

Organizational Assessment

VERMONT SECRETARY OF STATE

FINAL REPORT



February 27, 2014

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1. INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Matrix Consulting Group was retained by the Vermont Secretary of State to conduct an Organizational Assessment of the various operational units of the Office. The following report presents the results of the study. This study was designed to provide an assessment of the Vermont Secretary of State's staffing levels, organizational structure, and the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall operations. At this concluding point of the study, the project team has assembled this draft final report, which summarizes our findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

1. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY.

As part of an effort to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the operations of the Secretary of State's Office, the Secretary of State undertook this organizational assessment to ensure that processes, staffing and resources were effectively being utilized in the provision of services to the public. The overarching goal was to develop a plan for continuous improvement of services that complemented the numerous improvements already implemented by the Secretary since assuming office.

While this report provides specific recommendations to enhance services, improve processes, and align staffing requirements with service demands, these are mainly incremental changes and enhancements that complement efforts already underway. By conducting this study and as evidenced by previous activities, the Secretary of State has committed to a process of continuous improvement for the Office designed to ensure efficient and effective service provision. Implementing the recommendations contained in this report will continue and bolster this effort.

2. STUDY SCOPE AND METHODOLOGIES

The Secretary of State sought assistance in evaluating its current organizational structure, staffing allocations, and operational practices in a proactive approach to evaluating and improving operations. The Secretary sought this review to complement his continued efforts to streamline operations while maintaining appropriate service levels in an increasingly challenging economic environment.

In this study, the Matrix Consulting Group's project team utilized a wide variety of data collection and analytical techniques. The project team conducted the following data collection and analytical activities:

- **Develop an in-depth understanding of the key issues impacting the Office.** To evaluate the Office's organizational structure and staffing allocations, the Matrix Consulting Group conducted interviews with a large percentage of the employees in each division of the Secretary of State's Office. Interviews focused on goals and objectives, management systems, the use of technology, the levels of service provided by the division, and the resources available to provide those services, etc.
- **Develop a Profile of the Secretary of State's Office.** The Matrix Consulting Group conducted interviews with Office staff in each division to document current organization of services, the structure and functions of the various divisions, budgets, workload data, management systems, etc. This document was utilized as a "base" point of comparison for further analysis and comparison for all recommended changes.
- **Provide an opportunity for employee input.** In addition to interviews, the Matrix Consulting Group administered an employee survey. This survey asked employees to evaluate a variety of statements regarding the overall operations of the Secretary of State's Office and their divisions, and to identify constraints they faced, as well as their perceptions on improvement opportunities.
- **Provide an opportunity for stakeholder input.** The Matrix Consulting Group administered several surveys that were targeted at the major stakeholders served by the various Divisions of the Secretary of State's Office. Stakeholders surveyed included: professional registrants, Town Clerks, Records Officers and Records Liaisons, and Board/Committee Members.

- **Identify key strengths and opportunities for improvement in each division.** The best management practices included comparisons to industry standards developed by professional organizations. Additionally, the project team also utilized the Matrix Consulting Group library of best practices – developed by the firm while conducting hundreds of management studies throughout the country. The project team focused on best management practices for comparable services provided by other governmental entities.
- **Conduct further analysis of issues identified and summarize analysis in the project report.** Based on initial findings, the project team evaluated additional data, analyzed issues and alternatives, resulting in recommendations to staffing levels and management that would streamline operations, organizational structure and service delivery.

The objective of this study was to identify opportunities for improvement in the Secretary of State's Office for operational and organizational efficiency, as well as to assess individual departmental staffing needs and the overall organizational structure appropriate for the Secretary of State's Office in the future.

This report consists of a summary of the review of the operations, management, and staffing of each division in the Secretary of State's Office.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following table presents a summary of the recommendations contained in this report. Each recommendation is categorized into one of three categories (organization, management, staffing), assigned a priority level (based upon impact to the organization), and a designated individual assigned for responsibility to implement, and an estimated cost provided (if applicable).

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Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Category	Priority	Responsible Party	Cost
Chapter 6 Section 6.5	Focus the time and attention of the Secretary of State more on external relations – constituent as well as legislative and executive branches of State government. There will need to be a transition period of up to six (6) months to ensure that there is a plan for the Deputy to provide effective oversight for the Secretary of State's Office programs and services.	Management	High	Secretary of State	n/a
Chapter 6 Section 6.5	Clarify the duties of the Deputy Secretary of State to focus on the internal operations of the Office and the divisions, programs and functions within it. The Deputy will continue to be involved in constituent issues as well as legislative processes, but at reduced levels.	Staffing	High	Secretary of State	n/a
Chapter 6 Section 6.5	Utilize a working title for the Private Secretary to function as a Legislative Analyst or Legislative Coordinator to focus on the legislative needs of the Office, researching the specifics of legislative needs and working with Office and Legislative resources to enact it.	Organization	High	Secretary of State	Unknown
Chapter 6 Section 6.5	Fill the long-vacant Executive Assistant position to serve as the Office lead support person to handle constituent issues, public information and other duties.	Staffing	High	Secretary of State	\$50,000

Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Category	Priority	Responsible Party	Cost
Chapter 6 Section 6(1)	The Secretary of State should develop an annual work program for key initiatives and efforts of the Office in conjunction with each Director to ensure goals, programs and resources are in alignment.	Management	High	Secretary of State	n/a
Chapter 6 Section 6(1)	The annual work program should be reviewed at least quarterly with each Director, and should serve as a major component of each Director's annual performance evaluation.	Management	Medium	Secretary of State	n/a
Chapter 6 Section 6(2)	The Secretary of State should continue surveying key stakeholder groups on an annual basis to monitor satisfaction levels over time, and provide an avenue for ongoing input from these customers.	Management	Medium	Secretary of State	n/a
Chapter 6 Section 6(3)	Additional support should be provided to the Town Clerks through educational and information training sessions, including the use of online webinar sessions that are accessible and available to Town Clerks at all times.	Management	Medium	Deputy	n/a
Chapter 6 Section 6(4)	A complete review of information publications should be conducted with a focus on eliminating ongoing maintenance and publications that are not focused on direct Secretary of State services. The primary distribution method for publications should be electronic formats to reduce publication and distribution costs and enable more frequent updating.	Management	Medium	Executive Assistant	n/a

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Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Category	Priority	Responsible Party	Cost
Chapter 6 Section 6(5)	The efforts to update the website currently underway should continue as a high priority for the organization. A high level of focus should be placed on providing the ability for users to access information and services online without needing to visit or call the Secretary of State's Office.	Management	High	All executives	Unknown
Chapter 6 Section 6.2(6)	Staff should continue to explore efforts to streamline work processes by eliminating requirements for notarization of signatures where signatures are affixed based upon authority granted to the position and no statutory requirement is present requiring notarization.	Management	Medium	Deputy Secretary	n/a
Chapter 7 Section 7.1	No change is recommended in the organizational structure or immediate full-time staffing allocation for the Administrative Services Division based upon existing workloads and services provided.	Organization	n/a	n/a	n/a
Chapter 7 Section 7.1	Longer-term, a dedicated receptionist position should be added to the Administrative Services Division to handle all incoming telephone and walk-in inquiries for the Office. This position will only be required if and when the receptionist duties cannot be effectively handled by the existing position in addition to the financial and administrative duties assigned to it.	Staffing	Low	Administrative Services Director	\$45,000

Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Category	Priority	Responsible Party	Cost
Chapter 7 Section 7.2(1)	Additional policy and procedure manuals should be developed to cover all major functional areas of operations. All manuals should be made available on an intranet or similar site to ensure staff has access to them. Highest priority should be on the employee manual.	Management	Medium	Administrative Services Director	n/a
Chapter 7 Section 7.2(2)	Additional cross training should be provided to provide a backup for the budgeting and financial reporting duties of the Financial Manager II positions.	Management	Medium	Administrative Services Director	n/a
Chapter 7 Section 7.2(3)	Conduct quarterly meetings between budget staff and Department Directors to review expenditures and determine if any adjustments are necessary.	Management	Low	Financial Manager / Directors	n/a
Chapter 7 Section 7.2(4)	Ensure that the business owner/manager requesting a good or service has a copy of the final contract.	Management	High	Administrative Services Director	n/a
Chapter 7 Section 7.2(4)	Provide training to management staff in the use of Vision to track contracts in the system.	Management	Medium	Administrative Services Director	n/a
Chapter 7 Section 7.2(5)	Financial staff should develop an internal control and financial practices training session that all staff involved in handling payments, processing invoices, and otherwise involved in budgetary activities are required to participate in at least once every three years.	Management	High	Administrative Services Director	n/a

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Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Category	Priority	Responsible Party	Cost
Chapter 7 Section 7.2(5)	The Financial Manager II position should conduct random audits of financial transactions handled by staff in each division.	Management	High	Administrative Services Director	n/a
Chapter 7 Section 7.2(6)	The Information Technology Department should develop a strategic plan.	Management	High	Administrative Services Director	n/a
Chapter 7 Section 7.2(7)	The Office should continue to develop the recently drafted multi-year technology plan to ensure that all high priority initiatives and technology needs can be accomplished with existing funding levels and to determine support for future funding needs/ requests of the legislature.	Management	Medium	Administrative Services Director	n/a
Chapter 7 Section 7.2(8)	The Information Technology Department should work with customer departments to develop an IT steering committee to provide input on major IT issues.	Management	High	Administrative Services Director	n/a
Chapter 7 Section 7.2(8)	The Information Technology Steering Committee's roles should be clearly defined to include establishment of IT goals, prioritization of needs and communications/ problem solving between operating departments and the IT Unit.	Management	High	Administrative Services Director	n/a
Chapter 7 Section 7.2(9)	The Information Technology Department uses a formal process for the acquisition and selection of new application software. However, because this acquisition process is typically focused on the individual requesting Department all such systems need to be placed in an overall context of the entire operations of the Vermont Secretary of State's Office.	Management	Medium	Administrative Services Director	n/a

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Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Category	Priority	Responsible Party	Cost
Chapter 7 Section 7.2(10)	The role of webmaster should be assigned to the Executive Assistant position. In this role, the Executive Assistant should oversee website management and content.	Management	Medium	Administrative Services Director	n/a
Chapter 7 Section 7.2(10)	The Executive Assistant should develop content management and formatting guidelines to ensure a consistent look and feel to the new Secretary of State website. Training should be provided to the designated web coordinators within each division.	Management	Medium	Administrative Services Director	n/a
Chapter 7 Section 7.2(11)	The Secretary of State should require all managers to complete assigned performance evaluations in a timely manner.	Management	High	Secretary of State	n/a
Chapter 7 Section 7.2(11)	One component of supervisor evaluations should be on their performance of their managerial/supervisory duties, including completion of performance evaluations.	Management	Medium	Administrative Services Director	n/a
Chapter 7 Section 7.2(11)	Annual training plans are not developed for all employees. These should be included within the annual performance evaluation to develop goals and objectives for the coming year.	Management	High	Secretary of State	n/a
Chapter 7 Section 7.2(12)	Performance targets should be established for the handling of major functional duties (such as Human Resources) to measure performance.	Management	Medium	VAC Program Coordinator	n/a

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Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Category	Priority	Responsible Party	Cost
Chapter 8 Section 8.2(1)	The Secretary of State should undertake discussion with the appropriate legislative staff to determine their willingness to take over responsibility for the preparation of the legislative directory.	Organization	High	Secretary of State / Director of Elections	n/a
Chapter 8 Section 8.2(2)	The Secretary of State should evaluate the benefits and seek to expand their statutory authority from simply serving as a “receive and file” unit to a “compliance review and enforcement” approach for all required filings related to campaign finance, elections, and lobbyist disclosure.	Management	High	Secretary of State / Director of Elections	n/a
Chapter 8 Section 8.2(2)	Staffing increases will be required should the Secretary of State’s Office implement compliance reviews. However, specific staffing levels cannot be determined until the new role is clearly defined.	Management	Medium	Secretary of State / Director of Elections	Unknown
Chapter 8 Section 8.2(3)	Given the critical nature of the duties of this division, especially those related to elections, a comprehensive policy and procedures manual should be developed to ensure consistency of interpretation and enforcement by all staff.	Management	Medium	Director of Elections	n/a

Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Category	Priority	Responsible Party	Cost
Chapter 8 Section 8.2(4)	Given limited staffing, which is typically sufficient to handle workloads, staff should supplement educational efforts by creating additional training materials including online webinars for use by the division's stakeholders. All webinars and educational materials should be made available on the Secretary of State's website.	Management	Medium	Director of Elections	n/a
Chapter 8 Section 8.2(5)	Basic performance targets should be adopted, measured and reported on a monthly basis. An annual summary should be included in the Secretary of State annual report and posted on the website.	Management	Medium	Director of Elections	n/a
Chapter 9 Section 9.1(2)	No changes in organizational structure or full-time staff positions are recommended based upon existing workloads and services provided.	Organization	n/a	n/a	n/a
Chapter 9 Section 9.1(2)	The existing part-time temporary position should be increased to full-time hours until future staffing requirements can be adequately determined. This will not be feasible until after the software system and the resulting business processes changes are fully implemented.	Staffing	High	Corporations Director	n/a
Chapter 9 Section 9.2(1)	An expedited processing option should be made available to customers needing a faster option for business registrations.	Management	Low	Corporations Director	n/a

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Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Category	Priority	Responsible Party	Cost
Chapter 9 Section 9.2(2)	Basic performance targets for the Corporations Division should be adopted, measured, and reported on a monthly basis. An annual summary should be included in the Secretary of State annual report and posted on the website.	Management	Medium	Corporations Director	n/a
Chapter 9 Section 9.2(3)	A comprehensive policy and procedures manual should be developed for the Corporations Division to ensure consistency of interpretation and enforcement by all staff and to serve as a training tool for future new staff.	Management	Medium	Corporations Director	n/a
Chapter 9 Section 9.2(3)	All manuals should be made available on an intranet or similar site.	Management	Low	Corporations Director	n/a
Chapter 9 Section 9.2(4)	Highest priority for implementation of new technology is the continued expansion of online services to reduce the need to interact with the Corporations staff on routine transactions.	Management	High	Corporations Director	n/a
Chapter 10 Section 10.2	A Deputy Director position should be established within the Office of Professional Regulation. This position should supervise the Executive Officers and Licensing Administrator and subordinate staff, and focus on the daily operations of the professional registration duty.	Organization	High	Secretary of State	Depends on classification

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Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Category	Priority	Responsible Party	Cost
Chapter 10 Section 10.3	One licensing administrator position should be eliminated. All boards and committees not supervised by either the Pharmacy Executive Officer or the Nursing Executive Officer should report to a single Licensing Administrator position.	Staffing / Organization	High	Director of OPR	\$60,000
Chapter 10 Section 10.3	The licensing administrator position should be responsible for overseeing the e-licensing efforts including further implementation and modification.	Staffing	High	Director of OPR	n/a
Chapter 10 Section 10.3	All duties related to handling follow-up duties on discipline and remediation should be reallocated from the licensing administrators to the Case Management staff.	Organization	High	Director of OPR	n/a
Chapter 10 Section 10.4	The Legal Assistant Position should be reallocated to report directly to the Licensing Administrator II/ Case Manager position.	Organization	High	Director of OPR	n/a
Chapter 10 Section 10.4	Longer-term, if additional professions are included with the Office of Professional Regulation for administration and oversight, consideration should be given to establishing a dedicated case management unit that handles all case management activities for all professions.	Organization	Low	Director of OPR	n/a

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Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Category	Priority	Responsible Party	Cost
Chapter 10 Section 10.6(1)	In the short-term, the existing organizational structure and focus of Professional Regulations should remain, with no additional duties moved to this division other than those associated with the current effort to move responsibility for notary oversight.	Management	High	Director of OPR	n/a
Chapter 10 Section 10.6(1)	Longer-term consideration should be given to expanding the professions and trades for which the Secretary of State provides registration activities to implement a “one-stop” approach to professional registration as seen in select other states. Legislative action would be required for implementation.	Organization	High	Secretary of State / Director of OPR	n/a
Chapter 10 Section 10.6(1)	Consider exploring options to incorporate responsibility for oversight and administration of the Vermont Prescription Monitoring System – from the independent Board as it currently exists to a function overseen by the Office of Professional Regulation, specifically the Pharmacy Executive Director.	Organization	Medium	Secretary of State / Director of OPR	n/a
Chapter 10 Section 10.6(2)	The developed procedure manuals should be reviewed, maintained and utilized as part of training for all new staff assigned to registration duties in the Professional Regulation Division. These manuals should be available on the intranet for all staff.	Management	Medium	Director of OPR	n/a
Chapter 10 Section 10.6(3)	Develop a plan to cross-train all licensing board specialists so that during the cyclical peak workload seasons, all staff can be assigned to assist, even outside of their normal area of assignment.	Management	Medium	Director of OPR	n/a

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Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Category	Priority	Responsible Party	Cost
Chapter 10 Section 10.6(4)	Develop greater online educational materials to support the covered professions. Checklists and educational materials should be available on the website and cover topics including ethics, registration procedures, continuing education requirements, and practice issues.	Management	Medium	Director of OPR	n/a
Chapter 10 Section 10.6(4)	Develop additional training sessions should over time. Specific focus should be placed on developing a series of online webinars that can be utilized at the convenience of the registrant. Session topics should include ethics, registration procedures, practice issues, the complaint procedure, etc.	Management	Medium	Director of OPR	n/a
Chapter 10 Section 10.6(5)	Standard performance targets for key OPR functions should be established for processing license/registration renewals, investigations (initial determination of whether an investigation is warranted, and length of time for conduct of the investigation). A monthly report of performance against the established targets should be prepared and posted on the website and included in the annual report.	Management	Medium	Director of OPR	n/a

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Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Category	Priority	Responsible Party	Cost
Chapter 10 Section 10.6(6)	Future modifications to the e-licensing software should include additional functionality to enable automation and online processing of late registrations (including late fee calculations, online submittal of required training documentation and practice plans, and online payments).	Management	High	Director of OPR	n/a
Chapter 11 Section 11.1(2)	The existing position of Administrative Assistant B should be replaced with a higher-level position and assigned responsibility for handling data analysis, procedure development, and assisting with policy implementation to provide necessary support to the Director.	Staffing	High	Secretary of State / State Archivist	Unknown
Chapter 11 Section 11.1(2)	A new full-time position of Reference Archivist should be implemented to dedicate a resource to staffing the Reference Library and increase the hours of service to the public – at an estimated annual salary cost of \$50,000 to \$65,000,	Staffing	High	Secretary of State / State Archivist	\$50,000 to \$65,000
Chapter 11 Section 11.1(2)	The current grant-funded archivist position should be converted to a position funded by the state at the expiration of the grant funds – at an estimated annual salary cost of \$22,500 to \$27,500.	Staffing	High	Secretary of State / State Archivist	\$22,500 to \$27,500
Chapter 11 Section 11.1(2)	To bring the Secretary of State's Office into compliance with records retention regulations, the Office should utilize temporary staffing for these duties.	Staffing	High	Secretary of State / State Archivist	Unknown

Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Category	Priority	Responsible Party	Cost
Chapter 11 Section 11.3(1)	To make required statutory changes reallocate the responsibility of the legislative clerk – specifically, numbering legislation and preparation and distribution of certified copies of resolutions.	Management	High	Secretary of State / State Archivist	n/a
Chapter 11 Section 11.3(2)	To address the desired support identified by stakeholders in the survey, VSARA staff should develop additional educational materials that enable stakeholders to further understand statutory requirements and how to comply with them. Where applicable, technology such as the use of webinars should be utilized to enable customers to utilize the seminars at their convenience.	Management	Medium	State Archivist	n/a
Chapter 11 Section 11.3(2)	Additional training sessions should be developed for State Records Officers and Records Liaisons focused on their individual roles and responsibilities. These sessions should be archived online for participants to review at their leisure for refresher training.	Management	Medium	State Archivist	n/a
Chapter 11 Section 11.3(3)	Of highest importance to VSARA is the development and implementation of more functional technology solutions to support their mission. This need has already been identified by the Secretary of State's Office and included within the high-level IT plan that has been developed.	Management	High	IT / State Archivist	Unknown

Each of these recommendations is discussed in more detail later in the report.

2. PROFILE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE

The purpose of the descriptive profile is to document the project team's understanding of the Vermont Secretary of State organization. The profile includes a summary of each division's roles and responsibilities, organizational structure, allocation of staff by function, and the principal assigned responsibilities of staff. Data contained in the profile was developed based on site work conducted by the project team, including:

- Interviews with other departmental managers in the Office to discuss quality of service issues, inter-divisional coordination, technology issues, etc.
- Interviews with staff to understand roles and responsibilities within the Vermont Secretary of State organization. The project team interviewed staff in each of the divisions, including: Administration, Administrative Services, Corporations, Professional Regulation, Archives and Records Management, and Elections.
- Collection of various data describing organization and staffing, workload and service levels as well as costs. Documentation of key practices relating to work planning, work processes, scheduling, policies and procedures.
- Limited observation of worksite, processes, workflow and staff activities.

The structure of this descriptive profile for the Vermont Secretary of State Office is as follows:

- Introduction
- Organizational charts of each division by key functional areas.
- Summary descriptions of key roles and responsibilities of positions.
- Summary of key workload measures and technology utilization.

The descriptions of responsibilities provided in the "Summary of Key Roles and Responsibilities" section summarize the team's understanding of the major programs

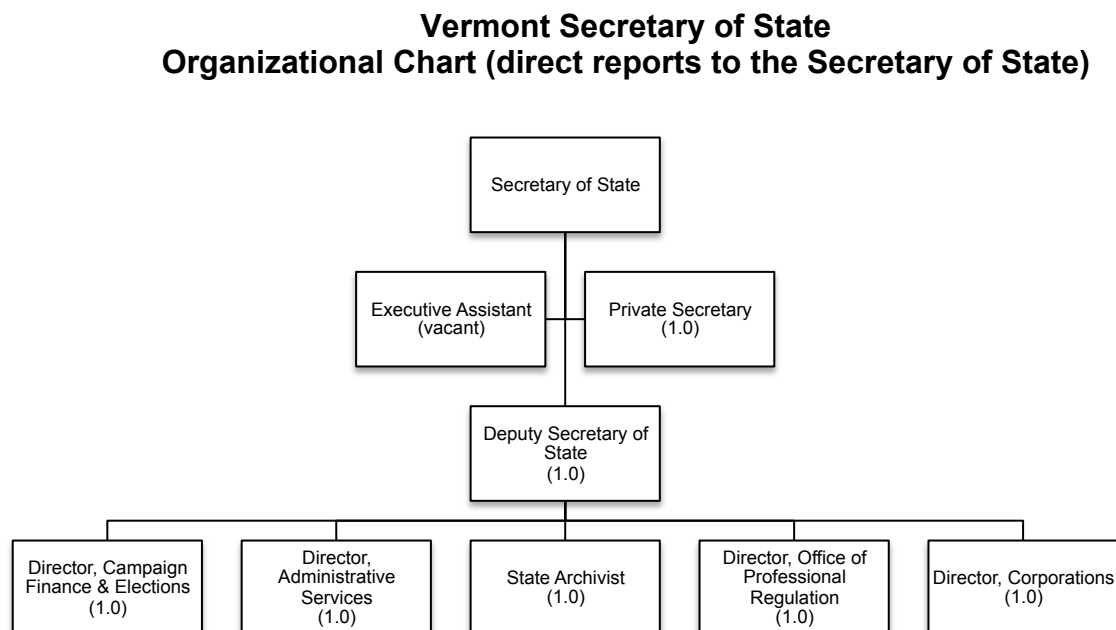
and service activities to which staff throughout the Secretary of State's Office are assigned. These descriptions are not intended to provide the level of detail of a typical job description. Rather, the descriptions provide the basic responsibilities and reporting relationships for each position.

1. ADMINISTRATION.

The Secretary of State and his staff are charged with protecting public health and safety, facilitating and monitoring commerce in the state, protecting the validity of the state's electoral process, and encouraging citizen engagement by protecting public access to government and its records.

(1) Organization

The following chart shows the current organizational structure of the Secretary of State's Office and the direct reports to the Secretary of State:



The following section provides a summary of the key roles and responsibilities of the positions in the Administrative Division.

(2) Summary of Key Roles and Responsibilities

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role in Development Review Process
Administration		
Secretary of State	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Serves as head of the entire Secretary of State Organization.• Responsible for carrying out the duties of the Vermont Secretary of State Office as prescribed by Statute.• Established priorities for each division within the Secretary of State's Office.
Deputy Secretary of State	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Serves as Deputy for Secretary of State and member of executive team.• Spends a significant amount of time on legal issues related to the Secretary of State's office including municipal issues/ inquiries, open meetings issues, and public records.• Issues opinions on public records requests.• Handles special projects for the Office as assigned by the Secretary of State.• Assists, as needed, on internal investigations and performance related issues.• Reviews and signs off on all performance evaluations conducted by management staff for their assigned employees.

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role in Development Review Process
Private Secretary	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists with variety of administrative issues for the Secretary of State. Handles constituent correspondence, phone calls on behalf of Secretary of State. Provides legislative support to the Secretary of State regarding initiatives of the Office. Provides briefing documents and talking points for the Secretary's meetings, presentations, and other public comments. Develops and issues press releases, newsletters, and other public documents related to issues handled by the Office. Handles press inquiries and requests for information.
Executive Secretary	1.0	Position is currently vacant.

(3) Summary of Budget

The following table presents a summary of the Vermont Secretary of State's budget for the last three years by major program area:

Fiscal Year	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Line Item			
Salaries & Wages Budget	\$3,403,642	\$3,346,288	\$3,601,167
Fringe Benefits Budget	\$1,504,703	\$1,663,207	\$1,721,487
Per Diem	\$166,097	\$232,644	\$232,644
Contracted and Third Party	\$727,606	\$787,795	\$1,438,861
Property Management	\$16,218	\$23,000	\$23,000
Repair & Maintenance	\$35,482	\$17,437	\$17,437
Rentals Budget	\$570,047	\$555,325	\$639,802
Purchased Services Budget	\$884,394	\$802,138	\$840,180
Supplies Budget	\$107,075	\$74,372	\$74,372
Equipment Budget	\$128,828	\$323,397	\$323,397
Other Operating Expenses	\$47,589	\$62,118	\$63,220
Grants Other Than AHS Budget	\$80,065	\$945,114	\$812,715
Other Non-Operating Exp Budget	\$0	\$0	\$0
Transfer Out Budget	\$0	\$0	\$0
EXPENDITURE TOTALS	\$7,671,746	\$8,832,835	\$9,788,282

Fiscal Year	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
By Fund			
General Fund	\$1,506,287	\$1,518,552	\$0
SoS Services Fund	\$0	\$0	\$3,662,119
Federal Revenue Fund	\$125,605	\$156,760	\$127,599
Federal Election Reform HAVA 2002	\$613,358	\$1,843,240	\$1,872,401
Securities Regulatory	\$493,811	\$492,991	\$0
Prof Regulatory Fee Fund	\$3,888,632	\$3,931,927	\$4,039,163
Rulemaking Advertising Fund	\$72,765	\$100,000	\$0
Vermont Campaign Fund	\$625,816	\$504,878	\$0
Funeral & Burial Service Trust	\$0	\$0	\$0
Archives Workshop Fund	\$0	\$0	\$0
Surplus Property	\$0	\$0	\$0
BGS-Public Records-Receipts	\$0	\$99,487	\$12,000
BGS-Vital Records	\$102,886	\$110,000	\$0
Inter-Unit Transfers Fund	\$242,587	\$75,000	\$75,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES BY FUND	\$7,671,746	\$8,832,835	\$9,788,282

Fiscal Year	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Revenue			
General Fund	\$1,662,027	\$1,518,552	\$0
Special Fund	\$5,259,697	\$5,239,283	\$7,713,282
Federal Revenue Fund	\$787,048	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
Interdepartmental Transfer	\$76,840	\$75,000	\$75,000
TOTAL FUNDING	\$7,785,612	\$8,832,835	\$9,788,282

(4) Summary of Statute.

The following table provides an initial summary of the duties outlined in the noted statute related to duties established for the Secretary of State by legislation:

Statute Section (Title 3 – Chapter 5):	Description
§101 – Commission	Establishes Secretary of State's Office.
§103 – Documents Required to be Filed	All bonds, leases, deeds, and contracts filed with Secretary.
§104 – Preparation of Acts and Resolutions	Secretary takes custody of acts and resolutions of the legislature.
§106 – Acts and Resolutions of Assembly	Secretary keeps acts and resolutions on permanent file.
§107 – Legislative Clerk	Clerk assists Secretary in duties related to the legislature.
§108 – Compilations, Indices, and Bulletins	Secretary issues indices, compilations, bulletins, etc. related to Vermont statutes as necessary.

Statute Section (Title 3 – Chapter 5):	Description
§109 – Laws and Journals	Secretary keeps a copy of journals, laws, and revisions after each legislative session.
§110 – Surveyor’s General Papers	Secretary keeps surveyor general’s papers.
§111 – Township Charters	Secretary keeps records of township charters.
§112 – Statements and Communications to General Assembly	Secretary makes statements and communications to general assembly.
§113 – Record by Photographic Method	Photographic record of documents holds same force as a legal copy.
§117 – Vermont State Archives and Records Administration	Outlines responsibilities of VSARA regarding management and storage of records and archives.
§122 – Office of Professional Regulation	Establishes Office of Prof. Regulation and list of regulated professions.
§123 – Duties of Office	Outlines administrative and technical duties of the Office of Prof. Regulation in assisting the boards.
§124 – Professional Regulatory Fee Fund	Establishes Professional Regulatory Fee Fund so each profession funds its own regulation.
§125 – Fees	Lists fees that may be charged by the boards.
§126 – Agent for Process; Nonresident Licenses	Office of Prof. Regulation serves as agent of professionals in other states.
§127 – Unauthorized Practice	Outlines process for dealing with unauthorized practice.
§128 – Disciplinary Action to be Reported	Instances of discipline on a registered professional must be reported to the board.
§129 – Powers of Board; Discipline Process	Outlines powers of board for investigating and disciplining professionals.
§129a – Unprofessional Conduct	Defines unprofessional conduct.
§129b – Board Member and Advisor Appointments	Outlines appointment and meeting process for boards.
§130a – Appeals from Board Decisions	Outlines process for appeal regarding board decisions.
§131 – Accessibility of Disciplinary Matters	Procedures to inform public of actions rightfully taken against professionals, and protect professionals from disclosure of false claims made against them.
§132 – Board Quorums	Majority required for a board quorum.

