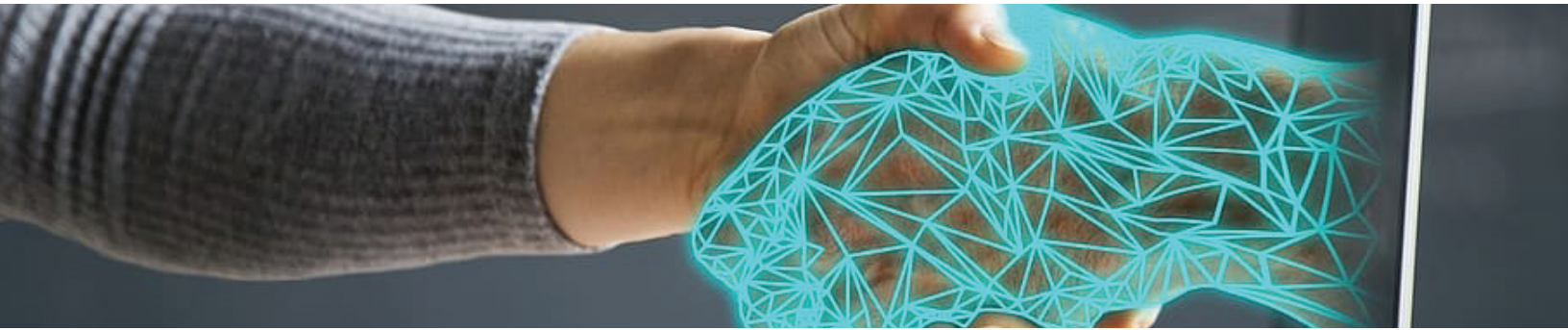


City Technology Purchases



Objective

Is the City's process for obtaining technology goods and services efficient and do those goods and services meet City needs?

Background

The City's 2019 IT Strategic Plan states its "current state of technology and its available resources do not always allow for the seamless delivery of services that our residents, businesses, and staff expect in Austin." The City's departments rely on technology to help meet the demand for their varied services. Most departments rely on the City's Communications and Technology Management department (CTM) for assistance with their technology needs, including planning for purchases. However, some of the larger departments have their own dedicated IT staff.

The City's process to purchase technology generally involves multiple parties including the City Council, CTM, the Corporate Purchasing Office, and other City departments (see Exhibit 1 on the next page).

What We Found

The City's process to purchase technology is not working effectively to ensure City needs are met.

The City has an established process to purchase technology. However, that process is not coordinated, timely, or clear and may not be applied consistently. The process does not ensure City resources are secure and protected. Additionally, the City does not have a good understanding of its needs which may result in purchases not aligned with Citywide goals. To address these issues, the City has opportunities to better understand what resources it has, clarify roles and responsibilities, and coordinate technology purchases.

The City's oversight of technology is not effective

- Only one of three listed technology oversight groups is functioning. Members of that group need better information about what the City has, how much it costs, and how key IT roles and responsibilities are defined.

Planning for purchases is not done consistently or coordinated Citywide

- The planning phase of the process is typically done by departments and information is not centrally tracked or shared with all decision-makers.
- The City does not have an effective way to plan for purchases within or across departments, and better cooperation is needed.

The City's tracking tool and review processes are not working as intended

- The City's tracking tool does not capture all technology purchases or key information from the process (see Exhibit 2 on the next page).
- Reviews of technology purchase requests are not consistently done and do not document findings.

