

IT STRATEGIC PLAN FY2022 – FY2026



INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY

Version 1.0
Spring 2022



REVISION HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES
0.9	February 23, 2022	Final Draft.
1.0	April 20, 2022	Version 1.0

APPROVAL

This Indian Health Service (IHS) Office of Information Technology (OIT) Fiscal Year 2022-2026 Strategic Plan was endorsed by the OIT leadership team. I have reviewed and approve this plan as written.

Mitchell

Thornbrugh -S

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Mitchell Thornbrugh -S

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welcome to the Indian Health Service (IHS) Office of Information Technology (OIT) Fiscal Year 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan. This Plan outlines our vision for the future and the innovative ways we can support the mission of the IHS to raise the health status of the American Indian and Alaska Native people to the highest possible level. Strategic Priorities of this plan include:

- A commitment to workforce resiliency through attracting, developing, and retaining the best and brightest technology talent;
- A focus on modernization and innovation through co-creating scalable, enterprise solutions that enhance patient care;
- An emphasis on operational excellence within our office to ensure we're delivering secure, reliable, and efficient IT services to customers in a clear, transparent way; and
- Increased concentration on data capabilities, fostering a culture of data sharing, interoperability, and analytics to drive decisions and inform care.

This plan has been developed through a collaborative process that included several workshops, meetings, and data calls at the conclusion of Fiscal Year 2021. Stakeholders from the OIT Staff, fellow IHS offices, and representation across councils, committees, and geographic areas all played an important role in understanding the future of IHS through technology.

In addition, the HHS Strategic Plan FY2018 - 2022, Indian Health Service Strategic Plan for FY2019 - 2023, and 2020 - 2025 Federal Health IT Strategic Plan, have all been considered in building this plan. Relevant mandates, acts, and Administration priorities also played a role in shaping our future direction.

The Executive Leadership Team is fully committed to this Strategic Plan and its success is contingent on combined efforts of all employees and partners.

**HEALTHY COMMUNITIES & QUALITY HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS THROUGH
STRONG PARTNERSHIPS AND CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES**

- IHS.GOV

MESSAGE FROM THE CIO



Technology solutions are woven into the fabric of our everyday life. The evolution of digital solutions provides a unique opportunity to deliver quality health services to American Indian and Alaska Native people. While we have made significant progress to seize these opportunities, we are at a pivotal point at Indian Health Service. We must strive not just to *meet* the existing need but also to *expand* into new, uncharted spaces to deliver truly innovative technology solutions. Success requires an approach centered on partnership, scalability, and resiliency to build the foundation for lasting change—both in our modernization efforts and

beyond. We sit at the forefront of creating an ecosystem of data, technology, and infrastructure to support a comprehensive health care service delivery system managed by the IHS, Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and Urban Indian Organizations. The possibilities are endless.

As we learned in 2020 and 2021, great challenge often drives great innovation. The unprecedented pandemic forced health care systems to pivot quickly and accelerated the more modern delivery of services. We witnessed extraordinary growth in telehealth, accelerated vaccine development, and innumerable creative solutions for patient and staff safety. The pandemic has been uniquely challenging for our agency's service to our American Indian and Alaska Native stakeholders, who are often rurally located, far from the treatment facilities and reliable internet where these solutions are made available.

As such, OIT must approach the coming years with a renewed focus on **modernization & innovation**. We'll do this in part through an emphasis on **workforce resiliency**, fostering the team we have, capturing and preserving critical technical knowledge, and recruiting the additional talent we need. We will hone our **operational excellence**, striving to deliver even more consistent, efficient service to our customers via clear governance, a commitment to continuous improvement, and a push toward process maturity. And we'll hone our abilities to enable **data & interoperability** to support timely, patient-centered decision making across the many levels of our agency – from headquarters down to the bedside.

This strategic plan is a simple, clear representation of our priorities, goals, and objectives for the coming five years. It clarifies our focus, enabling us to make confident decisions and investments in areas that align to our strategy and make the greatest possible impact.