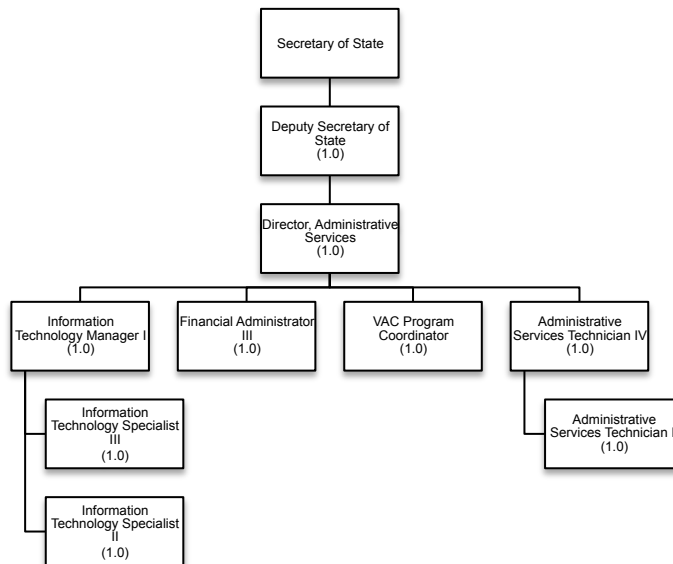
2. ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION.

The Administrative division of the Secretary of State’s office takes responsibility for the human resources, information technology, and financial services necessary to the functioning of the office.

(1) Organization

The current organizational structure of the Administrative Division unit is shown below:

Vermont Secretary of State
Administrative Services Organizational Chart



The following section provides a summary of the key roles and responsibilities of the positions in the Administrative Division.

(2) Summary of Key Roles and Responsibilities

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
Administrative Division		
Administrative Services Director III	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversees and administers the Administrative Services Division of the Secretary of State's Office. Supervises the FA III, IT Manager, VAC Program Coordinator/Personnel Administrator, and Administrative Services Technician IV. Serves as member of Executive Team. Responsible for oversight and administration of areas including Finance, Personnel, and Information Technology. Establishes internal administrative procedures and processes for major administrative functions (human resources, financial, procurement, and information technology) ensure procedures are appropriately implemented and complied with by all staff. Business Office functions including reception area of Secretary of State's Office. Assigns work, establishes priorities, and evaluates efforts of all assigned staff. Ensures adopted budget is designed to allocate funds to highest priorities of the Secretary of State's Office.
Financial Manager II	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for the development and administration of the Office budget including operating and capital budget. Evaluates, with assistance from operating divisions, appropriateness of fees for services. Monitors budget on on-going basis for compliance with adopted allocations, runs reports – as needed – for Division Directors for use in monitoring individual budget accounts. Involved in grant fund oversight and monitoring including HAVA.

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
VAC Program Coordinator	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human resources coordinator for the Secretary of State's Office; Office HR representative for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment/hiring of new personnel Personnel actions/investigations and disciplinary actions Job description/employee classifications maintenance Internal coordinator for the State's HR system (PeopleSoft) New employee orientations. Handles contracts for the Secretary of State's Office including all personal services contract, website maintenance, Vote by Phone, IT contracts, etc. Coordinator for grants in the Secretary of State's Office. Coordinator for the address confidentiality program in "Safe at Home" for domestic abuse/violence victims, principally relating to coordinating with 16 shelters in the State, education and information disseminating; developed on line tools for information; gets new advocates in the State certified.
Administrative Services Technician IV	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handles processing of all invoices to be paid by the Secretary of State's Office. Ensures appropriate documentation and sign-off are available on items. Ensures invoices are appropriately charged to correct line item and contract (if applicable) Administers the temporary Officiant Program. Handles asset management program for the Office. Issues all work orders for maintenance required by Secretary of State facilities including facility maintenance, phone support, etc. Serves as payroll delegate and expense coordinator for the Office. Assists with processing new employees. Assists with receptionist duties for the front office and back up support for incoming phones. Supervises Admin Services Tech III

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
Administrative Services Technician II	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary receptionist for walk-ins at the main Secretary of State Office. • Handles in-coming phone calls to the Secretary of State Office. Answers questions or directs to appropriate staff member for handling. • Assists with administering the temporary Officiant Program. • Provides backup support to Administrative Services Technician IV as requested. • Assists with entry and processing of invoices (those under \$1,000).
Information Technology Manager I	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves as Chief Technology Officer for the Secretary of State Office. • Supervises assigned staff – assigning work, establishing performance standards and timeframes for completion, and evaluating performance. • Provides project management oversight for major IT initiatives within the Secretary of State's Office. Currently significant projects underway including updating, Corporations system implementation and preparation for Elections system selection. • Oversees all IT contracts for services. • Serves as principal liaison with the State's central IT staff to ensure Secretary of State compliance and conformance to state adopted standards and guidelines related to IT.
Information Technology Specialist II	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principally responsible for handling PC related issues including installation, resolving operational issues, installation of new software, • Serves as primary operational support personnel for Secretary of State's Office related to PC operational issues. Initial and primary technical support for users on software and hardware issues. • Provides backup support, as needed, on network and server services.

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
Information Technology Specialist III	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Principally responsible for ensuring server and networks remain operational and functioning.• Provides support and assistance related to the website development and maintenance.• Provides backup support on operational issues, as needed.

(3) Summary of Organizational Characteristics.

The following table presents a summary of the Administrative Division's major service areas and technology utilization:

Function / Description of Service	Description, Workload or Service Level
Hours of Service	7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
Major Services Provided	Finance, Information Technology, Human Resources, Budget, Procurement, Payroll and Expense, and Customer Service.
Technology Utilized	State Financial, Personnel and Payroll Systems.

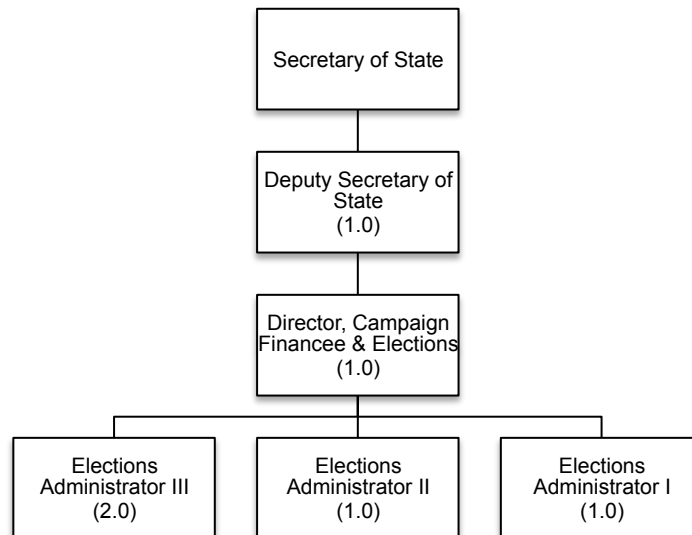
3. ELECTIONS.

The Elections Division of the Secretary of State's Office administers and ensures integrity, security and accuracy of state and federal elections in the State of Vermont. They work in cooperation with local election officials across the state to conduct elections, promote voter registration and participation, and administer laws relating to campaign finance and lobbyist disclosure.

(1) Organization

The current organizational structure of the Elections Division is shown below:

**Vermont Secretary of State
Elections Division Organizational Chart**



The following section provides a summary of the key roles and responsibilities of the positions in the Elections Division.

(2) Summary of Key Roles and Responsibilities

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
Elections		
Director	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversees and administers the Elections Division of the Vermont Secretary of State office. Responsible for assigning work, supervising, and evaluating performance for all assigned staff members. Oversees administration of Lobbyist disclosure reporting, election administration, and campaign finance filings in Vermont. Provides on-going support and advice to Town Clerks for meeting their assigned duties and obligations regarding administration of elections. Ensures ballots are established appropriately for elections. Oversees election management system. Provides educational sessions to customers, as needed/requested, related to campaign finance compliance, lobbyist disclosure compliance, and election administration issues. Supervises, assigns works, and evaluates performance for all assigned staff.
Elections Administrator III	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for oversight and administration of elections laws and regulations. Provide advice, support and guidance to Town Clerks on elections compliance and implementation. Handle lobbyist disclosure questions and filings. Handle questions, filings and inquiries regarding campaign finance filings. Answer questions from public, lobbyists, candidates for office and Town Clerks on all aspects of compliance with Vermont Statutes and Regulations. Provide educational sessions, as needed/requested, related to elections administration (for Town Clerks), campaign finance (for candidates for office), and lobbyist disclosure compliance (for registered lobbyists).

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
Elections Administrator II	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handles processing and filing of Campaign Finance and Lobbyist Disclosure filings. Ensures all filings are appropriately logged into database and appropriately filed in office. Handles inquiries and questions from customers (including lobbyists, candidates, and town clerks) regarding compliance with regulations. Handles public inquiries regarding regulations, filings and other issues for subject areas administered.
Elections Administrator I	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HAVA funded position. Principally assigned to duties related to administration of federal elections including management of voter checklist. Administers Motor Voter Law – distributes paper forms received and distributes to applicable Town Clerk for processing.

(3) Summary of Organizational Characteristics.

The following table presents a summary of the Election Division's major service areas and technology utilization:

Function / Description of Service	Description, Workload, or Service Level
Hours of Service	7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
Major Services Provided	Election Support and Administration, Campaign Finance Filings, Lobbyist Disclosure filings.
Regulations Administered and Enforced	Elections, Campaign Finance, and Lobbyist Disclosure.
Technology Utilized	Specialized software to administer Elections, Campaign and Lobbyist disclosures.

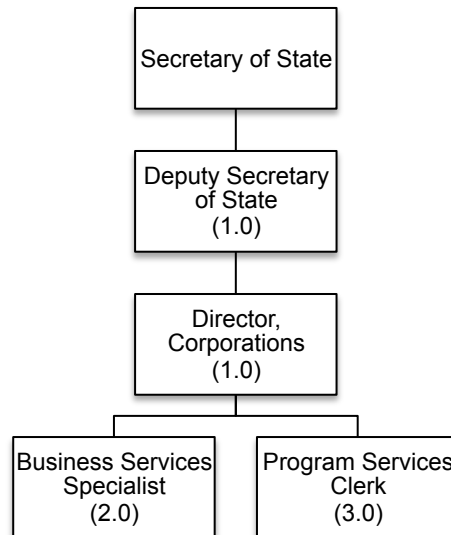
4. CORPORATIONS DIVISION.

The Corporations Division facilitates and maintains registrations for trade names, LLCs, partnerships, corporations, and non-profit entities in the State of Vermont. They also serve as the filing repository for Uniform Commercial Code Filings in the State of Vermont.

(1) Organization

The current organizational structure of the Corporations Division is shown below:

**Vermont Secretary of State
Corporations Division Organizational Chart**



The following section provides a summary of the key roles and responsibilities of the positions in the Corporations Division.

(2) Summary of Key Roles and Responsibilities

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
Corporations		
Director	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversees the Corporations Division and assigned staff. Direct report to the Secretary of State. Responsible for setting priorities, objectives for Corporations Division and assigned staff. Assigns work to staff, evaluates individual performance, and handles any related disciplinary or performance issues. Responsible for the oversight and administration of programs related to UCC filings, business registration, service of process and certifications. Overseeing the implementation of a new computer system to modernize technology. Involves review and modification to existing business processes.
Business Services Specialist	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues copies of requested files to registered entities (corporations, LLCs, nonprofits, and partnerships) upon request. Makes determinations for certificates of good standing, approves or denies certificates. Processes business closing notifications and paperwork. Uses electronic database and physical files to organize and maintain file database of documents related to entities' status (open, modified, closed). Process filings for Unified Commercial Code (UCC) liens. Make daily check deposits.
Program Services Clerk	3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completes registrations and modifications to the status of registered entities and trade names. Provides customer service to walk-in visitors at the Secretary of State's office. Assists registered entities in sending service of process letters to entities outside Vermont.

(3) Summary of Organizational Characteristics.

The following table presents a summary of the Corporations Division's major service areas and technology utilization:

Function / Description of Service	Description, Workload or Service Level
Hours of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday
Major Services Provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Registration, renewals, changes in status, and closings of registered entities (corporations, partnerships, LLCs, and nonprofits) and trade names.• Processing and tracking of UCC liens.• Customer service to walk-in visitors at the Secretary of State's office.
Regulations Administered and Enforced	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State statutes related to business registration, UCC filings.
Technology Utilized	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementing new integrated software program to handle all core business functions.• Existing/prior software included:• FoxPro based databases.• OldCorps and NewCorps DOS systems• "UCC on Woody" – home-built system to contain all UCC information• Microsoft Office, including Access

5. VERMONT STATE ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

The Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) was created by Act 96 of 2008, which consolidated the State Archives Division, Office of the Vermont Secretary of State (SoS), and Division of Public Records, Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS), into one division under the Secretary of State.

The former State Archives Division was established through Act 3 of 2003 as the successor to the State Papers Division. The State Papers Division, under the direction of the Editor of State Papers, was responsible for the publishing records of "historical interest" that were statutorily required to be deposited with the Secretary of State for permanent preservation, including, but not limited to, legislative acts and governor

correspondence. Other state records of archival value, however, were accessioned and promoted by the Division of Public Records.

The former Division of Public Records began as the Public Records Commission, which was created in 1937 to give “aid, advice and information to any or all custodians of public records.” In 1959, the Public Records Advisory Board (PRAB) and the Public Records Department superseded the Commission. Chaired by the Secretary of State, PRAB was responsible for establishing record retention requirements and state standards for managing records. The Public Records Department, a free standing entity within the executive branch, provided administrative support for PRAB in addition to a public research room, paper records storage, and record copying and microfilming services. The Public Records Director largely acted in the capacity of state archivist until the 1980s, when the functions of the Public Records Department were combined with purchasing, postal, printing, and other general services functions. The department was reorganized as a division under BGS in 1996.

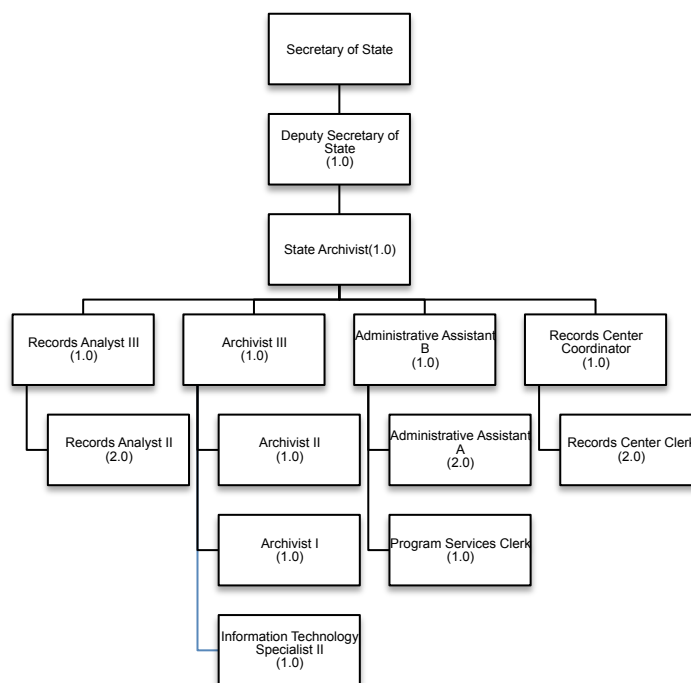
VSARA has served as the single authoritative, standards-based state entity for assisting public agencies in the management of public records since July 1, 2008, and is charged with “administering and implementing a records management program for state government in accordance with professional records and information management practices and principles.” In addition to the state archives and records management programs, VSARA also: operates the State Records Center, certifies vital records, provides Apostilles and related document authentication services, manages the processing and filing of legislative acts and resolves, administrative rules, state deeds

and leases, oaths and appointments, and several other statutory filings, and reconstitutes files for agencies that previously had their records microfilmed.

(1) Organization

The current organizational structure of the Vermont Archives and Records Administration is shown below:

**Vermont Secretary of State
VSARA Organizational Chart**



The following section provides a summary of the key roles and responsibilities of the positions in the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration.

(2) Summary of Key Roles and Responsibilities

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
Vermont State Archives and Records Administration		
State Archivist	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides leadership and management at the executive level for VSARA under the general supervision of the Secretary of State. Uses analytical skills to develop high-level policies where existing guidance on recordkeeping may be minimal, or where standards, laws, and technology are rapidly changing. Establishes, implements, and maintains a strategic plan for managing public agency records, regardless of physical form or characteristics, in accordance with professional archival and records management principles. Works effectively with heads of public agencies (state and local) to motivate and assist them in establishing active records management plans. Directs the activities of professional records analysts in developing statewide standards for records and information management, including record schedules. Directs the activities of the Vermont State Archives, the state's permanent repository of records of enduring public value, to assure that records with archival value are properly managed by state agencies and transferred to the State Archives when no longer in use. Oversees the state records center which has responsibility for providing a secure facility for the management of inactive state agency records for the retention period specified in the agency's records schedule. Assures the state records center has plans for disaster mitigation and response. Manages those statutory filings of the Secretary of State assigned to VSARA such as administrative rules, legislative acts and resolves, and state deeds and leases. Assures that the archival and records management programs support and

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
		<p>advance enterprise initiatives developed by the Department of Information and Innovation and other state agencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists public agencies in developing disaster mitigation and response plans for their public records. Serves as the Office of the Secretary of State's designated Records Officer, who is responsible for the Office's records management program as outlined in 3 V.S.A. § 218
Records Analyst III	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performs advanced level work for establishing and administering the State's records management program, including the development and implementation of statewide standards for records and information management and training programs for public agencies, under the general supervision of the State Archivist. Collaborates with the State Archivist to identify and plan for future program and service needs. Provides authoritative records analysis and management consulting services and outreach to public agencies. Independently performs the full variety of advanced records management functions, including: appraisal theory and methodology, records management policies and procedures, legal reviews, and professional standards and best practices. Oversees the identification, classification, and analysis of public records to determine their value and ultimate disposition (destruction or transfer to state archives) and the establishment and maintenance of agency records management programs. Supervises and approves the development of records retention schedules and transfer lists completed by subordinate staff. Oversees the development a quarterly newsletter on records management issues, trends and developments.
Records Analyst II	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performs a full range of work for establishing and administering the State's records management program

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
		<p>under the general supervision of the Records Analyst III.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies, classifies, and analyzes public records to determine their value and ultimate disposition (destruction or transfer to state archives). Analyzes, researches, and creates records retention schedules for public agencies. Understands and explains records management program requirements to public agencies. Analyzes and develops services specific to meet the records management needs of public agencies. Provides consultative services and outreach to public agencies, including guidance on record schedules, laws and regulations, policies and guidelines, and professional standards and best practices.
Archivist III	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performs advanced level work establishing and administering the State's archival management program, including the development and implementation of statewide standards for archival management and reference services, under the general supervision of the State Archivist. Collaborates with the State Archivist to identify and plan for future program and service needs. Provides authoritative archival consultation and program service information to the public, organizations, and professional peers. Identifies archival priorities and available resources, and assists staff in the day-to-day archival processing workflow. Plans for the systematic management of archival records to assure their authenticity and accessibility over time, regardless of their physical form or characteristics. Approves transfer of legal custodianship of archival records from creating agency in the state archives. Oversees the arrangement, description, and cross-referencing of records in the State Archives. Coordinates with the Record Analyst III

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
		<p>to consistently apply appraisal decisions, records classification and taxonomies, and related work and standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes the use of archival public records. • Chairs the Vermont Public Records Advisory Board (VHRAB).
Archivist II	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performs a full range of work for establishing and administering the State's archival management program under the general supervision of the Archivist III. • Independently performs the full variety of archival management functions, including appraisal, arrangement and description, and reference services. • Describes archival records in accordance with VSARA descriptive standards and professional reference models. • Applies knowledge of reference practices, procedures, and trends to enhance onsite and online reference services.
Archivist I	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performs a limited range of work for establishing and administering the State's archival management program under the general supervision of the Archivist III. • Assists in the systematic management of archival public records to assure their authenticity and accessibility. • Identifies, classifies, and describes archival public records to enhance access. • Provides onsite and online reference services. • Applies acquired knowledge to narrowly defined projects and services.
Information Technology Specialist II	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performs a full range of system administration under the general supervision of the Records Analyst III. • Administers, maintains, and supports Versatile, a records management used by VSARA to manage physical records in the State Archives and State Records Center. • Develops system documentation, procedures, and reports. • Designs and tests proposed system

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
		<p>modifications, changes, and/or updates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors data integrity within the system and performs various quality assurance checks and reports. • Provides technical and application support and training for internal and external users. • Reports to Archivist III.
Administrative Assistant B	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans and directs the administrative activities of VSARA under the supervision of the State Archivist but with significant interaction with other VSARA supervisors and staff. • Collaborates with the State Archivist to identify and plan for future administrative service needs. • Plans, assigns, supervises, trains, and reviews the work of subordinate staff. • Reviews unit procedures and policies and recommends improvements where appropriate. • Perform office management, mail and switchboard services, and other duties as assigned. • Prepares statistical and special reports as requested. • Serves as VSARA's liaison to the SoS Business Division and also as building liaison (between VSARA and BGS Print Shop and Postal Operations, which are co-located with VSARA in the same building).
Administrative Assistant A	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the direction of the Administrative Assistant B, performs a limited range of tasks of a technical nature related to the filing, processing, publishing, authentication, and/or certification of documents related to one or more of the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Administrative rules ○ Legislative acts and resolves ○ Authentications/Apostilles ○ Notary certificates ○ Deeds and leases ○ Vital records ○ Student Transcripts ○ Municipal Charters • On occasion, provides administrative support for educational programs related to one or more of the above areas.

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performs other administrative/clerical tasks as requested, such as reception, answering phones, processing and distributing mail, data entry projects, and special projects. • Fills in for the Program Services Clerk as needed.
Program Services Clerk	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performs advanced, specialized clerical work under the supervision of the Administrative Assistant B • Locates, retrieves, and processes certified copies of vital records upon request. • Locates, retrieves, and reproduces agency records from microfilm upon request. • When requested, removes agency records from microfilm. • Performs other administrative/clerical tasks as requested, such as reception, answering phones, processing and distributing mail, data entry projects, and special projects. • Fills in for Administrative Assistant A as needed.
Records Center Coordinator	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervises the operations and records management procedures of the State Records Center, including the receipt, inventory, storage, retrieval, and disposition of records from state agencies, under the general supervision of the State Archivist. • Collaborates with the State Archivist to identify and plan for future Records Center service needs, including in the area of records security. • Notifies state agencies when records have met their retention requirements and are eligible for destruction. • Coordinates the shipment and deliveries of records to the State Records Center and State Archives and is responsible for documentation of records received and, where applicable, destroyed. • Reviews data and entries in Versatile to ensure system controls for the management of boxes in the State Records Center are in compliance with record schedules approved by the State Archivist.

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzes space availability and determines location of records in both the State Records Center warehouse and State Archives vaults. Ensures facility and equipment are properly maintained by BGS and/or third-party vendors. Prepares statistical and special reports as requested. Serves as VSARA's liaison with BGS Facilities Management.
Records Center Technician *This position was recently reclassified by the Department of Human Resources	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performs advanced, specialized clerical work under the supervision of the Records Center Coordinator. Receives, processes, and stores agency records. Checks, verifies, and maintains proper entries in Versatile for each box received or destroyed. Retrieves requested records and prepares for mailing or delivery. Performs other clerical or physical tasks as requested, such as box inventories and box relocation projects.

(3) Summary of Organizational Characteristics.

The following table presents a summary of the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration's major service areas and technology utilization:

Function / Description of Service	Description, Workload or Service Level
Hours of Service	7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday
Major Services Provided	State Archivist functions, Records Management functions (storage of records, business process support on retention, destruction of records), reference program.
Regulations Administered and Enforced	State statutes related to archives, records, and information management, the management of public records, and agency records management programs.

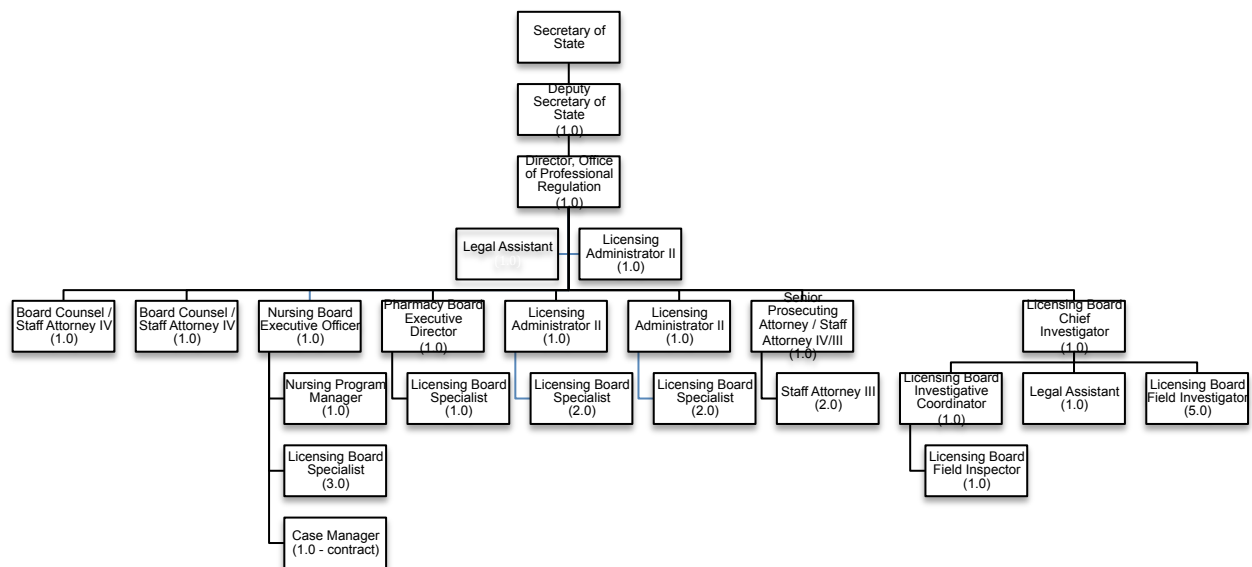
6. OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION.

The Office of Professional Regulation protects the public through the effective regulation of 45 professions and occupations. They assure that credentialing standards are current, and promote safe and effective practice. They also investigate and prosecute instances of unlicensed or unprofessional conduct.

(1) Organization

The current organizational structure of the Office of Professional Regulation Division is shown below:

**Vermont Secretary of State
Office of Professional Regulation Organizational Chart**



The following section provides a summary of the key roles and responsibilities of the positions in the Office of Professional Regulation Division.

(2) Summary of Key Roles and Responsibilities

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
Office of Professional Regulation		
Director	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides overall direction for the Office of Professional Regulation, including review of operations and services, staff, financial and legal issues that arise.• Directly supervises ten positions: the Senior Prosecuting Attorney, the two staff attorneys who are Board/Committee counsels, the Chief Investigator, the Nursing Board Executive Officer, the Pharmacy Board Executive Officer, two supervising Licensing Administrators, a third Licensing Administrator II who is a case manager and a Legal Assistant.• Takes the lead or assists with the development of new legislation regulating professions; presents or assists with the presentation of the annual legislative agenda for regulated professions, including budget presentations to boards and then legislative committees.• Responsible for internal human resources issues pertaining to staff development or problems.• Evaluates changes to improve the operations of the Division (e.g., systems, business practices).• Handles, at least initially, customer/consumer complaints brought into the Division, responds to inquiries for the Secretary of State and manages external relations with licensees, associations, other agencies and the public.• Coordinates, as necessary, with other Directors and the Secretary of State.

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
Legal Assistant/Docket Clerk	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performs a variety of administrative tasks for the investigative team.• Stores physical case files, distributes incoming case-related information to the appropriate field investigator, send inactive files to VSARA.• Keeps records of communications with investigators.• Enters new cases in e-license system and notifies complaint holder of action taken.• Serves as docket clerk and manages docket.• Distributes copies of completed reports to Licensing Board Administrator.
Case Manager	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Serves as administrator of all discipline cases for all professions (excluding nursing) including intake of complaints, screening of complaints, and assignment to investigation team.• Writes closing reports for cases.• Coordinates I-Team meetings – provides input on recommendations for action.• Coordinates assignment to Prosecuting unit if I-Team believes complaint warrants action based upon investigations.• Provides administrative support for processing of all complaints – sending notices to complainants and defendants, attending Board hearings, and closing cases following disposition.

