



Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

Memorandum

January 31, 2025

TO: Executive Committee

FROM: Manish Jani, Deputy Director, 303.866.5844
Natalie Castle, Director, 303.866.4778

SUBJECT: Legislative Information Services FY 2025-26 Budget Request

Summary

The legislature's information technology (IT) team, also known as Legislative Information Services (LIS), respectfully requests the Executive Committee's consideration of its FY 2025-26 budget request. LIS, which is part of Legislative Council Staff (LCS), provides IT services and support to all legislative staff, legislators, and the public. IT functions provided by LIS include:

- infrastructure; network servers, storage, backup, equipment, wireless networks, etc.;
- support: desktop, mobile devices, printers, audio/video, helpdesk, support services, etc.;
- cybersecurity, including incident response, risk management, and threat monitoring;
- application development, including custom software applications, website, and software products; and
- digital accessibility.

Table 1 on page 3 summarizes staff's recommendations for the FY 2025-26 IT budget requests. The request totals a net decrease of \$103,900 Total Funds. This includes a net decrease of \$503,900 General Fund, an increase of 2.0 FTE General Fund, and a request for spending authority from the Executive Committee for up to \$400,000 from the Legislative Department Cash Fund.

- A net ongoing increase of \$93,500 General Fund is requested for **data center management, and disaster recovery software and services**. More information is available on pages 4 and 5.



- Staff respectfully requests a net decrease in Total Funds of \$229,984 for **accessibility compliance**. This amount includes a net decrease of \$479,984 General Fund, an increase of 2.0 FTE General Fund, and \$250,000 in spending authority from the Legislative Department Cash Fund. Technical improvements to staff’s approach to accessibility and a changing accessibility industry has resulted in a shift in funding from document remediation to applications accessibility. This request asks that the budget be adjusted to reflect that change.

In particular, the request reduces the budget for document remediation by \$845,346 General Fund and increases the budget for applications accessibility by \$765,362 Total Funds, of which \$206,663 is ongoing General Fund operating, \$308,699 and 2.0 FTE is ongoing General Fund personal services, and \$250,000 is a one-time cash fund request. Staff also requests that the budget for accessibility audits be absorbed into the budget for applications. More information is available on pages 7 through 10.

- Staff respectfully requests that increases in LIS **general operating budgets for software, software-related services, and IT equipment** be increased \$32,584 General Fund to accommodate a 2.3 percent inflation rate and costs associated with equipping 2.0 FTE with software and a laptop. More information is available on page 10.
- Staff requests that the line item that appropriates and sets aside \$150,000 General Fund each year toward the purchase every four to five years of **computers and iPads for the Legislative Department** be refinanced from the General Fund to the existing balance of the Legislative Department Cash Fund for FY 2025-26. Each year, this amount is appropriated from the General Fund to LCS to be saved and intentionally reverted at the end of each fiscal year to a special account in the Legislative Department Cash Fund for this purpose. This refinancing represents a one-time reduction in General Fund expenditures. More information is available on page 11.

Impact on the Legislative Council Staff General Fund Budget

This request includes a net General Fund reduction of \$503,900, which represents a 2.7 percent decrease year-over-year between FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26 in the amount appropriated to LCS in the Legislative Appropriations Bill. This amount consists of the following:

- **ongoing reductions** of \$353,900, which consists of operating budget cuts of \$662,599 and increases in personal services of \$308,699 and 2.0 FTE. This amount is equal to 1.9 percent of the amount appropriated to LCS for FY 2024-25 in the Legislative Appropriations Bill (i.e. excluding appropriations in the Long Bill).



- a **one-time reduction** of \$150,000 General Fund resulting from refinancing the Legislative Department’s annual savings for its periodic computer and iPad refresh to the Legislative Department Cash Fund. This amount should be restored to the General Fund for FY 2026-27. \$150,000 represents about 0.8 percent of the LCS base General Fund budget for the 2025 Legislative Appropriations Bill.

The \$250,000 request from the Legislative Department Cash Fund to pay contractors to upgrade the Legislative Department’s software applications for accessibility is not currently expected to be required beyond FY 2025-26.

