful IT implementation.

Near the end of the interview, Carol Harp noted something that resonated with our group as something applicable to other agencies. She stated: "DODD has been very siloed; they should work together so that the systems can be better integrated."

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Below is a graphic that shows various areas of DODD and how they may have been isolated causing poor communication:



### Questionnaires

The respondents to our survey are individual contributors within the IT section of DODD. They cited the biggest changes were that of added responsibility, additional training opportunities, better communication, and improved ticket processing. The changes made have helped them work more effectively and removed many “user obstacles” to productivity. However, they also felt that there was too much duplication of reporting, too many meetings and not enough time. The majority agreed that budget restrictions due to COVID-19 did not alter plans. The budget restrictions triggered a Virtual Desktop to PC rollout across all DODD.

Anthony Patsy, DODD Infrastructure Specialist II, said he manages the needed knowledge transfer from contractors to state staff by documenting specifics and following up on outstanding issues to facilitate better transitions. Anthony also noted that recent state staff positions were outside hires.

When asked if they feel a disconnect within the management structure, two out of three answered with yes (Various). While the other parts of the business felt increased communication between the IT areas and other areas, additional communication within the IT area may help improve morale and outcomes. Also, those who wish to communicate more may have self-elected to participate in this survey, therefore these results may not be representative.

Within the survey results, very specific infrastructure changes for locations were recommended, such as moving network switches within a developmental center (a residential center for individuals served by the agency) and the replacement of various equipment (Various Respondents). While other parts of DODD may have experience with the issues caused by poor computer applications or old desktop hardware, IT infrastructure needs are often invisible to those outside the area - unless something suddenly stops working. Bringing these needs and these voices into the IT project priorities and funding allocation will ultimately make the agency stronger. However, care should be taken so that business needs continue to be the driving factors for decisions.

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There have been recent investments in IT equipment with the goal of better return on investment and reduction of problems related to outdated equipment. This is meant to reduce the need for in-person IT services. As DODD has eight developmental centers located throughout the state, reduction of in-person technology staff can help shift budget resources to agency program priorities.

Developmental Centers provide residential placement for individuals with intellectual disabilities who are in crisis and temporarily unable to be served in the community. Each developmental center is licensed and certified as an intermediate care facility and serves people who require comprehensive medical, behavioral and/or residential services.

Like other entities across the state and the world, DODD IT made several rapid changes to adjust to the work from home shift due to the COVID pandemic. This resulted in a need for more remote access and virtual meetings. This focus on a larger issue may also have helped to break some of the agency's siloes. The senior management level initially had daily meetings. Senior IT leadership in those meetings were able to listen and consider what changes they could implement to help the agency.

### Analysis

The approach to changing staff augmentation to state staff is part of an overall strategy change for the IT division in DODD. Interestingly, changes in processes were noted by non-IT staff, but specific process names and jargon were not known.

The IT changes at DODD were influenced by cost savings as well as providing improved service. As fiscal professionals are the likely audience of this case study, it is important to note the role that the Finance Office can play. Program areas require the right information and level of data to inform their decision making.

In this circumstance, the leadership change occurred during the administration transition. Traditionally, transition materials, often referred to as transition books, are developed to help new leaders in an agency learn about key aspects of the organization. These were the initial materials provided to the new IT senior staff. The Finance Office also provided the Biennial Operating Budget request at the beginning of the transition (Mowry). DODD has a central office, in addition to eight developmental centers across the state of Ohio; these all have IT needs. In addition, there are statewide enterprise services provided by the Ohio Department of Administrative Services.

While effective contractors may be an advantage to a government entity, contractors with outdated skills or lack of knowledge of current systems will not provide the best value for the agency or the taxpayer. Identifying those contracts and contractors that provide needed services can be an important step to identifying what should remain and which components offer opportunity for canceling contracts and reducing expenditures.