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
Licensing Administrator II	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two positions responsible for supervising two Licensing Board Specialists each who are responsible for working with and following up on all regulated professions and activities with the exception of the Nursing Board and the Pharmacy Board which have their own staff. Provide Board support as needed, including follow-through and implementation of policy initiatives and rulemaking. Board and committee responsibilities are divided evenly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental health, accountancy, athletic trainers, chiropractors, DAC, OTs, dental, psychologists, psychoanalysts, PTs, radiology techs, real estate appraisers, social workers. Acupuncture, architects, auctioneers, barbers/cosmetology, boxing, tattooists, dieticians, electrolysis, engineers, funeral services, hearing aids, landscape architects, surveyors, auto racing, nursing homes, opticians, private investigators, real estate agents, respiratory care. Assist with the recruiting of Board and Committee members. Follow up on complaints and disciplinary processes, as necessary. Develop and support e-licensing capabilities.
Licensing Board Specialist	4.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists professionals with board registration and renewal process. Issues approval for board certification in select professions and passes others along for board decision. Approves applicants for profession-specific testing. Processes renewal requests and fees, issues renewal licenses. Processes verification requests and fees. Assists professional board with their meeting agenda, minutes, and action items. Provides customer service on the phone, via email, and in person regarding professional governing regulations.

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
Staff Attorney IV/Board Counsel	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides advice to assigned Board/Advisory Committee on all aspects of Board duties including policy/regulation development, handling of disciplinary actions, and other regulatory issues. Handles presiding officer duties for cases brought before regulatory Boards. Takes the lead or assists with the development of new legislation regulating professions; assists with the presentation of the annual legislative agenda for regulated professions. Assists in developing internal policies and procedures for staff to follow in regulated professions. Communicates new regulations and laws to staff in the division. Coordinates with staff or staff supervisors responsible for following up on complaints in regulated areas.
Nursing Board Executive Officer	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversees nursing licensing programs for VT Secretary of State Office. Provides staff support to the Board of Nursing including on general administrative functions and development of new policies and procedures regarding accreditation, licensing and disciplinary actions. Supervises all staff assigned to the Board of Nursing unit. Provides answers and guidance related to nursing profession including practice related issues, certification issues, and general compliance with State regulations. Provides input and guidance as needed on nursing profession practices for investigations. Conducts educational outreach efforts including speaking at colleges/universities and other entities regarding nursing profession, licensure requirements, and professional practice issues.

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
Nursing Aide Program Coordinator	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for administration of education related programs for nursing. Ensures nursing programs established meet state criteria. Answers practice questions related to nursing profession.
Licensing Board Specialist / Nursing	3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for the day-to-day administration of licensing related to nursing professions. Assists with renewal for assigned professions. Process all applications for licensure for nursing professions. Makes deposits as needed. Assist public in understanding regulations and resolves issues related to applications for licensure. Attends Board/Advisory Committee meetings and hearings, providing administrative support, processing of applications, and other administrative support required related to board activities (including board agendas, meeting minutes, etc.).
Nursing Case Manager	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracted position. Serves as administrator of all discipline cases for nursing unit including intake of complaints, screening of complaints, assignment to investigation team. Writes closing reports for cases. Coordinates I-Team meetings – provides input on recommendations for action. Coordinates assignment to Prosecuting unit if I-Team believes complaint warrants action based upon investigations. Provides administrative support for processing of all complaints – sending notices to complainants and defendants, attending Board hearings, and closing cases following disposition. Conducts follow-up and monitoring for disciplinary actions (practice remediation) that result in required educational or other remediation action as part of disciplinary decision.

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
Pharmacy Board Executive Director	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversees administration of the Pharmacy Board and other assigned Committees/Advisory Board. • Supervises one staff member assigned to assist. • Responsible for working with assigned Committee/Boards to establish and administer enacted regulations and establishment of operating procedures regarding regulated professions. • Provides answers and guidance related to pharmacy profession including practice related issues, certification issues, and general compliance with State regulations. • Provides professional input and advice regarding pharmacy profession during investigations. • Oversees licensing process for assigned professions. • Provides administrative and professional support to assigned Board/Advisory Committees including on establishment of regulations for the profession and the handling of disciplinary cases. • Conducts educational outreach efforts including speaking at colleges/universities and other entities regarding pharmacy profession, licensure requirements, and professional practice issues.
Licensing Board Specialist	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for the day-to-day administration of licensing related to assigned professions. Serves as renewal clerk for assigned professions. • Process all applications for licensure for covered professions. • Assist public in understanding regulations and resolves issues related to applications for licensure. • Attends Board/Advisory Committee meetings and hearings, providing administrative support, processing of applications, and other administrative support required related to board activities (including board agendas, meeting minutes, etc.).

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
Staff Attorney IV / Senior Prosecuting Attorney	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves as Chief Prosecuting Attorney for OPR. • Handles cases related to reported misconduct and unprofessional practice for all of the 45 professions regulated by the Vermont Secretary of State's Office. • Supervises two Staff Attorneys in the unit. Responsible for assigning their workloads, evaluating performance, and ensuring completeness and sufficiency of work activities. • Serves as member of investigation team on cases of reported misconduct. • Provides legal support, as required, to investigative staff. • Determines charges to be filed on cases of reported misconduct. • Serves as prosecutor for all cases that proceed to hearing (whether administrative law officer or before applicable Board). • Responsible for case negotiations and settlements. • Drafts all charges, stipulations, settlement agreements, legal motions related to assigned cases. • Serves as OPR liaison for the unit for office wide projects and team meetings.
Staff Attorney III	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handles caseload, as assigned by Senior Prosecuting Attorney related to complaints determined to warrant prosecution. • Serves as member of investigation team, as needed. • Provides legal support to investigative staff. • Determines charges to be filed on specific cases. • Prosecutes cases where charges have been filed – including negotiated settlements and actual presentation of case at hearing. • Drafts all charges, stipulations, settlement agreements, legal motions related to assigned cases.

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
Chief Investigator	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor for the Investigative Coordinator and five (5) Investigators, the legal assistant and indirectly for one (1) Inspector. Reviews investigative reports and investigations for productivity and quality. • Assists with oversight of case assignments and follow-ups. • Coordinates with the case managers for the division. • Coordinates with prosecuting attorneys in the division on prosecutions. • Takes initial responsibility for the follow up of investigative complaints. • Responsible for interagency issues relating to ongoing and joint investigations. • Coordinates staff training. • Assists with recruitment and training of new investigative staff; functions as the field training officer for all new investigators.
Licensing Board Investigative Coordinator	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervises licensing board field investigator. • Investigates cases of professional misconduct in the State of Vermont. • Screens cases generated by complaint, makes determination of their legitimacy for further action. • Provides assistance and advice to other investigators. • Assists prosecutors with document procurement and provide specific case-relevant information.
Licensing Board Field Investigator	5.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct investigations of complaints including interviewing complainants, defendants and witnesses, compiling evidence and documents related to the case, and making recommendation on whether compliant warrants prosecution. • Serve as member of I-Team to evaluate complaints received and determine whether charges are warranted. • Assigned generally to geographic areas throughout state – handle cases involving all regulated professions within the State of Vermont. • Provides support and works closely with Prosecutors on assigned cases.

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities / Role
Licensing Board Inspector	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducts inspections related to the professions regulated by the Vermont Secretary of State.• Inspections include both required inspections and as-needed/requested inspections for compliance with regulations regarding the applicable regulations governing the profession.• Handles inspection duties statewide.
Legal Assistant	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides general administrative support to the Investigators and limited support to Prosecutors as requested/required.• Assist with file preparation and case management.• Assist with incoming correspondence, scanning and uploading to the system.• Initial intake of non-nursing complaints.

(3) Summary of Organizational Characteristics.

The table, which follows, presents a summary of the Office of Professional Regulation Division's major service areas and technology utilization.

Function / Description of Service	Description, Workload or Service Level
Hours of Service	7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
Major Services Provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate and license professionals with the State of Vermont in a variety of fields.• Maintain and renew licenses as necessary.• Conduct regular meetings of the professional boards of the State of Vermont, assisting boards in their public protection responsibilities.• Investigate, report, and prosecute cases of professional misconduct.
Regulations Administered and Enforced	State statutes regarding regulated professions.
Technology Utilized	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• E-license• Microsoft Office• Multiple professional testing web portals

3. BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ASSESSMENT

While the organizational assessment for the Vermont Secretary of State is designed to provide an analysis of operations, organizational structure, and staffing, a comparison to 'best practices' represents an important step for the project team to report its preliminary findings and issues. In order to make the assessments of operational strengths and improvement opportunities, the project team developed a set of performance measures which we call "best management practices" against which to evaluate the overall operations of the Office of the Vermont Secretary of State.

The measures utilized have been derived from the project team's collective experience and represent the following ways to identify departmental strengths as well as improvement opportunities:

- Statements of "effective practices" based on the study team's experience in evaluating operations in other agencies or "industry standards" from other research organizations.
- Identification of whether and how departments meet the performance targets.
- A brief description of potential alternatives to current practice.

This assessment does not preclude other opportunities for improvement to be added following further analysis and review, but provides an overview of currently identified issues / opportunities.

1. OVERALL OPERATIONS / ADMINISTRATION

Performance Target	Strengths	Potential Improvements
Establishment of annual work plan and annual goals for the various Division Heads by the Secretary of State.	Individual division goals are developed in consultation and discussion with the Secretary of State in a more informal manner.	No formal annual work plan is developed for the Secretary of State's Office to outline key initiatives and establish priorities for each division.
Monthly group meetings with all division heads to discuss major issues and areas which may require cooperation among divisions, which have significant impact on operations, or raise potential political issues.	The Secretary of State hold individual meetings with each division head and group meetings of the executive team to address overall and individual performance efforts.	
At least an annual in depth review of each division by the Secretary of State to ensure progress is being made toward adopted goals and objectives.		A formal annual review of each division is not conducted.
Works with other agencies in the State to develop partnerships and cooperative efforts in providing services to the public.	The Secretary of State's Office routinely works with other State Agencies to develop cooperative programs and services. Examples include the current effort to incorporate processes and share data with the Department of Labor and Department of Revenue from the new Corporations software.	Additional efforts could be undertaken to further enhance services to the public and clarify the specific duties of the Secretary of State's Office. For example, there are many services provided to Town Clerks and Municipalities that have continued based upon historical participation that are not clearly defined in the State Statute as Secretary of State functions.
Customer services (internally and externally) are routinely monitored.		A comprehensive customer satisfaction survey is not conducted of all stakeholders and users of Secretary of State services. The surveys conducted for this engagement provide a baseline that could be utilized going forward to conduct an annual or biennial survey.
An annual report summarizing major activities of the Secretary of State's Office is developed and made available to the public.		No annual report is prepared of key accomplishments, service improvements, and initiatives of the Office. This should be prepared and made available on the website.

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Performance Target	Strengths	Potential Improvements
The Secretary of State's Office has adopted a comprehensive policy and procedures manual that is routinely and frequently updated and provided to all employees.	Individual functions have developed policy and procedure manuals covering their individual services and functions. These are updated as necessary to remain current.	Additional policy and procedure manuals should be developed to cover all major functional areas of operation.
Financial staff is cross-trained for critical accounting and financial purposes.	Most staff members are cross trained (or have appropriate backup) to ensure that critical functions have more than one individual capable of performing the duties.	Consideration should be given to cross-training a staff member on handling budgeting and financial reporting duties.
Operating budgets provide readable, comprehensive information on budgeted expenditures, staffing, and revenue, and the goals and objectives and performance measures.	Operating budget is developed on a line item basis to provide a clear plan for the coming year on major expenditures.	
The Office has a five-year capital improvement plan providing readable and comprehensive information on costs, and provides a link to the operating budget.		Given the large focus and investment on capital investment in the IT arena, a more detailed five year plan for investment in this area should be developed to ensure that all initiatives are appropriately funded and programmed.
Operating and capital expenditures are monitored on an ongoing basis to assure actual expenditures do not exceed the authorized budget.	Budget staff conducts ongoing monitoring and review of budgets and expenditures. Additionally, periodic reports are provided to all Division Directors for their use in monitoring their individual budgets.	Quarterly meetings should be conducted between budget staff and Department Directors to review expenditures and determine if any adjustments are necessary.

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Performance Target	Strengths	Potential Improvements
<p>Account Payable functions are effective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All accounts payable disbursements are supported by adequate documentation (invoice, receiving report, purchase order). • Invoices are reviewed and approved before payment is made; payments are accurate. • Payables are processed in sufficient time to obtain discounts. • Payments can be made electronically. 	<p>Accounts payable functions are generally appropriate with an adequate review of invoices prior to submission for payment.</p>	<p>The accounts payable function is heavily manual leading to extensive shuffling of paperwork between divisions for approval, coding and processing. Some concerns noted regarding the process utilized for payment of invoices on contracts where not all invoices are appropriately coded to the relevant contract for payment. Additionally, invoices should be checked against payment provisions of the contract.</p>
<p>Accounts Payable is processed within 30 days or other time periods sufficient to obtain available discounts.</p>	<p>Internal processing is conducted in a timely manner when invoices are appropriately reviewed and approved by Division Directors.</p>	<p>Once entered for payment, the Secretary of State's Office has no control over timing of payment by the State.</p>
<p>Accounting policies, procedures and systems are in place.</p>	<p>The Office follows applicable state policies and procedures related to accounting and processing of payments.</p>	
<p>Are automated and integrated financial packages in place that eliminate duplicate data entry among departments for payroll, accounts payable, accounts receivable?</p>	<p>The Office uses the State's financial system for major financial processes. There is no ability, or need, to utilize other systems to supplement these existing systems.</p>	
<p>Centralized purchasing guidelines and processing have been implemented to control spending and ensure compliance with purchasing requirements.</p>	<p>Within the Office, purchasing has been centralized to ensure policies and procedures are followed and procurements are achieved through the most economical manner possible.</p>	
<p>The Office has an adopted purchase card/credit card policy to guide use of assigned credit cards.</p>	<p>The use of credit cards is limited within the Secretary of State's Office. Policies are in place to govern the use of these cards for those individuals who have been assigned one.</p>	

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Performance Target	Strengths	Potential Improvements
Are automated and integrated financial packages in place that eliminate duplicate data entry among departments for payroll, accounts payable, accounts receivable?	Systems are designed to eliminate, where possible, the duplication of entry of data related to payroll, accounts payable, and accounts receivables. Since State systems are typically utilized, the Office has little control over changes to these systems to simplify processing.	
Responsibility for cash payments has been centralized.	Payments are taken at the point of service. Internal policies have been developed to govern receipting, depositing and reconciling payments received.	Internal controls should be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure staff conformance to adopted policies and procedures. Staff handling payments should have a refresher training periodically to ensure conformance to guidelines. Random audits of accounts should be conducted to ensure financial controls are followed.
Appropriate internal controls are in place to secure, track and safeguard cash.	The handling of payments is governed by appropriate financial internal controls for the organization.	
Policies, procedures, and work practices are in place to assure the prompt and frequent reconciliation of all cash.	Reconciliation of payments is conducted daily.	
On-line payments have been implemented to increase public access to Secretary of State Services and provide 24/7 access to payment options.	The Vermont Secretary of State's Office has continued to expand the use of online payments to reduce manual processing.	The Office should continue to expand the use of online payments whenever feasible to reduce processing of manual payments via check or cash.
A fixed asset program is in place.	The Office has a fixed asset program in place that conforms to State Requirements.	The program and inventory is in the process of being updated to address identified issues with the inventory noted when a change in personnel occurred.
The Office allocates administrative costs to enterprise funds.	The Office only has one enterprise fund, Professional Registration, and an appropriate overhead / administrative allocation is charged to the program to account for administrative support provided for that program.	

Performance Target	Strengths	Potential Improvements
Information Technology		
<p>The Office has developed a multi-year technology plan addresses the subjects below and is reviewed/updated annually:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual division and Office-wide technology needs; • Equitable resource allocation, anticipating growth and technology advances; • Funding for technology; • Cost-effective acquisition; • Professional development for technology users; • Technical support needs of users; • Infrastructure and network communication including community access issues; and • Information management and delivery. 	<p>The Office has an informal multi-year technology program to address identified priorities and initiatives.</p>	<p>The Office should develop a more formal multi-year technology plan to ensure that all high priority initiatives and technology needs.</p>
<p>Security standards have been developed to include diagnostic tools, monitoring tools, intrusion detection systems, firewalls, encryption, secure e-mail, and anti-virus.</p>	<p>The Office has implemented security standards to ensure security and safety of data and computer systems.</p>	
<p>A refreshment program is in place to replace computer hardware and PCs.</p>	<p>The Office has established a refreshment program that targets replacement of PC on a three to four year cycle.</p>	
<p>Software is upgraded at appropriate intervals and consistently deployed throughout the organization.</p>		<p>Historically, software upgrades have been done in accordance with not being an “early adopter” of software upgrades. The Office should develop a formal policy outlining timing of adoption of new software versions. The Office should continue the approach to upgrading all staff at the same time to maximize implementation and staff training efforts.</p>

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Performance Target	Strengths	Potential Improvements
Appropriate back-up procedures are in place.	The Office has implemented appropriate backup procedures to ensure data safety.	
Support is provided to all users in handling both hardware and software operational issues.	IT staff within the Secretary of State's Office provide both hardware and software support to employees. If necessary, IT staff have access to contractors to address higher level issues/concerns that they cannot resolve directly.	
IT provides a webmaster to manage the content of the Secretary of State's website.		Webmaster services are not provided by IT but decentralized to all divisions – which is an appropriate model for the Secretary of State Office to enable each division to directly manage their content.
IT procures its primary systems (such as financial, payroll, personnel, etc.) from vendors; it does not develop its systems in-house.	The VT Secretary of State for its proprietary solutions effectively utilizes this approach. Main software systems (such as financial, personnel, etc.) are State systems. The Office is updating existing critical systems with solutions developed by external vendors either from off-the-shelf procurements or software written to specifically meet VT needs.	
IT services are appropriate centralized within the organization prevent duplication of services, and ensure a standard approach to IT infrastructure.	The IT function is centralized within the Administrative Unit of the Vermont Secretary of State's Office.	
Human Resources		
Personnel files are maintained on all employees in a centralized location, and performance appraisals are conducted at least annually for all employees.	Personnel files are maintained in a secure environment with access limited to those with a business requirement for access.	

Performance Target	Strengths	Potential Improvements
Annual training plans are developed to ensure staff remains current in skills and abilities required to perform their duties. Training also includes relevant training sessions for topics such as sexual harassment, diversity, workplace violence, ethics, and supervisory skills (where applicable).		Annual training plans are not developed for all employees. These should be included within the annual performance evaluation to develop goals and objectives for the coming year.
An approach has been developed and employed to provide consistent approach to supervision across divisions.	Staff is provided access to various supervisory training programs offered by the State and other entities.	A formal supervisory training program should be required for all supervisor/directors with refresher training required at least every three years.
Performance evaluations are conducted in a comprehensive and timely manner.	The Office has a performance management plan for conducting evaluations of all staff members. All Directors and key managers have been provided training on conducting performance evaluations.	Some performance evaluations continue to fail to be conducted in a timely manner.

The following section outlines key issues related to management of key issues and performance targets within each division of the organization.

2. DIVISION PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT.

Performance Target	Division				
	Administration	Corporations	Elections	Professional Registration	VSARA
Technology utilized is sufficient to meet the organization's need.	Technology is appropriate to meet existing needs and service provisions.	New system under development has been designed to meet current and known future needs.	An RFP for a new election system has been issued and a contract awarded to replace deficient and obsolete systems. The requirements are designed to meet current and known future term needs.	A new system has been implemented in the recent past. With some actual use, effort should be spent to identify future upgrades/updates to enhance further functionality.	The division is operating with software not designed to meet or fully service all known needs. A long-term plan should be developed to program the updating of this system.

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Performance Target	Division				
	Administration	Corporations	Elections	Professional Registration	VSARA
Policy and Procedure Manuals are in Place for Critical Functions.	Basic policy and procedures have been documented. Some, such as the personnel manual, should be prepared in electronic format to simplify updating and distribution. All manuals should be made available on an intranet or similar site.	Basic procedures are documented. With implementation of new system, all procedures should be fully documented. All manuals should be made available on an intranet or similar site.	Few procedures are well documented. A comprehensive procedures manual should be developed. All manuals should be made available on an intranet or similar site.	With the implementation of the new system, most permit/registration processes have been well documented. All manuals should be made available on an intranet or similar site.	Major processes and procedures have documentation. Additional checklists and documentation should be prepared for stakeholders and users of services. All manuals should be made available on an intranet or similar site.
Customer Service is routinely monitored, measured, and reported on.	Customer service is not routinely monitored, measured or reported on. At least a biennial survey should be conducted.	Customer service is not routinely monitored, measured or reported on. At least a biennial survey should be conducted.	Customer service is not routinely monitored, measured or reported on. At least a biennial survey should be conducted.	Customer service is not routinely monitored, measured or reported on. However, the division did conduct a survey of board and committee members to solicit input and feedback. At least a biennial survey should be conducted.	Customer service is not routinely monitored, measured or reported on. At least a biennial survey should be conducted.

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Performance Target	Division				
	Administration	Corporations	Elections	Professional Registration	VSARA
Appropriate performance targets have been developed for performing key duties.	Most internal service functions do not have established performance targets. Key services (such as HR recruitment) should have performance targets even though frequency of provision is low.	Internal performance targets, as part of the new software and business process implementation, are under development. Targets for processing of applications should be established and monthly reports of performance developed.	Most services do not easily lend themselves to the establishment of performance targets since deadlines are driven by statute requirements.	Internal performance targets should be established for the processing times applicable to registration activities. Monthly reports of individuals and units should be generated to demonstrate actual performance in comparison to the targets.	Some performance targets have been developed to enable performance measurement. Additional efforts should be made to increase performance measurement and reporting to manage work activities.
The performance targets are routinely measured, summarized in a report, and compiled into annual report.	Not at the present time. Recommendation for monthly report.	Not at the present time. Recommendation for monthly report.	Not at the present time. Recommendation for monthly report.	Some limited evaluation of processing times is done for select functions (such as investigation/case closure).	Existing performance targets are measured and monthly report developed.

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Performance Target	Division				
	Administration	Corporations	Elections	Professional Registration	VSARA
An appropriate level of online services is provided to customers.	Current services for administration are appropriately provided online. Key future consideration is the determination of what "educational material" will continue to be provided and which will be discontinued. Those items that will continue to be provided must be updated and reprinted.	Services provided online are currently appropriate. Some consideration should be extended to provision of expedited processing.	Services provided online recently expanded in last election. This approach should continue to be provided by the Office with additional training provided, as needed, to ensure stakeholders understand operation.	Services provided online are currently appropriate. Consideration should be given to expansion of opportunities to pay for past due amounts online (requires system modification).	VSARA currently provides online access in the following areas: online record ordering, online notifications, and direct access to specific sets of data/records. Various written resources are available on the VSARA website.
Supervisory staff are appropriately utilized. Spans of control are not excessive.	In general supervisory staff appropriately allocated and organized.	Supervisory span of control is appropriate.	Supervisory span of control is appropriate.	Several areas where spans of control should be modified including that of the Director (must be decreased), Licensing Administrator (can be increased), and several where very narrow spans of control that are due to unique functions provided by staff.	Several units with very narrow spans of control though all units are grouped according to function.

Performance Target	Division				
	Administration	Corporations	Elections	Professional Registration	VSARA
Training provided to key stakeholders and users of the service are appropriate.	Additional training opportunities for stakeholders such as Town Clerks should be considered.	Training levels appear appropriate for needs of stakeholders.	Additional training should be provided for stakeholders such as Town Clerks, Lobbyists and Candidates. Consideration should be given to providing online training through webinar services.	Additional training can be provided for various stakeholders including board/ committee members, and members of the professional registration groups.	Additional training for state records officers/ liaisons should be provided regarding key provisions of the state statutes and how to comply.
Educational materials available online or provided through the Office website are well developed and address key questions of stakeholders .	Determination on which Secretary of State publications will remain in publication should be settled. All publications should be updated, remain current, and available online as well as limited printed form.	n/a	Additional educational materials including checklists and FAQ may address issues noted by key stakeholders.	Additional educational materials including checklists and FAQ may expand support provided to the professions regulated. A specific updated process related to the disciplinary investigation process should be developed with timeframes outlined.	Additionally, checklists and FAQ documents should be developed for these groups to ensure a common understanding of regulations.

6. SPAN OF CONTROL ANALYSIS

As part of the organizational and position staffing review and analysis, a span of control analysis of the existing Secretary of State organizational structure was conducted. This analysis is summarized the following table:

Vermont Secretary of State – Spans of Control

Position	Number of Direct Reports
Secretary of State	8 (including all Division Directors)
Deputy Secretary of State	5
Director of Campaign Finance & Elections	4
Administrative Services Director	4
Information Technology Manager	2
Administrative Services Tech II	1
State Archivist	4
Records Analyst III	3
Archivist III	2
Admin. Assistant B	3
Records Center Coordinator	2
Director of the Office of Professional Regulation	10
Nursing Board Executive Officer	4
Licensing Board Chief Investigator	7
Licensing Board Investigative Coordinator	1
Licensing Administrator II	2
Licensing Administrator II	2
Staff Attorney IV	2
Pharmacy Board Executive Officer	1
Director of Corporations	5

As shown in the above table, overall spans of control within the Vermont Secretary of State's organizational structure are very narrow (i.e., supervisory personnel oversee a small number of staff) with the limited exception of the Director of the Office of Professional Regulation. While not uncommon in smaller organizations, especially ones similar to the Vermont Secretary of State's Office that have many different operational areas of responsibility, this highlights the ability of these position to easily manage assigned staff if appropriate managerial processes and procedures are utilized.

4. STAKEHOLDER AND EMPLOYEE SURVEY RESULTS

As part of work conducted for the office of the Vermont Secretary of State, the Matrix Consulting Group project team developed and distributed a series of anonymous surveys to employees and stakeholders of the Vermont Secretary of State.

Surveys were distributed to business registrants, professional registrants in the State of Vermont, professional board/advisory committee members, town clerks, Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) stakeholders, and employees of the Secretary's office. All surveys were distributed on September 18 with a closing date of October 9 with the exception of the VSARA Stakeholders survey, which was distributed on October 4 with a closing date of October 14.

The surveys were conducted to provide employees and stakeholders an opportunity to share their opinions about their interactions with and the level of service provided by the Vermont Secretary of State's office. Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements, with their responses recorded on a scale from 1-5, with 5 being "Strongly Agree" and 1 being "Strongly Disagree". For presentation purposes, responses are grouped in terms of agreement (including both strongly agree and agree), disagreement (disagree and strongly disagree), and neutral. The following sections provide a summary of the results for each survey.

1. BUSINESS REGISTRANTS

This survey was distributed to 43 business registrants, of which 19 responded, for a response rate of 44%. The following table shows the breakdown of respondents by the number of years they have been interacting with the Vermont Secretary of State's Office.

Number of Years Registering Entities	Percentage of Respondents
Less than 5 years	15.8%
5-10 years	5.3%
More than 10 years	78.9%

The vast majority of survey participants are long-standing users of the Secretary of State's services.

The following table shows the breakdown of respondents by the frequency with which they contact the Vermont Secretary of State's office.

Frequency of Contact	Percentage of Respondents
0-25 times per month	57.9%
26-50 times per month	26.3%
More than 50 times per month	15.8%

The majority of respondents interact with the Secretary of State's Office less than 25 times per month.

(1) Selected Response Questions

The first section of the survey provided respondents with the chance to choose their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements. The following table indicates the level of agreement or disagreement with each statement in the survey, rounded to the nearest whole number (for this reason, the totals may not total exactly 100%). Those who expressed disagreement with a statement were asked to provide written comments explaining why they disagreed with the statement.

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	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	No Response
1. Staff of the Corporations Division is easily accessible by phone or email to answer questions.	74%	16%	11%	0%
2. Staff are knowledgeable and provide accurate responses to questions.	78%	6%	17%	0%
3. The regulations and procedures regarding business incorporation and required filings are clear and easy to understand.	72%	22%	6%	0%
4. Online incorporation and filing of annual reports is easy to accomplish.	78%	0%	17%	6%
5. The services provided online are appropriate.	78%	6%	17%	0%
6. Online services are easy to access.	89%	6%	6%	0%
7. The Corporations Division portion of the Secretary of State's website provides useful information.	78%	11%	0%	11%
8. The Corporations Division staff provide an appropriate level of service.	61%	22%	6%	11%
9. In comparison to other States in which I conduct business, the Vermont Secretary of State provides are more efficient level of service.	28%	39%	11%	22%

The following points summarize the key findings and observations regarding each statement.

- A strong majority of 74% of respondents agreed with statement #1: that staff are easily accessible. Those who disagreed mentioned that the staff are sometimes not readily available, and that calls are screened too aggressively.
- A strong majority of 78% of respondents agreed with statement #2: that staff are knowledgeable and accurate in answering questions. Those disagreeing mentioned that they have had difficulty finding someone who can answer their questions accurately, and that they have had many filings bounced because of faulty information provided to them.
- A strong majority of 72% of respondents agreed with statement #3: that the regulations and procedures governing business registration are clear and easy to understand. Those who disagreed said that they have received answers from staff that vary from the instructions on forms, and that forms should be formatted in a manner that allows them to be saved, reviewed and edited.
- A strong majority of 78% of respondents agreed with statement #4: that online incorporation and filing of forms are easy to accomplish. Some of those who disagreed said that online filing is not yet available, while another expressed

concern that the process for registrants with numerous entities is too time-consuming and could be expedited by enabling batch features. Disagreeing respondents were mostly those who interacted with the office 26-50 times per month.