Table 1
LIS FY 2025-26 Budget Request Summary
Change from FY 2024-25 Appropriation

| Request | Total Funds | General Fund | Cash Fund* | FTE |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Cybersecurity, Data Center, and Disaster Recovery Software | \$93,500 | \$93,500 | \$0 | 0.0 |
| Accessibility Compliance | | | | |
| Document remediation | -\$845,346 | -\$845,346 | \$0 | 0.0 |
| Applications | \$765,362 | \$515,362 | \$250,000 | 2.0 |
| Audits (absorbed into Applications) | -\$150,000 | -\$150,000 | \$0 | 0.0 |
| Subtotal, Accessibility Compliance | -\$229,984 | -\$479,984 | \$250,000 | 2.0 |
| General LIS Operating and IT Equipment – Inflation and new FTE | \$32,584 | \$32,584 | \$0 | 0.0 |
| Annual Savings for Computer & iPad Refresh | \$0 | -\$150,000 | \$150,000 | 0.0 |
| Total | -\$103,900 | -\$503,900 | \$400,000 | 2.0 |
| <i>Subtotal, ongoing operating</i> | <i>-\$662,599</i> | <i>-\$662,599</i> | <i>\$0</i> | <i>0.0</i> |
| <i>Subtotal, new staff requests**</i> | <i>\$308,699</i> | <i>\$308,699</i> | <i>\$0</i> | <i>2.0</i> |
| <i>Subtotal, one-time operating</i> | <i>\$305,000</i> | <i>-\$150,000</i> | <i>\$400,000</i> | <i>0.0</i> |

*Legislative Department Cash Fund spending authority requested from the Executive Committee.

**FTE requests include base salary and associated costs totaling 23.6 percent (11.63 percent for PERA, 10.0 percent for PERA AED and SAED, 1.45 percent Medicare, 0.45 percent FAMILI, and 0.07 percent short-term disability.)



Cybersecurity, Data Center Management, and Disaster Recovery Software and Services

LIS respectfully requests a net increase of \$93,500 General Fund for the software programs described in Table 2. Each of these are described in more detail in the following paragraphs.

Dashlane Password Manager - \$20,000

The Legislative Department's elected officials and staff require multiple login credentials to many systems, applications and websites, both internal and external to the agency and that contain sensitive data. A password management tool is critical to an organization's cybersecurity strategy, particularly access control and credential management, and is recommended by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the Center for Internet Security (CIS).

A password manager allows the Legislative Department to reduce the risk of breaches, safeguard sensitive data, and ensure compliance with established cybersecurity frameworks. It does this by automating the process of creating, storing, and recalling complex passwords; and by encrypting the credentials so that they remain secure even if an attacker gains access to the password database.

LIS respectfully requests \$20,000 to renew the Legislative Department's instance with Dashlane in FY 2025-26. While LIS was able to purchase Dashlane in FY 2024-25, that purchase utilized one-time funding that is not expected to be available in FY 2025-26.

Automated Password Reset Tool - \$10,000

Automated password reset tools lets users securely reset their passwords from any location, device, or browser, whether or not they are logged into the network's VPN, while maintaining security with multi-factor authentication and trusted network locations. Allowing users to reset their passwords without the help of IT support gives users more control and will reduce administrative workload for the IT support team. Many help desk calls to the service desk are related to passwords.



VMware Renewal Increase - \$12,000

VMware is software that allows you to use a single physical server to create several “virtual” network servers, essentially multiplying the functionality of one server into several. This results in a more efficient and flexible server environment and saves money on hardware and energy. VMware was recently acquired by Broadcom; after which Broadcom made several changes to its pricing model that are expected to increase the Legislative Department’s renewal fee for VMware by \$12,000 more than previously expected in FY 2025-26.

Veeam Availability Orchestrator - \$6,500

Veeam is software that creates backups of the Legislative Department’s servers at the department’s disaster recovery data center. “Availability Orchestrator” is an add-on to the Department’s existing license with Veeam that would automate the process of bringing the Legislative Department’s network back online following a network outage.

Currently, LIS must power on each backup server manually to bring the department’s network back online. Availability Orchestrator automates this process, which will significantly increase the reliability of the departments’ network infrastructure and reduce downtime following an outage. Availability Orchestrator also documents the condition of the disaster recovery data center and facilitates data center testing without affecting the performance of the department’s network.

