

# Report on Shared Services

**Department:** Arkansas Department of Agriculture

**Secretary:** Wesley W. Ward

The purpose of this report is an analysis and action plan for shared services, that is staff or support services shared across the entities within the Cabinet Department. This analysis will assist in the formulation of the plan for this report to the Governor on how to achieve greater efficiency (including cost savings) and effectiveness as it relates to this topic. This work should take into consideration the state of the Department as a whole and the state of each constituent agency, board, and commission.

Questions	Responses
<p>1. After a thorough analysis of shared services within your department, identify all opportunities for more efficient and effective delivery of services and for cost savings.</p> <p>Consider short-term, mid-term, and long-term opportunities.</p>	<p>The Department has identified the following areas of focus for more efficient and effective delivery of services and for cost savings through shared services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fiscal and Human Resources</li> <li>• Laboratory Functions</li> <li>• Marketing and Communications</li> <li>• Information Technology</li> <li>• Emergency Response</li> <li>• Legal</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Fiscal and Human Resources</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidation and co-location of fiscal and human resources staff and reduction in salary expenses through consolidation of duties.</li> <li>• Streamlining the hiring process and updating employee policies.</li> <li>• Initiate fiscal and human resource support to the three service bureaus added to the Department.</li> <li>• Increased availability of online licensing and payments. Currently only 3 of 48 licensing programs offer online licensing. Only 6 of the 48 licensing programs offer online payment options.</li> <li>• Co-location of staff and reduction in building and operating leases.</li> <li>• Department wide evaluation of employee workload and increased cross-training.</li> <li>• Evaluation of field staff areas of responsibility throughout the state.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Laboratory Functions</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardize process for procurement and disposal of laboratory supplies and equipment across five currently separate laboratories.</li> <li>• Standardize Quality and Project Management Systems.</li> <li>• Shared project management and process improvement.</li> <li>• Shared laboratory staff, space, and equipment.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Marketing and Communications</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidate and co-locate the marketing and communications team.</li> <li>• Develop a new strategic communication plan.</li> <li>• Combine the six separate websites and eight social media channels where possible.</li> <li>• Improve coordination and processes of marketing and communication activities across the department.</li> </ul>

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Questions	Responses
	<p><b><u>Information Technology</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidate all networks under the Arkansas.gov domain.</li> <li>• Migrate all divisions to Office 365.</li> <li>• Increase bandwidth to accommodate changing network environment and transition to Office 365.</li> <li>• Evaluate and modernize current IT assets where possible.</li> <li>• Institute an IT ticketing system for employee help requests.</li> <li>• Standardize licensing software and databases.</li> <li>• Combine contracts of use including cell phones and software licensing.</li> <li>• Consolidate servers for increased efficiency and network security.</li> <li>• Fully implement the two complimentary and currently owned software platforms (MiCorp and DocStar) to enhance our digital capability internally and externally.</li> <li>• Complete transition from paper to digital forms.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Emergency Response</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement more in-house emergency response training.</li> <li>• Broaden the use of aircraft currently used almost exclusively for forestry fire detection.</li> <li>• Develop an all hazards Incident Management Team with employees from across the Department.</li> <li>• Broaden the use of the Forestry Dispatch Center at Malvern for field staff of additional divisions.</li> <li>• Reduce reliance on part-time law enforcement officers and transition to full-time officers.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Legal</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidate contracts for legal research provider and bill tracking.</li> <li>• Implement the newly added Arkansas Farm Mediation Program.</li> <li>• Consolidate duties according to legal expertise when possible.</li> <li>• Coordinate with outside firm for collection of unpaid penalties.</li> <li>• Continuous assessment of existing state and federal laws, state and federal regulations, and court rulings.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Develop a plan to implement the efficiency opportunities identified above.</p> <p>What are the key elements and action steps of your plan?</p>	<p><b><u>Fiscal and Human Resources</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human resources, payroll, and purchasing sections can transition immediately.</li> <li>• Other fiscal sections including procurement, cash receipts, and fixed assets can be combined in the short term.</li> <li>• Entire fiscal staff and duties will be transitioned and co-located within one year.</li> <li>• All upcoming vacant positions will be evaluated to determine if combining duties is feasible.</li> <li>• Development of a new employee handbook with updated policies.</li> <li>• Fiscal and human resource services provided to all service bureaus added to the Department.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Laboratory Functions</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An assessment of the current status of all laboratories and a gap analysis is currently underway.</li> <li>• Formulation of metrics to determine efficiency levels.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish priorities, timelines, responsible parties, and deliverables.</li> <li>• Monitoring of progress with mid-course correction if needed.</li> <li>• Documentation of procedures leading to improvements.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Marketing and Communication</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-location of marketing and communication staff will occur by the end of September to improve coordination and delivery of services.</li> <li>• The marketing and communication staff will cross-train and reassign duties as needed based on areas of expertise and skillsets.</li> <li>• An evaluation of existing social media channels will be conducted.</li> <li>• Updated contact and distribution lists for sharing public information will be developed.</li> <li>• An analysis of existing website costs and options for consolidation is underway.</li> <li>• A complete evaluation of the website for ease of use to the public will be conducted.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Information Technology</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An evaluation of the current IT team structure and duties will be conducted in the short term.</li> <li>• DIS has been contacted regarding options to increase the bandwidth at the Department headquarters.</li> <li>• Develop and implement a plan to modernize current agency assets.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Emergency Response</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify personnel to receive additional emergency response training and their capability to serve on a department-wide all hazards Incident Management Team</li> <li>• Evaluate cost and capability of providing field staff with radios to increase safety and communication.</li> <li>• Establish a process for aviation assistance beyond forestry fire detection.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Legal</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of expiration dates for all contracts for legal research, bill tracking, and other services used by legal staff is underway.</li> <li>• Members of the legal staff are currently conducting an assessment of cross-training needs, areas of expertise, and coordination of work processes within the legal team.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Identify any obstacles to the implementation and success of this plan.</p>	<p><b><u>Fiscal and Human Resources</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relocation costs of moving fiscal staff to the headquarters location. A cost estimate for minor remodeling to accommodate additional employees has been requested from the Division of Building Services.</li> <li>• Timely implementation of more online payments will depend largely on INA’s workload and response time.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Laboratory Functions</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff selected for cross-training must learn different lab functions and receive detailed safety training.</li> <li>• External auditing and grant funding entities typically require physical security measures that restrict laboratory access to authorized personnel. Cross-training will require detailed coordination and approval from these</li> </ul>