- A strong majority of 78% of respondents agreed with statement #5: that the online services provided are appropriate. One of those disagreeing believes that all filing should be done online, with no reliance on traditional mail. Another believed that online services were not yet available. Disagreeing respondents were mostly those who contact the office 26-50 times per month.
- A strong majority of 89% of respondents agreed with statement #6: that online services are easy to access. The one disagreeing respondent stated that the links change frequently, and the site is difficult to navigate.
- A strong majority of 78% of respondents agreed with statement #7: that the Corporations Division of the VT Secretary of State's website provides useful information. Two registrants who have been registering entities for more than ten years indicated that they do not use this portion of the website.
- A majority of 61% of respondents agreed with statement #8: that the Corporations Division staff provides an appropriate level of service. Those who disagreed suggested that the Division should provide expedition services.
- Respondents to statement #9, regarding the level of service provided by the Vermont Secretary of State in comparison to other states received 28% agreement, 39% neutrality, and 11% disagreement. 22% of respondents chose to skip this statement. All of those who agreed were fairly new (0-5 years) to registering entities in Vermont. Those who disagreed said that staffing in other states is more conducive to their needs, and that other states provide for expedited registration, which Vermont does not.

(2) Narrative Response Questions

The second section of the survey provided respondents with the chance to give written answers to open-ended questions. The most common themes of the responses received for each question are summarized below.

Survey participants were asked, *"What changes could the Secretary of State Corporations Division make to improve services for you?"* Responses generally included the following themes:

- Expedited service should be offered.
- Website search function should be more sophisticated.
- More care should be taken with the appearance of official certificates.
- FAQ section should be more comprehensive.

Next participants were asked, “*What additional online services would you find beneficial?*” Primary themes from their responses included:

- Filings and certified copies should be available and searchable online for purchase and download.
- New database should include information that was in the old one.
- Online chat with VT SOS staff should be available.

Finally, participants were asked about recent changes that had been implemented on the Corporations Division. The following table shows how respondents responded to this question about the effectiveness of recent changes:

Have recent changes made it easier to do business with the office?	
Yes	72%
No	0%
Unsure	28%

As shown, the vast majority of respondents indicated that recent changes have made it easier to do business with the Secretary of State’s Office Corporation’s Division.

2. PROFESSIONAL REGISTRANTS

This survey was distributed to 45,585 recipients, of which 3,650 responded, for a response rate of 8%. The following table shows a rough breakdown of respondents by profession:

Profession	Percentage of Respondents
Registered Nurse	35.5%
Engineers	9.5%
Other Nursing (multiple)	8.6%
Pharmacy	6.2%
Real Estate (multiple)	5.4%
Accountancy	3.4%
Mental Health Counseling	3.1%
Architecture	3.0%
Cum. Other (each less than 3%)	25.3%

The following table shows the breakdown of respondents by length of time registered in Vermont:

Number of Years Registered in VT	Percentage of Respondents
Less than 5 years	32.7%
5-10 years	21.9%
More than 10 years	45.5%

There is a fairly even distribution in the length of time that respondents have been registered in Vermont.

The following table shows that breakdown of respondents by frequency of contact with the Vermont Secretary of State's office:

Frequency of Contact	Percentage of Respondents
Once per year	64.2%
2-5 times per year	29.1%
6-10 times per year	3.6%
More than 10 times per year	3.1%

An overwhelming majority of respondents interact with the SOS office less than five times annually, and many of them only once per year.

(1) Selected Response Questions

The first section of the survey provided respondents with the chance to choose their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements. The following table indicates the level of agreement or disagreement with each statement in the survey, rounded to the nearest whole number. Those who expressed disagreement with a statement were asked to provide written comments explaining why they disagreed:

	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	No Response
1. Staff of OPR are easily accessible by phone or email to answer questions.	63%	15%	5%	16%
2. Staff are knowledgeable and provide accurate responses to questions.	66%	15%	4%	16%
3. The regulations and procedures regarding registration are clear and easy to understand.	76%	16%	6%	3%
4. Online registration is easy to use.	77%	12%	4%	7%
5. The services provided online are appropriate.	79%	12%	3%	6%
6. Online services are easy to access.	77%	14%	4%	5%
7. The OPR portion of the Secretary of State's website provides useful information.	68%	19%	3%	11%
8. OPR staff provides an appropriate level of service related to business practices for my profession.	64%	19%	5%	13%

The following points summarize the key findings and observations regarding each statement:

- A majority of respondents agreed with each statement in this section, and no statement received more than 6% disagreement, showing that there is a general consensus of satisfaction among the registered professionals regarding the service provided by the Office of Professional Regulation.
- A majority of 63% agreed with statement #1: that the staff are accessible to answer questions. Of those who disagreed, Cosmetology and Radiologic Technology respondents did so in the greatest numbers. Comments from those who disagreed generally had to do with slow voicemail or email responses, or frustration that they could not speak to someone in real time.
- A majority of 66% agreed with statement #2: that staff are knowledgeable and accurate when providing answers to questions. While no profession disagreed significantly more than the others, those respondents who did disagree complained of slow responses, insufficient notification of what was needed for registration, being passed from staff member to staff member without getting answers, and in a few cases, even rudeness on the part of OPR staff.
- A strong majority of 76% agreed with statement #3: that the regulations and procedures of registration are clear and easy to understand. Of those that disagreed with this statement, professionals in the fields of Advanced Practice Registered Nursing and Mental Health Counseling did so in greatest number. Those who disagreed cited outdated or confusing forms, difficulty in navigating the website, and a lack of corrective action when forms were incorrectly filed.

- A strong majority of 77% agreed with statement #4: that online registration is easy to use. The professions that expressed significant disagreement were Advanced Practice Registered Nursing, Cosmetology, and Dental. Respondents who disagreed said that the online system was not very intuitive, did not allow users to generate their own usernames/passwords, and required multiple attempts to successfully register, after which no confirmation of success was displayed.
- A strong majority of 79% agreed with statement #5: that the services provided online are appropriate. Accountancy and Advanced Practice Registered Nursing had the greatest number of disagreeing responses. Respondents who disagreed mentioned the difficulty of navigation, lack of reminders to renew, and a need for a more responsive, intuitive system.
- A strong majority of 77% agreed with statement #6: that online services are easy to access. Cosmetologists and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses expressed more disagreement than other professions with this statement. Respondents in disagreement said that the website was difficult to navigate, and did not offer an intuitive user experience.
- A majority of 68% agreed with statement #7: that the OPR portion of the Secretary of State's website is easy to use. No one profession expressed particularly strident levels of disagreement for this statement. Respondents who disagreed once again cited the difficulty of navigation through the website and the need for a more user-friendly interface.
- A majority of 64% agreed with statement #8: that OPR provides an appropriate level of service related to business practices for their profession. A number of professions had higher levels of dissatisfaction in this area: Advanced Practice Registered Nursing, Clinical Social Work, Electrology, and Mental Health Counseling. Disagreeing respondents mostly cited experiences with slow turnaround time, unresponsive staff, or inaccessible board members.

(2) Narrative Response Questions

The second section of the survey provided respondents with the chance to give written answers to open-ended questions. The most common themes of the responses received for each question are summarized below.

Survey respondents were first asked, *“What changes could the Secretary of State make to improve services for you?”* Responses generally included the following themes:

- Faster responses from staff to emails and voicemails.
- Improved customer service.
- Batch payment for multiple re-licensing.
- Continue to provide paper registration in addition to web system improvements.
- Allow foreign registrants to renew without social security number.
- Allow registrants to self-select username and password.

Respondents were next asked, *“What additional online services would you find beneficial?”* The following themes were common among the responses:

- Information about licensing and professional development/continuing education opportunities should be displayed online.
- Website needs to be streamlined, currently not intuitive or easily searchable.
- Easy access/modification to profile and contact information.
- Job opportunities should be posted on the website.
- Online licensing renewals and verification.

Respondents were then asked, *“If you do not currently utilize the available online services, why not?”* Common themes in the responses are listed below:

- Website is difficult to access and navigate, sometimes out of date
- Was unaware they existed.
- Already prefer paper registration/renewal.
- Do not have internet access.
- Do not get good customer service online, and would rather call.

3. BOARD/ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

This survey was distributed to 150 recipients, of which 55 responded, for a response rate of 37%. The following table shows the breakdown of respondents by length of time served on the board/advisory:

Time Served	Percentage of Respondents
Less than 5 years	62.3%
5-10 years	34.0%
More than 10 years	3.84%

The majority of board/advisory members have served less than five years, and less than 4% of them have served for more than ten. In general, this is not a long-tenured group of respondents.

The following table shows that breakdown of respondents by frequency of contact with the Vermont Secretary of State's office:

Frequency of Contact	Percentage of Respondents
Once per month	36%
2-5 times per month	50%
6-10 times per month	9%
More than 10 times per month	6%

Most board/advisory members interact with the SOS office less than five times per month, but most of those are not just once-monthly interactions. Only 15% interact with them more than five times per month. A handful of interactions per month seem to be the norm.

(1) Selected Response Questions

The first section of the survey provided respondents with the chance to choose their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements. The following table indicates the level of agreement or disagreement with each statement in the survey, rounded to the nearest whole number. Those who expressed disagreement with a statement were asked to provide written comments explaining why they disagreed:

	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	No Response
1. Staff of OPR are easily accessible by phone or email to answer questions.	89%	4%	7%	0%
2. Staff are knowledgeable and provide accurate responses to questions.	91%	7%	2%	0%
3. The regulations and procedures that my board/advisory committee are responsible for are clear and easy to understand.	78%	15%	7%	0%
4. Staff of OPR provide an appropriate level of administrative support to our Board/Advisory committee.	84%	13%	4%	0%
5. Staff keep us apprised of changing rules and regulations impacting our Board/Advisory committee.	87%	11%	2%	0%
6. I am satisfied with the legal support we receive from our assigned Board Counsel.	87%	11%	2%	0%
7. I am satisfied with the administrative support we receive from our assigned staff (Licensing Administrator and Licensing Board Specialist).	84%	4%	13%	0%
8. The orientation I received upon appointment to my position on the board/advisory commission provided the information I needed to fulfill my assigned duties.	81%	13%	4%	4%
9. Staff conduct thorough and complete investigations on complaints that are received.	85%	6%	7%	2%
10. I am satisfied with the prosecution services provided by the staff attorneys assigned as prosecutors on complaints brought before my board.	74%	11%	13%	2%

The following points summarize the key findings and observations regarding these statements:

- A strong majority of respondents agreed with every statement in this section, and only two statements (#7 and #10) received disagreement of more than 10%;

those statements are analyzed below. This gives a clear indication that they are generally satisfied with the support that OPR staff offers to board/advisory committee members.

- Statement #7, regarding the amount of administrative support that board/advisory committee members receive, generated a strong majority of 84% agreement. 13% of respondents disagreed, but there was no discernible pattern of disagreement along the lines of longevity or frequency of contact. Those disagreeing mentioned slow or non-responsive staff support, and confusion or lack of detail on the part of their assigned staff.
- Statement #10, regarding the prosecution services provided by staff attorneys received a strong majority of 74% agreement. Three of four Land Surveyors board members and three of four Pharmacy board members disagreed, and these respondents comprised over 85% of the disagreement on this statement. Those who disagreed cited a lack of thoroughness, preparedness, and communication on the part of prosecutors, and their opinion that the process takes too long.

(2) Narrative Response Questions

The second section of the survey provided respondents with the chance to give written answers to an open-ended question. The most common themes of the responses received for each question are summarized below.

Survey respondents were asked, *“What changes could the Secretary of State Office of Professional Regulation implement to improve services for you and your Board/Advisory Committee?”* Responses included the following common themes:

- More competent, professional prosecuting attorneys.
- More timely investigations and resolutions.
- Hire more staff and streamline processes to provide better service to the board.

4. TOWN CLERKS

This survey was distributed to 234 recipients, of which 118 responded, for a response rate of 50%. The following table shows the breakdown of respondents by length of time served as Town Clerk:

Time Served	Percentage of Respondents
Less than 5 years	28%
5-15 years	39%
More than 15 years	33%

The following table shows that breakdown of respondents by frequency of contact with the Vermont Secretary of State's office:

Frequency of Contact	Percentage of Respondents
Once per month	56%
2-5 times per month	40%
6-10 times per month	4%
More than 10 times per month	0%

(1) Selected Response Questions

The first section of the survey provided respondents with the chance to choose their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements. The following table indicates the level of agreement or disagreement with each statement in the survey, rounded to the nearest whole number. Those who expressed disagreement with a statement were asked to provide written comments explaining why they disagreed:

	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	No Response
1. Staff of the Secretary of State's office are easily accessible by phone or email to answer questions.	81%	13%	6%	0%
2. Staff are knowledgeable and provide accurate responses to questions.	83%	13%	3%	1%
3. The Office provides clear direction and support on how to handle elections.	92%	6%	2%	0%
4. The Office provides clear direction on compliance with public records requests.	69%	20%	2%	9%
5. The Office provides clear direction on how to comply with records management practices.	56%	25%	14%	6%
6. The services provided online for Town Clerks are adequate.	63%	26%	10%	1%
7. The Secretary of State's website provides useful information for Town Clerks.	73%	20%	6%	2%
8. Information on the Secretary of State's website is easy to locate and access.	52%	36%	9%	3%
9. Overall, the Secretary of State's Office provides a high level of service to Town Clerks.	69%	22%	6%	3%

	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	No Response
10. In comparison to other state agencies with which I interact, the Secretary of State's Office provides a higher level of service.	48%	38%	4%	9%

The following points summarize the key findings and observations regarding these statements:

- All but one statement in this section received a majority of agreement from respondents, and only one statement saw disagreement over 10%. This is a strong sign that town clerks are generally well satisfied with the service and assistance provided by the VT Secretary of State's Office. Statements with greater levels of disagreement, or receiving less than 70% agreement, are analyzed below:
- Statement #4, regarding the clarity of directions on compliance with public records requests, received a majority of 56% agreement. While 20% remained neutral, there was an even distribution of respondents in terms of longevity among those who responded neutrally.
- Statement #5, regarding clarity of directions on compliance with records management practices, received a 56% majority of agreement. 25% remained neutral, and 14% disagreed. There was not a discernible pattern among those who disagreed. In their comments, they noted a frustrating lack of clarity about what records management practices are expected of them.
- Statement #6, regarding the online services provided for town clerks, received a majority of 63% agreement, while 26% remained neutral and 10% disagreed. There was not a discernible pattern to those disagreeing respondents, but many of them said that the website seemed antiquated and difficult to navigate.
- A slim majority of 52% agreed with statement #8: about the ease of access to information on the Secretary of State's website. 36% remained neutral, and many of the 9% who disagreed cited similar reasons to those listed above for statement #6.
- Statement #10, regarding whether the Secretary of State's office exceeded the level of service provided by other state agencies, received 48% agreement, 38% neutrality, and 4% disagreement. There was again no pattern to the responses. Written comments discussed inconsistent answers from staff, a lack of interactive service, and a tendency to pass questions along.

(2) Narrative Response Questions

The second section of the survey provided respondents with the chance to give written answers to open-ended questions. The most common themes of the responses received for each question are summarized below.

Survey respondents were first asked, *“What changes could the Secretary of State make to improve services for you?”* The following common themes were included in the responses:

- Better website organization.
- Better depth of knowledge in answering questions definitively.
- Need for ongoing, communicative relationships with Town Clerks.
- Continuing education opportunities for Town Clerks.

Next, respondents were asked, *“What additional online services would you find beneficial?”* The responses included the following general themes:

- Clear records retention guidelines.
- Standardized, statewide checklist for records retention.
- Contact info for Town Clerks and treasurers.

Respondents were then asked, *“What additional training would you like to see the Secretary of State’s Office provide for Town Clerks?”* The following were common themes in the responses:

- Clear and precise training on records retention and destruction.
- Online notary training.
- Regular training on changes in applicable law.

5. VSARA CUSTOMERS

This survey was distributed to 583 Records Officer and Records Liaisons, of which 220 responded, for a response rate of 38%. The following table shows the breakdown of respondents by role:

Role	Percentage of Respondents
Records Officer	25%
Records Liaison	75%

The following table shows that breakdown of respondents by frequency of contact with VSARA:

Frequency of Contact	Percentage of Respondents
Once per month or less	64%
2-10 times per month	30%
More than 10 times per month	6%

(1) Selected Response Questions

The first section of the survey provided respondents with the chance to choose their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements. The following table indicates the level of agreement or disagreement with each statement in the survey, rounded to the nearest whole number. Those who expressed disagreement with a statement were asked to provide written comments explaining why they disagreed.

	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	No Response
1. VSARA staff are easily available by phone or email to answer questions.	86%	5%	0%	9%
2. VSARA staff are knowledgeable and provide accurate responses to questions regarding records and information management.	83%	7%	0%	10%
3. VSARA provides clear direction on how to establish, maintain, and implement an active and continuing agency records management program.	75%	12%	4%	9%
4. The services provided online for Records Officers and Records Liaisons are adequate.	78%	13%	5%	5%

	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	No Response
5. The VSARA website provides useful information for Records Officers and Records Liaisons.	78%	11%	4%	7%
6. Information on the VSARA website is easy to locate and access.	71%	17%	6%	6%
7. Overall, VSARA provides a high level of service to Records Officers and Records Liaisons.	82%	12%	2%	4%
8. VSARA provides a sufficient number of education and training options for Records Officers.	49%	26%	8%	17%
9. VSARA provides useful advice and support to Records Officers and Records Liaisons for the effective management, preservation, and disposition of records, regardless of their physical form or characteristics.	66%	19%	3%	12%

The following points summarize the key findings and observations regarding these statements:

- All but one statement received a majority of agreement in this section, and seven of nine statements received more than 70% agreement. No statement received more than 8% disagreement. Records Officers and Records Liaisons are clearly expressing their general sense of satisfaction with the service and resources provided by VSARA.
- Statement #6, that information on the website is easy to locate and access, received a strong majority of 71% agreement. While only 6% disagreed and there was no pattern to their responses, it is worth noting that they all gave essentially the same reason for disagreeing: the website is not intuitive or user-friendly, and those who are unfamiliar with it have a difficult time finding what they need.
- Statement #8, that VSARA provides a sufficient number of education and training options for Records Officers, received 49% agreement, 28% neutral responses, and 8% disagreement. 17% of respondents chose to skip this statement. There was no pattern to the disagreeing responses. Of those who disagreed, several stated that they had never heard of any trainings, or that they would like to see more than one per year. Another wanted to learn how to build a records system that includes physical, film, and electronic files, and another suggested uniform statewide records policies to eliminate all inconsistencies.
- Statement #9, regarding the usefulness of information provided by VSARA to Records Officers and Liaisons received a majority of 66% agreement. 19% remained neutral, and 3% disagreed. Those disagreeing stated that they need a way to keep legal files indefinitely, that VSARA only accepts limited types of

records, and that the wait to sync their records with VSARA has been far too long.

(2) Narrative Response Questions

The second section of the survey provided respondents with the chance to give written answers to open-ended questions. The most common themes of the responses received for each question are summarized below.

Survey respondents were first asked, *“What changes could VSARA make to improve services for you?”* The responses included the following general themes.

- Easier processing of interfiles.
- Email updates when action is requested.
- Website improvements.

Respondents were next asked, *“What additional online services would you find beneficial?”* The most common themes of the responses are below:

- Easier box ordering procedures.
- Email copies to liaisons.
- Online summary of what records are in each box.
- More navigable website layout.

Then, respondents were asked, *“What additional training would you like to see VSARA provide for Records Officers and Records Liaisons?”* The following general themes appeared in the responses:

- Emergency preparedness training for records management.
- Training with Versatile web module.
- Dealing with sensitive public records requests.
- Regular training on changes in case law.

6. EMPLOYEES OF VERMONT SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE

This survey was distributed to 74 recipients, of which 60 responded, for a response rate of 81%. The following table shows the breakdown of respondents by division.

Division	Percentage of Respondents
Administration	20%
Corporations	7%
Elections	5%
Professional Regulation	46%
VSARA	22%

When asked if their position included supervisory responsibilities, 32% of respondents said that it did, while the remaining 68% did not.

(1) Selected Response Questions

The first section of the survey provided respondents with the chance to choose their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements. The following table indicates the level of agreement or disagreement with each statement in the survey, rounded to the nearest whole number. Those who expressed disagreement with a statement were asked to provide written comments explaining why they disagreed.

	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	No Response
1. The business processes within my division are efficient and effective.	69%	12%	19%	0%
2. The business processes involving other divisions are efficient and effective.	35%	28%	19%	18%
3. My division performs work that is not duplicated by other divisions.	83%	5%	10%	2%
4. My division has well documented rules policies and processes to guide my work.	54%	10%	36%	0%
5. In my division, we do a good job planning and scheduling our work.	79%	9%	12%	0%
6. My division is rarely in crisis mode.	76%	11%	11%	2%
7. In my division, we have the right mix of in-house and outsourced services.	54%	35%	9%	3%

	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	No Response
8. The organizational structure of my division is well suited to its responsibilities.	64%	20%	16%	0%
9. The overall organizational structure of the Vermont Secretary of State's Office promotes the efficient delivery of services.	60%	26%	12%	2%
10. There are no functions/services performed by my division that would be more appropriately conducted by another division/state agency.	66%	21%	14%	0%

The following points summarize the key findings and observations regarding each statement.

- Statement #1, regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of business processes in the division, received a majority of 69% agreement. 12% remained neutral, and 19% disagreed. Nearly half of the disagreeing responses came from Administrative Services. Those disagreeing mentioned lack of staff support and unpreparedness for unfamiliar situations.
- Statement #2, regarding the efficiency of business processes involving other divisions, received 35% agreement, 28% neutral responses, and 19% disagreement. 18% of respondents chose to skip this statement. Nearly half of disagreeing responses came from Administrative Services. Those disagreeing cited lack of attention to detail and general disorganization.
- Statement #3, regarding the lack of duplication in the division's work, received a strong majority of 83%, while 10% disagreed. All but one disagreeing response came from an employee with supervisory responsibility. Respondents who disagreed mentioned that the Elections division, the health department/medical board, or another part of the government might duplicate their work entirely.
- Statement #4, regarding the documentation of rules, policies, and procedures, received a majority of 54% agreement. 10% remained neutral, and 36% responded negatively. There was no discernible pattern in the negative responses. Those disagreeing simply stated that there was very little – or frequently changing – documentation.
- Statement #5, regarding the planning of scheduling of work, received a strong majority of 79% agreement. 9% remained neutral, and 12% disagreed. There was no pattern to the negative responses. Respondents who disagreed stated a need for deadlines, the intrusion of non-core duties into work completion, and work being tied to outside circumstances rather than systematically distributed.

- Statement #6, that the division is rarely in crisis mode, received a strong majority of 76% agreement. 11% of responses were neutral, and 11% disagreed. All but one of those disagreeing responses were from employees with supervisory responsibilities. Those disagreeing stated that the department is reactive, and has no good way to handle the unexpected.
- Statement #7, regarding the mix of in-house and outsourced services, received a majority of 54% agreement, while 35% of respondents remained neutral and 9% disagreed. There was no clear pattern to the disagreement. The respondents who disagreed mostly believed that in-house staff were needed more than contracted staff, particularly for the website.
- Statement #8, that the organizational structure of the division is well suited to its responsibilities, received a majority of 64% agreement. 20% remained neutral, while 16% of respondents disagreed. More than half of the disagreeing responses came from OPR employees. Comments included statements that there was not a true organizational structure in place, that they are understaffed, and that there are too many supervisors who are not respected.
- Statement #9, that the overall organization of the Secretary of State's Office promotes the efficient delivery of services, received a majority of 60% agreement. 26% of respondents remained neutral, and 12% disagreed. There was no pattern to the disagreement. Those disagreeing stated that the Secretary of State's Office would benefit from an analysis of core functions, that the SOS Office has become a conglomerate of random government pieces over time, and that there is room for streamlining.
- Statement #10, that the division does no work that would be better suited for another division received a majority of 66% agreement, while 21% of respondents remained neutral, and 14% disagreed. There was not a discernible pattern to the disagreeing responses. Those disagreeing said that the leg directory should be removed from statute, that some functions like notaries should be served by a professional board, that APA and legislative clerk duties do not belong in VSARA, and that some of the things handled by the office do not fall within the goals of the office.

(2) Narrative Response Questions

The second section of the survey provided respondents with the chance to give written answers to open-ended questions. The most common themes of the responses received for each question are summarized below.

Survey respondents were first asked, *“Are there areas within the Secretary of State’s organizational structure where you feel the spans of control should be modified (i.e. – increase or decrease the number of employees per supervisor) to improve the efficient use of resources? If so, please identify the area and provide comments regarding why the change is appropriate.”* The responses included the following general theme: Span of control is too great in OPR, director can’t deal with external issues efficiently as a result.

Respondents were then asked, *“Are there opportunities for unit/division consolidation that you feel should be considered by the Secretary to provide a higher level of service or control/reduce the cost of service provision? If so, what areas should be reviewed or considered by the project team.”* The following themes appeared in the responses:

- Civics education and voter outreach should be part of elections division.
- Statutory filings should be consolidated.
- Notaries might be consolidated to OPR division.

Respondents were then asked, *“Are there opportunities for functional consolidation (i.e. – specific services or programs that are similar in nature but provided by more than one unit/division) that you feel should be considered by the Secretary to provide a higher level of service or control/reduce the cost of service provision? If so, what areas should be reviewed or considered by the project team.”* The responses included the following themes:

- Need centralized filing office.
- OPR and licensing for businesses should be under one roof; OPR should control licensing for all licensed professions and occupations.

Respondents were then asked, *“Are there any operating efficiencies (either within your division/unit or in other divisions/units) that you feel the project team should consider during this study?”* The general themes found in the responses are below:

- Improved purchasing processes.
- Workflow automation to decrease reliance on email.
- Cross-training of staff across more than one unit.
- Streamlined customer service.
- IT work should only be done by IT staff.
- Improved technology at VSARA, replacement of old computers.

Respondents were then asked, *“Are there opportunities for consolidation/sharing of service that could occur between the Secretary of State's Office and other entities (public or private) that you feel should be considered to provide a higher level of service or control/reduce the cost of service provision? If so, what areas should be reviewed or considered by the project team?”* The following general themes were found in the responses:

- All professional licensing boards should be under one roof.
- Stronger connections between VSARA and libraries around the state.
- Temporary officiant service might be localized.
- Some APA/legislative clerk duties should be shifted to LCAR.

Respondents were then asked, *“Are there any services that are currently provided by the Secretary of State's Office that you believe are not “core services” required to be performed by the Office and should be considered for elimination? If so, please describe the services.”* The responses included the following general themes:

- Some professions do not need to be regulated by the state government, and better uses for staff could be found.
- Processing of Acts and Resolves should be transferred to legislative council.

Respondents were then asked, *“Are additional resources (e.g., staff, financial resources) necessary to provide the required services of your unit or the appropriate level of service? Please describe.”* The themes found in the responses are below:

- Administrative Services needs another position in order to meet core functions adequately.
- Legal counsel needs increased clerical/staff support.
- Archives and Records Center in VSARA could use an extra staff person in order to decrease work overload.
- OPR needs a deputy director to decrease span of control.
- Full-time records clerk in VSARA.
- Professional full-time front desk staff in Administrative Services.

Respondents were then asked, *“Are there additional technology enhancements that would improve service delivery for the Secretary of State's Office?”* The following general themes were included in the responses:

- Automated phone message to better sort calls.
- Computer updates in hardware and software.
- Website streamlining and an easier-to-use layout to increase percentage of interactions with public that occur online.
- E-license system is far too slow, needs an upgrade.
- FoxPro system is sometimes slow and cumbersome.
- Desktop document scanners.

Respondents were then asked to, *“Please use the space below to share any additional comments that you would like to share with the project team.”* The following themes were common in the responses:

- Involve staff when decisions are being made that will affect them.
- Semi-annual gatherings are good for cohesiveness in the SOS office.
- Better morale and team dynamics necessary in many divisions of the SOS office.

The input received in the survey responses were important feedback to the project team during this study and was used to evaluate issues.

5. CRITERIA UTILIZED TO EVALUATE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

To evaluate the overall organizational structure and staffing requirements for the Secretary of State's Office requires utilizing an organizational framework and principles to evaluate and determine the appropriate structure for service provision. The process that was utilized in conducting this study and evaluating operations, staffing allocations, and organizational structure included the following:

- Initial interviews were conducted with the Secretary of State to identify issues, service delivery objectives, and understand existing organizational structure.
- Interviews were then conducted with all of the Division Directors, and a significant number of other managers, supervisors, and employees. The purposes of these interviews were to document the following:
 - Organizational structure in each division
 - Key issues facing the division
 - Staffing of the department and responsibilities of these staff, and
 - Management systems utilized to plan, monitor, and adjust approaches to providing services.
- A survey was conducted of employee attitudes toward the current organizational structure and management issues. Particular focus was placed on areas of duplication throughout the organization.
- A span of control analysis was conducted on all managerial positions to determine areas where issues may be present relative to too narrow or too broad spans of control.
- A limited comparison to other Secretary of State organizations was conducted to determine other commonly utilized organizational structures and grouping of services.
- Various alternative approaches to organizing the Secretary of State services were developed and evaluated.

This document reflects the analysis of the project team in evaluating organizational structure and management issues in the Vermont Secretary of State's Office.

1. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN A COMMUNITY'S ABILITY TO ACCOMPLISH ITS OBJECTIVES.

Governmental organizational structures are often unplanned, having developed over time in response to a variety of external pressures and internal changes to address current pressing issues. This often results in an overall organizational approach that can be duplicative, fragmented, inefficient, and difficult to alter once in place.