We are a team that is passionately dedicated to our agency's mission to raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of those we serve. Our staff are resourceful, dedicated, and creative. We've made an admirable impact with the resources we have today. The next five years are an opportunity to redefine what we need to meet this promise tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Mitchell Thornbrugh
Chief Information Officer



PURPOSE

Our Strategic Plan is a foundational guiding resource for IHS information technology to help synthesize other guidance and chart a course for our focus in an ever-changing world. It serves as a living tool that supports decision making, guiding both what we choose to do *and* what we choose not to do. It paints a clear picture of the priorities that guide all who interact with the IHS Information Technology (IT) program during the five-year planning horizon.

Indian Health Service

The Federal Health Program
for American Indians and
Alaska Natives

We activate this plan in part through our [annual work planning](#) process, which encourages us to identify critical initiatives each year that directly support the success of our strategic priorities. We cascade our annual work plan to annual divisional work plans and, finally, to employee performance plans. This ensures that each individual is accountable to and rewarded for work that is tied directly to the greater success of our strategy. Finally, we [monitor and report](#) on progress against each priority area using select key performance indicators (KPIs). These approaches are described in much further detail in the appropriate sections.

PLAN ALIGNMENT

Our strategic plan for IHS information technology considers other relevant plans, mandates, and requirements that cascade to, and thus guide, our organization. These include, but are not limited to:

- HHS Strategic Plan FY 2018- 2022,
- Indian Health Service Strategic Plan for FY2019-2023,
- 2020-2025 Federal Health IT Strategic Plan,
- Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA), and
- President's Management Agenda (to be considered in annual planning once released).

To demonstrate this alignment more clearly, we've cross-walked our strategic priorities to the IHS Strategic Plan for FY2019-2023 and the HHS Strategic Plan FY 2018-2022 in [Appendix D](#).



OVERVIEW

The IHS OIT is charged with supporting the agency via secure, reliable information technology solutions, policies, and standards. We provide critical support for the IHS, Tribal, and Urban (I/T/U) health care facilities that care for more than 2.5 million American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people across the Indian health system.

We also provide the technology infrastructure for a nationwide enterprise, including a secure wide area network, email, and unified communication services; national data centers; and regional and national Help Desk support for approximately 20,000 users. We fulfill these functions through the following divisions:

- **Division of Information Technology:** Develops and supports various enterprise services, including software development and quality assurance.
- **Division of Information Technology Operations:** Manages technology deployed for use across the agency, such as email, web services, and the help desk.
- **Division of Information Security:** Ensures an agency-wide secure and trusted information technology environment.
- **Division of Program Management and Budget:** Provides internal support to other members of the OIT, primarily through spend-plan and budget development, financial reports and analyses, and the Capital Planning and Investment Control (CPIC) program.
- **Division of Data Management and Analytics:** Enables enterprise data management, reporting, and analytics for OIT and all program offices within the agency, across Areas, and, occasionally, at the site level. Facilitates the National Patient Information Reporting System (NPIRS) program.

OIT contains other critical functions including the office of Enterprise Architecture (EA), the office of the Chief Medical Information Officer (CMIO), the office of the Chief Health Informatics Officer (CHIO) and the forthcoming Division of Health IT Modernization and Operations. Through our work, we enable IHS to achieve its mission to “raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level.”²

THE OIT MISSION

Lead and deliver enterprise technology solutions that enhance health care delivery and patient experience

Our **Mission** describes our purpose as an office: what we do as it relates to IHS information technology, how we do it, and why we exist.

Our **Vision** illustrates where we’re headed with information technology across the agency and the impact we seek to have.

THE OIT VISION

Elevate digital capabilities to empower healthcare strategies

² <https://www.ihs.gov/aboutihs/>

THE OIT GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our guiding principles represent the core values that guide our office’s behaviors and decision making. They are the basis for how we conduct our work, and form the unique character of our culture and customer interactions.



Positive encounters

Do we understand the need?