Pure Storage Support Annual Renewal - \$55,000

Pure Storage Support is an “evergreen” software and equipment subscription that supports the Legislative Department’s data storage system in both its primary and disaster recovery data centers. The Legislative Department upgraded its data storage infrastructure in 2022 with funding from the Legislative Department Cash Fund. The upgrade included an initial three-year subscription to Pure Storage Support. Beginning in FY 2025-26, the subscription will need to be renewed annually at a rate of \$55,000. This subscription gives the department access to continuous software updates, and allows the department to modularly replace and upgrade key hardware components over time.



Table 2
FY 2025-26 Budget Request Detail for Software and Related Services in
Cybersecurity, Data Center Management, and Disaster Recovery

| Request | Description | General Fund |
|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Dashlane Password Manager | Information security and customer experience. Automates the process of creating, storing, recalling, and encryption of complex passwords. | \$20,000 |
| Automated Password Reset Tool | Information security and customer experience. These tools allow users to securely reset their passwords from any location, device, or browser, whether or not they are logged into the network's VPN, while maintaining security with multi-factor authentication and trusted network locations. | \$10,000 |
| VMware ¹ Renewal Increase | Data center management. VMware allows an individual server to be multiplied into several "virtual" servers. After Broadcom's recent acquisition of VMware, Broadcom changed its pricing model in such a way that the Legislative Department's license renewal fee is expected to increase by \$12,000 more than had been previously expected. | \$12,000 |
| Veeam Availability Orchestrator | Disaster recovery. "Availability Orchestrator" is an add-on to the Legislative Department's existing license with Veeam. Availability Orchestrator will automate the process to recover each server in the department's network, without requiring staff to recover servers manually. | \$6,500 |
| Pure Storage Support Renewal | Data center and disaster recovery management. Pure Storage Support is a software and equipment subscription that supports the Legislative Department's data storage system. The renewal allows access to continuous software upgrades to software and equipment upgrades. | \$55,000 |
| Total Funds | | \$93,500 |

¹ <https://www.vmware.com/>



Accessibility Compliance

Section 24-34-802, C.R.S., requires state digital resources and services to be accessible to persons with disabilities on or before July 1, 2024 with a grace period against legal liability through June 30, 2025. The following two shifts in funding are reflected in this request:

1. **Shifting funding from document remediation to applications compliance.** While LIS remains just as strongly committed to the production of accessible documents as a year ago, technical improvements in staff's approach to accessibility and a changing accessibility industry has resulted in a shift in the need for funding away from document remediation. The following three things have occurred:
 - a. LIS has contracted with a document remediation vendor that charges close to one tenth (11.2 percent of) the cost per page as was assumed when the FY 2024-25 budget was enacted, without compromising quality;
 - b. current application contractors for LIS have begun the programming required to convert documents requiring line numbers (bills, amendments, and committee reports) and documents with limited life-spans (e.g. calendars) into an accessible HTML format, vastly decreasing the number of documents requiring PDF remediation; and
 - c. although work remains ongoing, LIS accessibility staff have worked closely with staff throughout the department to upgrade style guides, reformat product templates into more accessible forms, and automate productivity software to institutionalize more accessible document production. New software has been purchased for specific staff throughout the department (Adobe Acrobat Pro and Grackle) to facilitate accessibility. These efforts will reduce the amount of work that would be required from in-house and vendor remediation staff.

These changes and efforts have allowed LIS to shift funding toward the significant costs entailed in ensuring the Legislative Department's applications are compliant. This budget request is adjusted to reflect this change.

2. **Refinancing front-loaded needs away from the General Fund and to the Legislative Department Cash Fund.** Staff has identified the following two areas:
 - a. **Active-use document remediation.** Roll-forward authority is requested for up to \$150,000 FY 2024-25 General Fund appropriations to ensure that pre-existing documents in active use can be remediated. While this does not require spending authority from the Legislative Department Cash Fund, rolling this



money forward into FY 2025-26 prevents it from being reverted to the Legislative Department Cash Fund. Front-loading these costs assumes that the Office of Information Technology (OIT) Rules allowing pre-existing documents not in active use to be remediated only when requested through an accommodations policy, remain consistent.

- b. **Accessibility compliance contractors.** LIS expects to spend \$628,184 General Fund on accessibility compliance contractors in FY 2024-25 and \$456,663 in FY 2025-26, of which staff currently believes approximately \$250,000 will no longer be required in FY 2026-27. Much of the work on upgrading applications, including the Website, for accessibility is front-loaded and is currently not expected to be ongoing into FY 2026-27. Staff therefore is requesting \$250,000 in Legislative Department Cash Fund spending authority from the Executive Committee in FY 2025-26.