Incremental changes in organizational structure and organization, with no overall strategy, are often detrimental to the organization's overall performance. For example, questions posed and evaluated by the project team included:

- Are some programs unnecessarily duplicative? Does this duplication constrain progress in other areas? Administrative savings resulting from consolidation of redundant programs can be put towards enhancement of other Secretary of State services.
- Is the current structure too fragmented? Does the fragmentation prevent the Secretary of State's Office from effectively mounting major initiatives or encourage smaller, less effective programs? Does this result in slower progress and lost opportunities for major gains? Fragmentation often means less flexibility for major initiatives and less accountability for basic services provided.
- Is the current structure inefficient? Do too many divisions recreate the same administrative structures or have involvement in the provision of a single service? Are these structures necessary or are they redundant?
- Does a complex structure make it resistant to change direction, either from the elected Secretary of State or his key administrators? Do the complexity of an organizational structure and the diversity of its structure make it more difficult for the public and the community to identify opportunities, obtain information, and influence policy? Would other methods of organization allow a greater degree of public input and increase access to services?

- Are staffing allocations in line with service expectations? Are staffing allocations designed to maximize the potential of each position?

Each of these issues should be carefully considered during any contemplated reorganization. Changes have occurred in the way in which proactive and leading organizations have been organized to maximize their effectiveness. Some of the more pertinent trends are described in the following section.

2. A NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONAL TRENDS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.

There are a number of trends apparent in public sector organizations that should be considered in evaluating alternative forms of organization. These trends reflect a move away from organizations and systems that are:

- Centralized or decentralized as a matter of “principle” – rather focus should be on the specific services provided and the efficiency of service provision
- Hierarchical
- Rule-driven
- Process-oriented
- Reactive.

The public sector is moving toward organizations and systems that are characterized by the elements presented below:

- **Centralized and responsive.** Public sector organizations are designing service delivery methods, especially internal support services, based upon a centralized approach that focuses on the most efficient and effective provision of the internal service without regard to perceptions of authority, control, silos, or historical practice. Going hand in hand with this, is the provision of highly responsible, economical and efficient services governed by technical experts. This approach allows other departments to focus on their “core business” rather than administrative functions.
- **Decentralized and flexible.** Progressive local government organizations are designing their structure, systems, and processes to provide a varied response to different situations, therefore making themselves more flexible and open to

change. Greater autonomy and initiative are encouraged with required centralization utilized only where internal control is needed, it fosters greater efficiency, or cost savings.

- **Flatter organizations.** Progressive organizations are also reducing the number of layers of managers and supervisors resulting in fewer levels of organization and oversight, and enabling line workers to make more decisions. The flatter organization results from the need for quicker decisions and changes lessening the need for the command and control functions previously performed by middle managers. These organizations also typically have highly developed supervisory training programs and high levels of accountability for individuals selected for supervisory/managerial positions.
- **Mission and results-driven organizations.** Public organizations are encouraging long-term thinking through the development of strategic plans, the definition of goals, translation of these goals into desired objectives, and the use of performance measures to make more informed decisions on program priorities and resource allocations.
- **Competitive organizations.** Under pressure from the economy, reduction in revenue sources, and devolution of service from the state and federal level, local governments throughout the nation are restructuring their services to be more cost efficient and effective.
- **Anticipatory organizations.** Instead of dealing with crises as they occur, local governments are focusing on how to prevent them through such efforts as development of plans for preventive maintenance of a community's infrastructure, the development of strategic plans, adoption of performance measures, complaint tracking, etc.
- **Customer centric organizations.** Constituents are increasingly looking over the shoulder of local government and requiring justification for the actions of elected and appointed officials. There is increasing conflict within communities regarding the funding priorities of local government. This requires local entities to increasingly spend more time considering how to reach residents and be more proactive in getting their constituents involved.

These trends need to be considered in the evaluation of the Secretary of State's Office and the development of alternatives to the current organizational structure.

3. IN EVALUATING THE PLAN OF ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, A NUMBER OF PRINCIPLES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.

In evaluating the plan of organization and the management systems of the Vermont Secretary of State's Office, the Matrix Consulting Group utilized a number of principles for organizational structure. These principles are presented in the paragraphs below:

- **Organizational structure must be designed to facilitate the objectives of the Office.** Organizations must be willing to adapt to new situations, realities and priorities within a community. The organizational structure must reflect the public policy goals and objectives of a community for it to remain vital.
- **Organizational structure should facilitate decision-making, planning and management of operations and activities.** This impacts the organizational structure and the management/supervisory staffing assigned within a structure. Critical functions within an organization should be placed where those responsible can access key decision makers without having to work through multiple layers of an oversight organization. Similarly, less vital functions can be safely placed more deeply within an organizational structure. Additionally, organizational structures should enable the sharing of "internal support" services, where feasible, to maximize staff utilization, enable staff to specialize in the functions performed, and enable the overall department/agency to focus on its core businesses.
- **Organizational structures should focus attention on management or public policy priorities.** Key issues or initiatives should be given organizational prominence. This may be temporary (of a new service area) or long-term (public safety). Key services provided by the Office must be reflected in the organizational structure with no "gaps" or "overlaps" in service delivery.
- **Span of control must be appropriate given complexity of function and the management systems in place to monitor performance.** Some functions require lower ratios of staff to supervisors, either due to the complexity or level of workload or operational practices that require higher levels of oversight. Other functions, such as those that are more centralized (typically) or more routine in nature, are open to higher ratios of staff to supervisors.
- **Responsibility for performing a function should be placed as low in the organization as it can while retaining effectiveness and efficiency.** Many recent trends in organizations have focused on the objective of "pushing decision making down" to line staff. Reducing the need to refer to managers also reduces the need for those same management positions.

- **Organizational structure and management systems should not be unnecessarily complex.** Organizational structures and management systems should be based on common sense and should also be easily understood both internally and externally.
- **Roles and responsibilities of managers and supervisors should be clearly defined.** This is particularly important when there are multiple layers of supervision in an organizational structure. What makes one level of supervision different from the others above and below it? Is there a clear rationale for adding or maintaining an additional level of management or supervision?
- **An organization must be designed to maximize efficiency of programs and of its own staffing.** An organizational structure is the reflection of the priorities of the community in many ways. This includes the efficiency with which the operations of the community are run. Similar functions should be grouped together under common supervision.

These principles, coupled with the trends identified previously, lead to a number of key organizational issues, which should be considered in evaluating any organizational structure.

4. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF AN EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE CAN BE TRANSLATED INTO CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING THE VERMONT SECRETARY OF STATE'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE.

In order to evaluate the organizational structure and staffing needs of the Vermont Secretary of State's Office, the project team utilized the principles which summarized as follows:

Organizational Structure Criteria
Facilitates objectives and policies.
Facilitates decision-making and planning.
Facilitates management of operations.
Access to key decision makers for staff.
Critical functions near key managers.
Key programs with organizational prominence.
No gaps or overlaps in services.
Span of control is "appropriate".
Decision making at line level where possible.
Effort to make the organization "flat."
Management systems support structure.
Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.
Distinctions of roles among staff are clear.
Organization makes "common sense."
Similar functions are grouped together.

The project team utilized these criteria in conjunction with the information gained from the comparative survey and other data point as a way of screening and comparing various alternative organizational structures and to identify the recommended alternatives.

5. SPAN OF CONTROL ANALYSIS.

In evaluating spans of control, the project team utilized the prior analysis conducted on span of control by position that is reflected in the following table:

Vermont Secretary of State – Spans of Control

Position	Number of Direct Reports
Secretary of State	8 (including all Division Directors)
Deputy Secretary of State	5
Director of Campaign Finance & Elections	4
Administrative Services Director	4
Information Technology Manager	2
Administrative Services Tech II	1
State Archivist	4
Records Analyst III	3
Archivist III	2
Admin. Assistant B	3
Records Center Coordinator	2
Director of the Office of Professional Regulation	10
Nursing Board Executive Officer	4
Licensing Board Chief Investigator	7
Licensing Board Investigative Coordinator	1
Licensing Administrator II	2
Licensing Administrator II	2
Staff Attorney IV	2
Pharmacy Board Executive Officer	1
Director of Corporations	5

As shown, there are many very narrow spans of control present in the Vermont Secretary of State's Office. While not uncommon in smaller organizations – especially those that provide a variety of very specialized and technical services – it does result in a more hierarchical structure and limits the ability of supervisors to have more typical spans of control.

6. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE COMPARISON TO OTHER SECRETARY OF STATE OFFICE'S.

In addition, the project team conducted a limited review of other state Secretary of State organizations to determine both the functions performed by other Secretary of State operations, as well as how these functions were organized. This is shown in the following table:

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	Campaign Finance & Elections	State Archives	Corporations	Professional Regulation	Other Functions performed by Secretary of State
Delaware	State Elections Commission	Separate Division of SoS	Separate Division	Separate Division	N/A
Maine	Separate division, but combined with corps.	Separate Division of SoS	Separate Division, but combined with elections	Department of Professions & Financial Regulation	Bureau of Motor Vehicles
Montana	Separate Division	Records Management within SoS – Archives part of State Historical Society.	Separate Division	Department of Labor & Industry	N/A
New Hampshire	Separate Division	Separate Division of SoS	Separate Division	Professions regulated by multiple departments	Securities Regulation
North Dakota	Separate Division	State Historical Society responsible for Archives; Info Tech responsible for records management/.	Separate Division	Department of Boards & Commissions	Commission of Combat Sports, Contractor Licensing
Rhode Island	Separate Division	Separate Division of SoS.	Separate Division	Department of Labor & Training, and Department of Business Regulation	State Library
South Dakota	Separate Division	State Historical Society for Archives; Administration / Finance for Records Management	Separate Division	Department of Labor & Regulation	Concealed Pistol Permits
Wyoming	Separate Division	Cultural Resources / Affairs	Separate Division	Department of Administration & Information	N/A

While this evaluation shows that the functions performed by and the organizational approaches utilized by Secretary of State Office's vary considerably, there are some general trends that emerge. Most other organizations use a similar organizational structure where each major function is organized as a stand-alone division. There are some exceptions where several divisions are combined or where functions are performed outside of the Secretary of State Office by other state agencies.

6. ADMINISTRATION

A relatively large complex organization such as Vermont's Secretary of State's Office needs effective management both at the functional level as well as from an office-wide perspective. This chapter of the report examines the top management structure of the Secretary of State's Office and evaluates opportunities to strengthen the overall management of the Office to achieve its goals in providing effective service to the citizens and businesses in the State.

1. THE MISSION AND GOALS OF VERMONT'S OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE SUPPORT A WIDE RANGE OF IMPORTANT PUBLIC OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY FUNCTIONS.

Vermont's Secretary of State's Office exists to provide a wide variety of services to citizens and businesses in the State as well as internally to other State functions. The constitutional and statutory mission of the Secretary of State's Office are as follows:

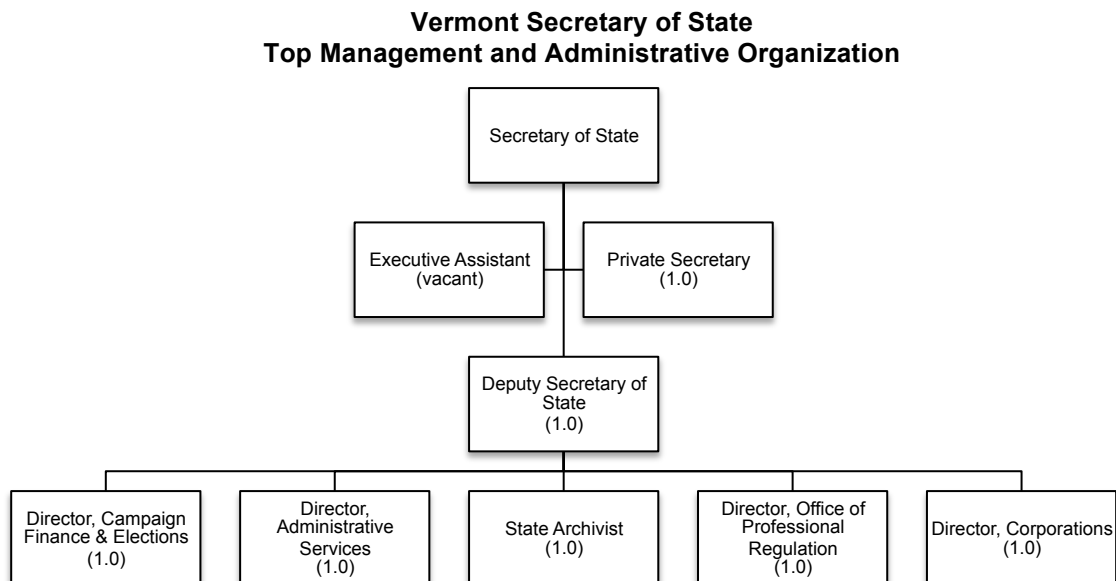
- To protect public health and safety through the appropriate regulation of certain professions over which it has authority through State statute.
- To facilitate commerce in the State through corporate registrations and other services provided to businesses operating in Vermont.
- To protect the integrity of the State's electoral process by supporting and regulating an electoral process that includes candidates, lobbyists, local officials and the public.
- To protect public access to government and its records, including archival materials retained by the Secretary of State or advice on documents retained by other functions in State government.

These are important functions for a State government involving such fundamental principals as transparency, access, and oversight of services provided in the State that can impact citizens and businesses. Because these functions are

organized in one agency, the Secretary of State's Office, there is a need to ensure the consistency and quality of service across these functions as well as monitor and promote legislation to facilitate the functions for which they are responsible. That is the purpose of top management in the Office.

2. THE CURRENT TOP MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE IS COMPRISED OF POSITIONS CHARGED WITH OVERALL MANAGEMENT OF THE OFFICE AND SUPPORT TO IT.

The current top management and administrative organization of the Secretary of State's Office comprises four (4) authorized positions, three (3) of which are filled. The following chart shows the current organizational structure of the Secretary of State's Office and the direct reports to the Secretary of State:



The top management and administrative team is responsible for the following functions and activities in the Office:

- The Secretary of State's principal responsibilities revolve around:

- Serves as overall and elected head of the entire Secretary of State organization.
- Responsible for carrying out the duties of the Vermont Secretary of State Office as prescribed by the State Constitution and Statute.
- Establishes and monitors priorities for each Division within the Secretary of State's Office.
- Maintains relations with the Legislature and the Governor's Office for purposes of promoting effective regulations and legislation.
- Maintains relations with town and citizens' groups in the State for purposes of communicating priorities and issues affecting functions within the Secretary of State's Office.
- The Deputy Secretary of State's principal responsibilities revolve around:
 - Serves as Deputy for Secretary of State and member of executive team for purposes of assisting in the management of internal operations.
 - Devoted to the review of legal issues related to the Secretary of State's office including municipal issues / inquiries, open meetings issues, and public records.
 - Issues opinions on public records requests.
 - Handles special projects for the Office as assigned by the Secretary of State.
 - Assists, as needed, on internal investigations and performance related issues.
 - Reviews and signs off on all performance evaluations conducted by management staff for their assigned employees.
- The Private Secretary's responsibilities revolve around the following:
 - Assists with variety of administrative issues for the Secretary of State.
 - Handles constituent correspondence, phone calls on behalf of Secretary of State.
 - Provides legislative support to the Secretary of State regarding initiatives of the Office.

- Provides briefing documents and talking points for the Secretary for meetings, presentations, and other public comments.
 - Develops and issues press releases, newsletters, and other public documents related to issues handled by the Office; handles press inquiries and requests for information.
- The Executive Secretary's position, though an authorized position in the Secretary of State's Office has been unfilled for some time. The position, if filled, is dedicated to providing administrative support to the top management and administrative team.

Regardless of the personal responsibilities currently assigned to current staff the project team, though its work with the Secretary of State's Office, has come to appreciate that there are four sets of roles and responsibilities that need to be met for the effective functioning of the organization. These areas of responsibility are described in the following points:

- **Internal Operations** – the first set of roles relate to the consistent efficient and effective functioning of the Office in terms of meeting the service mission and goals of the organization, customer service commitments, as well as the coordination of functions within the Office. These roles revolve around the following general areas:
 - Ensuring that the mission and goals of the Secretary of State's Office are met internally as well as for external review within the State.
 - Ensuring that division managers (i.e., Directors) were effective in playing their parts in meeting the mission and goals as it relates to functions within their responsibility.
 - Ensuring that the service delivery systems needed in the future had plans to address these needs.
 - Ensuring that coordination exists among the different divisions within the Secretary of State's Office as that relates to a wide variety of issues such as on line presence, how citizens and businesses are handled as well as administrative support.
 - Ensuring that there are consistent and effective policies and results pertaining to "customer service" in the Secretary of State's Office.

- **Legislation** – the second set of roles relate to how effectively the Secretary of State’s Office supports legislation that can improve the regulatory environments in which it operates as well as legislation that it promotes from within. Some of these roles revolve around the following general areas:
 - Understanding the legislative needs and gaps in the State that impede the effectiveness of its various regulatory environments – elections, business entities, professions and official records.
 - Researching the forms that new legislation can take to address the identified needs and gaps.
 - Working with staff within the specialty areas in the Secretary of State’s Office to draft or outline new legislation.
 - Working with the Legislative Council to draft new legislation in support of the effective functioning of functions within the Secretary of State’s Office.
 - Working with and through the State Legislature to ensure that desired legislation is enacted by gathering support for it and dedicating staff resources to it, as necessary.
- **External Relations** – As an organization with widespread responsibilities, there are a wide variety of stakeholders and constituencies that need to be communicated with and supported in a wide variety of ways. Some of these roles revolve around the following general areas:
 - Regularly contacting and supporting executive and legislative branch leaders in the State on matters affecting and affected by the Secretary of State’s Office.
 - Regularly contacting and supporting town and city leaders in the State on matters affected by the Secretary of State’s Office (principally relating to elections and official records).
 - Regularly contacting and supporting a wide variety of citizen and business groups in the State regarding elections, commercial requirements and official records.

Meeting these organizational and management needs effectively lead to the ultimate success of an elected official such as a Secretary of State. Currently, there are a number of issues associated with the allocation and performance of these roles. These issues are described in the next section.

3. THERE ARE ISSUES WITH RESPECT TO THE ALLOCATION AND PERFORMANCE OF THE ESSENTIAL ROLES TO BE PERFORMED BY TOP MANAGEMENT AND OTHER STAFF IN THE OFFICE.

As the Secretary of State's Office is currently functioning and has functioned under this Secretary of State, there are a number of issues focused on top management and administration which have impeded its ability to function at the high level of efficiency and effectiveness desired by the Secretary. These issues include:

- **There is an overlapping of actual roles performed by top management and administrative staff in the Secretary of State's Office.** Each of the top administrative managers are involved in day-to-day operations, legislative support and external relations.
- **There is no clear allocation of who directors report to in the Office.** While organizationally a Deputy position exists between the Secretary and Division Directors, in practice managers tend to report directly to the Secretary rather than the Deputy.
- **The Secretary of State is spread thinly between internal, external and legislative roles and responsibilities.** As described in the previous section of this report, the Secretary of State's Office generally and the Secretary himself have wide ranging roles with wide ranging constituencies and stakeholders.
- **A support position is functioning to assist with legislative planning and support.** The Private Secretary, who has legislative experience, has assisted in the research of legislative needs, working with the Legislative Council on forwarding specific legislation and assisted with support in Legislative Committees.
- **Long-range planning in the Office is inconsistent.** Apart from selected information technology planning, service and operational planning is driven principally at the division level, resulting in an inconsistent approach to planning across the organization.
- **Coordination across the Secretary of State's Office is also inconsistent.** There is no consistent and regular process to evaluate the sharing of resources, for example. Where it is, it is principally driven at the division level.
- **Legislative development and support is more reactive than reflecting a dedicated process of identifying needs and supporting it.** There is no process in the Secretary of State's Office to develop a legislative calendar in

which at specific points of the year legislative needs are identified, these needs researched and a plan for supporting through the legislative process.

These are significant issues for the Secretary of State's Office that could impact the efficient and effective functioning of the office. The issues revolve around one overriding theme – vague allocation of roles within the organization leading to all of the top management and administrative staff in the Office being involved in all aspects of its functioning. This is evaluated in the next section.

4. COMPARING THE TOP MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION TO THE ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPALS IDENTIFIED.

The following table summarizes the evaluation criteria utilized for this study and the findings that resulted from the evaluation of the organization of responsibilities among top managers and administrative staff in the Secretary of State's Office:

Evaluation Criteria	Key Comments / Conclusions
Alignment with Management Priority Criteria such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitates objectives and policies• Facilitates decision making and planning• Facilitates management of operations• Access to key decision making and planning• Key programs with organizational prominence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Secretary of State plays the primary role in setting strategic direction of the Office.• There is no process for planning the service delivery system of the future, apart from recent IT efforts.• Divisions report directly both to the Secretary and the Deputy. While ostensibly the Deputy Secretary's responsibility, divisions work directly with the Secretary of State on major issues, policies, and programs.• The allocation of roles among the Secretary, Deputy and the Private Secretary crosses all areas of responsibility – internal, legislative, and external.
Alignment of Management Control criteria such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decision making at line level where possible• Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined• Distinction of roles among staff are clear• Management systems support structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As noted above, role clarification is needed for the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and the Private Secretary to ensure focus is placed on highest priority functions and so that divisions are not functioning as "silos".• The organization has in place a defined performance management system however, completion of performance evaluations is not always conducted in a timely or consistent manner for Directors. This is difficult to do effectively with divided reporting.

Evaluation Criteria	Key Comments / Conclusions
<p>Alignment with Organizational Design Criteria such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Span of control is “appropriate” • Organization structure and makes “common sense”/“conforms to industry practice” • Effort to make the organization “flat”/maximize managerial positions • No gaps or overlaps in services • Similar functions are grouped together in the organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current organizational structure is typical of those seen in other comparable Secretary of State organizations performing a comparable set of duties. • Overall span of control for the Secretary of State is vague with the Secretary and the Deputy ostensibly supervising the same directors and other reports. • For effective organizational design and accountability purposes each top management and administrative position needs to have specific yet complementary roles and responsibility. • To accomplish this, the Secretary of State’s Office needs another position filled – principally to support managers and the public.

This assessment has identified several major issues in the way in which the Secretary of State’s Office organizes management and administrative functions. The issues that cross cut the effective organization of these priority functions are:

- Better clarify the roles of the Secretary and the Deputy as that relates to internal and external responsibilities. While recognizing that the Secretary is ultimately responsible for the effective overall functioning of the Office, he does not need to be involved in day-to-day operations to meet this responsibility. This is a Deputy’s role in any organization that has one.
- Effectively direct staff efforts to legislative coordination. Again, while recognizing that the Secretary needs to have a policy hand in legislation affecting the regulatory environments of the Office, there is much staff work underlying this important function that can be accomplished by others – the Division Directors and the Private Secretary who has been acting in much of that role.
- Ensure that administrative support is adequate – this has been a major issue for the Office as the Secretary, the Deputy and the Private Secretary have covered some of these functions (e.g., constituent support) while others have not had the attention they require (public relations).

The next section describes how organizational and management changes could be made to address these issues in the Secretary of State’s Office.

5. HOW THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE NEEDS TO ADDRESS THE ORGANIZATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN THIS ASSESSMENT.

The following points summarize the key organizational conclusions regarding the general organizational structure and top management/administrative staffing in the Secretary of State's Office:

- The Secretary of State needs to be more involved in external relations with constituents and local officials as well as legislative and executive branch stakeholders. This requires him to have the trust and knowledge that day-to-day issues in the Office are being addressed and resolved effectively. This will require the following:
 - Affirming the strategic direction for the Office in terms of service delivery, customer service, budget and meeting established service priorities.
 - Assigning the Deputy specific responsibilities with respect to oversight of day-to-day operations of the Office including problem resolution, implementation of strategic direction and planning for divisions, and performance reviews for division directors, coordination of services, meeting customer service objectives. A written plan should be developed for the accountability for these responsibilities.
 - Meeting with the Deputy Secretary on a weekly basis to ensure that the objectives of the office are being met and to review ongoing issues. The Secretary should evaluate his performance against these plans.
 - Meeting with the legislative analyst/coordinator position to plan the legislative calendar and ensure that the legislative needs of the Office and support to specific legislation is being met.
 - Working on a daily basis with the Executive Assistant position to ensure that public outreach and constituent support is being provided at the level and quality desired.
 - Ensuring that time is available to foster effective external relations with the legislature and with appropriate Executive Branch representatives on specific issues of concern to each and to engender general support for the Secretary of State's Office.
- The Deputy Secretary should be reassigned specific roles with respect to oversight of day-to-day operations of the Secretary of State's Office. This will require the following:

- Developing specific general and annual plans with the Secretary of State for being involved for day-to-day operations.
- Developing specific accountability points with respect to these general and annual plans.
- Developing specific general and annual plans for Division Directors.
- Developing specific accountability points with respect to these general and annual plans for Directors and evaluating their performance against these plans.
- Providing legal counsel to the Secretary of State's Office on an as-needed basis.
- Providing assistance to the legislative development and support process as needed and as determined by the Secretary of State.

These roles require a full time position to perform effectively.

- The Private Secretary position has expanded her responsibilities in the recent past to plan and support the development of legislation for the Secretary of State's Office. This has been inconsistently performed in the past and largely dedicating a position to this has improved communication with the Legislature and has facilitated the movement of various bills. This position should either be reclassified to a Legislative Analyst or Legislative Coordinator. Barring the ability to reclassify, the following roles should be assigned to the position under and working title of "Legislative Analyst" or "Legislative Coordinator":
 - Developing a legislative calendar for the development of and/or support for specific legislation to improve the regulatory environments of the Office, achieve the policy priorities of the Secretary or to address gaps or overlaps needed in legislation governing activities in the Office.
 - Starting in the early autumn start meeting with Division Directors to understand the legislative needs in each area of the Office.
 - After the Director meetings, later in the autumn, research specific legislative changes and strategies to support the ideas that came out of the Directors meetings. These strategy sessions should include the Secretary of State and the Deputy Secretary of State.
 - Once the strategies have been developed support the legislative process through assisting in the development of specific legislation for the

Legislative Council or for internal staff development in the Secretary of State's Office.

- With the Secretary of State and the Deputy, as necessary, support the processing of legislation through the Legislature as well as gathering support from external supporters.
- During a legislative “off season” which could occur during the summer months assign special projects to this position on a prioritization process that involves the Secretary of State, the Deputy and the Division Directors.

These roles require a full time position to perform effectively.

- The funds currently allocated for an Executive Assistant position but not utilized for that function should be dedicated to filling that vacant position. The Executive Assistant position should be allocated to many of the roles currently being fulfilled by the Private Secretary. These roles should include the following:
 - Initially fielding and triaging for follow-up constituent enquiries.
 - Providing administrative support for the Secretary of State, Deputy and Legislative Analyst/Coordinator.
 - Provides support for the Secretary for meetings, presentations, and other public events.
 - Developing press releases, newsletters, and other public documents related to issues handled by the Office; handles press inquiries and requests for information.

The project team has identified, as alternatives, the following recommendations to address each of these organizational issues. The table below provides a summary of the benefits and issues that may result from making these changes:

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Alternatives / Recommendation	Benefits	Potential Issues
<p>Clarification and restructuring the roles of the Secretary of State and the Deputy Secretary of State.</p> <p>The Deputy Secretary of State position should have more defined roles and responsibilities within the organization. Duties should include oversight of internal operations allowing the Secretary to focus more on external relations.</p> <p>The Deputy Secretary would still have involvement and responsibilities as legal counsel as well as selected assistance in legislation and constituent duties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More focused and effective utilization of both positions to support the mission of the Office. • Clarity of roles within the Office. • Maximizes the use of existing positions. • Increases coordination and cooperation within the Office. • Frees the Secretary of State to focus on important external relations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to develop a plan and accountability system for the Deputy. • The need to educate staff and stakeholders of the new role being performed by the Deputy to ensure effective utilization of the position and others in the Office.
<p>Formalizing the roles and responsibilities of the Private Secretary to legislative coordination/analytical ones.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhances legislative coordination and support for legislation for the Office. • Ensures one individual is looking at legislative issues from a broad perspective taking into consideration of all divisions' needs and services. • Provides additional support to the Secretary of State and the ability to manage the process and each participant's time and attention. • Provides needed legislative research and support and the ability to work with Division Directors on their needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shifts costs from administrative to programmatic functions (in spite of the fact that the incumbent devotes much time to legislative functions already). • Acceptance by other managers of this shift in Office roles. • The development of the legislative calendar for the Secretary of State's Office which makes all this necessary.

Alternatives / Recommendation	Benefits	Potential Issues
<p>Filling the long vacant Executive Secretary position – while this position would fulfill a variety of support and public informational roles the primary function would relate to constituent relations freeing the Secretary and Deputy from much of this.</p> <p>A more centralized and formalized public information effort should be undertaken by the Secretary of State's Office to ensure a consistent message is disseminated to the public.</p> <p>This function should be considered for inclusion within the roles and responsibilities of the Private Secretary position.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a more consistent approach to constituent issues and dissemination of public information and interaction. • Enables a unified message to be distributed based on the policy directives of the Secretary of State. • Provides a single point of contact for constituent outreach and media relations from the Secretary of State's Office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires the development of a "triage program" of what responses can be generated by each position in the Office. • The development of a comprehensive public relations plan.

The functional results of the organization of the Vermont Secretary of State's Office can be enhanced through the implementation of the recommended management, programmatic and administrative changes outlined in this section.