- Does it have real potential to positively enable health care delivery and/or patient experiences?
- Did we partner with customers to understand the end user requirements?
- Did we respond to the customer with transparency and clear expectations?

Best practice first

What’s the proven industry approach?

- Does the proposed solution align to current industry standards?
- Can we make recommendations to better align it?

Innovative solutions

Is there an even better way?

- Is there a new emerging tool or method we should consider?

Enterprise-minded

Can we scale or standardize across many?

- Does the solution integrate into our broader ecosystem of solutions?
- Is this something we can and should centralize?
- Is this an opportunity to set a “standard” way and share it across the agency?
- Does this offer a good value (cost/benefit) to the agency?

Reliable results

Can we meet or exceed expectations?

- Will this solution deliver what the user and patient really need?
- Can we truly support it or transfer ownership to someone who can?

Secure information

Can we do it all securely?

- Can we trust the integrity of the information within?
- Can we keep it safe and abide by all current mandates and regulations?

Finally, we always operate with a focus on **holistic service**, including shared respect throughout the agency and consideration for the impacts of our decisions on IHS, Tribal, and Urban partners.



FY22-FY26 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This describes the Fiscal Year 2022-2026 strategic priorities for IHS Information Technology.

These will serve as our areas for focus in the next five years, and will be implemented, monitored, and updated using the processes described later in this plan.

Workforce Resiliency	We attract, develop, and retain the best and brightest talent.
Modernization & Innovation	We co-create scalable, enterprise solutions that enhance patient care.
Operational Excellence	We deliver secure, reliable, and efficient IT services to customers.
Data & Interoperability	We foster a culture of data sharing, interoperability, and analytics to drive decisions & inform care.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: WORKFORCE RESILIENCY

We attract, develop, and retain the best and brightest talent.

Objective 1: Workforce and Succession Planning. Increase organizational capacity to forecast and respond to current and future staffing needs and workload demands.

Objective 2: Learning and Development. Expand efforts to identify and fill critical knowledge and skill gaps and develop our team.

Objective 3: Recruitment and Retention. Strengthen activities and partnerships to identify, source, attract, and retain IT talent in a competitive market.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)
Measures
OIT Employee Engagement Index (FEVS participation)
OIT FTE Retention Rate
OIT Employee training (# of employees and Hours or number of classes)



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: MODERNIZATION & INNOVATION

We co-create scalable, enterprise solutions that enhance patient care.

Objective 1: Health Care Information Technology. Modernize the HIT system to improve data collection and support clinician workflow in partnership with IHS stakeholders.

Objective 2: Infrastructure. Build infrastructure and network solutions that enhance access for consultative care.

Objective 3: Digital Capabilities. Augment digital solutions and services that streamline patient care practices, enable access to data, and automate processes that enhance the delivery and experience of care.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)
Measures
Modern Integration Adoption (Gartner)
Tech Innovation Spending (Gartner)
Sites and systems with modernization processes and procedures



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

We deliver secure, reliable, efficient IT services to customers.

Objective 1: Process Maturation. Develop standardized practices, processes, and security to ensure effective delivery of IT services.

Objective 2: Governance. Establish governance practices that support and engage business partners and facilitate streamlined and transparent decision-making.

Objective 3: Continuous Improvement. Strengthen IT management practices through regular review and refinement of approaches to effectively scale to meet emerging needs.

Objective 4: Customer Experience. Foster customer engagement and satisfaction by strengthening collaboration and communication with our stakeholders.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)
Measures
Activities with standard processes
Help Desk First call resolution
Projects with Completed Stage Gate Reviews



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: DATA & INTEROPERABILITY

We foster a culture of data sharing, interoperability, and analytics to drive decisions & inform care.

Objective 1: Data Sharing. Develop a strategy to support data sharing across Tribal programs and governments.

Objective 2: Data Federation. Establish the foundation for a centralized data repository and capability for data federation to reduce data duplication and enhance access.