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	<p>entities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-contamination hazards as a result of shared access must be prevented.</li> <li>• Requirements of accreditations currently held by existing labs could constrain sharing staff, lab space, and equipment. Accreditation documents explicitly addresses initial and ongoing personnel competency, environmental conditions, and instrument maintenance.</li> <li>• Transition to a uniform quality management system will require additional upfront cost and significant time for development and training.</li> <li>• Inherent divisions between the life sciences and the physical sciences may impose limitations on interoperability of current labs.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Marketing and Communications</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing all programs and divisions the timely service needed for coordination and release of public information.</li> <li>• Length of time it takes to get an updated and consolidated website.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Information Technology</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased costs associated with migrating to Office 365, necessary increases in bandwidth, updating equipment on a timely basis, acquiring additional licenses to implement MiCorps and DocStar programs, and consolidating server and storage resources.</li> <li>• Remote locations of Forestry Division offices create significant IT challenges including poor or lack of service in some areas.</li> <li>• Difficulty in coordinating the many logistical issues involved in consolidating server resources.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Emergency Response</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase costs associated with purchasing additional radios for field staff and additional full-time law enforcement staff.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Legal</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Court rulings and changes to federal and state laws and regulations.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Are there any anticipated costs associated with the plan?</p>	<p><b><u>Fiscal and Human Resources</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relocation costs of moving fiscal staff to the headquarters location. A cost estimate for minor remodeling to accommodate additional employees has been requested from the Division of Building Services.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Laboratory Functions</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The expansion of the primary existing quality management system would require expansion of the current license’s capacity. Cost is estimated at \$2,000 - \$4,000.</li> <li>• Consolidation of laboratory functions will require absorption of duties with existing staff, realignment of existing staff, and potential hiring 1-2 additional personnel at the GS07 level.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Marketing and Communications</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estimated cost of \$5,000 for setting up and building a new consolidated website.</li> </ul>

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	<p data-bbox="560 170 867 199"><b><u>Information Technology</u></b></p> <ul data-bbox="610 205 1503 506" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional bandwidth is estimated to cost an additional \$1,200 monthly.</li> <li>• Transition to Office 365 is estimated to cost an additional \$145,000 annually.</li> <li>• Expanding the use of DocStar is estimated at \$1,895 per user. An evaluation to determine the number of additional licenses needed is underway.</li> <li>• Cost of consolidating server resources at DIS cannot be estimated until the conversion to Office 365 and the consolidation of our in-house IT resources is completed.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="560 548 829 577"><b><u>Emergency Response</u></b></p> <ul data-bbox="610 583 1503 848" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The salary for each additional full time law enforcement officer would be approximately \$40,000. This cost would be offset by improved coverage of the State and returned revenue in restitution and fines to the agency and the citizens of Arkansas. This cost would also be offset by the elimination of the stipend and training costs for part time law enforcement officers that is estimated at \$30,000 annually.</li> <li>• The cost for additional handheld or mobile radios for field staff is being evaluated. Grant funding will be explored.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="560 890 634 919"><b><u>Legal</u></b></p> <ul data-bbox="610 926 1503 984" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25% of the salary expense for the Farm Mediation Program coordinator position. The balance is paid by a federal grant.</li> </ul>

