



## Office of Information Technology Services

KATHY HOCHUL  
Governor

ANGELO "TONY" RIDDICK  
NYS Chief Information Officer

TO: Dear Chairpersons Krueger and Weinstein,  
FROM: Angelo "Tony" Riddick  
DATE: January 24, 2022  
RE: NYS Office of Information Technology Services, Budget Testimony

Please find a copy of my testimony below.

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Thank you Chairs Krueger and Weinstein, and distinguished members of the State Legislature.

It is the honor of a lifetime to partner with you during this pivotal moment in history.

I am Angelo "Tony" Riddick, New York's Chief Information Officer and Director of the state's Office of Information Technology Services.

For the last 22 months, ITS has been at the forefront of the state's COVID response...and I have had the honor and challenge of being on the job for 14 of those 22 months.

...We enabled fully remote and then hybrid work for tens of thousands of state employees.

...Rapidly built applications and revamped state websites...

...and provided the tools that allowed New York to ensure uninterrupted services during a pandemic.

ITS created the vaccine scheduling system and the state's return to work portal to safely bring workers back to their offices.

We offered 24-7 support for the mass testing and vax sites, and provided the necessary upgrades to support online meetings and virtual government.

And, we worked with our partners in the public and private sectors to build the Excelsior Pass platform, becoming the first state in the nation to offer digital proof of a COVID vaccine.

In fact, we recently partnered with the federal government and our friends at the Division of Veterans' Services and Department of Health to extend the Excelsior Pass to veterans who received their COVID shots at a VA facility. This information was once outside the state's jurisdiction and could not be included in our immunization databases.

Now, hundreds of thousands of New York veterans are able to access the Excelsior Pass, so they can share proof of immunization and be easily welcomed into businesses and venues across the state.

As a 30-year active duty veteran who was vaccinated at the VA, I cannot thank Governor Hochul enough for her leadership and commitment to getting this done.

So often in the last 2 years when New York was challenged in new and varied ways, ITS was there with the solution.

And, while a number of long-term modernization projects were already underway in March 2020, the pandemic forced our state government to continuously pivot and adapt.

Now that we've entered a new phase, we are leaning forward and working to cement the progress that has already been made.

The truth is there are countless opportunities to be smarter, better and more agile.

We are focused on accelerating modernization projects at multiple state agencies, and understanding which solutions can help bridge the gap while we move to retire legacy technology.

We have enhanced our support model to give more state employees the ability to work remotely – so they can better support their agencies and more quickly and confidently respond to the next crisis.

As a state, we should be embracing technology as a solution not only in times of crisis, but also in times of calm.

We know technology can support processes and help government operate more efficiently, and it can provide greater access to many more New Yorkers.

Digital enhancements are ongoing and will continue to improve citizen interactions with their state government.

New tools are helping state agencies and their hardworking employees deliver faster results for all New Yorkers.

And, right now our agency is implementing the technology to support a new law which originated right here in the Legislature that will require state agency websites to be accessible in each of the 12 most commonly spoken non-English languages.

We have procured the necessary language translation tools, and following additional testing and configuration work, expect to deploy this new technology on time and to the benefit of many more New Yorkers.

We know technology can provide a lifeline to families in difficult times.

During the height of the pandemic, ITS utilized technology to assist the Department of Labor in clearing their unemployment insurance backlog and delivering benefits to families in need.

We know technology can even help provide enhanced cyber protection for the state's network and its data.

And that brings me to cyber security, which is fast becoming the defining IT issue of our time.

No agency is better prepared or better positioned than ITS to tackle this diverse set of cyber challenges.

We start by taking every threat seriously.

We have end point detection tools already in place which provide an extra layer of protection against intrusion, and in the coming year we will work with our partners at the local level to extend these protections.

We have top notch security professionals who monitor the state's network and global threat landscape all day every day.

Prior to coming to New York, I had extensive experience with the Army's Cyber Command and taught cybersecurity courses at the National Defense University, and yet I have never seen more attempted attacks than we are seeing today.

I urge you to join us in making this a priority NOW!

To fight this new cyber war, we need more resources, we need more people and new recruiting techniques, and we need better intelligence sharing at all levels of government.

I am pleased to say Governor Hochul's budget achieves all of this and more!

The Executive Budget funds Year One of a multi-year investment that will allow the state to establish a strong "Zero Trust" framework.

"Zero trust" means everything we do is secure, and there are checks and balances on every device, every transaction, and every request for access. This will better protect the state's data from intrusion or attack.

If this budget is approved, we will use a portion of the new funding to enhance our Red Team - - a group that tests security across Executive agencies by identifying and launching attacks in a controlled environment. They are critical to the state's readiness to respond to a real threat.

The Executive Budget also recommends new cyber resources to provide local governments with expert strategic assistance and security solutions to mitigate ransomware attacks so they can better protect their own assets.

I thank Governor Hochul for her leadership on this important issue and know it will allow us to make a strong statement to the world that New York State takes cybersecurity very seriously.

Thank you for your service, leadership and commitment to the state of New York.

I am happy to take any questions you may have.