Cloud Transition Task Force

Meeting Minutes
September 7, 2021, 10:00 – 12:00 Noon

Members attending:

Bill Kehoe	**Cindy Guertin-Anderson**
Vinod Brahmapuram	**Rose Feliciano**
Michael Mattmiller	**Sandra Toussiant**
Camille Kruger (did not attend)	*Staff:*
Debbie LaCroix	*Sue Langen*
Omid Ghaffari-Tabrizi	*Derek Puckett* (did not attend)
Grant Rodeheaver	**Sheri Sawyer**
Franklin Plaistowe	*Jill Satran*

Attending but not on the list:
- Jessica Fortescue
- Craig Keating
- Jerry Britcher
- Susie Fry
- Lewis McMurran
- Marie Bruin
- Bill Belden

1. **Welcome and approval of minutes** – Bill Kehoe

   Bill Kehoe kicked off the meeting. The meeting today will focus on retraining needs. We will be putting together a small work group to start forming the recommendations.

   Approval of minutes – There were no suggested changes and the minutes were adopted.

   Jill Satran reviewed the agenda and the draft issue paper on retraining that was sent previously to task force members.

2. **Workforce retraining planning – Skills assessment and inventory**

   Jill provided a brief recap of the last Task Force meeting. Reviewed the Workforce Planning Principles to Achieve Objectives. There may be a need to inventory training needs which would require involvement of State HR, ESD, WaTech/OCIO, DES, SBCTC, training vendors and Agency resources.

3. **Workforce retraining planning – Agency perspectives**

   Presentations by Jerry Britcher, CIO, Health Care Authority (HCA) and Grant Rodeheaver, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)

Jerry Britcher discussed his experiences at HCA where they have been building cloud infrastructure over years. Key observations:

Organizational Change Management is a key element of success. Staff tend to stick with what they know which can end up with a lift and shift approach which does not allow us to take advantage of the tools in the cloud. This approach will increase costs of infrastructure services. Staff need to be engaged and prepared where they can use the new tools.

Tools – each environment has its own toolsets designed to maximize capability. HCA uses AWS and Azure for M365 environment. HCA has an enterprise data warehouse, SEBB, P1 and PEBB. PEBB and SEBB programs showed us that we needed to adopt new toolsets. Previously HCA was an on-premise shop and needed to change assumptions to implement cloud technologies. New tools were needed in addition to existing tools (database tools, data movement tools). These new tools are inherent to the new environment and staff need to be prepared for this. HCA has *MORE* work that needs to be done since moving to the cloud. It did not result in a reduction of staff. Infrastructure and application development staff both have to change their tool sets.

Software as a Service (SaaS) – Procuring a software solution from a vendor who manages the services. For example, HCA has a Service Now licensing platform. Business processes are automated in the Service Now platform and developers work in this program. HCA continues to have a significant backlog for work. It did not reduce the work that was done. This new toolset requires users to train from the bottom up.

Grant Rodeheaver, State board for CTC, Previous CIO at Department of Transportation

There is a perception that cloud computing is cheaper and can reduce the state spend. This is not true and we needed to work on changing that assumption.

WSDOT transitioned the agency's website to a cloud service when they identified a need for surge capacity. At the time the on-premises service had difficulty scaling up to meet demand at certain peak loads. Using the Cloud was the right decision as it is scalable to handle high peak times (e.g., significant snow storm). This has been a successful transition.

WSDOT also shifted to a cloud solution for their development and test environments. Staff received training through Microsoft and Amazon and some contracted training through SPSCC. Originally the vendor training was provided free of charge and then became a contracted item with vendors. Staff engagement went well – it was a safe place for staff to learn. Allowed them to gain confidence and build their skill sets.

WSDOT benefitted by expertise they developed in the data center. Many skill sets will translate to the cloud. Training helped staff to make the transition.

At the state board, SBCTC moved PeopleSoft from hosted to AWS. It has worked well. Training was provided through Amazon and managed service providers directly. There has been thought of reducing staff. We are growing and will have more service post-implementation.

OCM is critical for both technical and business staff to improve adoption of new services. Staff need to find safe places to become familiar with the tools.

How did you determine the types of training needed?

The WSDOT website example was a one-off situation so people got excited about learning new skills. There wasn't any anxiety about losing their job. In the data group, they needed to bring their expertise to the cloud environment. This was a bit more challenging.

At HCA SEBB, the program was new to Washington. There was a significant amount of OCM needed to shift from individual school districts doing their own benefits management to a more centralized approach. Technically, this application was intended to be a cloud-based application. Staff were tasked with looking at things differently.

Jill Satran interviewed other stakeholders who offered additional perspectives. SaaS seemed to be a bit different for some agencies as the vendor was taking things in-house so state employees no longer managed the system. Staff were trained for an entirely new job.

Bill Kehoe offered additional perspectives:

- Moving to the cloud is different depending on the IT service you provide. It is important to help staff define what that transition looks like. It impacts all services and both business and IT staff.

- The impact varies from service to service. For example, network architects may not be as significantly affected. However, moving telephony to the cloud is huge. Application development is also a big change. Impacts for DBAs, data center, data analytics, help desk will all look different. Business analysts, contract management and project management will also differ significantly.

- It is incumbent on leadership to lay out what it looks like for each service. Retraining will vary depending on the role.

- Bill noted he didn't experience losing staff on previous projects, although the jobs looked different. And legacy systems can remain for some time and can absorb staff who do not want to make the transition.