Accessibility Budget Request, Total and General Fund

Staff respect requests **a net decrease of \$229,984 Total Funds from \$1.74 million in FY 2024-25 to \$1.51 million in FY 2025-26, and an increase of 2.0 FTE, in FY 2025-26** for accessibility compliance. Table 3 shows the budget request in detail, including estimated (not actual) expenditures and the appropriated budget for FY 2024-25, the full budget request for FY 2025-26, and the change requested between the two budgets.

The request includes **a net decrease of \$479,984 General Fund**, along with an increase of 2.0 FTE General Fund. This is accomplished by shifting spending from documents to applications. The General Fund request for vendor document remediation is falling by \$883,500 from \$931,000 in FY 2024-25 to \$47,500 in FY 2025-26. This is slightly offset by a requested increase of \$38,154 on software and tools for document remediation, including for Adobe PDF, Adobe Creative Cloud, Grackle, CommonLook, and MadeToTag. Meanwhile, the General Fund request for applications compliance is reflected in two places in Table 3: the increase in personal services (\$308,600 General Fund and 2.0 FTE), and the General Fund line item for applications compliance (\$206,663 General Fund), for a total General Fund increase for applications of \$515,362. The General Fund decrease also reflects a \$150,000 decrease for audits.

The total increase in the amount requested for applications compliance is \$765,362, which includes spending authority for \$250,000 from the Legislative Department Cash Fund.



Table 3
FY 2025-26 Budget Request Detail for Accessibility Compliance

| Request | FY25 Est. Expend. ^a | FY25 Appropriation | FY25 FTE | FY26 Request | FY26 FTE | Change In Request | Change in FTE |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|----------------------|------------------|
| GENERAL FUND | | | | | | | |
| Personal Services^b | \$619,537 | \$619,537 | 5.0 | \$928,236 | 7.0 | \$308,699 | 2.0 |
| Document Remediation | | | | | | | |
| Software and Tools | \$53,596 | \$36,800 | 0.0 | \$74,954 | 0.0 | \$38,154 | 0.0 |
| Vendor Doc. Remediation ^c | \$256,500 | \$931,000 | 0.0 | \$47,500 | 0.0 | -\$883,500 | 0.0 |
| Subtotal, Documents | \$310,096 | \$967,800 | 0.0 | \$122,454 | 0.0 | -\$845,346 | 0.0 |
| Applications Compliance | | | | | | | |
| ReadSpeaker webReader | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | 0.0 | \$5,000 | 0.0 | \$0 | 0.0 |
| Application Contractors | \$618,184 | \$0 | 0.0 | \$206,663 | 0.0 | \$206,663 | 0.0 |
| Subtotal, Applications | \$623,184 | \$5,000 | 0.0 | \$211,663 | 0.0 | \$206,663 | 0.0 |
| Accessibility Audits | \$65,000 | \$150,000 | 0.0 | \$0^d | 0.0 | -\$150,000 | 0.0 |
| SUBTOTAL, GENERAL FUND | \$1,617,817 | \$1,742,337 | 5.0 | \$1,262,353 | 7.0 | -\$479,984 | 2.0 |
| LEG. DEPT. CASH FUND | | | | | | | |
| Applications Contractors | \$0 | \$0 | 0.0 | \$250,000 | 0.0 | \$250,000 | 0.0 |
| Total Funds | \$1,617,817 | \$1,742,337 | 5.0 | \$1,512,353 | 7.0 | -\$229,984 | 2.0 |

^a/Estimated (not actual) expenditures are shown here for FY 2024-25 to illustrate the change in staff's approach to accessibility compliance

^b/Personal services include base salary and associated costs totaling 23.6 percent

^c/Roll-forward authority is requested for up to \$150,000 of the amount estimated for vendor document remediation in FY 2024-25.

^d/While audits are continuing, funding for them is being rolled into the application contractor line item beginning in FY 2025-26.



Accessibility Personnel Request

The accessibility personnel request includes requests to fund both full time staff and accessibility contractors. These new FTE and contractors will work together, along with existing staff, to ensure progress on document remediation continues and that the Legislative Department's custom applications are upgraded to become compliant with accessibility standards.