Objective 3: Analytics and Visualization. Build capacity and skills for improved use of analytics and visualization to support data-driven decision making.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)
Measures
Increase Data Sharing and Data Sharing tools
Increase Benchmark Score for Data and Analytics Program (Gartner)
Analytics Enabled Workforce (Gartner)

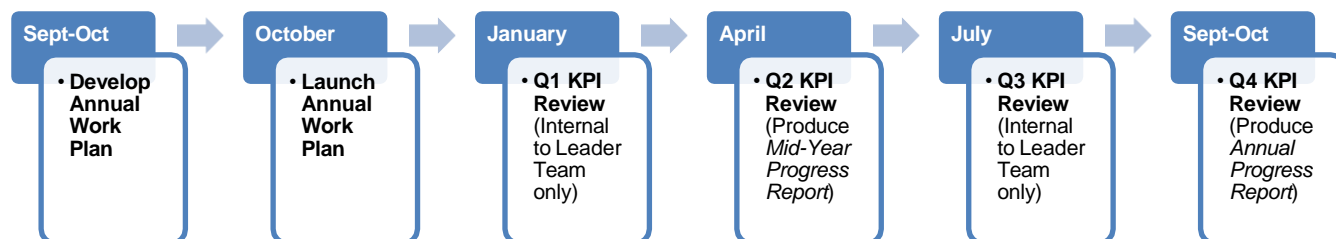
IMPLEMENTATION

It is critical that OIT staff, particularly our leadership and management, fully engage with and support the implementation of this plan. We're leveraging a comprehensive strategy activation approach to translate our strategy into action.



ANNUAL WORK PLANNING

Per our standard, recurring planning cycle (below), we'll create an annual Work Plan containing a limited number of critical initiatives that support the success of each strategic priority. Each yearly initiative will contain success measures that align to and support the strategic plan KPIs. In building this Work Plan, we collaborate with ISAC to consider the Committee's annual priorities alongside our Strategic Plan. Our completed Work Plan then cascades across departments down to individual staff, and helps shape team and individual performance.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY STEWARDSHIP

To ensure a proper cascade of our priorities, as well as cross-organizational accountability to their success, we'll assign two "Strategic Priority Stewards" to each Strategic Priority (eight total Stewardship slots). These Stewards will be identified by the CIO and refreshed annually, where necessary. Stewards will consist of leaders from across OIT, or designees thereof. While Stewards are not necessarily owners of the resulting work, nor individually responsible for the success of the stewarded priority, his/her/their responsibilities are to:

- Baseline KPI measurements for the stewarded priority;
- Verify annual Work Plans for proper alignment to the stewarded priority;



- Gather quarterly progress updates across OIT departments, including refreshed measures against the priority's KPIs;
- Summarize the above as an input into a twice-annual progress report; and
- Recommend adjustments to the stewarded priority annually, where needed.

This inaugural Stewardship program offers us an opportunity to enhance both accountability and cross-departmental coordination of our strategic efforts. It ensures collaborative planning, tracking, and reporting to create a big picture look at our iterative success.

MONITORING & REPORTING

Per our renewed commitment to operational excellence, including the objective of continuous improvement, we actively monitor our Strategic Plan to ensure we are effectively meeting the emerging needs of the agency. We leverage our Stewards to gather/establish a baseline of all KPI measurements by the end of calendar year 2021. Stewards then gather a blend of anecdotal and quantitative progress updates from across departments each quarter.

The OIT Executive Leadership Team summarizes our progress against the plan twice a year in a Mid-Year Priority Progress Report and Annual Priority Progress Report. This report is shared across OIT for transparency into our performance against the Plan.

PLAN REVIEWS & UPDATES

We recognize that a Strategic Plan is a living resource, and can be most effective if it is adaptable to new challenges and opportunities as they arise. We leverage our Stewards to recommend adjustments to our Plan on an annual basis. The OIT Executive Leadership Team considers these recommendations, making changes where critically necessary to adapt to previously unforeseen shifts in the environment. A substantial change prompts a new published version of the Strategic Plan. These iterations are captured in the Version History at the start of this document.