Recently there was a large contractor staff at DODD, but not a lot of proof of what everyone was doing. The new leadership team worked with managers to address this issue. The managers had to justify contractor staff. With that focus, they were able to reduce the numbers. Once the

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areas became lean, then the organization was able to build up in areas that needed additional investment. As part of this process, Carol Harp created a staffing plan based on the identified need. There were 17 open positions when COVID related restrictions occurred. One of these restrictions was a state staff hiring freeze with limited exceptions.

Some of the recent savings were derived from the reduction of centrally provided services, such as the Department of Administration Services' Virtual Desktop. Close examination of current services may provide potential areas for reduction or total elimination. Other emerging technologies, such as use of Cloud services rather than servers located on site at the State of Ohio Computer Center (SOCC), may also offer opportunities for decreases in expenses. However, not all services are optional and there may be certain costs or services that are required to comply with state and federal laws.

One may also note that this sort of cultural shift is easier to accomplish when reducing the use of contractors. It is much easier to remove contractors or replace contractors with different staff augmentation than replacing or removing state staff. Other IT leaders in state or local government may have to use different or longer-term strategies to be able to achieve similar culture shifts.

There are other potential case studies of IT innovation in government that could provide further examples of best practices. This case study focuses on IT services within a state agency, but there are also examples of improvements in services for Ohio citizens. Long wait times at Bureaus of Motor Vehicles nationwide are the subject of jokes. The "Get in Line Online" feature allows Ohioans to reserve a space in line before they even enter one of the offices of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Average wait times by office location are provided on the website. While the ability to get in line remotely is appealing to people, the importance of this option becomes only greater during the COVID-19 pandemic. A future Ohio Fiscal Academy capstone project may research the financial impact of this endeavor.

## Conclusion

The original scope of this capstone project focused on the shift from IT staff augmentation to state staff, while researching we learned that this change was only one part of a larger transformation of the IT section of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. The reduced contract spending is easily measured by comparing account code 510 expenses across years. However, this examination of purchased personal services provides only a portion of the total picture. Non-IT staff reported greater transparency and communication with their IT business partners. This in turn resulted in projects and finished products that better fit business needs. The improved communication allowed for better management of resources throughout the agency resulting in a better alignment between program needs and processes, and the technological solutions for those areas. This case study provided a window into how IT functions of government could reduce costs, while also providing improved service to their agency partners.

## DODD IT Staff Augmentation

### Recommendations

Due to the pandemic and its economic impact, the State currently has a hiring freeze. Even before this freeze is lifted, state agencies should evaluate their use of contractors and state staff. While tightened economic conditions may result in greater resistance to change, agencies would benefit from considering ways to make services and processes more efficient and effective.

One effective strategy may be using this time to establish new job classifications as needed to keep up with emerging technologies and trends. Job classifications can take a year or more to move from proposal to approval due to the many parties and consents involved in the creation of new job classifications.

There are some barriers in the government sector that make some IT innovations more difficult than in the private sector. However, the effective use of technology can provide savings and better services to taxpayers and clients. Technology can also quickly become a large part of an agency's budget and may not produce the desired results. In this case study, we examined some best practices for including the program area in the IT decision-making of an agency. This may help other agencies develop IT strategies that will provide a lasting value to their constituents. Fiscal professionals benefit from learning about these opportunities due to their role as fiscal stewards. As IT customers, Finance also benefits from the delivery of applications and IT services that best fit their needs. A strong partnership between a Finance office and their Information Technology counterparts can provide benefits throughout a government organization.



## DODD IT Staff Augmentation

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### Appendix

#### Questionnaire

1. What is your current title?
  - a. How long have you been in the position and what are your responsibilities?
2. If you joined DODD within the past year where were you previously?
3. Who reports to you and who do you report to?
4. How have the changes made, since Ed Carr joined DODD in March 2019, impacted your job and job duties? (Answer NA if you joined DODD after March 2019)
5. Since March 2019 when Ed Carr joined DODD (answer N/A if you joined after this time)
  - a. How have the shifts in the IT area changed or impacted your relationships with other parts of the agency?
  - b. How have other sections of DODD reacted to the changes?
6. What changes have had to be implemented in IT due to COVID?
7. What were the next steps and/or projects planned for IT prior to the budget restrictions being be put in place?
8. How have the budget restrictions changed your plans?
9. How is the current hiring freeze changing your plans and strategy?

