

2025-2028 Strategic Plan




County of Ventura
Information Technology Services


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Contact Us

 805-654-3540

 ITS.Admin@Ventura.org

 www.ventura.org/itsd

Executive Summary

The ongoing technological transformation, particularly through advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) have outpaced the adoption of any other technology in the past 50 years, permeating every facet of society. In response, Information Technology (IT) Services must go beyond simply fulfilling customer requests. Modern IT organizations are expected to lead in innovation, proactively recommending novel solutions and consulting closely with customers to address their current and future needs.

To succeed, our modern IT organization must balance five key capabilities while simultaneously aligning with County of Ventura's 2024 Strategic Plan:

- **Mature and Enhance Foundational Technologies and Processes:** Continuously improve capabilities and service delivery. The first step is establishing a focus on operational competency.
- **Transform Legacy Applications:** Ensure they are more sustainable, interoperable, scalable, and provide improved functionality.
- **Apply Technology to Provide Business Value:** Address gaps and enhance capabilities within partner agencies.
- **Drive Innovation:** Implement the foundations that lead the County of Ventura into a digital future.
- **Invest in Employees:** Ensure a positive work environment that delivers impact through aligning the IT culture on strategic efforts.

Innovation, by its nature, defies traditional project planning. It requires understanding emerging technologies to support business outcomes. Innovation involves exploration, investment, experimentation, and analysis. Though not always yielding immediate solutions, these efforts often provide valuable insights. The Technology Strategic Roadmap (pg. 12) outlines key technologies of interest and internal IT projects to deepen knowledge, assess risks, and develop business projects aligning with the IT Business Roadmap.

The Information Technology Strategic Plan sets the strategic direction for the department and provides an executive vision for the evolution of technology services. This document will outline the initiatives that will be our key priorities over the next three-year planning cycle.

Message from the CIO

The County has set the strategic direction for the next several years, and it is IT Services' responsibility to support this with advanced technology, despite the constantly changing technology landscape. We take this responsibility to heart, knowing we can better support our partner agencies to make a difference in the lives of our constituents.

IT Services has watched technology change and accelerate over the last few years. While it has infiltrated almost all aspects of everyone's lives, it remains our domain. So, we began preparing for this time when technology would become even more valuable to meeting the needs of County government. This preparation began with getting our organization mindset focused on technology governance, operational stability, and legacy system modernization. Our culture is more aware of providing value over just managing costs. Many projects have been initiated that will address many of the areas on the County Strategic plan.

Over the last 2 years, IT Services has been working with our partner agencies, research partners, and external peer groups to develop a roadmap for our collective futures. The roadmap is broken into 3 areas: Projects that are constituent facing; internal projects to strengthen IT Services' infrastructure and delivery capabilities; and developing skills to operate in the rapidly evolving technology space.

The roadmap to our future begins here and begins now. I look forward to taking this journey with all of you.

Terry

Terry Theobald
Chief Information Officer





Vision & Mission

Vision

To be the technology leader in Ventura County, providing consultation, innovative solutions, sustainable technologies, and exceptional value to our community.

Mission

To provide exceptional services and innovative information technology solutions to our partner agencies and constituents.

Background

In October 2023, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors approved the County of Ventura Strategic Plan 2024 – 2027, which outlined five strategic priorities:

- **Healthy, Safe, & Resilient Communities**
- **Responsibility & Economic Vitality**
- **Reliable Infrastructure & Sustainability**
- **Address Homelessness & Support Vulnerable Populations**
- **Diverse & Innovative Workforce**

IT Services has meticulously considered these key priorities in its strategic planning process and identified how we can successfully contribute to their achievement. As an organization, we are dedicated to delivering exceptional value through technology. Our strategic goals and initiatives align with the Countywide strategy and are designed to guide us toward operational excellence, innovation, and a culture of continuous improvement. These goals form the foundation for our engagement with stakeholders, the delivery of IT services, and the fostering of a dynamic, empowered team that drives transformative outcomes:

Healthy, Safe, & Resilient Communities

- **Criminal Justice Solutions:** Continue developing and implementing versatile solutions for the Ventura County Integrated Justice Information System (VCIJIS) to enhance the efficiency and accuracy of justice-related information sharing and processing.
- **Public Safety Services Communications:** Ensure robust and reliable communication channels for emergency services, facilitating swift and effective responses to incidents, and improving coordination between agencies.
- **Medical-Grade Network:** Implement a secure, reliable network that meets the unique needs of the Health Care Agency.





