

DIGITAL TALENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

Attract, cultivate and elevate digital talent to build modern digital systems that are user-centered and aligned to improve state performance.

The data-driven approaches described above – as well as the critical goal of providing better functioning core operational systems – can and should be accelerated in order to improve the performance of government in Connecticut. Doing so requires intentional administrative action around digital talent, IT acquisition and systems alignment.

Perhaps chief among these are a series of practical steps to prioritize and elevate digital talent. The opportunity of updating the state's approach to its digital workforce is reinforced by the urgent necessity to do so: nearly half of the state's IT personnel is eligible for retirement and much of this workforce is expected to do so by 2022. Connecticut should take advantage of this need by attracting new digital service experts who will bring private sector best practices to build, maintain and optimize a modern digital infrastructure for the state.

To effect this necessary transformation, a Lamont administration should take on the following achievable agenda:

- **Modernize the state's outdated digital job specs** for IT positions of all levels. In many cases IT job specs are more than two decades old. The state must re-write and reform its digital hiring practices to attract today's talented digital service experts. The need runs the spectrum of services, particularly in the disciplines of design, software engineering, IT procurement, and product management. Recognize that relevant digital skills are continually evolving and therefore position descriptions call for flexible rather than fixed skill requirements.
- **Keep workforce skills current.** To accommodate evolving skill requirements inhibited by current HR standards, the state's current workforce must be supported by a reliable system of cost-effective training in up-to-date practices, akin to private sector practice.
- **Ensure digital talent is at the policy-making table.** The delivery of most government services relies significantly on effective digital services. However, it is rare that digital talent is at the table as policies are being developed. As a result, we miss opportunities to achieve policy goals in ways that non-technical experts may not consider. Further, without a digital eye on policy development, government also unintentionally creates policy mandates that are unnecessarily complex, cumbersome and expensive to implement with digital systems.
- **Elevate and align digital leadership.** Ensure senior digital leadership is in place at major agencies, both providing capable digital guidance at the agency – ideally reporting to the

commissioner – while also aligning around a common agenda of government-wide digital priorities.

- **Launch a Connecticut Digital Service.** Consider replicating the Obama administration’s successful digital service models: 18F and the U.S. Digital Service, offering time-limited tours of duty for private sector digital experts. Such term-limited positions encourage a continuous influx of up-to-date design and technology skills into government from which career staff can learn.

A talent base fostered through these steps should be mobilized around the core priority of **ensuring the backbone of data-driven government, our digital systems and platforms, are more user-centered, functional, secure, and aligned.**