

2026-28

IT STRATEGIC PLAN

Progress Report: May 2026



COMMISSION
FOR THE
BLIND



BLINDNESS WITHOUT BARRIERS

Information Technology (IT) Strategic Plan: Progress Report May 2026

I - Executive Summary

Of the eight (8) Strategic Technology Opportunities (initiatives) identified with the 2025 updated version of the Oregon Commission for the Blind's (OCB) IT Strategic Plan, four remain in 2026.

Two initiatives were funded with savings found elsewhere in the B2023-25 budget before June 30, 2025, and have dropped out of the plan. Those initiatives included the adoption of Remote Incident Manager (RIM) as an accessible remote access tool for internal as well as external use and 10 customizations to our AWARE case-management system.

Two presented to the Governor's Office for consideration with the B2025-27 budget were not approved for funding, due to concern over the availability of General Funds, and the uncertainty with Federal Funding and the overall economy since the change in administration in Washington, D.C. Those initiatives, AWARE Project Phase 4 and Matrixed OCB 2025 have also dropped out of the plan.

OCB acquired 18 CoPilot licenses for a select group of managers, IT personnel, and assistive technology users in early 2026. In the year ahead, management will need to assess needs to decide if the time has come to migrate the remaining employees to CoPilot, and restrict their use to other AI applications like ChatGPT, Gemini, etc. If that decision happens in the Summer of 2026, the price of those additional licenses will have to be funded from existing resources which are already inadequate.

OCB also completed the migration of data to 365 storage by consolidating data down to a single source of truth and removing redundant information during migration in September 2025. The redesign of the agency website was also completed under budget and before our deadline of June 2024, however

accessibility became a priority in 2025, so this initiative morphed into overall website management.

The new initiative, identified a year ago and guided by the cloud-smart approach principle, would consist of a tool to assist the Orientation and Career Center (OCCB) with student enrollment and scheduling. This new application would replace an out-of-date legacy Microsoft Access database which has aged beyond its usefulness. The two options identified and researched did not meet all the needs of those who would use this tool and, with turnover at key positions further impacting this project, it has moved to a back burner position.

In March 2026, EIS CSS assessed OCB's cybersecurity position. From that, OCB is developing and operationalizing a six-month work plan based upon the assessment. This is a new initiative to the updated 2026 plan.

The principles which guide Information Technology (IT) needs at OCB continue from the 2023 version of OCB's IT Strategic Plan and are as follows:

User Focused – Ease of Use

Quality Business Data

Cross-Agency Collaboration

Advancing Diversity Equity Inclusion and Accessibility

Mission First

Cloud-Smart Approach

OCB's Business Objectives also remain unchanged from 2023, with Operational Excellence, Successful Client Outcomes, Effective Education and Outreach, and an Engaged & Proficient Team the business goals we seek to address.

II - Strategic Objectives / Initiatives

1. **Operational Excellence** – Of our three initiatives under Operational Excellence, two are still in process and one has been completed. Our goal to move from local drives to cloud storage has been completed and well under our original

cost estimates. We wrapped up this initiative in September 2025 which was just beyond our projected deadline of June 2025. This includes dove-tailing this effort with the EIS M365 retention initiative. It is now incumbent on team managers to ensure retained records are relevant and comply with retention expectations, using IT support to automate housekeeping. Our two active initiatives are the upgrade of our OCCB scheduling tool, and the development and implementation of a work plan based upon our 2026 CSS Assessment. We continue to investigate more viable options for our OCCB scheduling tool while being aware of our fiscal limitations. Initial progress has been made on the development of a work plan to move through the recommendations from our CSS Assessment. Many of the recommendations will involve cross-organizational collaboration and coordination with an initial set of action goals being set for 6 months.