10. How did you manage the needed knowledge transfer from contractors to state staff?
11. Did many contractors convert to state staff or were the state staff positions outside hires?
12. When do you request contracts to be deliverable based vs based on hourly use of contractors?
13. In your opinion why would other agencies be unwilling to discuss use of IT contractors?
14. How has cloud storage impacted IT contracts & staff augmentation, if at all?
15. Who else do you recommend that we talk with?
16. Are there any improvements you feel could be made that could benefit not only DODD IT but DODD as a whole?
17. Do you feel there is a disconnect within the management structure? If so, please explain or provide suggestions.

18. What is your favorite animal?

- a. Dog
- b. Cat
- c. Gold Fish
- d. Eww pets, no thanks
- e. Other, please specify

## DODD IT Staff Augmentation

### Governance Project Scoring Template

Criteria	Selection	Score	Weight
Mandatory	Not mandatory	0	7
Mandatory	State compliance	1	7
Mandatory	Federal compliance	3	7
Mandatory	n/a	0	7
Urgency	Required within 6 months	8	6
Urgency	Required within 12 months	7	6
Urgency	Required within 24 months	6	6
Urgency	Desired within 12 months	4	6
Urgency	Desired within 24 months	3	6
Urgency	No Deadline	2	6
Functional State	Effective	0	5
Functional State	Acceptable Work-Arounds	1	5
Functional State	Ineffecient Work-Arounds	3	5
Functional State	No Work-Arounds	5	5
Strategic Alignment	No alignment	0	5
Strategic Alignment	Aligned with 1 or 2	1	5
Strategic Alignment	Aligned with 3 or 4	3	5
Strategic Alignment	Aligned with 5+	5	5
RACI Chart	Not completed	0	3
RACI Chart	Completed	3	3
Business Process	Not documented	0	4
Business Process	Current state documented	1	4
Business Process	Future State documented	3	4
Business Process	Lean/Kaizen documented	5	4
Value Type	Like for like replacement	1	3
Value Type	Enhancement	3	3
Value Type	New automation	5	3
Internal	No internal benefit	0	5
Internal	One Department	1	5
Internal	Two or Three Departments	3	5
Internal	Enterprise	5	5
External	No external benefit	0	5
External	Limited impact	1	5
External	Significant impact	3	5
External	Impacts all customers	5	5
Stakeholder Impact	CF 1	1	7
Stakeholder Impact	CF 2	2	7
Stakeholder Impact	CF 3	3	7
Stakeholder Impact	CF 4	4	7

## DODD IT Staff Augmentation

Complexity	Extreme	1	3
Complexity	High	2	3
Complexity	Medium	4	3
Complexity	Low	5	3
Cost	Unknown	0	3
Cost	Estimated	1	3
Cost	Some actuals known	3	3
Cost	Exact costs known	5	3
Funding	Special Funding	1	3
Funding	Internal	0	3
TBD	Time Limited Internal	5	3
TBD	Internal - Planned	3	3
TBD	Internal - Unplanned	2	3
TBD	Internal - Unplanned	2	3

Criteria	Weight	Selection	Score	Score
Mandatory	7	Not mandatory	0	0
Urgency	6	Required within 24 months	6	36
Functional State	5	No Work-Arounds	5	25
Strategic Alignment	5	Aligned with 1 or 2	1	5
<b>Customer Value</b>				
RACI Chart	3	Not completed	0	0
Business Process	4	Current state documented	1	4
Value Type	3	New automation	5	15
Internal	5	Two or Three Departments	3	15
External	5	Significant impact	3	15
Stakeholder Impact	7	CF 4	4	28
Complexity	3	Medium	4	12
Cost	3	Estimated	1	3
Funding	3	Internal	0	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>33</b>	<b>158</b>