Staff can purchase technology outside the established process

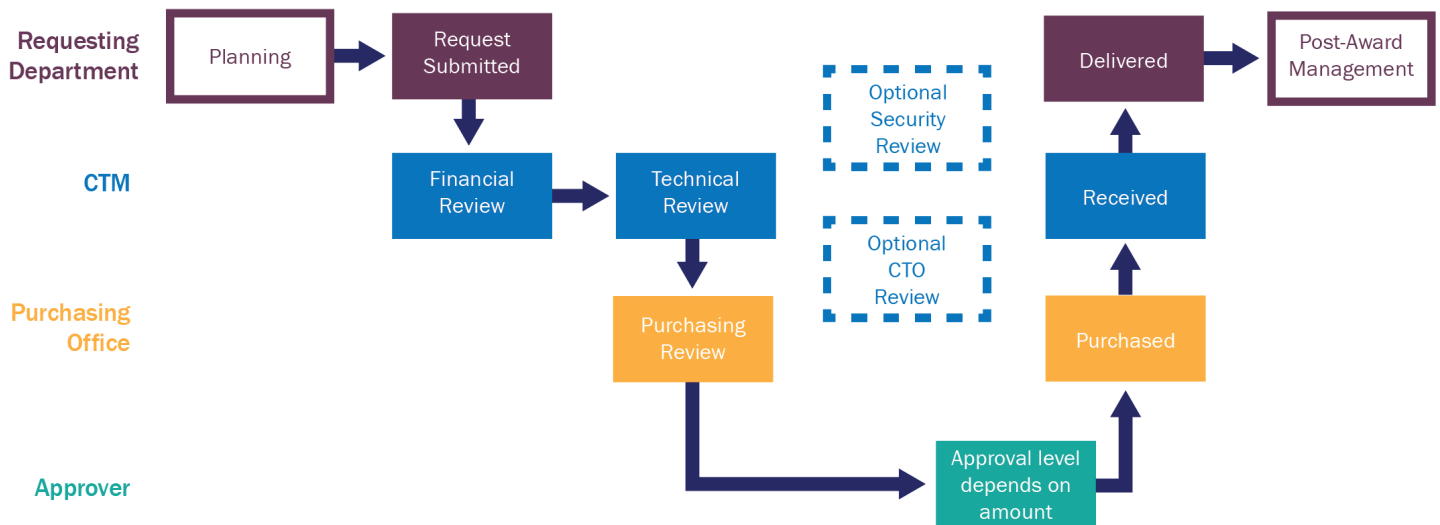
- Timelines for technology purchases are not easily tracked and about 60% of surveyed staff said the process takes too long, which may incentivize departments to go outside the process.

City Technology Purchases

What We Recommend

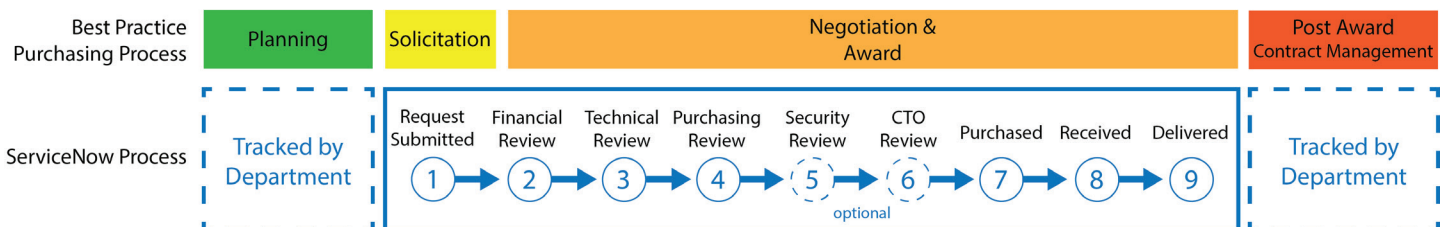
- The City Manager should ensure technology oversight or governing groups are established and operating effectively.
- The City's Chief Information Officer (CIO) should establish and lead a stakeholder group to evaluate the City's current approach to purchasing technology, address improvement opportunities, and develop options for moving to a more coordinated and effective approach.
- The City Manager should assign clear responsibility and authority for technology purchasing consistent with the results from the CIO's evaluation process.
- The City's CIO should ensure the the City maintains complete, accurate, and available information for technology purchasing decision-makers.

Exhibit 1: The City's technology purchasing process involves several steps and departments



Source: Analysis of the City's activities conducted by OCA, June 2021

Exhibit 2: CTM's tool does not track information from all four phases of the technology purchasing process



The ServiceNow process does not track the Planning or Post Award Contract Management stages of the purchasing process outlined in the Best Practice Purchasing Process.

Source: OCA analysis of the City's technology procurement activities and procedures, April 2021