2. **Successful Client Outcomes** –

- a. Our objective of successful client outcomes is tied to four initiatives in our IT Strategic Plan. Two of those initiatives, Aware Project Phase 4 and a Matrixed OCB, have been cancelled. The AWARE Project Phase 4 was reevaluated and deemed not necessary for the BEP program and any improvements from the implementation would not be cost effective. Our second initiative sought to develop agency level expertise with mandated statewide cloud-based applications including Workday Human Resources, Payroll and Time-Tracking, OregonBuys, and whatever fiscal option is contemplated in the future for SFMA by DAS and EIS. The cancellation of the Matrixed OCB initiative was due largely to resource constraints and the need to focus on entry into Order of Selection, the only mechanism our federal funding partner makes available to us to create a waitlist for individuals seeking vocational rehabilitation services.
- b. Our two other initiatives have been successfully completed. The customization of our case management system was completed in December 2024, 6 months ahead of schedule. Our final initiative was the adoption of the RIM tool which allows our instructors to effectively

remote into their client's workstations to support accessible instruction and learning. This project has been successfully completed and is highly utilized by both our instructors and IT staff.

3. **Effective Education and Outreach** – The initiative supporting this goal centers on the re-design and re-deployment of our Commission for the Blind website using the latest state-standard SharePoint templates. In addition to refreshing the site's look and functionality, we have also updated our website to be WCAG 2.1 compliant with the new Title II laws, ensuring greater accessibility for all users. This initiative has been successfully completed, though the deadline was pushed out an additional year.
4. **Engaged and Proficient Team** - This goal was tied to the initiative of adopting a chatbot-enabled knowledge base for OCB personnel, so their questions around regulations, requirements, processes, and procedures can be easily submitted to an AI logical-language-model and that model can return the best and most pertinent information based on the data in our 365-hosted data set. Abandoning the initial thought to acquire a customized solution intended specifically for State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies due to the cost of the same, this initiative's success now relies on the data migration project's success and the licensing/adoption of Microsoft Copilot as our AI solution.

III - Metrics and Targets

Initiative	2023 Magnitude of Costs	Actual (or revised) for 2026	Targeted Start Date	Duration (Months)	Actual Duration (Months)	Complete
Local to Cloud File Shares	\$28,226	\$229,719	7/1/2024	12	18	Yes
AWARE Project Phase 3	\$252,000	\$237,248	10/13/2023	21	15	Yes
Website Redesign / WCAG 2.1 Compliance	\$67,753	\$38,369	1/1/2024	6	13	Yes
Chatbot Knowledge Base >>>> CoPilot	\$466,680	\$55,800	1/1/2026	18	n/a	No
OCCB Student Services	n/a	\$11,520	7/1/2025	24	n/a	No
2026 CSS Assessment & Work Plan	n/a	n/a	5/15/2026 *	6	n/a	No

**NEW to the 2026 update*

IV - Resource Allocation

No additional funding for OCB’s IT Strategic Plan was approved for 2025-27, and no new initiatives which require additional investment are planned for 2027-29. The initiatives which remain with accompanying costs, the upgrade of our OCCB scheduling tool and additional CoPilot licenses for the rest of the agency, will have to be funded from existing resources which are already inadequate.

V - Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Like last year, this year presents persistent fiscal challenges and ongoing constraints. The Commission for the Blind continues to operate within the same budgetary limitations and financial pressures that influenced last year’s

IT Strategic Plan. The experiences gained from the prior year highlight the necessity of maintaining continuity in addressing these challenges—planning must remain flexible and responsive to changes in funding, while sustaining operational stability and exercising prudent resource management are essential. Looking forward, our agency leadership will continue to use strategies informed by our fiscal limitations while still reaffirming our dedication to careful prioritization, and adaptability.

VI - Next Steps

Given the reliance of the IT Strategic Plan on available funding and the current demands placed on IT personnel, agency leadership will maintain efforts to secure necessary resources. These resources are essential to effectively support employees who serve blind Oregonians now and in the future.

VII – Conclusion

The updated 2026 IT Strategic Plan from the Oregon Commission for the Blind focuses on balancing ambitious goals with financial and resource limitations. It outlines a shift to cloud and AI-driven solutions, efforts to enhance accessibility of public websites and documents, the need to strengthen security measures, and proactive strategies to manage risks while supporting operational excellence.