Questions	Responses
<p data-bbox="164 1203 496 1299">5. What is the detailed implementation timeline for this plan?</p> <p data-bbox="164 1341 456 1400">How will you track your progress?</p>	<p data-bbox="560 1169 927 1199"><b><u>Fiscal and Human Resources</u></b></p> <ul data-bbox="610 1205 1503 1577" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The transition of human resources, payroll, and purchasing will be implemented immediately.</li> <li>• The transition of other fiscal duties and staff will occur within 12 months.</li> <li>• Implementation of a new hiring policy will take place within 30 days and a new handbook will be developed within 3 months.</li> <li>• Exploring the possibility of more online payment capability will happen immediately with a goal of having more in place within 6-12 months, depending on INA's schedule.</li> <li>• Cost savings for these actions are easily quantifiable and will be tracked and reported.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="560 1619 839 1648"><b><u>Laboratory Functions</u></b></p> <ul data-bbox="610 1654 1471 1883" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared procurement, consumables, waste handlings, and quality management software will take place within 6-12 months.</li> <li>• Shared project management, process improvement, development of a common mode of discussion, and initial shared staff will be implemented within 12-24 months.</li> <li>• Full implementation of shared staff, instrumentation, and space will require 24-48 months.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Savings will be tracked through the Qualtrax Action item workflow management system.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Marketing and Communications</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidation of the marketing and communication team will happen within 30 days</li> <li>• A new strategic communication plan will be finalized within 30 days.</li> <li>• New contact lists for industry partners will be developed and entered into new database within 6 months</li> <li>• Website with no databases connected to them will be moved under the Department website within 3-6 months.</li> <li>• Research and discussion for a website host will begin immediately and a decision will be made within 6 months.</li> <li>• At the expiration of current contracts or within 24 months, all divisions will be consolidated into the Department website</li> <li>• Progress will be reported and tracked on a monthly basis.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Information Services</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Migration to Office 365, consolidation of the private networks to Arkansas.gov domain, and the increase in bandwidth will take place within 4 months.</li> <li>• Combine common contracts of use within 6 months.</li> <li>• Consolidation of server resources, migration of data and processes to DIS, and enhanced use of MiCorps and DocStar will take place within 6-12 months.</li> <li>• Complete transition from paper forms with 12-24 months.</li> <li>• Progress will be reported and tracked quarterly.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Emergency Response</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide radios to field personnel and make the Dispatch Center available to all divisions within 6-12 months.</li> <li>• Make aviation assets available for additional emergency response actions within 6 months.</li> <li>• Identify personnel for cross-training and provide training within 6-12 months.</li> <li>• Create an all-division incident management team with 12-24 months.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Legal</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over the next 6-36 months, in-house procurement staff will notify legal staff as contracts expire. We will track the reduction in costs as the contracts expire and are consolidated.</li> </ul>
<p>6. How will you measure the success and results of your plan? Include detailed forecasts of cost savings, efficiencies achieved, etc.</p>	<p><b><u>Fiscal and Human Resources</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost savings through attrition and not filling positions is easily quantifiable and will be tracked. Five fiscal positions currently identified and scheduled not to be filled will result in a savings of \$273,822 annually.</li> <li>• Improved services through online licensing and payment services will be measured by the increase in the number of online services offered. Progress will be tracked and reported quarterly.</li> </ul>

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	<p><b><u>Laboratory Functions</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target turn-around times will be established for all lab procedures. Actual turn-around times will be measured and reported.</li> <li>• Workflow and project completion will be tracked in Qualtrax.</li> <li>• Participation in the quality management system will be measured by the growth of controlled documents.</li> <li>• Training compliance will be measured and tracked through Qualtrax.</li> <li>• Consolidation of accounts with vendors of consumables in common among the labs will be tracked and reported. The decrease in the number of procurement accounts is estimated at a minimum of 5%.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Marketing and Communications</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A consolidated website for the Department is estimated to save \$4,000 annually.</li> <li>• Customer service will be measured through positive and negative comments received from internal and external users of the website.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Information Technology</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT goals are easily quantifiable and will be tracked and reported.</li> <li>• Cost and efficiency savings will be realized as IT resources are moved to DIS, reducing the dependence on in-house IT staff for server administration, backup, and maintenance.</li> <li>• Additional savings will be realized by a reduction in the amount and type of backup programs and associated license renewals and software updates.</li> <li>• IT staff will have more time to provide direct support to employees.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Emergency Response</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-house training will reduce travel costs immediately. Ability to hold trainings around existing meetings could further reduce costs.</li> <li>• Case resolution time will be tracked and reported to determine the benefit and efficiency of additional law enforcement officers.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Legal</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Savings of \$5,000 are expected for consolidation of legal service contracts.</li> <li>• The Farm Mediation Program Coordinator will be handling the workload shared by four employees of the agency that previously housed the program.</li> </ul>
<p>7. How could the Department of Transformation and Shared Services provide support to the Department?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with INA to negotiate prices for web hosting and maintenance and to provide timely services. There is no requirement that state agencies use INA but they do provide security and services that are beneficial.</li> <li>• Assist DIS in providing more timely and cost-effective services.</li> <li>• Reduce costs by negotiating more statewide contracts for services used by many agencies.</li> </ul>

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