APPENDIX A: VISUAL PLAN SUMMARY

FY2022 - 2026

Office of Information Technology (OIT)

MISSION: lead and deliver enterprise technology solutions that enhance health care delivery and patient experience.

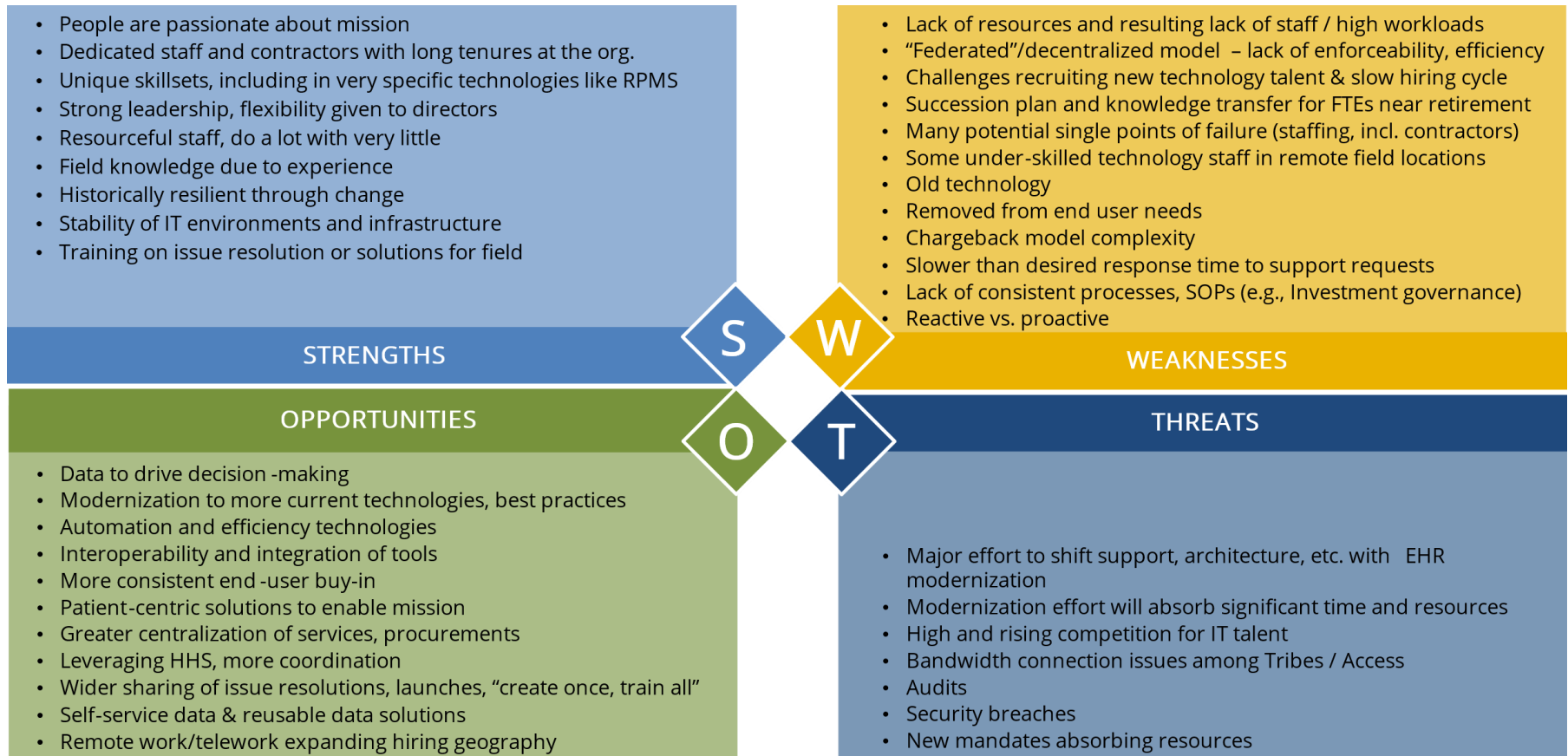
VISION: elevate digital capabilities to empower healthcare strategies for American Indians and Alaska Natives.