Recommendation: Focus the time and attention of the Secretary of State more on external relations – constituent as well as legislative and executive branches of State government. There will need to be a transition period of up to six (6) months to ensure that there is a plan for the Deputy to provide effective oversight for the Secretary of State's Office programs and services.

Recommendation: Clarify the duties of the Deputy Secretary of State to focus on the internal operations of the Office and the divisions, programs and functions within it. The Deputy will continue to be involved in constituent issues as well as legislative processes, but at reduced levels compared to current duties.

Recommendation: Reclassify or utilize a working title for the Private Secretary to function as a "Legislative Analyst" or "Legislative Coordinator" to focus on the legislative needs of the Office, researching the specifics of legislative needs and working with Office and Legislative resources to enact it.

Recommendation: Fill the long-vacant Executive Assistant position to serve as the Office lead support person to handle constituent issues, public information and other duties.

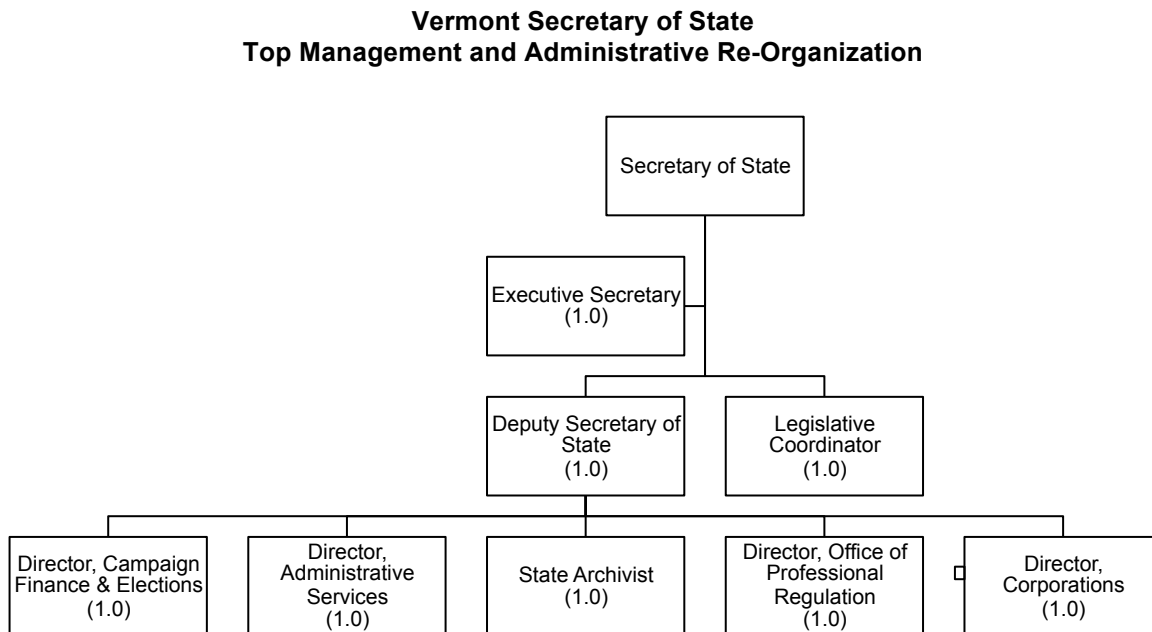
It should be noted that there are no financial consequences from these recommendations because all of the positions are already budgeted. The only potential consequence would stem from the decision to reclassify the Private Secretary position rather than utilization of a working title to shift the current roles to the recommended roles.

The exhibit below provides a suggested implementation plan for the recommendations made in this chapter of the report.

Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeframe
Focus the roles of the Deputy Secretary of State to operational oversight.	Secretary of State and Deputy Secretary of State.	Three months for development of an activity and accountability plan. Three months to implement it and evaluate the responsibility and accountability plan.
Focus the roles of the Private Secretary to legislative coordination.	Secretary of State and Private Secretary (Legislative Analyst/Coordinator).	Three months for development of an activity and accountability plan. Three months to implement it and evaluate the responsibility and accountability plan.
Fill the vacant Executive Secretary position and focus this position on constituent relations, internal support and public relations.	Secretary of State and Human Resources.	Three months to recruit the position from the point the decision is made. Three months for development of an activity and accountability plan. Three months to implement it and evaluate the responsibility and accountability plan.

From the point of acceptance of the recommendations to complete implementation, then, is less than one year with most of the implementation process possible within six months. The top management and administrative structure of the

Secretary of State's Office, once fully implemented, would be structured as shown below:



6. THERE ARE SEVERAL MINOR OPERATIONAL CHANGES THAT SHOULD BE COMPLETED OR ENHANCED TO IMPROVE OPERATIONS.

The following points summarize key operational issues identified throughout the engagement and through the best management practices assessment. Following a brief discussion of each issue is a recommended action to address the issue.

(1) More Defined Annual Planning Should Be Undertaken and Progress Towards Completion Routinely Monitored.

The prior staffing changes outlined will greatly enhance the organizational structure and the focus of on key duties of the top executive positions within the Secretary of State's Office. To fully implement these changes and monitor progress, the Secretary of State should work with Directors to establish an annual work plan outlining key initiatives and efforts for the coming year and clearly establishing milestones and

implementation targets. These work plans should be reviewed annually between the Directors and the Secretary of State to monitor progress and assess implementation. A key component of each Director's annual work evaluation should be based upon their implementation of the annual work plan.

Each year the Secretary of State should develop an annual report outlining key aspects of service delivery over the prior year. This annual report should include key changes that have been implemented by the Office, summary descriptions of each division and key workload measures and initiatives from the prior year, and summaries of any planned new programs or initiatives to be implemented in the coming year. To cost-effectively implement and distribute this report, it should be prepared electronically, posted to the website, and distributed – via email – to key constituency groups.

Recommendation: The Secretary of State should develop an annual work program for key initiatives and efforts of the Office in conjunction with each Director to ensure goals, programs and resources are in alignment.

Recommendation: The annual work program should be reviewed at least quarterly with each Director and serve as a major component of each Director's annual performance evaluation.

(2) To Continue a Program of Continuous Improvement and Ensure Service Delivery is Meeting Customer Expectations, an Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey Should be Administered.

With the undertaking of this organizational assessment and in conjunction with other efforts recently implemented, underway, and planned within the Secretary of State's Office, the Secretary of State has begun a transformational effort to enhance the services provided by the Office and ensure efficient and effective service delivery. The Office has a broad range of customers – ranging from residents, individuals in various professions throughout the state, City Clerks, candidates for election, lobbyists,

businesses, and other State Agencies. As part of this study, surveys were undertaken to solicit input from these stakeholders to understand their service needs and their current level of satisfaction with services. In most cases, high levels of satisfaction were noted from these stakeholder groups.

To understand the impact of the various changes in service delivery methods, and potential organizational and staffing changes, the Secretary of State should maintain this dialogue with these stakeholders by conducting an annual survey. This survey would enable ongoing measurement of satisfaction with services provided, and further enable ongoing input regarding potential and implemented changes. The ongoing surveys would not need to be quite as extensive as those undertaken as part of this organizational assessment, but should include many of the same “satisfaction” questions to enable trend evaluation over time.

Recommendation: The Secretary of State should continue surveying key stakeholder groups on an annual basis to monitor satisfaction levels over time and provide an avenue for ongoing input from these customers.

(3) Provide Additional Educational Outreach and Targeted Training to Town Clerks.

Vermont Town Clerks are an important constituency group of the Vermont Office of the Secretary of State. As a group, Town Clerks depend upon support, guidance, and programs of the Secretary of State’s Office to assist them in the completion of their local duties ranging from general questions and support to specific technical assistance related to the conduct of elections and records management and storage. The survey conducted as part of this engagement noted a desire from the Town Clerks to receive additional training and educational materials from the Secretary of State’s Office. While extensive support and information is currently provided, the diverse backgrounds and

remote locations of some Town Clerks may warrant additional support mechanisms. This includes the use of more online, webinar-type training and information sessions that can be accessed at the convenience of the Clerk. This may address concerns about accessibility of select training sessions and the inability of some Town Clerks to travel to scheduled sessions.

Recommendation: Additional support should be provided to the Town Clerks through educational and information training sessions including the use of online webinar sessions that are accessible and available to Town Clerks at all times.

(4) Review Existing Publications for Continued Relevance, Updated, and Primarily Distributed Electronically.

Over time, the Secretary of State's Office has assumed responsibility for the development and distribution of a wide variety of publications for the general public and Town Clerks. Many of these publications are related to topics that, while important and useful, are not the responsibility of the Secretary of State's Office to administer, oversee or manage (e.g., publication on public cemetery regulations). Additionally, many of these publications have not been updated for an extended period of time and still list the former Secretary of State on the publications.

After implementation of the recommended changes in the organizational structure and staffing of the direct reports to the Secretary, the position overseeing public information should undertake a comprehensive review of existing publications and answer the following questions:

- **Should the publication be continued?** Serious consideration should be given to discontinuing publications that are not directly related to core Secretary of State duties as outlined by state statute.
- **Does the publication need to be updated?** A schedule should be developed that outlines all publication approved for continuation and developing a plan that will enable them to be updated in a coordinated and timely manner.

- **Determination of distribution method.** While most publications will require some limited publication in hard-copy format to ensure accessibility to all interested parties, the Secretary's Office should focus on primarily distributing publication in electronic format. There are many benefits to this approach including:
 - Reduction in publication and distribution costs (both for initial publication but also for republication when only minor changes have been made – for example, change in key individuals referenced in the document),
 - Ease and ability to update more frequently, and
 - Ability to post publications to website and email to those requesting the information.

This effort will result in a both more up-to-date publication listing and a more streamlined set of documents to maintain going forward.

Recommendation: A complete review of information publications should be conducted with a focus on eliminating ongoing maintenance and publications that are not focused on direct Secretary of State services. The primary distribution method for publications should be electronic to reduce publication and distribution costs and enable more frequent updating.

(5) Implement New Website Under Development.

Over the last year or so, the Secretary of State's Office and staff have undertaken an extensive effort to completely review and overhaul the website for the Office. This effort will address many of the concerns identified by staff and stakeholders regarding ability to access or find information on the Vermont Secretary of State's website. All divisions of the Office have had the opportunity to be involved in the development of the new website – these efforts should continue. The new website should focus on several critical information issues including:

- Accessibility of Information.
- Transparency of services and performance measures.
- Summary data highlighting services provides and how to access these services.
- Listing of FAQs (frequently asked questions).

- Fee schedules for services.
- Key Staff listings including name and contact information.
- Ability to conduct online services (e.g., online certifications, registrations, and inquiries).

The effort undertaken by the Secretary of State's Office should be lauded for identifying and taking the initiative to develop a more comprehensive, useful, and user-friendly website for the Office.

Recommendation: The efforts to update the website currently underway should continue as a high priority for the organization. A high level of focus should be placed on providing the ability for users to access information and services online without needing to visit or call the Secretary of State's Office.

(6) Continue Efforts Cooperatively to Identify Areas Where Notarization of Signature is Not Required.

Staff within the Office of the Vermont Secretary of State have been identifying areas where processes can be streamlined through the elimination of the notarization of official signatures (i.e. – those affixed by a staff member of the Secretary of State's Office in the routine performance of assigned duties). Except in very limited cases, notarization is not required to validate official signatures. Staff should continue to review all cases where notarization is required and eliminate this requirement unless required by State statute (or other relevant authority).

Recommendation: Staff should continue to explore efforts to streamline work processes by eliminating requirements for notarization of signatures where signatures are affixed based upon authority granted to the position and no statutory requirement is present requiring notarization.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

This chapter outlines the evaluation of staffing and operational issues related to the Administrative Services Division of the Vermont Secretary of State's Office.

1. OVERALL, THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THIS DIVISION IS APPROPRIATE.

During the conduct of this study, several reclassifications of positions within this unit have been implemented including changes for the positions focused on (1) financial and budget oversight, and (2) the position focused on human resources. In applying the organizational criteria outlined in Chapter 5, the following table summarizes the evaluation criteria utilized and the findings that resulted from the evaluation of the organizational and operational practices of the Administrative Services Division.

Evaluation Criteria	Key Comments / Observations
Alignment with Organizational criteria such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitates objectives and policies• Facilitates decision making and planning• Facilitates management of operations• Access to key decision making and planning• Critical functions near key managers• Key programs with organizational prominence• No gaps or overlaps in services• Similar functions are grouped together	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Services within the Administrative Services Division are appropriately allocated within the Division with similar functions appropriately grouped together.• As currently structured, there are no overlaps in services provided and no substantial gaps in services.

Evaluation Criteria	Key Comments / Observations
<p>Alignment of Staffing / Managerial Control criteria such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Span of control is “appropriate”• Decision making at line level where possible• Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined• Distinction of roles among staff are clear• Management systems support structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administrative Director’s span of control, while narrow, is appropriate given the number and types of functions overseen.• IT Manager has very narrow span of control but it is appropriate for the small IT organization within a smaller state agency. A supervisory position is required to handle project planning, management and daily oversight of staff.• Roles and responsibilities for staff within the Administrative Services Division are clear and appropriate. There are no blurred lines of responsibilities or overlaps in responsibilities for positions.• Positions have been established at levels appropriate for the functions necessary to be performed and recent changes in the level of the positions for human resources and budget have addressed identified issues.• Most management systems, especially software systems, in support of service delivery or performance of duties are State-provided and required systems. Limited ability to impact or change systems is present.

Evaluation Criteria	Key Comments / Observations
<p>Alignment with External Entities / Organizational Design Practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization structure and makes “common sense”/“meets industry standards” or “best management practices” • Effort to make the organization “flat”/maximize managerial positions • Staffing levels are in line with recognized “best management practices” and associated workload/service levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative Services Division represents a common and best practice of having administrative functions centralized into a single organizational unit. • No organizational structure changes are appropriate within this unit. • Staffing levels within this unit are typically appropriate and in alignment with best practices and the associated workloads with the following notations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The IT staffing allocation is higher than typically seen for comparably sized organizations. However, this level of staffing is appropriate for the Vermont Secretary of State’s Office based upon the services provided, the number of extensive system replacements underway (and the number of projects that must be managed), and the limited support provided by the State’s IT structure to the Secretary of State’s Office. - Human Resources staffing is slightly above recognized industry benchmarks. However, this position also performs other duties (and therefore is not dedicated full-time to HR functions). If other duties performed by this position were to increase significantly, the Office could consider utilization of State provided HR support similar to the approach utilized by other State Agencies (however, this is not recommended at this time). • Given the receptionist role played by the Administrative Services Technician positions, consideration should be given in the future to expanding the role of these positions to also answer basic questions regarding Corporation and Elections functions to assist with the situations where due to limited staffing positions within this unit may not be available.

The following points summarize the key organizational findings regarding the organizational structure and management staffing in Administrative Services Division:

- No significant organizational or staffing issues were identified. Recent changes in position levels for the budget oversight and human resources functions have addressed issues noted during the study relative to the required services to be provided that were outside of the duties allocated to the positions. These changes have positioned the Office to provide required services in an efficient and effective manner.

The project team has identified, as alternatives, the following recommendations to address each of these organizational issues. The table below provides a summary of the benefits and issues that may result from making these changes.

Alternatives / Recommendation	Benefits	Issues
Cross train the Administrative Services Technician positions to handle basic inquiries, provide general information, and answer selected questions from the public to support Elections and Corporations Divisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensures a more timely service delivery to the public/stakeholders/customers.• Provides support to two Divisions where limited staffing may impact service delivery if one or more staff is absent but where workloads do not appear to warrant additional staffing at this time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearly defining the types of inquiries and information that can be handled by these positions would be required.• Staff from Corporations and Elections would need to appropriately cross train these staff to handle these additional topical areas.• A review of the classification may be required to ensure duties are compatible with existing classification levels.

As noted in the above recommendation, the project team notes the ability (through cross training) of the administrative services technician positions to serve as a relief function for basic inquiries related to Elections and Corporations functions when workloads exceed the capacity of the existing staff. These staff members also serve as the “receptionist” for the overall Secretary of State’s Office. This recommendation does not suggest that the administrative services technicians serve as the primary intake for these units – but only to serve as a relief valve.

Longer-term, the Secretary of State’s Office should employ a dedicated full-time customer service specialist position to handle walk-in and incoming calls. At the present time, this position also has allocated financial and administrative duties. If in the future, these financial and administrative duties expand, a full-time dedicated receptionist position should be allocated to ensure that a high level and responsive customer service approach is employed for individuals contacting the Secretary of State’s Office.

The functioning of the organization and the Administrative Services Division of the Vermont Secretary of State's Office can be enhanced through the implementation, over time, of the recommended staffing changes outlined in the table above and summarized below.

Recommendation: *No change is recommended in the organizational structure or immediate full-time staffing allocation for the Administrative Services Division based upon existing workloads and services provided.*

Recommendation: *Longer-term, a dedicated receptionist position should be added to the Administrative Services Division to handle all incoming telephone and walk-in inquiries for the Office. This position will only be required if and when receptionist duties cannot be effectively handled by the existing position in addition to the financial and administrative duties assigned to it.*

2. THERE ARE SEVERAL OPERATIONAL CHANGES THAT SHOULD BE COMPLETED OR ENHANCED TO IMPROVE OPERATIONS.

The following points summarize key operational issues identified throughout the engagement and through the best management practices assessment. Following a brief discussion of each issue is a recommended action to address the issue.

Issue	Analysis and Discussion	Recommendation
Are there services that should be reallocated to or from the Administrative Services Division?	No services should be reallocated to or from the Administrative Services Division at this point in time.	n/a
Are operations within Administrative Services Division appropriate? Are there operational improvements, service enhancements or alternatives for service delivery that should be considered within the Administrative Services Division?	<p>To ensure consistency in application of policies and procedures within the Administrative Services Division, additional policy and procedure manuals should be developed covering major functional areas.</p> <p>Basic policy and procedures have been documented. Some, such as the personnel manual, should be prepared in electronic format to simplify updating and distribution.</p>	<p>Additional policy and procedure manuals should be developed for all major functional areas of operations.</p> <p>Electronic manuals, versus paper manuals, should be developed wherever possible. Highest priority should be on the employee manual.</p>

Issue	Analysis and Discussion	Recommendation
	<p>Since critical budgeting and financial reporting functions are provided by a single position within the organization, a plan to cross train other staff should be developed and undertaken to provide backup support to this individual to ensure these critical functions can continue should the individual in this position be temporarily unable to perform assigned duties. This cross training could be provided to either the Administrative Services Technician or alternatively by the HR position. The Financial Manager position is currently under review for upgrading to a manager position. The project team would support this change.</p>	<p>Additional cross training should be provided to provide a backup for the budgeting and financial reporting duties.</p>
	<p>In some cases, Division Managers are not focused on the ongoing management of their assigned budgets. Responsibility for reviewing the budgets and ensuring compliance has fallen to the Financial Manager position. Division Managers should routinely monitor and oversee their adopted budget and be responsible for ensuring compliance with the budget as adopted.</p>	<p>Quarterly meetings should be conducted between budget staff and Department Directors to review expenditures and determine if any adjustments are necessary.</p>

Issue	Analysis and Discussion	Recommendation
	<p>The accounts payable function is heavily manual, leading to extensive shuffling of paperwork between divisions for approval, coding and processing. Some concerns noted regarding the process utilized for payment of invoices on contracts where not all invoices are appropriately coded to the relevant contract for payment.</p> <p>This issue has been addressed through the inclusion within Vision, the financial software, of all open contracts. This information will enable, for each contract established for use by the Secretary of State's Office and Division Managers, to review open contracts when submitting invoices with their approval for payment. The approval should list the contract number to which individual invoices should be charged.</p>	<p>To improve internal financial processing within the Secretary of State's Office and ensure that invoices are paid against the appropriate contract, all Division Managers should be trained on the use of Vision, particularly the ability to query and view open contracts online. During their review and approval of invoices, they should note on the approval the specific contract, in addition to the line item, to which a particular invoice should be charged and compare invoices to the payment provisions of each contract.</p>
	<p>Internal controls should be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure staff conformance to adopted policies and procedures. Staff handling payments should have a refresher training periodically to ensure conformance to guidelines. Random audits of accounts should be conducted to ensure financial controls are followed.</p>	<p>Financial staff should develop an internal control and financial practices training session that all staff involved in handling payments, processing invoices, and otherwise involved in budgetary activities are required to participate in at least once every three years.</p> <p>The Financial Manager position should conduct random audits of financial transactions handled by staff in each division.</p>

Issue	Analysis and Discussion	Recommendation
	<p>Ongoing five-year planning focus should be continued and enhanced on IT needs for the VT Secretary of State's operations.</p> <p>This is critical to ensure that the comprehensive and aggressive updating of the information technology program that has been started is fully implemented and completed.</p>	<p>The Office should continue to enhance the recently drafted multi-year technology plan to ensure that all high priority initiatives and technology needs can be accomplished with existing funding levels and to determine support for future funding needs/requests of the legislature.</p>
	<p>Some performance evaluations continue to fail to be conducted in a timely manner. All managerial staff have been recently trained how to complete performance evaluations. The Secretary should make a high priority that all managers complete their assigned performance evaluations in a timely manner. A key evaluation factor for supervisors should be their completion of assigned performance evaluations for staff in a timely manner.</p>	<p>The Secretary of State should require all managers to complete assigned performance evaluations in a timely manner.</p> <p>One component of supervisor evaluations should be on their performance of their managerial/supervisory duties, including completion of performance evaluations.</p>
	<p>Each annual performance evaluation for staff members should include a discussion and determination of a training plan for the coming year. This ensures that employees and supervisors discuss areas of needed training and identify appropriate training focus and courses for each position.</p>	<p>Annual training plans are not developed for all employees. These should be included within the annual performance evaluation to develop goals and objectives for the coming year.</p>
	<p>Performance targets should be established for the handling of major functional duties (such as Human Resources) to measure performance. Key targets for the filling of positions could include the following: 120 days for managerial positions, 60 days for mid-management or supervisory positions, and 45 days for entry level positions.</p>	<p>Performance targets should be established for the handling of major functional duties (such as Human Resources) to measure performance.</p>

Issue	Analysis and Discussion	Recommendation
Is technology appropriately utilized within Administrative Services Division?	The technology utilized is appropriate to meet existing needs and service demands. Majority of systems utilized are State provided systems.	The Office should continue to expand the use of online payments whenever feasible to reduce processing of manual payments via check or cash.

The following sections address more substantive recommendations warranting additional discussion beyond what is listed in the above summary.

(1) POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUALS, INCLUDING EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION DOCUMENTATION, SHOULD BE DEVELOPED IN ELECTRONIC FORMATS.

To simplify updating and distribution of manuals, all policy and procedure manuals should be developed as electronic documents for simplicity and ease of distribution. This same approach should be utilized for the employee orientation manual. All manuals should be maintained on an intranet portal so that all staff have immediate access to the most current version of all policies and procedures. This will also make distribution of modifications and updated documents easier to accomplish.

The highest priority should be the development of the employee manual and new employee orientation documentation in electronic format with appropriate linkages to external documents (e.g., benefit program descriptions). If existing staff capacity does not enable this to be assigned as a priority in the next year, consideration should be given to contracting out this function at an estimated cost of \$5,000 to \$10,000 to complete.

Recommendation: Additional policy and procedure manuals should be developed for all major functional areas of operations. All manuals should be made available on an intranet or similar site to ensure staff has access to them. Highest possible priority should be on the employee manual.

(2) A Back-Up Position Should be Designated for the Budgeting and Financial Reporting Position.

With limited staffing within the Administrative Services Division, many critical functions are performed by single incumbents within limited backup to perform their duties during periods of absence. Of most importance, this was noted in the functions performed by the Financial Manager II position related to financial and budget functions. Other staff within the office should be cross trained on the critical financial functions in order to ensure continuity of service delivery during any absence of this individual.

A backup plan should be developed that trains several different individuals on these key duties including the VAC Program Coordinator, and the Administrative Services Technician position with the allocation of duties based upon those that most appropriately align with their existing duties.

Recommendation: Additional cross training should be provided to provide a backup for the budgeting and financial reporting duties of the Financial Manager II positions.

(3) The Quarterly Budget Review Sessions Should Continue and Greater Responsibility Should Be Allocated to Directors for Management of their Budgets.

To ensure budgets are appropriately managed, the Financial Manager II position should continue to have quarterly meetings with each Division Director to review the status of their budget, identify potential problem areas, and make mid-year adjustments as necessary and appropriate. However, the responsibility for managing Division budgets should be clearly allocated to the Directors and they should assume responsibility for compliance with the adopted budget and identifying problem areas. The Financial Manager II should assist in determining what actions are needed, if any,

to address potential problem areas but should not assume responsibility for ensuring Directors appropriately manage their allocated budget.

Recommendation: Quarterly meetings should be conducted between budget staff and Department Directors to review expenditures and determine if any adjustments are necessary.

(4) Although Recent Changes Have Strengthened the Process of Managing Contracts Additional Steps Need to be Taken.

The Secretary of State's Office has the authority to execute contracts for goods and services within certain limits. The contract management process in the Secretary of State's Office conforms to the State's Contracting Bulletin 3.5 (Vermont Agency of Administration, dated July 15, 2008). In Vermont, there is much discretionary authority provided to departments including the following limits:

- Under \$15,000, supervisors have complete discretionary authority, even without competitive bid (though this is preferable).
- Between \$15,000 and \$100,000, departments can go through a "simplified bid process" in which three written bids are received for a specific scope of work.
- Over \$100,000 departments need to go through the contracting process specified by Bulletin 3.5 which involves public noticing, RFP (or other procurement process) scope formatting and substance requirements, and selection procedures. It also requires approvals outside of the department and within the State depending on the amount and type of contract.

There are other provisions for specific situations involving transportation, privatization, marketing, etc.

Bulletin 3.5 describes the specific processes in place for departmentally developed contracts, which includes the process for the development of the contract, its contents, payments, reporting, provisions for non-compliance, executing, and retaining contract files. Once issued, responsibility for contract management in conformance to Bulletin 3.5 is at several levels in the Secretary of State's Office, including:

- The business owner who requested the good or service – usually a director or other management position within a division.
- The VAC Program Coordinator, whose responsibilities extend to contract tracking, including development of the contract documents. Once contracts are signed, responsibility for monitoring falls to the business owner. The VAC Program Coordinator can assist with answering questions, as needed.
- The Administrative Services Technician IV, who authorizes progress and final payments against a contract, ensuring that there is appropriate documentation and sign-off as well as charging the appropriate account.

The process for executing and managing contracts has recently been changed to address a critical issue for the Office – invoices were received for payment and could be processed without knowledge that the good or service was actually received, received on time, and according to the specifications, terms, and conditions of the contract. A summary of that process is described in the following:

INCEPTION
• Staff, usually a director, requests a good or service.
• The Secretary grants authority for the acquisition.
• The Director of Administrative Services ensures that the acquisition is in the budget and funds are available.
• The VAC Program Coordinator develops an RFP or, for sole source projects, develops the contract.
RFP
• The VAC Program Coordinator asks the manager for a scope of work to write the RFR.
• The VAC Program Coordinator posts the RFR on the State Bid Board and, if requested by the business owner, place ads in newspapers.
• A panel selected by the business owner reviews proposals.
• A selection is made.
CONTRACT DEVELOPMENT
• The VAC Program Coordinator asks the business owner for a scope of work and recommended payment provisions.
• The VAC Program Coordinator works with the business owner to revise the information and complete the rest of the documents.
• If the vendor has not previously done business with the State, The VAC Program Coordinator sends them an I-9 to complete and give it to the Administrative Services Technician IV who enters them in the Vision system to have them set up as a vendor by Finance and Management. (One to two weeks).
• The contract is revised and reviewed until it is satisfactory.
• The Business Owner sends the approved copy to the Administrative Services Technician IV to enter into the system to get a contract number.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Administrative Services Technician IV gives the VAC Program Coordinator the contract number, which is put on the document.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Depending on the amount of the contract, it is then sent for review to some, or all of the following: Attorney General, Finance and Management, Secretary of Administration, Chief Information Officer, DII Business Analyst, Chief Marketing Officer.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After approval by all required parties it is sent to the vendor for signature.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When VAC Program Coordinator receives it back, the Secretary signs it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The VAC Program Coordinator sends a completed signed copy to the vendor.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The VAC Program Coordinator gives the Administrative Services Technician IV a copy of the signature page so the hold can be taken off the account in the system
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The VAC Program Coordinator files the original contract.
PAYMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The vendor sends the invoice to purchasing@sec.state.vt.us or mails it to Purchasing/SOS. It goes to the Administrative Services Technician IV.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Administrative Services Technician IV then sends it to the business owner to sign off on it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They send the approved copy to It is not clear if the Business Owner checks the invoice against the payment provisions in the contract before they sign it to approve payment, and it is entered into the system to approve payment and files the invoice.

This process has several checks and balances built into it – the contract development process includes the business owner/manager, the Administrative Services Director, the VAC Program Coordinator, the Administrative Services Technician and the Secretary himself. The payment process was recently changed to provide that invoices go directly to purchasing rather than the business owner, in order to eliminate delays that were present with invoices sitting for extended periods of time prior to processing. Now, as before, the business owner/manager is still required to sign-off that the vendor provided the good or service according to the terms of the contract. Additionally, the business owner should be comparing payment terms in the contract against the invoice. This change in the payment process was positive and necessary.

The contract process could be further strengthened through the following steps:

- Ensuring that the business owner/manager has a copy of the final contract.
- The VAC Program Coordinator has kept an Excel spreadsheet to track open contracts. This information is now available in Vision, the financial management information system. Contracts can now be tracked and accessed by all

concerned through this system. Business owners need to be trained in the use of Vision for this purpose. This is particularly useful to track expiration dates.