Responsibility & Economic Vitality

- **Property Management and Revenue Capabilities:** Continue the implementation of the new Property Tax solution to streamline and improve revenue collection efficiency.
- **Financial Management Systems:** Roll out the updated Ventura County Financial Management System (VCFMS) to streamline financial processes, enhance accuracy, and improve overall financial management efficiency.

Reliable Infrastructure & Sustainability

- **Artificial Intelligence:** Introduce AI-driven solutions to improve self-service capabilities for end users, enabling quicker resolutions and more efficient service.
- **Reliable Communications:** Upgrade and enhance network infrastructure to provide secure and reliable voice and data communications, ensuring seamless connectivity and robust performance.
- **Technology Resiliency:** Evaluate and update all elements of the county's IT disaster recovery infrastructure based on emerging cloud, cybersecurity, and application platforms.



Address Homelessness & Support Vulnerable Populations

- **Provide Broadband Connectivity:** Expand broadband services to underserved areas of Ventura County, ensuring all residents have access to reliable, high-speed internet.
- **Data Governance:** Establish a data governance program focused on data related to homelessness and vulnerable populations.
- **Data Repositories:** Expand data storage and curation tools to go beyond traditional IT data types to include images, videos and audio files.
- **Advanced Data Science Tools:** Review and procure data management tools for the new data.

Diverse & Innovative Workforce

- **Employee Development:** Prioritize the growth and advancement of our team with a focus on emerging technology, learning processes, and peer experiences.
- **IT Innovation Center:** Create a dedicated center for IT innovation to foster creativity, develop cutting-edge solutions, and drive technological advancements.

Foundational Work

Since 2022, we've undertaken the following initiatives in preparation for IT Services Strategic Efforts:

- Revamped IT Services culture to embrace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion principles.
- Reimplemented the ITIL (IT Infrastructure Library) standard for IT operational excellence.
- Established an IT governance framework using the Info-Tech COBIT standard.
- Achieved first place in the annual Center for Digital Government - Digital Counties award.
- Launched a Customer Relationship Management program to enhance County IT Services delivery, ensure accountable budgeting, streamline processes, and foster innovation.
- Implemented a new property tax system.
- Secured funding and contracts for a state-of-the-art regional radio system for County law enforcement, fire agencies, city police, fire departments, and other first responders.
- Obtained funding and initiated a 5-year project to modernize the County's Criminal Justice Information System (VCIJIS), maintaining high integration levels while expanding capabilities.
- Entered a joint build agreement with the California Department of Technology to construct 45 miles of fiber, benefiting over 1,800 households in underserved and disadvantaged communities.
- Upgraded the County's aging Voice over IP telephone system.
- Developed the first version of the IT Services Strategic Plan, focusing on overall IT vision and innovation.
- Created a Countywide Risk Management policy and associated training programs.
- Enhanced the County security platform with endpoint protection, email protection, data loss prevention, system load balancing, and a remote Security Operations Center (SOC).
- Conducted regular phishing tests for all county employees and contractors, followed by necessary training.
- Performed a major upgrade to the security and redundancy systems in the IT Data Center.
- Completed a comprehensive review and upgrade of all existing countywide IT policies.



IT Principles

In today's rapidly evolving technological landscape, IT principles serve as foundational guidelines that direct how an organization approaches its technology strategy and operations. These principles are more than just guidelines—they are the bedrock of consistency, innovation, and efficiency in delivering IT services. By adhering to well-defined IT principles, organizations ensure alignment between technology initiatives and broader County business objectives, optimize resource usage, and reduce the risk of fragmented or inefficient processes.

Our IT Services Guiding Principles:

- Technology investments must have a business benefit with an emphasis on improving outcomes for County constituents. Technology for technology's sake, or personal preference, should not be a consideration.
- Our decisions and actions will align with the County strategic plan.
- We evaluate and adopt emerging technologies while mitigating unnecessary risk.
- Technology should be leveraged across departments and agencies to maximize County investments.
- We have a responsibility as data stewards to the County.
- We must have a cybersecurity mindset.
- We invest in & encourage continuous learning.
- We will establish and adhere to technology industry standards and best practices.
- We will buy solutions/services before we build.
- We focus on value over cost.
- There must be meaningful benefits to county constituents.