PRIORITY	Workforce Resiliency	Modernization & Innovation	Operational Excellence	Data & Interoperability		
	<i>We attract, develop, and retain the best and brightest talent.</i>	<i>We co-create scalable, enterprise solutions that enhance patient care.</i>	<i>We deliver secure, reliable, efficient IT services to customers.</i>	<i>We foster a culture of data sharing, interoperability, and analytics to drive decisions & inform care.</i>		
GOAL						
OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce & Succession Planning: increase organizational capacity to forecast and respond to current and future staffing needs and workload demands. Learning & Development: expand efforts to identify and fill critical knowledge and skill gaps and develop our team. Recruitment & Retention: strengthen activities and partnerships to identify, source, attract, and retain IT talent in a competitive market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Care Information Technology: modernize the HIT system to improve data collection and support clinician workflow in partnership with IHS stakeholders Infrastructure: build infrastructure and network solutions that enhance access for consultative care. Digital Capabilities: augment digital solutions and services that streamline patient care practices, enable access to data, and automate processes that enhance the delivery & experience of care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process Maturation: develop standardized practices, processes & security to ensure effective delivery of IT services. Governance: establish governance practices that support and engage business partners & facilitate streamlined & transparent decision-making. Continuous Improvement: strengthen IT management practices through regular review and refinement of approaches to effectively scale to meet emerging needs. Customer Experience: foster customer engagement and satisfaction by strengthening collaboration & communication with our stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Sharing: develop a strategy to support data sharing across Tribal programs and governments. Data Federation: establish the foundation for a centralized data repository and capability for data federation to reduce data duplication and enhance access. Analytics & Visualization: build capacity and skills for improved use of analytics and visualization to support data-driven decision making. 		
	GUIDING PRINCIPLES	Positive Encounters	Best Practice First	Innovative Solutions	Enterprise-Minded	Reliable Results
Holistic Service as our Foundation						

APPENDIX B: ENVIRONMENTAL BACKGROUND

As a summary of our environmental analysis preceding the plan, we developed a **SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis**. This analysis grounded our discussion of where we are today and where we want to focus tomorrow, allowing us to great a plan that capitalizes on our strengths, addresses many of our weaknesses, seizes opportunities, and mitigates threats.



APPENDIX C: STRATEGIC PLANNING APPROACH

We created this plan using a collaborative, four-phased process in partnership with stakeholders, including inputs from the Office of Information Technology's leaders, staff, and customer representatives from Headquarters, Areas, and the field.

- **Phase 1 – Discovery.** Reflected on the current state of IHS information technology in FY21, reviewing environmental factors, mandates, and related plans that shaped our priorities. Engaged with stakeholders to understand how well we met their needs in the prior planning horizon and how we could best support their success in the coming years through technology services and solutions. We summarized our environmental findings to better understand where we were prior to this planning period and where we hoped to go in the future.
- **Phase 2 – Meet & Retreat.** Held a series of interactive workshops with information technology leadership to reflect on our findings and identify opportunities for renewed focus. We envisioned an ideal future state in which technology services and solutions would even better enable IHS to achieve its mission. This shaped our refreshed Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles and led to the selection of our four Strategic Priorities, Objectives, and KPIs contained herein.
- **Phase 3 – Document & Vet.** Documented our vision in a revised plan for the future and circulated it among key leaders and critical stakeholders for confirmation.
- **Phase 4 – Approve & Launch.** Received IHS CIO sign-off and published the plan.



APPENDIX D: CROSSWALK AND ALIGNMENT WITH HHS, IHS, AND HEALTH IT STRATEGY

The table below is a crosswalk of the IHS IT Strategic Plan and three related guidance documents that informed the strategy—the IHS Strategic Plan, the HHS IT Strategic Plan, and the Health IT Strategy.