- If, upon expiration, a contract will be renewed or not, Administrative Services needs lead time to develop and review contracts for renewal.

Recommendation: Ensure that the business owner/manager requesting a good or service has a copy of the final contract.

Recommendation: Provide training to management staff in the use of Vision to track contracts in the system.

(5) Internal Controls and Financial Practices Should be Further Enhanced.

Given the relatively decentralized approach utilized by the Secretary of State's Office to providing services and accepting payments, a strong internal control and financial practices audit program should be put into place. Staff in Administrative Services Division should develop a comprehensive training program related to internal controls and financial practices. This training should cover topics including the following:

- Cash handling,
- Cash reconciliation and deposit requirements,
- Procurement policies and practices,
- Receipt of good, supplies, and services,
- Invoice/contract payments,
- Budget administration, and
- Adopted policies of the State and Secretary of State's Office regarding financial, purchasing, and cash handling topics.

All staff involved in conducting duties in the above listed areas should be required to undergo a training session, at least once every three years, covering these items. Staff in the Administrative Services Division should also periodically conduct

random audits and document reviews to ensure that staff are handling their assigned duties in accordance with adopted policies and procedures.

Recommendation: Financial staff should develop an internal control and financial practices training session that all staff involved in handling payments, processing invoices, and otherwise involved in budgetary activities are required to participate in at least once every three years.

Recommendation: The Financial Manager II position should conduct random audits of financial transactions handled by staff in each division.

(6) Information Technology Strategic Plans.

To achieve the mission of the Vermont Secretary of State's Office relative to Information Technology use and deployment, the IT unit must:

- Provide the centralized information technology services required by the various divisions of the Office including: file server operations, network services, business application support and maintenance, end-user training and support, web services, telecommunications services, project coordination, and contract administration.
- Provide the vision, leadership, and skills that will enable the Vermont Secretary of State's Office to benefit from technological innovation and improve customer service both internally and to stakeholders.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the existing IT support provided, the Matrix Consulting Group looked at the three main components that characterize an information technology operation: people, process, and technology. These were then compared to those activities considered best practices for a customer service focused IT environment, which include strategy, project management, and operational quality. The intent was to identify any gaps that may be present and to offer recommendations to minimize these gaps.

The Vermont Secretary of State's Information Technology Department has undertaken a significant work program over the last couple of years to update, replace or significantly modify all the major IT systems that support the core services provided

by the Vermont Secretary of State's Office. The approach being utilized by IT in replacing these systems is based upon the following characteristics:

- IT responsibility would revolve around acquiring and operating the technology.
- IT would have responsibility for acquiring the appropriate software (principally through contracted services) rather than developing it internally, installing and managing systems with internal staff.
- The Office would own and operate all of the technology within the organization.
- IT would require staff with skills and abilities to manage the technology.
- And, IT success would be measured based upon application acquisition, application provisioning, and how well the department operated and managed the technology.

The IT environment in the Vermont Secretary of State's Office is characterized by its outsourcing of certain functions and services, and by the following activities:

- The IT unit's responsibility revolves around technology provisioning and technology performance.
- The IT Manager is focused on blending and managing both internal and external technology resources.
- Both internal and external resources provide technology within the Office.
- The IT unit is structured around both internal and outsourced technology and services.
- The IT unit success is measured based upon service-level costs and performance levels.

This approach has proven quite effective in undertaking and implementing significant technology changes over the last several years. This has been accomplished with limited financial resources and the need to essentially oversee the development of several major software systems to handle unique functions performed by the Secretary of State that make the use of off-the-shelf software difficult to acquire and implement.

Ideally, an IT strategy should identify future directions and the initiatives required to achieve the desired future environment. It should enable a flexible, reliable, and efficient attitude toward strategic direction. Strategy definition does not begin with technology but with a definition of the Secretary of State's Office overall and divisional goals. The IT strategy must relate strategy to business objectives. A successful IT strategy is key to the IT Unit's credibility, enabling the unit to become a strategic partner to the divisions and stakeholders it serves. A well-designed IT strategic plan will help achieve these goals by:

- Ensuring IT creates the highest business value with optimal investment levels.
- Helping to optimize and balance limited IT resources and processes.
- Aligning the IT resources to the highest impact initiatives and operational activities.
- Ensuring that IT activities are aligned with department priorities, as well as helping to identify ways to more efficiently enable business activities and opportunities.

Furthermore, a well-designed IT strategy can help the Secretary of State's Office by:

- Ensuring the wise investment of business dollars in IT-enabled initiatives that help achieve business goals and objectives.
- Driving drive lower costs, increasing output, and enhancing customer service through the alignment of IT activities and the Office requirements.

It is important to remember that having an IT strategic plan does not necessarily guarantee that IT will meet all of its commitments or that department needs will remain static. However, it can help IT and the Secretary of State's Office management to think about, discuss, negotiate, and agree upon a future course for IT to navigate.

The Information Technology Unit should approach and prepare for the development of an IT strategy by building a charter, agreed upon and signed by all key stakeholders. It is also important that the Unit does not attempt to build a strategic plan without sufficient preplanning. Doing so may result in a loss of stakeholders and/or a strategy that addresses the wrong topics, the wrong time frames, and at the wrong level of detail. Additionally, prior to the strategy development effort, it is extremely important that the IT Unit prioritizes the stakeholders and fully understands their concerns. Successful strategic plans are not determined by how well written they are, but by the extent to which they facilitate the achievement of high impact results for the Office.

Recommendation: The Information Technology Department should develop a strategic plan.

(7) The Office Should Expand the Development of the Multi-Year Technology Plan.

The Office has recently drafted a multi-year technology plan outlining key initiatives and programs underway. This effort should be continued and expanded to ensure that dedicated resources allocated for technology efforts, both financial and staffing, are sufficient to meet the identified operational needs of the Office. The Office has undertaken a very comprehensive and transformational technology upgrade effort over the last several years with systems being custom-developed for each of the major functional areas. However, given the limited staffing of IT and the fact that virtually all software development is contracted out, the Office maintains a level of risk that internal needs will exceed available capacity and IT resources. Even the new permitting software that was implemented to assist OPR has extensive updates and modifications needed that have been identified since implementation. With projects currently

underway to update Corporations and Elections systems, and the known need to address VSARA technology issues, the risk for not allocating sufficient resources is very real. This can only be effectively planned for, managed, and risk managed if a long-term plan with resource allocations (financial costs of system development and implementation along with staffing requirements) clearly outlined.

Recommendation: The Office should continue to develop the recently drafted multi-year technology plan to ensure that all high priority initiatives and technology needs can be accomplished with existing funding levels and to determine support for future funding needs/requests of the legislature.

(8) Creation of an Information Technology Steering Committee

An IT steering committee is considered a best practice approach for aligning strategic business and IT priorities. The committee should be made up of the Secretary of State, and each of the Directors for the business units. This committee should have a clear mandate for reviewing, monitoring, and prioritizing major IT projects from a cross-functional perspective. Successful IT steering committees focus on three main tasks which include IT strategic planning, project prioritization, and project approval.

The committee helps ensure that IT strategy is aligned with the strategic goals of the Secretary of State's Office and, because the committee includes each of the Division Directors, their participation helps ensure they have ownership over the IT decisions will impact their individual divisions.

An IT steering committee brings a number of benefits to both the IT Unit and the Secretary of State's Office as a whole:

- The IT steering committee's strongest mandate is to find and align business solutions that leverage technology.
- At budget time, the ITD will be able to set request funding allocation based upon defined and agreed upon division and organization-wide business requirements.
- Other divisions will be able to see their IT demands in the larger context of all known competing needs of the organization, and at least understand (though maybe not agree with) the rationale behind decisions to proceed with one project over another.
- IT projects, especially cross functional projects will be decided upon based on committee approval and priority and not just within the IT unit.

It is important to recognize that asking a steering committee to allocate IT resources has not been very efficient. IT management must retain ownership over its resource allocation to achieve the adopted work plan.

The main function of this IT steering committee is to align scarce IT resources with the organizational needs of the Office. Additionally, this committee should be tasked with ensuring that the IT Unit is providing valuable services, focused on the highest priority needs of the organization, and that it is doing so in an effective and efficient manner. To achieve these deliverables, there are a number of considerations that should be addressed prior to the establishment of the steering committee. First, the committee should adopt the mindset of providing information technology services to the entire organization (rather than focusing on a single division). Again, the intent is to have the committee act as the coordinating team for the key issues and decisions affecting the use of IT across the Secretary of State's Office. Key tasks that the committee would be involved in include:

- Guidance on strategic goals.
- Alignment of IT and department objectives.
- Communications path between executives and middle management.
- Resolution of cross-function issues.
- Assessment of IT capabilities and adequacy of the IT infrastructure.
- Sponsorship of IT improvement projects, etc.

While the IT Manager has responsibility for directing and managing IT resources, the creation of successful IT outcomes is a joint effort of the entire management team and stakeholders working together to achieve common goals.

For the committee to work effectively, those involved should reach a consensus with regards to the role and purpose of the committee, and should recognize that the committee's success will be based on a membership comprising stakeholders from the represented departments. The IT Unit should be represented on this committee, but the delegate should act as a consultant and/or committee observer. This IT Unit will benefit from the support and commitment of other committee members, as well as shared responsibility and accountability.

It is imperative that the committee remains focused on organization-wide technology issues and not on the IT Unit itself. This wider view of technology use within the Secretary of State's Office helps ensure that the committee mediates resource conflicts and technology priorities in the best interest of the organization. The committee should be focused on setting strategic direction, reviewing and approving standards and procedures, ensuring senior management and end-users have input, making recommendations for allocation of IT resources, measure and monitoring IT service

delivery, and providing oversight and review of large technology projects. The charter for the IT steering committee should focus on maximizing the performance of the organization.

The IT Steering committee should not be involved with specifics of low-level projects. Project status reporting should occur at a lower level, like a project team meeting. The steering committee should focus on the specific issues the project needs to address not how the project is progressing. The committee should also not concern itself with IT minutia. If committee reports principally consist of updates on status reports, maintenance items and support costs the committee will quickly lose interest and disband. The committee needs to focus on organization-wide IT strategy and ensuring that major initiatives are proceeding as planned. Finally, substantial efforts should be made to minimize committee time commitments. The meetings need to be streamlined, and members need to be in attendance or replaced if they cannot find time to attend. All project proposals and written documentation should be distributed in advance so members can be well prepared.

Recommendation: The Information Technology Department should work with customer departments to develop an IT steering committee to provide input on major IT issues.

Recommendation: The Information Technology Steering Committee's roles should be clearly defined to include establishment of IT goals, prioritization of needs and communications/problem solving between operating departments and the IT Unit.

(9) Systems Acquisition Should Ensure all Aspect of Operations Are Considered and Not Simply those of the Division Being Assisted.

As is often the case, the acquisition of new application software is often defined principally by available financial resources rather than operational need. Often, it is left

up to the division requesting the new application software to justify its use and undertake the primary role in requirements definition. This is understandable, however; it can lead to the development of new applications that exist as silos within the organization. Additionally, without appropriate guidance from IT staff, division staff may not consider all aspects of operations or technical capabilities that can best serve their needs. When this happens, it is often up to the IT Unit to identify and implement methods for moving data from these software silos between programs for use by other divisions or units. A better approach would be to utilize the previously mentioned IT steering committee to review new application requests and facilitate data sharing (if required) proactively instead of reactively by ensuring that appropriate linkages or data exchanges are built into software systems.

The current application selection process used by the ITD is procedurally adequate. The project team makes this recommendation only to ensure a holistic view of application selection and data sharing is utilized for the benefit of the Vermont Secretary of State's Office.

Recommendation: The Information Technology Department uses a formal process for the acquisition and selection of new application software. However, because this acquisition process is typically focused on the individual requesting Department, all such systems need to be placed in an overall context of the entire operations of the Vermont Secretary of State's Office.

(10) The Role of Webmaster Should be Assigned to the Executive Assistant Position to Ensure a Consistent Look and Utilization of the New Website and Assist Divisions with Content Management.

The Secretary of State's Office has been developing a comprehensive update of its website to improve service to its stakeholders. This website will provide greater ease of use, increased access to information, and improved functionality and appearance for

the Office's online presence. Websites are continuing to evolve as dynamic tools for interaction with stakeholders and as a primary source of information regarding services provided by organizations. As such, they require constant updating and revision to remain current.

The Secretary of State's Office should reassign to roles of Webmaster to those of the Executive Assistant position, which has been recommended for implementation elsewhere in this report. It is important that one individual have oversight and responsibility for ensuring a consistent appearance and functionality of the website for all divisions of the Office. Best practices in website design for smaller organizations such as the Secretary of State Office recommend that individual divisions are responsible for the majority of their content management based upon established and clearly defined guidelines. The Executive Assistant, in conjunction with the Executive Team, should draft the overall web content guidelines and provide training to other staff in their utilization. The Executive Assistant should also provide support to the various divisions in ensuring that all information and documents posted have a consistent look and feel. This will improve the experience of website users.

However, the Executive Assistant's role should not include the actual development and posting of all content – that should remain the responsibility of each division within the Office. To facilitate this, each division should designate one individual as the primary division web content coordinator. The Executive Assistant should provide support and guidance to these coordinators in the development, review, and formatting of information and documents that will be posted on the website. While the Executive Assistant may take primary responsibility for select sections of the website, those with

organization-wide applicability, it would not be effective or efficient for all content to be handled by this individual.

Recommendation: The role of Webmaster should be assigned to the Executive Assistant position. In this role, the Executive Assistant should oversee website management and content.

Recommendation: The Executive Assistant should develop content management and formatting guidelines to ensure a consistent look and feel to the new Secretary of State website. Training should be provided to the designated web coordinators within each Division.

(11) Place Greater Emphasis on the Timely Completion of Employee Performance Evaluations.

As previously noted, the existing organizational structure for the Vermont Secretary of State's Office does not have many supervisors who have extensive numbers of subordinates to oversee and supervise. The completion of performance evaluations is a critical and important function for any supervisor, and has historically not been a supervisory duty where supervisors were held accountable for timely completion. Effectiveness and benefits of performance evaluations decline when they are not completed in a timely and thorough manner. The Secretary should emphasize to all supervisory personnel that performance evaluations should be completed in a timely manner (i.e., no later than two weeks following due date, and preferably prior to employee's anniversary date) and include goals and objectives for the coming year (including any identified training needs). This timeframe exceeds what is permissible under collective bargaining agreements that require meetings to be held to discuss the evaluation 45 days following the applicable anniversary date. Failure to meet this contractual timeframe results in the granting of a satisfactory rating to the employee. All

supervisors should have their performance rated, in part, on their completion of supervisory functions – including completing performance evaluations.

Recommendation: The Secretary of State should require all managers to complete assigned performance evaluations in a timely manner.

Recommendation: One component of supervisor evaluations should be on their performance of their managerial/supervisory duties, including completion of performance evaluations.

Recommendation: Annual training plans are not developed for all employees. These should be included within the annual performance evaluation to develop goals and objectives for the coming year.

(12) Establish Performance Targets for Completion of Key Human Resources Functions.

To enable the monitoring and evaluation of the performance and completion of key human resources functions, the Office should adopt some limited performance measures against which performance is measured. These should cover both functions handled by the centralized human resources functions, as well as, those completed by supervisors. The following are recommendations for initial implementation:

- Time, in days, to fill positions from date of request by supervisor:
 - 120 days – Executive/Director Positions (if external recruitment conducted).
 - 60 days – Mid-management/supervisory positions.
 - 45 days – Entry level/non-supervisory positions.
- Performance Evaluations completed within two weeks of due date (tracked by individual supervisor).
- Exit Interview conducted with 90% of departing employees.

While basic, performance measures of this type will enable monitoring of service levels and serve as an “early warning indicator” when service delivery issues may arise.

It will also provide the focus on performance evaluations to let supervisors know that completion is being monitored and tracked.

Recommendation: Performance targets should be established for the handling of major functional duties (such as Human Resources) to measure performance.

8. ELECTIONS DIVISION

This chapter outlines the evaluation of staffing and operational issues related to the Elections Division of the Vermont Secretary of State's Office.

1. **OVERALL, THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND STAFFING REQUIREMENTS OF THIS DIVISION ARE APPROPRIATE.**

During the conduct of this study, no significant issues were identified or raised regarding either the overall organizational structure nor dedicated staffing levels. While limited concerns exist regarding seasonal peak workloads associated primarily with filing deadlines and election cycles, these can be addressed through the use of temporary staff as required. Additionally, as noted in the Administrative Services Division section, in the long-term a dedicated receptionist position has been recommended for the Secretary of State's Office. The addition of this position would enable limited cross-training to provide a central "intake center" that could handle basic questions and services related to multiple divisions of the Secretary of State's Office, which is not possible at the present time. This approach would also provide a relief valve during the peak workload times impacting Elections Division.

(1) The Elections Division Was Evaluated Against the Organizational Criteria.

The following table summarizes the evaluation criteria utilized and the findings that resulted from the evaluation of the organizational and operational practices of the Elections Division:

Evaluation Criteria	Key Comments / Observations
<p>Alignment with Organizational criteria such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates objectives and policies • Facilitates decision making and planning • Facilitates management of operations • Access to key decision making and planning • Critical functions near key managers • Key programs with organizational prominence • No gaps or overlaps in services • Similar functions are grouped together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The establishment of a unique Election Division addresses and is in alignment with the majority of criteria listed. • There are no overlaps or gaps in services provided with other organizational units. • All election related functions are located within this organizational unit. • Appropriate reporting relationships exist with access to key decision makers (e.g. – Secretary and Deputy Secretary of State). • There are minor gaps or overlaps in services provided by Elections and other Divisions most specifically noted is the overlap in legislative duties – acts and resolves - that are allocated to the Secretary of State and shared with VSARA.
<p>Alignment of Staffing / Managerial Control criteria such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Span of control is “appropriate” • Decision making at line level where possible • Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined • Distinction of roles among staff are clear • Management systems support structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Campaign Finance and Elections has a span of control of 1 to 4. While very narrow, this is not inconsistent with those seen in very narrowly defined and technical areas such as elections. • Role distinction for staff positions is appropriate. Each position is appropriately defined and expectations of the position are clear. • Appropriate management systems are in place – with a new elections system under development for implementation.
<p>Alignment with External Entities / Organizational Design Practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization structure and makes “common sense”/“meets industry standards” or “best management practices” • Effort to make the organization “flat”/maximize managerial positions • Staffing levels are in line with recognized “best management practices” and associated workload/service levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing structure makes sense and meets common industry practices. While some states organize this function as a stand-alone organizational unit or department, this is not typical in smaller states and would not be appropriate for the State of Vermont. Given the technical nature of the functions provided, there does not appear to be any benefit to merging with another of the Vermont Secretary of State’s Divisions. • Staffing levels – based upon interviews with staff regarding workloads and seasonality of work – are appropriate. While workloads peak during election time periods, alternative approaches should be utilized during those time periods, if needed, to supplement staff (including use of temporary staff).

As noted, no major organizational structure issues were identified from this assessment of the Elections Division.

2. THERE ARE SEVERAL OPERATIONAL CHANGES THAT SHOULD BE COMPLETED OR ENHANCED TO IMPROVE OPERATIONS.

The following table summarizes the key operational issues identified throughout the engagement and through the best management practices assessment. Following a brief discussion of each issue is a recommended action to address the issue:

Issue	Analysis and Discussion	Recommendation
Are there services that should be reallocated to or from the Elections Division?	No additional services should be reallocated to the Elections Division at this time. However, the compilation of the legislative directory should be considered for transfer to legislative staff.	The compilation of the legislative directory should be considered for reallocation to legislative staff.
Are operations within Elections Division appropriate? Are there operational improvements, service enhancements or alternatives for service delivery that should be considered within the Elections Division?	Longer-term consideration should be given to whether the duties performed related to campaign finance and lobbyist disclosure statements should be expanded from the “receive and file” to a greater level of review and compliance check (understanding legislation and statutory authority would be required). At the present time, the Secretary’s Office is simple a repository for the required filing. Many other states provide greater authority and responsibility to the Secretary of State to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.	The Secretary of State should evaluate the benefits of changing statutory authority from simply a “receive and file” to a “compliance review and enforcement” approach for all required filing related to campaign finance, elections, and lobbyist disclosure.
	Efforts at developing a comprehensive policy and procedures manual should continue to be developed to provide consistency in approaches and understanding for major processes (lobbyist reports, campaign finance report processing, and elections management).	Given the critical nature of the duties of this division, especially those related to elections, a comprehensive policy and procedures manual should be developed to ensure consistency of interpretation and enforcement by all staff. All manuals should be made available on an intranet or similar site.

Issue	Analysis and Discussion	Recommendation
	<p>Elections staff should develop additional educational materials including checklists and frequently asked questions to educate their stakeholders about how to comply with the regulations related to elections, campaign filings, and lobbyist disclosure statements.</p> <p>Additional training should be provided for Town Clerks, Lobbyist and Candidates for Office to acquaint and educate them with the major statutory provisions they must comply with. In addition to training sessions throughout the State, the Division should utilize webinar training so that the session can be archived and utilized by stakeholders at their convenience. Highest priority should be topics related to managing voter registration list and conducting elections.</p>	<p>Given limited staffing, which is typically sufficient to handle workloads, staff should supplement educational efforts by creating additional training materials including online webinars for use by the Division's stakeholders.</p> <p>All webinars and educational materials should be made available on the Secretary of State's website.</p>
	<p>While key functions are cyclical/seasonal and have statutory deadlines (therefore not lending themselves easily to the establishment of performance targets), limited performance targets including time to process requests for service, process submissions, and respond to inquiries should be tracked.</p>	<p>Basic performance targets should be adopted, measured and reported on a monthly basis.</p>
<p>Is technology appropriately utilized within the Elections Division?</p>	<p>Current technology is significantly outdated and not meeting service delivery needs. An RFP has been issued and a contract awarded for a new software systems to manage all critical Election functions (including lobbyist registration and disclosures).</p>	<p>n/a</p>

The key issues identified and discussed above are summarized in the following sections.

(1) The Secretary of State Should Explore Options to Transfer the Compilation of the Legislative Directory from Elections Staff to Legislative Staff.

Elections staff has performed the development of the legislative director for an extended period of time. While an important and useful document, the compilation of a legislative directory is more typically a function performed by legislatures by their own legislative staff. Notwithstanding existing statutory requirements, the Vermont Secretary of State's Office (specifically, the Secretary) should undertake discussion with the appropriate legislative staff to test the willingness of their staff to assume this duty and make the appropriate statutory changes. While this is not a full-time position within the Secretary of State's Office, it is not an insignificant workload that if not required to be performed, would provide additional time for staff to perform other core duties of the office.

Recommendation: The Secretary of State should undertake discussion with the appropriate legislative staff to determine their willingness to take over responsibility for the preparation of the legislative directory.

(2) The Secretary of State Should Explore Changing Statutory Authority for Elections to Transition to a True Oversight Board for Elections and Campaign Filings.

Unlike the services provided in many states related to elections oversight and campaign filings, the Vermont Secretary of State serves, by statute, simply as a repository of filings. There is limited-to-no true oversight and review of the documents filed to ensure compliance with even basic state statutes governing elections and campaign finance disclosures. The Office also has very limited authority to address non-compliance issues for those failing to file, or file in a timely manner, the required documents.

A much more common approach is that election and campaign filings are at least reviewed and monitored for some minimal level of compliance with regulations and statutory requirements. Typically, staff receiving these filings also have the authority and ability to levy administrative fines for failure to file or failure to file the required information. The Secretary of State's Office should consider seeking expanded statutory authority to provide a more comprehensive oversight for elections and campaign finance filings that moves beyond simple receipt and storage. These expanded duties should include the administrative ability to validate compliance with statutes, levy fines for non-compliance (either failure to file or failure to provide required information). This level of involvement by the Secretary of State would provide a service to the public that is not currently being provided by the State of Vermont.

Should this change in service be implemented through a statutory change, the Elections Division will require additional staff to handle the increased workload. While the extent of the workload cannot be determined at this point in time, and will not be clear until the determination is made regarding the level of compliance review that will be conducted, it is critical to note that this change in service cannot be implemented without an appropriate increase in staff allocated to the Elections Division.

Recommendation: The Secretary of State should evaluate the benefits and seek to expand their statutory authority from simply serving as a "receive and file" unit to a "compliance review and enforcement" approach for all required filings related to campaign finance, elections, and lobbyist disclosure.

Recommendation: Staffing increases will be required should the Secretary of State's Office implement compliance reviews. However, specific staffing levels cannot be determined until the new role is clearly defined.

(3) Develop a Policy and Procedures Manual for this Division.

During this evaluation, staff noted the difficulties encountered with the changes in staff in this division over the last several years due to the lack of detailed policies and procedures covering the services provided by the unit. The long time Director of this Division recently left and had no written policies and procedures in place. It will be important for the current Director to establish and document policies and procedures to ensure services are provided in a consistent manner.

While staff members have been able to become acquainted with the required duties and procedures, it took longer than necessary and left staff with exposure until they became familiar with statutory requirements. A high priority should be placed on developing written policies and procedures manual for the Elections Division to ensure consistency among staff, and compliance with all statutory obligations.

Recommendation: Given the critical nature of the duties of this division, especially those related to elections, a comprehensive policy and procedures manual should be developed to ensure consistency of interpretation and enforcement by all staff.

(4) Place Greater Focus on Expanding Training Materials and Utilizing On-line Training and Webinars.

The Elections Division, like other divisions in the Vermont Secretary of State Office, has many different constituencies ranging from lobbyist, individual candidates for office, to the Town Clerks. Given the diverse stakeholders and the limited staff, Elections staff should employ online training, which can be recorded and made available for review online at individual user's convenience, as a primary training mechanism for their functions. It would be easy to develop short webinars on filing requirements, compliance issues, and frequently asked questions that could be video

recorded and placed on the new Secretary of State website. All individuals interested in learn more about filing requirements, elections administration, etc could then access these materials.

Recommendation: Given limited staffing, which is typically sufficient to handle workloads, staff should supplement educational efforts by creating additional training materials including online webinars for use by the Division's stakeholders. All webinars and educational materials should be made available on the Secretary of State's website.

(5) While the Office is Primarily Reactive to External Actions, Basic Performance and Workload Measures Should be Established.

The Elections Division should adopt a handful of performance and workload measures for use in evaluating workload and performance of the Division. Key measures applicable to the functions performed could include the following:

- Percent of filings received by deadline (while not in direct control of performance against this target, a low percentage could indicate need for greater training or education of customers),
- Number of training sessions conducted by staff,
- Number of attendees, on average, per training session,
- Number of days, on average, to review and file:
 - Lobbyist disclosures,
 - Campaign finance filings,
 - Candidate filings, etc.

These metrics should be tracked on a monthly basis and an annual summary included in the annual report of the Vermont Secretary of State and posted on the website.

Recommendation: Adopt basic performance targets, and measure and report them on a monthly basis. An annual summary should be included in the Secretary of State annual report and posted on the website.

9. CORPORATIONS DIVISION

This chapter outlines the evaluation of staffing and operational issues related to the Corporations Division of the Vermont Secretary of State's Office.

1. OVERALL, THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND STAFFING REQUIREMENTS OF THIS DIVISION ARE APPROPRIATE.

The overall organizational structure of this division is appropriate when taking into consideration other units in the Secretary of State's Office, the duties performed, and typical organizational structure approaches utilized by other states. Similarly, staffing is generally sufficient to meet existing service demands. However, the division is undertaking a significant modification in its use of technology, including online services, and the business processes that it utilizes. After full implementation, these should have the result of reducing overall workload enabling staff to continue at the current level.

(1) The Corporations Division Was Evaluated Against the Organizational Criteria.

The following table summarizes the evaluation criteria utilized and the findings that resulted from the evaluation of the organizational and operational practices of the Corporations Division:

Evaluation Criteria	Key Comments / Observations
<p>Alignment with Organizational criteria such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates objectives and policies • Facilitates decision making and planning • Facilitates management of operations • Access to key decision making and planning • Critical functions near key managers • Key programs with organizational prominence • No gaps or overlaps in services • Similar functions are grouped together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment as a distinct organizational unit is appropriate and represents approaches seen in many other state organizations. • Role distinction for staff positions is appropriate. Each position is appropriately defined and expectations of the position are clear. • Appropriate management systems are in place – with a new software system being implemented. • There are no gaps or overlaps in services provided by Corporations and other Divisions.
<p>Alignment of Staffing / Managerial Control criteria such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Span of control is “appropriate” • Decision making at line level where possible • Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined • Distinction of roles among staff are clear • Management systems support structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Corporations has a span of control of 1 to 5. While very narrow, this is not inconsistent with those seen in very narrowly defined and technical areas such as handled by Corporations (business registration and UCC filings). • Role distinction for staff positions is appropriate. Each position is appropriately defined and expectations of the position are clear. • Appropriate management systems are in place – with a new elections system under development for implementation.
<p>Alignment with External Entities / Organizational Design Practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization structure and makes “common sense”/“meets industry standards” or “best management practices” • Effort to make the organization “flat”/maximize managerial positions • Staffing levels are in line with recognized “best management practices” and associated workload/service levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While a narrow focus and small unit, the organizational structure of Corporations makes sense. It is a common approach to handling functions for other Secretary of State operations. • The managerial position in Corporations (as in Elections) is somewhat underutilized for the managerial role (only supervising five staff) but is required due to the technical focus of the work activities. • Greatest issue on staffing is the lack of additional back-up support for key positions within the unit. When staff are absent for leave, there is limited backup support to handle existing workloads. The current PT temporary position should be increased to a full-time temporary position for the near term. Given the extensive process changes that are contemplated with the implementation of the new software, the future business processes are not yet fully defined and staffing requirements not known.