4. **Workforce retraining delivery – Worker perspectives**

Debbie LaCroix, WaTech

Depending on the services being moved to the cloud, the positions and training needs will be different. Agencies need to identify the positions, types of needed

training, and how you will be accomplishing that *and* keep the day-to-day duties done for a workgroup during the transition.

It is important to provide training classes, job shadowing and in-training positions. Need for baseline training and job shadowing that is available for all small and large agencies. Need to ensure that this happens during the workday rather than requiring night classes.

5. **Workforce retraining sources**

Presentations were provided to review the sources of training already available for employees.

Presentation by Cindy Guertin-Anderson, Department of Enterprise Services (DES)

DES provides statewide training to all employees and public employers. They provide the platform for the training records, learning management system (LMS). The LMS platform provides registration, tracking, reporting and compliance, and hosting of training sessions.

The Learning Solutions team is responsible for procuring training for the enterprise. Training providers are varied, including companies, single trainers, IT learning lab in the training center, single agency trainings.

DES partners with South Puget Sound Community College to provide trainings. Employees can get the training through LMS. LinkedIn Learning is also a partner. DES works with the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to determine the priorities for types of training that are needed. The also consult with groups on best practices for various types of training available.

Presentation by Bill Belden and Marie Bruin, SBCTC

The presenters discussed programs that are offered throughout the 34 technical and community colleges.

- 100 different sites offer variety of workforce development training.

- 11 different centers for excellence that support a particular sector of learning. One of the centers has an IT specialty.

SBCTC has great expertise to coordinate with any entity. They can help organizations articulate needs and coordinate with the organization to determine the best location(s) to meet their needs.

Community and technical colleges offer short-term certificates to Baccalaureate degrees. They also have some ability to bring in expertise to complete learning assessments for individuals. They can also evaluate employee skills and give credit for experience to contribute towards a degree.

There are several strategies available to serve the employees and industries. SBCTC does a lot of customized training that is not for credit as well. We have a vast set of skills for a bigger initiative. We also have the ability to assess student needs to determine what they need to pursue and what funding elements may be

available. We would expect the state to put some money in to support the services.

They also partner with Workforce Development Centers (WDCs) locally within each region.

SBCTC maintains a database inventory with over 400 different offerings including some specializations based on the assessment of skills. About half of our student enrollment is looking for a career change or have been displaced. Many of them are working adults looking for a change. We have established program offerings for adult learners. As a result of the pandemic, more programs went on-line to support the transition time. Colleges are evaluating the programs and will offer courses on line where it makes sense. This creates a new level of accessibility.

Through the SBCTC, state employees may have access to specific resources such as tuition waivers or worker retraining funds. Our state also has the Washington college grant which provides broader income eligibility than federal financial aid.

Question: If the state is looking at a cloud transition process that will last several years in the making, how best would the state engage with the learning areas to plan out an approach for a longer-term strategy. What is your lead time to provide training to meet that need?

Answer:

DES – It depends on the length and complexity of the training. Need to work on a backwards calendar. DES would need to know how many people will need training and when the skills are needed. Would work with the training provider and agencies to determine curriculum into the employment lifecycle.

SBCTC – It will take about 60-90 days to procure a vendor to support a credit-based programs. Then there will be another 60-90 days to develop the program. If using existing programs, it will take no time to set up.

Vendor provided training – Certification programs are offered by many of the cloud services providers. Platform teams are used to working in these programs. The large vendors partner with other vendors (e.g., Coursera and Udemy) that can provide a robust environment to serve employees.

Procurements for cloud services often include training programs within the contracts.

As technology evolves, there will be new technologies. Some require quick update training, while others require significant retraining. New concepts such as DevOps will change how we write solutions from the bottom up. We need to understand what we want our workforce to learn for both incremental and wholesale changes.

While it is important to learn the conceptual foundation, the state may implement a specific solution that requires just in time training. That reinforces the training and readily applicable in the work place.

6. Open Discussion – key findings, recommendations, gaps

The task force will need to start honing in on the messages to the Governor and the Legislature and to begin drafting recommendations for retraining and methods. We will be putting together a small workgroup to begin drafting the recommendation. Jill will also be touching base with each member to ensure each task force member has an opportunity to weigh in on the recommendations.

Bill Kehoe identified several themes

- The journey to the cloud is different for each agency and for the staff within each job classification. Retraining is not just for IT. It will be required for all related staff (contracts, security, business analysis, project management.)

- One of the recommendations may to compile an inventory of available training types and sources.

- We need to get a commitment on certifications and other training available from our industry partners so we come away with a good inventory of what is available today.

- There is a lot of diversity of impacts to each of the service offerings. We need to cross reference these with the training that is available.

It is important to understand that moving to the cloud is already happening for most agencies. It is not a big bang experience – it is happening incrementally. Every agency will have their own journey and strategy based on their individual needs. As they move forward, they can draw on this work without needing to do their own independent research.

7. Next Meeting and Wrap Up

Next meeting is September 28, 2021.

The next meeting will focus on the methods of training although much of that was covered in today's meeting. We will also be focusing on draft recommendations that we will want to include in the Task Force's report to the legislature.

Logistics – we are scheduled to meet on October 14 but we are seeing some scheduling conflicts. Jill will reach out to others to look at the future meeting cadence of meetings.

8. Public Comment

Craig Keating – Need to also identify durations for each training to help determine the just in time moment. Requested that all minutes be posted to the website. They will be posted when complete.

Meeting adjourned.