Strategic Goals

»»» Be THE Leading Information Technology Organization to County Government

Our ultimate goal is to be recognized as the leading government technology organization, setting the standard for excellence in IT services within the local public sector.

»»» Provide Thought Leading and Innovative Technology Capabilities

By being thought leaders in technology, we aim to proactively provide innovative solutions that address current challenges, anticipate future business needs, and seek opportunities to lead in strategic alternatives.

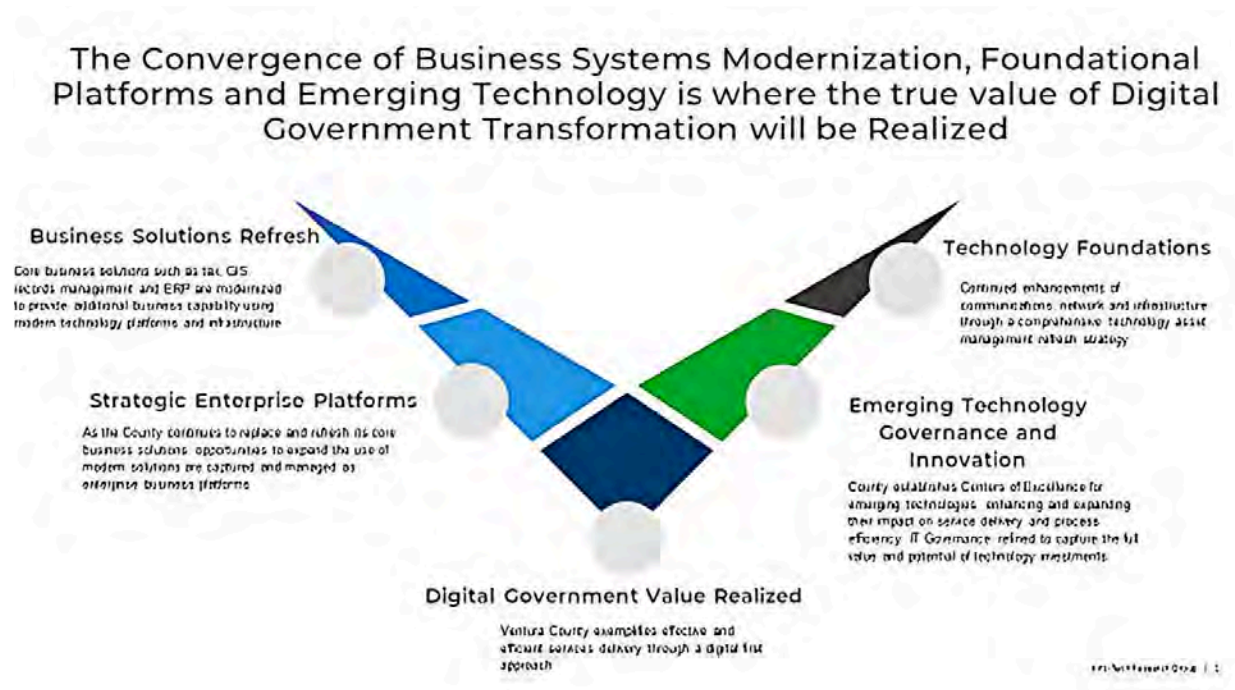
»»» Provide Reliable and Valued IT Infrastructure and Services

It is imperative to ensure that our IT infrastructure is robust, reliable, and continuously delivering value, enabling our partners to focus on their core objectives without disruptions and deliver critical services to County constituents.



To achieve these goals, we align our strategic initiatives with the core values they represent. Each initiative is designed to translate our goals into actionable steps, whether through enhancing our IT infrastructure, investing in cutting-edge technology, or fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration. By embedding these goals into our long-term strategic planning, we ensure that our initiatives are not only responsive to immediate needs but also forward-thinking, driving sustainable success. Our focus on continuous improvement, stakeholder engagement, and team empowerment ensures that we remain adaptable, innovative, and equipped to meet the evolving demands of the important work of the County.

In the dynamic landscape of digital government transformation, the true value lies not just in isolated technological advancements but in their harmonious convergence. By aligning these elements, county agencies can unlock unprecedented opportunities for efficiency, innovation, and citizen-centric services. This collaboration will propel the county towards a future where technology serves as a catalyst for positive change and improved public outcomes.