Full Time Staff

The LIS application development team is either developing or maintaining more than 60 custom applications, the most highly visible of which are listed in Appendix A on page 12. The law requires each of these be accessible on the same timeframe as documents, and the work required to comply continues to crowd out other development work. Staff respectfully requests a Business Analyst and a Quality Assurance Analyst, each with accessibility expertise, to facilitate the work of accessibility programmers on these applications. A base salary of \$125,000 for each is requested; with associated costs this increases the General Fund request by a total of \$308,699 and 2.0 FTE.

Application Compliance Contractors

The budget request for application contractors shows up in two places in Table 3. In FY 2025-26, \$206,663 General Fund and \$250,000 Cash Funds, or a total of \$446,663 Total Funds, is requested. Of this amount, only the General Fund request is expected to be ongoing beyond FY 2025-26. While the large majority of these contractors will be programmers with targeted expertise in both programming languages, UI/UX design, and accessibility, they may also include testers and business analysts.

General Information Technology Requests

Staff respectfully requests an increase of **\$32,584 General Fund** to allow the Legislative Department's line item for software, software services, and IT equipment to increase by a 2.3 percent inflation rate, and to equip the 2.0 new FTE requested here with software licenses and a laptop. Software and laptops for new staff are assumed to cost the same amounts as those assumed by the fiscal notes common policies: \$330 per FTE for software and \$1,670 per FTE for a laptop.



Annual Savings for the Legislative Department’s Computer and iPad Refresh

Staff requests that the line item that appropriates and sets aside \$150,000 General Fund each year toward the purchase every four to five years of **computers and iPads for the Legislative Department** be refinanced from the General Fund to the existing balance of the Legislative Department Cash Fund for FY 2025-26 only. Each year, this amount is appropriated from the General Fund to LCS to be saved and intentionally reverted at the end of each fiscal year to a “Computer Refresh” account in the Legislative Department Cash Fund for this purpose. This refinancing represents a one-time reduction in General Fund expenditures.

The “Computer Refresh” account in the Legislative Department Cash Fund currently has a fund balance of \$550,000, which has been encumbered in the fund for this purpose. Existing laptops and iPads were purchased in 2021, and the Legislative Department is scheduled to purchase new laptops and iPads during the 2025 interim. The refresh is expected to cost more than is currently encumbered in the fund.



Appendix A: LIS Custom Applications

Recent and in-development applications. The following is a brief list of applications created in the past few years or currently in development. These applications increase automation in the legislative process and save time for legislative staff and members.

- Electronic Bill Sponsorship;
- CRS Publishing (XDOME);
- CDC/JTC Requests Tracking Application;
- Website rewrite;
- Budgeting system rewrite (CLIMBS);
- Committee witness electronic signup;
- Visitor Services tour reservation system;
- Interim committee management system;
- Office of the State Auditor (OSA) Financial Recommendations system;
- LCS Research Request system;
- Joint Budget Committee (JBC) Research Request system;
- Greenhouse Gas Reports and Demographic Notes Integration;
- Bill Status Reporting (CLICS Reporting System)/Fiscal Impact Reporting;
- Box/iLegislate/CLICS Integration;
- Okta integration with applications; and
- Google integration with applications.

Existing applications. These are existing applications maintained by the LIS application development staff.

- Bill drafting, calendar, journal and committee management system (CLICS);
- Voting system (CLUVS);
- Budgeting system (CLIMBS);
- Legislative website;
- iLegislate;
- Live proceedings;
- OSA local government audits portal;
- Redistricting website;
- Initiatives/ballot system;
- Member history database; and
- Required reports database.



Future projects. Some of the projects planned for the future include, but are not limited to:

- Replace WordPerfect for bill drafting;
- Enhanced communication and collaboration tools;
- Website improvements:
 - accessibility (in-progress);
 - personalization;
 - bill event notifications and subscriptions;
 - advanced Search/Reporting;
 - application programming interfaces; and
 - data curation;
- One-stop administrative portal for legislators (aide hours, per diem approvals, notifications, subscriptions, etc.);
- Member self-service research request process;
- Automating journal and calendar creation;
- Automating enrolling;
- Digital annotating for amendments;
- Agile process improvements;
- Quality assurance process improvements;
- Data and system architecture assessments and improvements;
- Information security improvements;
- Infrastructure resiliency;
- Increased Cloud deployment;
- Future phases of the budget application CLIMBS; and
- A rewrite of the Senate and House voting systems.