The Goals and Objectives for each reference document are listed on the left side of the table and the IHS IT Strategic Plan Priority Areas are listed in the right columns. The “X” indicates the reference document objective aligns with the IHS IT strategic priority. The “*” indicates the reference document objective aligns with an IHS guiding principle. The intent of this crosswalk is to demonstrate that each IHS IT strategic priority aligns to other related goals and initiative at IHS, HHS and across the Federal government to further health IT related initiatives in various domain areas.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND RELATED GOALS	IHS IT Strategic Priorities			
	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
	Workforce Resiliency	Modernization & Innovation	Operational Excellence	Data & Interoperability
IHS Strategic Plan FY 2019 - 2023				
Goal 1: To ensure that comprehensive, culturally appropriate personal and public health services are available and accessible to American Indian and Alaska Native people				
1.1 Recruit, develop and retain a dedicated, competent, and caring workforce	X		X	
1.2 Build, strengthen, and sustain collaborative relationships		X		
1.3 Increase access to quality health care services				
Goal 2: To promote excellence and quality through innovation of the Indian health system into an optimally performing organization				
2.1 Create quality improvement capability at all levels of the organization				
2.2 Provide care to better meet the health care needs of American Indian and Alaska Native communities				
Goal 3: To strengthen IHS program management and operations				
3.1 Improve communication within the organization with Tribes, Urban Indian Organizations, and other stakeholders, and with the general public				
3.2 Secure and effectively manage the assets and resources		X	X	
3.3 Modernize information technology and information systems to support data driven decisions		X		X
2020 – 2025 Federal Health IT Strategic Plan				
Goal 1: Promote Health and Wellness				
1.a Improve individual access to health information		X		
1.b Advance healthy and safe practices through health IT		X		
1.c Integrate health and human services information		X		X
Goal 2: Enhance the Delivery and Experience of Care				
2.a Ensure safe and high-quality care through the use of health IT		X		
2.b Foster competition, transparency, and affordability in healthcare				
2.c Reduce regulatory and administrative burden on providers		X		X
2.d Enable efficient management of resources and a workforce confidently using health IT		X		
Goal 3: Build a Secure, Data-Driven Ecosystem to Accelerate Research and Innovation				
3.a Advance individual- and population-level transfer of health data				X
3.b Support research and analysis using health IT and data at the individual and population levels				X
Goal 4: Connect Healthcare and Health Data through an Interoperable Health IT Infrastructure				
4.a Advance the development and use of health IT capabilities			X	
4.b Establish transparent expectations for data sharing				X
4.c Enhance technology and communication infrastructure			X	
4.d Promote secure health information that protects patient privacy			X	



REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND RELATED GOALS

	IHS IT Strategic Priorities			
	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
	Workforce Resiliency	Modernization & Innovation	Operational Excellence	Data & Interoperability
HHS IT Strategic Plan FY2021 - 2023				
Goal 1: Optimize the IT Organization				
1.1 Enhance Recruitment Strategies & Policies	X			
1.2 Improve Collaboration				
1.3 Accelerate Workforce Development	X			
1.4 Improve Workforce Experience	*			
Goal 2: Accelerate Technology Modernization & Innovation		X		
2.1 Modernize Legacy IT		*		
2.2 Share Technology Solutions				*
2.3 Establish Common Standards		X		
2.4 Drive Innovation				
Goal 3: Enhance Data & Interoperability				X
3.1 Standardize Data Sharing				X
3.2 Create Data Policies				X
3.3 Cultivate Data Sharing Culture				X
3.4 Increase Data Insights				
Goal 4: Improve IT Management & Governance				
4.1 Enhance Acquisitions & Combined Purchasing Power			X	
4.2 Increase Investment Transparency			X	
4.3 Improve Compliance			X	
Goal 5: Strengthen Cybersecurity				
5.1 Improve Threat Detection			*	
5.2 Enhance Enterprise Risk Management & Incident Response			*	
5.3 Improve Customer Experience			*	
5.4 Promote Greater Cybersecurity Awareness			*	