Key Strategic Initiatives

Mature and Enhance Foundational Technologies and Processes for Continuous Improvement in Capabilities and Service Delivery

- Improve IT Service Management Capabilities
 - Establish Service Level Agreements for all services and all departments.
 - Update our Service Catalog for increased transparency.
- Implement an AI Chatbot to enhance self-service capabilities for end users.
- Ensure the security and continuity of county operations and service delivery by maturing our cybersecurity, disaster recovery, and continuity of operations practices.
- Ensure reliable and secure voice and data communications through network upgrades and enhancements.
- Migrate digital services and information to the .gov domain.

Transform Legacy Applications to Ensure Sustainability, Interoperability, and Scalability, and Provide Improved Functionality

- Community development applications and processes.
- Property management and revenue capabilities with the continued implementation of the new Property Tax solution.
- VCIJIS solutions.
- Emergency services communications.
- Jail Management Solution.
- Document and records management applications.

New Business Solutions that Address Gaps and Enhance Capabilities within Partner Agencies

- Enhance Data Visualization and Reporting Capabilities.
- Develop Centers of Excellence for Strategic Technologies to accelerate the adoption of best practices across all departments.
- Deliver secure digital transactions and ensure data privacy with Identity and Access Management.
- Provide broadband connectivity to underserved areas of Ventura County.
- Develop a cloud strategy for systematic modernization of infrastructure and applications.

Drive Innovation and Implement the Foundations that Lead Ventura County into a Digital Future

- Establish an institutional IT innovation center.
- Establish a Data and Insights Practice.
- Enhance digital service capabilities by implementing “Ask Ventura,” an AI Chatbot that will simplify navigation to County services and improve constituent experience.
- Enhance convenience and access to data and systems for county employees through password-less authentication.
- Explore Unified Communications as a Service.

Invest in Our Employees and Ensure a Positive Work Environment that Delivers Impact

- Invest in employee development through training, conferences, and other continuous learning opportunities.
- Expand and mature Business Relationship Management Capabilities to support digital service transformation.



Road Map

Roadmaps are a fundamental component of our strategy. These include formalized projects and innovative initiatives that we scope, budget, and meticulously plan for. We categorize these efforts into three distinct roadmaps based on the level of influence IT Services has.

Infrastructure / Resiliency

These projects are initiated and managed by IT Services. Depending on the investment level, they may also be overseen by the IT Governance Committee. The aim is to maintain and enhance the county's current technology infrastructure, including applications, networks, security, servers, data centers, data repositories, and more, while evaluating new technologies on the horizon.

Infrastructure / Resiliency	FY 24/25				FY 25/26				FY 26/27				FY 27/28			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
New ITSD Billing System																
Network Access Control																
Replace Reverse Proxy																
Expand Cybersecurity Training and Awareness Program																
AI Chatbot for Service Desk																
Passwordless Authentication																
Identity and Access Management																
Remote Access - SASE (Internal/External)																
Single Sign-on																
Contact Center Cloud Migration																
Red Sky (Remote User ALI for E911)																
Multi-Vendor Calling (Call Tower)																
VoIP Endpoint Upgrades																
Spok Call Locator (Gov Ctr)																
Cisco SDA POC																
Cisco DNA/Deploy																
Cisco SDA Deployment																

Citizen Facing / Digital Government

These projects are initiated outside of IT Services and are typically overseen by executive steering committees and the County's IT Governance Committee. They directly support the government's move to digital interactions, making services more accessible online rather than in person.

Citizen Facing / Digital Government	FY 24/25				FY 25/26				FY 26/27				FY 27/28			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Emergency Services Radio Project																
Property Tax Replacement																
Remote USE E911																
Accela Migration and Upgrade																
Broadband																
Radio Site Improvements																
Microwave Resizing																
AI Chatbot																
.gov Domain Name Migration																

Innovation / Technology Leadership

These projects are in various stages of development and include research, proof of concepts, and feasibility studies. This roadmap also focuses on staff development and building a high-level consultancy in existing and emerging government-used technologies.

Innovation / Technology Leadership	FY 24/25				FY 25/26				FY 26/27				FY 27/28			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Artificial Intelligence																
Formalize Customer Relationship Management																
Establish Service Level Commitments																
COTS Process & Procedures for VCIJIS 2.0																
Application Modernization Strategy																
Training and Workforce Development Plan																
Cloud Training Experience and Expertise																
Cloud Strategy																
Establish a Cloud Consultancy																
Data Lake & Query Capabilities																
Technology Centers of Excellence																
Establish Data Governance																
Data Analytics and Visualization																
Certificate Management																