The following section outlines the recommendations regarding staffing for Corporations.

(2) While Overall Organizational Structure and Staffing Levels are Appropriate, In the Long-Term, a Central Customer Service Specialist Position Should be Utilized as Back-up Support and Relief During Workload Peaks.

The following points summarize the key organizational findings regarding the organizational structure and management staffing in the Corporations Division:

- No recommended changes in overall organizational structure or staffing levels are recommended for the Corporations Division. While consideration was given to the opportunities to merge this division with another to eliminate small organizational units, the technical nature of the functions and the recent establishment of independent software systems warrant continuation of the existing structure at this time.
- Due to cyclical workloads and the limited staffing in this division, the current part-time temporary position should be made full-time, but remain a temporary position, to provide additional assistance to the division and assist with staff absences (e.g. – sick, vacation) and cyclical workloads. This will assist with current staffing needs. Future staffing requirements are not fully known and will not be clear until after the new software is implemented and further modifications of business processes are implemented.

As noted in the prior section, no overall change is recommended in the organizational structure of the Corporations Division. It should remain as a stand-alone Division of the Vermont Secretary of State's Office – this is also the most common approach utilized by other states that were surveyed as part of this engagement. However, there are peak and seasonal workloads that are difficult to address with existing staff levels. This can best be addressed by increasing the number of hours the existing part-time temporary position is allocated – but making it a full-time temporary position. Future staffing requirements cannot be adequately determined until after the new software system is fully implemented and final business processes are developed. However, to address immediate needs, the increase in the hours the temporary employee is working should be increased to a full-time level – though it should remain a temporary position.

Recommendation: *No change in organizational structure or full-time staff positions is recommended based upon existing workloads and services provided.*

Recommendation: *The existing part-time temporary position should be increased to full-time hours until future staffing requirements can be adequately determined. This will not be feasible until after the software system and the resulting business processes changes are fully implemented.*

2. THERE ARE SEVERAL OPERATIONAL CHANGES THAT SHOULD BE COMPLETED OR ENHANCED TO IMPROVE OPERATIONS IN THE CORPORATIONS DIVISION.

The following points summarize key operational issues identified throughout the engagement and through the best management practices assessment. Following this table is a more detailed discussion of key recommendations:

Issue	Analysis and Discussion	Recommendation
Are there services that should be reallocated to or from the Corporations Division?	No services should be reallocated to or from the Corporations Division at this time.	n/a
Are operations within Corporations Division appropriate? Are there operational improvements, service enhancements or alternatives for service delivery that should be considered within the Corporations Division?	The Division should provide the ability for applicants to request expedited service (with the payment of a increased fee) to achieve faster registration in cases where needed. While the existing processing times are very good, and the need for expedited processing should be limited, it would be a stakeholder friendly approach to provide this service.	Expedited processing options should be made available to customers needing a faster option for business registrations.
	Basic performance targets are in the process of being developed. These should be finalized, adopted and measured on a consistent basis with at least a monthly report provided of compliance levels with the adopted targets. Key targets should include time to handle registration (i.e. – 48 hours from date of submittal).	Basic performance targets should be adopted, measured and reported on a monthly basis. Processing targets should be disclosed on the website.
	Basic procedures are documented. With implementation of new system, all procedures should be fully documented.	All manuals should be made available on an intranet or similar site.

Issue	Analysis and Discussion	Recommendation
Is technology appropriately utilized within the Corporations Division?	The Corporations Division has a new software system under development that has been designed to meet their current and known future needs. While not fully functional at this point, significant progress is underway. Of particular note on this software project is that data will be shared between the Secretary of State Office, Department of Labor and Department of Revenue.	When fully implemented, the new software for the Corporations Division should provide a fully functional and customized system to meet current and future needs. No identified needs are present.
	Continued expansion of on-line services should be high priority.	Highest priority for implementation of new technology is the continued expansion of online services to reduce the need to interact with the Corporations staff on routine transactions.

The key issues identified and discussed above are summarized in the following sections.

(1) The Division Should Provide for an Expedited Processing Option for Business Registrations.

Even though existing processing times are generally extremely responsive and applications are processed in a matter of days, the Division should develop an approach that enables entities to register business through an expedited process (typically no more than 24 hours) in cases where their business needs cannot be accommodated by the normal processing of their application. It is typical to charge a significantly higher fee, often approaching twice the normal fee (or actual costs – if the Office wanted to track hours spent on expedited services) charged for typical processing.

Recommendation: An expedited processing option should be made available to customers needing a faster option for business registrations.

(2) The Division Should Adopt Performance and Workload Targets for its Operations.

To support the overall approach undertaken across all divisions to increase transparency and focus on service delivery, the Corporations Division should adopt a select set of performance and workload measures for operations. These measures could include the following:

- Percent of new business licensing applications processed within three days,
- Percent of renewal business licensing applications processed within two days,
- Percent of UCC filings processes within two days,
- Percent of certificate of good standings processed within two days,
- Percent of applications received online (a leading indicator over time with target to increase annually to a pre-determined target),
- Number of applications processed for:
 - New Business Applications,
 - Renewal Business Applications,
 - UCC filings,
 - Certificates of good standing

These metrics for the Corporations Division should be tracked on a monthly basis and an annual summary included in the annual report of the Vermont Secretary of State and posted on the website.

Recommendation: Basic performance targets for the Corporations Division should be adopted, measured, and reported on a monthly basis. An annual summary should be included in the Secretary of State annual report and posted on the website.

(3) Develop A Policy and Procedures Manual for this Division.

With the implementation of the new software for the Corporations Division and the concurrent changes in some business processes, a comprehensive policies and

procedures covering the services provided by the Division should be developed. This manual would include both the policies related to the services provided and the specific procedures on how to process applications and filings in accordance with those policies and the new software system. This manual will be important for ensuring consistent service by staff and to serve as a training tool for new staff in the future.

Recommendation: A comprehensive policy and procedures manual should be developed for the Corporations Division to ensure consistency of interpretation and enforcement by all staff and to serve as a training tool for future new staff.

Recommendation: All manuals should be made available on an intranet or similar site.

(4) The New Software Deployed within Corporations Should Focus Significant Efforts on Increasing Online Services.

The Division has undertaken an extensive requirements development process for the development of a new software system to handle core Corporations functions. The most critical focus in development and implementation to reduce workload and staffing requirements is to expand, to the greatest extent possible, the number of services that can be handled and processed online. Staff should strive to implement as automated and electronic application process as feasible to limit manual data entry and processing of applications. The Division should establish a target for a desired level of online application and provide training and support to customers to encourage electronic filings. To fully automate and support online processing, payments for a variety of services provided by the Corporations Division should be able to be processed online via electronic payments.

Recommendation: The highest priority for implementation of new technology is the continued expansion of online services to reduce the need to interact with the Corporations staff on routine transactions.

10. OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

This chapter outlines the evaluation of staffing and operational issues related to the Office of Professional Regulation in the Vermont Office of the Secretary of State.

1. THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND STAFFING ALLOCATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION WERE EVALUATED AGAINST THE ESTABLISHED ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN CRITERIA.

The Office of Professional Regulation is the largest division of the Office of the Secretary of State and has approximately 30 employees. The overall organization of this unit, as a separate division of the Office of the Secretary of State, is appropriate. However, there are several specific areas where the organizational structure and staffing allocations are not in alignment with effective service delivery, workloads or efficient organizational structure criteria.

The following table summarizes the evaluation criteria utilized and the findings that resulted from the evaluation of the organizational and operational practices of the Office of Professional Regulation:

Evaluation Criteria	Key Comments / Observations
<p>Alignment with Organizational criteria such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates objectives and policies Facilitates decision making and planning Facilitates management of operations Access to key decision making and planning Critical functions near key managers Key programs with organizational prominence No gaps or overlaps in services Similar functions are grouped together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Professional Regulations Division is the largest organizational unit in the Vermont Secretary of State and is focused entirely on the provision of services related to the professional registration of covered professions within the State of Vermont. The current organizational structure facilitates the accomplishment of the State's objectives and policies, and has all responsibility for administration under a single Director for accountability and management. No gaps or overlaps in services based upon statutory provision of allocated oversight to the Secretary of State. However, there are similar services provided by other organizational units in the State that duplicate administrative structures in place within the Vermont Secretary of State (i.e. – Teacher certification, trades certifications, medical professional registrations). Opportunities exist for the State to simplify services to the public and increase economies of scale with a different approach. This would require statutory changes to grant applicable authority to the Vermont Secretary of State.
<p>Alignment of Staffing / Managerial Control criteria such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Span of control is “appropriate” Decision making at line level where possible Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined Distinction of roles among staff are clear Management systems support structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spans of control within the Professional Regulation Division vary considerable, ranging from 1 to 10 for the Director, 1 to 7 for the Licensing Board Chief Investigator, 1 to 4 for the Nursing Board Executive Director, down to spans of 1 to 2 (or less) for the Licensing Board Investigative Coordinator, Licensing Administrator IIs, Staff Attorney IV, and Pharmacy Board Executive Officer. Spans of Control for Director is too broad given the range of functions assigned to this position. Spans for lower level positions are too narrow. Generally, roles are clearly defined within the Division with little overlap or duplications (except where designed to provide flexibility for cross-training, cross-utilization, and backup).
<p>Alignment with External Entities / Organizational Design Practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization structure and makes “common sense” / “meets industry standards” or “best management practices” Effort to make the organization “flat” / maximize managerial positions Staffing levels are in line with recognized “best management practices” and associated workload / service levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing organizational structure is appropriate based upon statutory authority. Approach utilized not significantly different from that seen in other states for handling professional registration (though the specific set of professions covered varies considerably from state to state – and represents a long-term potential for the State of Vermont to employ a more efficient process). Staffing levels as allocated have not resulted in backlogs, significant delays in completing work activities or inaccuracy due to workloads/peaks. However, registration workload and activities are not consistent among all licensing specialist positions.

The sections of this chapter which follow outline the key recommendations and staffing adjustments recommended within the Office of Professional Regulation. The issues addressed include:

- Should a Deputy Director position be established within the Professional Regulation Division?
- Should the positions involved in handling and processing complaints (i.e. – Legal Assistant and Licensing Administrator II) be grouped together into a single unit?
- Should the positions of Licensing Administrator be restructured to increase the number of staff that they supervise and more effectively utilize the supervisory position?

The project team has identified the following recommendations as alternatives to address each of these organizational issues. The table below provides a summary of each of these issues:

Alternatives / Recommendation	Benefits	Issues
A Deputy Director position should be established to reduce the Director's broad span of control and assigned duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced span of control for existing Director. Currently this span is too broad to effectively manage all staff plus handle assigned duties.• Enables sharing of critical duties including staff supervision, day to day management of registration activities, and policy establishment.• Recommendation that Director maintain overall responsibility for policy and procedure development, board/committee support, legislative actions, and the Deputy Director assume principal responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Professional Regulation operations including oversight of case management, resolution of minor issues faced by boards/committees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adds another managerial position/layer in the organization.• Requires additional payroll costs (though principally offset through the elimination of one Licensing Administrator position).• Will require segregation of duties currently performed by the Director and the establishment of a clear focus and assigned duties for the Deputy Director.

Alternatives / Recommendation	Benefits	Issues
The number of Licensing Administrators should be reduced by one, and all boards/committees not handled by the Nursing Executive Officer and Pharmacy Board Executive Officer reporting to a single Licensing Board Executive Officer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently the Licensing Administrators have a very different approach to handling supervisory and other assigned duties resulting in inconsistent standards and approaches within the Division. Existing workloads and service demands do not require the existing number of Licensing Administrator positions. Spans of control for the Licensing Administrators to Licensing Clerks (one to two) is too narrow. One position can easily manage and supervise the four licensing board specialists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensing Board Specialists will assume (continue) primary responsibility for handling boards/committees. Licensing Administrators will attend only those board/committee meetings where required to address issues/resolve problems. Otherwise, a schedule of attending one meeting per year for each board/committee should be established for the Licensing Administrator.
The position of Legal Assistant should report to the Licensing Administrator II.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To further reduce the number of direct reports to the Director, the position of Legal Assistant should be transferred to report to the Licensing Administrator II. This also accomplishes an organizational goal of having similar duties grouped together organizationally and increases oversight and accountability for the performance of the assigned duties. More effectively utilizes the position of Licensing Administrator II to oversee case management process for assigned boards/committees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently these two positions work closely to handle case management and closure activities. Licensing Administrator II position already provides some oversight and direction to the Legal Assistant. Existing job descriptions should not need to be adjusted to accomplish this change. However, they should be reviewed to ensure appropriateness.

The following sections provide more narrative regarding each of these recommendations.

2. THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION HAS TOO BROAD A SPAN OF CONTROL.

The Director of the Office of Professional Regulation has direct supervisory responsibility for supervising ten (10) individuals ranging from Executive Officers, Staff Attorneys, Licensing Administrators, to the Legal Assistant. Additionally, many – if not

the majority, of personnel issues and daily operational questions and issues rise to his level for resolution or, at a minimum, input. Having the Director supervise this many staff and handle the ongoing daily operational issues of the Office results in insufficient time being spent on longer-range issues – such as revising board regulations, addressing broader policy and procedure issues, strategic operational issues, and legislative efforts. While these work duties get addressed, and by all accounts addressed well, they are often addressed only at the last minute when they become unavoidable due to pressing deadlines.

The duties performed by the Director need to be segregated into two categories – one focused on daily operational issues, and the second focused on longer-range and policy-related duties. The Director should retain responsibility for the policy and long-range strategic functions of the position and delegate oversight of staff and the handling of more routine daily operational issues to a Deputy Director. The Deputy Director position should also be responsible for the ongoing supervision of the Executive Officers, Licensing Administrators and their subordinate staff. If needed to equalize workload and focus, the investigations staff could also be assigned to the Deputy Director. There are many opportunities to improve internal operations and administration of the individual Boards and Committees through review and updating of their enabling legislation – however, neither the director nor others within OPR has the extensive time required to conduct the research and drafting to continually update regulations for each profession. The existing workload related to the professional regulations that need to be updated may require the Secretary of State to allocate some funds for contractual services.

This change will enable the Director to spend the required time on higher level and more strategic duties and reduce the number of direct reports coming to him.

Recommendation: A Deputy Director position should be established within the Office of Professional Regulation. This position should supervise the Executive Officers and Licensing Administrator and subordinate staff and focus on the daily operations of the professional registration duty.

3. THE NUMBER OF LICENSING ADMINISTRATORS SHOULD BE REDUCED BY COMBINING THE TWO EXISTING POSITIONS AND REALLOCATING SOME ANCILLARY DUTIES TO OTHER POSITIONS.

The two existing licensing administrator positions are each responsible for overseeing an allocated set of boards and commissions. In addition, one is responsible for e-permitting functions (including form development) and the other licensing administrator is responsible for handling all follow-up activities on disciplinary actions (excluding Nurse follow-up activities).

If the other duties are removed, one Licensing Administrator can handle the oversight of all of the Boards and Commissions not currently overseen by the Pharmacy Executive Officer and the Nursing Executive Officer. This position could also play a significant role in the updating of e-licensing processes and software functionality. And this is the role that should be assigned to the licensing administrator. This responsibility should be clearly outlined in the job description to ensure this vital function is covered. Longer-term, the division could use a person allocated at a higher percentage to oversight of the e-licensing program. In the recent past, OPR had a dedicated position responsible for the e-licensing program oversight and administration. While a full-time position is not warranted at present, future demands – especially if additional online capabilities are implemented – may warrant the reconsideration of this position. If implemented in the future, this position should report to the Deputy Director who has

assigned responsibility for daily oversight of the licensing functions and supervision of all staff performing licensing functions.

The duties of one of the licensing administrators related to case follow-up to monitor compliance with terms and conditions of disciplinary or remedial actions should be transferred to the case management unit. This function better aligns with the duties performed by staff in that area, and should be able to be absorbed without the addition of new staff members.

Recommendation: One licensing administrator position should be eliminated. All boards and committees not supervised by either the Pharmacy Executive Officer or the Nursing Executive Officer should report to a single Licensing Administrator position.

Recommendation: The licensing administrator position should be responsible for overseeing the e-licensing efforts including further implementation and modification.

Recommendation: All duties related to handling follow-up duties on discipline and remediation should be reallocated from the licensing administrators to the Case Management staff.

4. THE LEGAL ASSISTANT POSITION SHOULD BE ORGANIZATIONALLY REALLOCATED TO REPORT TO THE LICENSING ADMINISTRATOR PERFORMING CASE MANAGER DUTIES.

Currently, the legal assistant reports directly to the Director of the Office of Professional Regulations. The duties of this position include assisting the Licensing Administrator II position that serves as Case Manager in developing case closure reports and related duties associated with case management, among others. To more effectively cross-utilize staff according to workloads, and provide a more cohesive organizational structure for case management, the legal assistant position should be reallocated and report directly to the Licensing Administrator/Case Manager. This would provide an organizational structure and allocation of duties related to case management

similar to the approach utilized for nursing case management oversight and administration. In addition to improved case management operations, there will be a reduction in the number of direct reports to the Director. When this change is implemented, a review of the Case Manager job description should be undertaken to ensure this position appropriately allows supervision functions.

Longer-term, if additional professions are included within the authority of the Office of Professional Regulation may be appropriate to create a dedicated case management unit that includes all staff associated with case management without regard to the board and committees they support. This will provide greater flexibility in cross-training staff and handling varying workloads. However, current workloads do not support this change at the present time. The integrated approach for nursing, having case management staff reporting to the Nursing Executive Office, is working well and should be maintained. Even if a consolidated case management unit is created in the future, it is likely that case managers would be assigned primary areas of focus (such as nursing/health professions, and others) similar to the segregation of duties currently utilized for the Executive Officers/License Administrators.

Recommendation: The Legal Assistant Position should be reallocated to report directly to the Licensing Administrator II/Case Manager position.

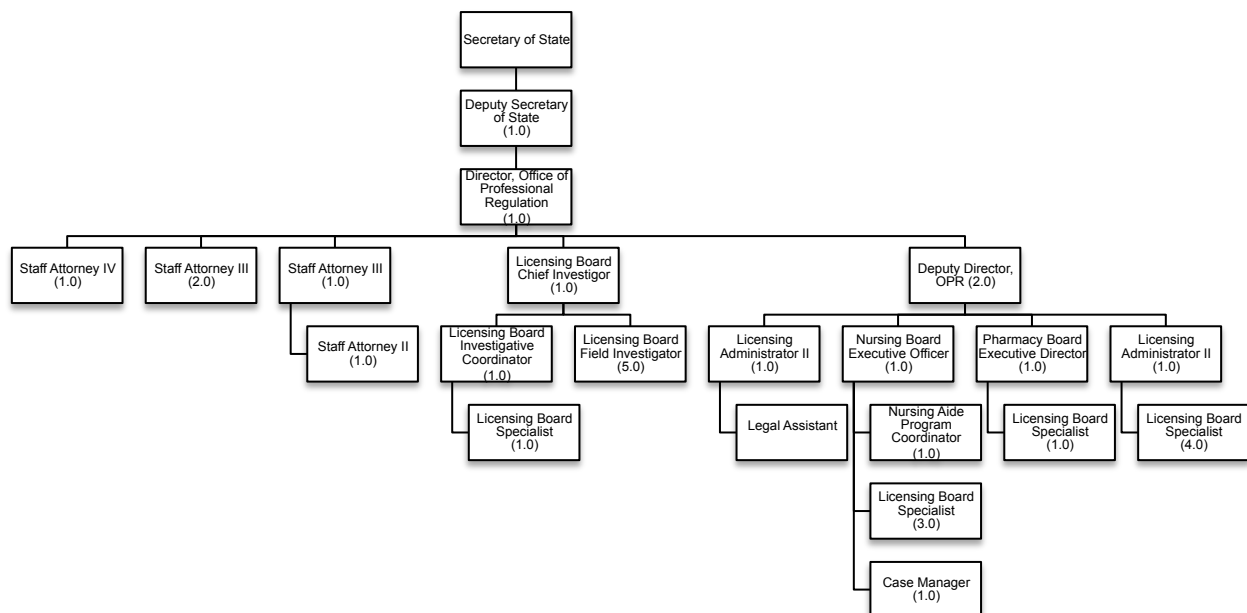
Recommendation: Longer-term, if additional professions are included with the Office of Professional Regulation for administration and oversight, consideration should be given to establishing a dedicated case management unit that handles all case management activities for all professions.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES WOULD RESULT IN A NEW ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR THE OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION.

With the implementation of the recommendations above related to Office of Professional Regulation, position allocations will result in a new organizational structure that addresses the span of control issue for the Director and provide greater capacity for the Director to focus additional time and effort on strategic issues, legislative issues related to board and committee, board and committee policy development and overall policy direction for OPR.

The following organizational chart demonstrates the new structure that would be established following implementation of these recommendations.

**Vermont Secretary of State
Office of Professional Regulation Proposed Organizational Chart**



6. THERE ARE SEVERAL OPERATIONAL CHANGES WITHIN THE OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATIONS THAT SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED OR ENHANCED TO IMPROVE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS.

The following table summarizes key operational issues identified throughout the engagement and through the best management practices assessment. Following this table is a more detailed discussion of key recommendations.

Issue	Analysis and Discussion	Recommendation
Are there services that should be reallocated to or from the Professional Regulations Division?	<p>Consideration was given to the merger of the Corporations and Professional Regulations Divisions into a single organizational unit. Since both units deal primarily with registration activities, merger would provide ability to provide additional support to the Corporations unit and streamline the overall organizational structure of the Office. However, given the technical nature of the two units, there would still be a need for a manager of Corporations resulting in limited, if any, cost savings from the change. Absent identified cost savings or operational improvements, the organizational change is not warranted.</p> <p>The services provided are based entirely on state statutory requirements. However, our limited evaluation of the services provided by other states show a potential economy of scale and the ability to implement a “one-stop” professional registration approach if professions and trades whose registration is currently handled by other State Agencies were transferred to the Secretary of State’s responsibility.</p>	<p>The existing organizational structure and focus of Professional Regulations should remain with limited duties moved to this Division. The notable exception is that the project team concurs with the effort underway to move the handling of notary functions to OPR from VSARA.</p> <p>However, longer-term consideration should be given to expanding the professions and trades for which the Secretary of State provides registration activities to implement a “one-stop” approach to professional registration as seen in select other states. Legislative action would be required to implement. Additionally, expansion of duties related to the functions overseen by the Pharmacy Executive Officer should be considered.</p>

Issue	Analysis and Discussion	Recommendation
<p>Are operations within the Professional Regulations Division appropriate? Are there operational improvements, service enhancements or alternatives for service delivery that should be considered within the Professional Regulation Division?</p>	<p>The procedure manuals developed as part of the software implementation should be periodically reviewed and updated at least every three to five years to ensure they remain current. Copies of these manuals should be provided to all employees and placed on the Secretary of State's intranet.</p>	<p>The developed procedure manuals should be reviewed and maintained in current condition and utilized as part of training for all new staff assigned to registration duties in the Professional Regulation Division. These manuals should be available on the intranet for all staff.</p>
	<p>Licensing Board Specialists should be cross-trained to enable utilization across assigned functional areas so that registration activities are completed in a timely manner.</p>	<p>A plan to cross-train all licensing board specialist should be developed so that during the cyclical peak workload seasons, all staff can be assigned to assist, even outside of their normal area of assignment.</p>
	<p>Professional Regulations staff should develop additional educational materials including checklists and frequently asked questions to educate their stakeholders about how to comply with relevant professional regulation statutes, including registration, continuing education, practice issues, and complaint handling.</p>	<p>Greater online educational materials should be developed to support the covered professions. Checklists and educational materials should be available on the website and cover topics including ethics, registration procedures, continuing education requirements, and practice issues.</p>

Issue	Analysis and Discussion	Recommendation
	<p>Additional training should be developed for various aspects of the Professional Registration Division including board/committee members (e.g. – ethics, investigations protocols) and members of the Professional Registration groups (e.g. – ethics, investigations, maintaining required training, key practice issues).</p>	<p>Additional training sessions should be developed over time. Specific focus should be placed on developing a series of online webinars that can be utilized at the convenience of the registrant. Topics covered should include ethics, registration procedures, practice issues, the complaint procedure, etc.</p>
	<p>Internal performance targets should be established for the processing times applicable to registration activities and complaint investigations. Targets on investigations should include initial determination to validate if investigation should be conducted and then total time for case closure. Monthly reports of individuals and units should be generated to demonstrate actual performance in comparison to the targets.</p> <p>Suggested initial performance measures/targets for OPR would include: number of days to process new applications, number of days to process renewals, percentage of complaints reviewed within 14 days for determination of opening an investigation, percentage of investigations completed within 120 days and 360 days.</p>	<p>Standard performance targets should be established for processing license/registration renewals, investigations (initial determination of whether an investigation is warranted, and length of time for conduct of the investigation).</p> <p>A monthly report of performance against the established performance targets should be prepared and posted on the website.</p>

Issue	Analysis and Discussion	Recommendation
Is technology appropriately utilized within the Professional Regulation Division?	The Professional Regulations Division has implemented a new software system over the last several years to handle its major services including professional registration. The system handles registration activities well, but is not designed to handle late registrations. Longer-term, the system should be designed to handle late registrations, including the calculation of fees and penalties, and the ability to submit the required documentation regarding training, and practice plans that are required for late registrations.	Future modifications to the e-licensing software should include additional functionality to handle late registrations (including late fee calculations, online submittal of required training documentation and practice plans, and online payments).

The key issues identified and discussed above are described in more detail in the following points.

- (1) SHORT-TERM LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES EXIST TO EXPAND THE ROLE OF THE OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATIONS. LONGER-TERM, SEVERAL FUNCTIONS CURRENTLY OUTSIDE THE STATUTORY AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR CONSOLIDATION WITHIN OPR.**

The current allocation of duties assigned to OPR is appropriate based upon the functions performed by all units within the Office of the Secretary of State. During the completion of this study, the Secretary of State has undertaken efforts to move responsible for notary oversight from VSARA to OPR. This change principally includes modifications to the approach for licensing notaries. The project team concurs with this effort as it places the licensing of notaries within the unit of the Vermont Secretary of State that routinely handles licensing functions for an extensive listing of professions but recognizes that this move involves a substantial modification in statutory authority relative to notary licensing.

The current structure of OPR can be easily scaled up to handle the oversight and administration of licensing functions for many other professions in the State of Vermont.

Currently, professions including teachers, trades, and physicians fall outside of the responsibility of OPR. This creates a duplication of effort including staff resources, licensing technology, and administration practices that could be leveraged to provide a more centralized and “one stop” approach to professional licensing in the State of Vermont if all these professions were included under the statutory authority of the Vermont Secretary of State. While there are opportunities to reduce cost of administration by having all professions regulated by one agency, the cost savings would accrue to other State Agencies. Staffing and budgets for the Vermont Secretary of State would have to be increased to handle the additional workloads associated with administering additional professions.

One other area of more efficient allocation of resources within the State Structure worth noting is the potential to having OPR oversee the functions currently performed by the Vermont Prescription Monitoring System. Currently, all pharmacists in the state are required to prepare and submit reports to this entity regarding dispensed controlled substances. However, for virtually all other professional purposes, and for disciplinary cases, they fall under the authority of OPR. Again, efficiencies achieved from reallocation of this function to the Secretary of State might accrue to the State unless the entire function and association budget were directly reallocated as part of the shift in responsibility.

Recommendation: In the immediate term, the existing organizational structure and focus of Professional Regulations should remain with no additional duties moved to this division other than the current effort to move responsibility for notary oversight.

Recommendation: Longer-term consideration should be given to expanding the professions and trades for which the Secretary of State provides registration

activities to implement a “one-stop” approach to professional registration as seen in select other states. Legislative action would be required to implement.

Recommendation: Consideration should be given to exploring options to incorporate responsibility for oversight and administration of the Vermont Prescription Monitoring System from the independent Board, as it current exists, to a function overseen by the Office of Professional Regulation – specifically the Pharmacy Executive Director.

- (2) The Comprehensive Policy and Procedures Manual Developed by OPR for Handling Licensing Processing Should be Maintained in Current Status and Utilized to Ensure Consistency in Processing and Training Future Staff.**

With the implementation of the new e-licensing software, staff within OPR has developed a fairly comprehensive procedure manual outlining processing requirements and procedures. This manual should be maintained in a current state and made readily available to staff. This will ensure consistency in processing across all licensing board specialists and provide the basis for a training program for current and future staff members of OPR. It is vitally important to leverage the efforts that have been undertaken to date in developing this manual to maintain it in an up-to-date manner. This requires that one of the licensing board specialists be assigned responsibility, in conjunction with the Licensing Administrator assigned to e-licensing,

Recommendation: The developed procedure manuals should be reviewed and maintained in current condition and utilized as part of training for all new staff assigned to registration duties in the Professional Regulation Division. These manuals should be available on the intranet for all staff.

- (3) Develop a Plan to Further Cross-Train Licensing Board Specialists to More Effectively Handle Peak and Varying Workloads Across Disciplines.**

While the current allocation of Licensing Board Specialists to support specific Boards and Committees is working effectively, and enables the Licensing Board Specialists to become more intricately familiar with the unique aspects of their assigned professions, workload is not consistent or equally distributed across all disciplines.

OPR currently addresses peak workloads by temporarily assigning Licensing Board Specialists to assist each other without regard to their normal assigned boards and committees. Additional cross-training of Licensing Board Specialists should be conducted to increase the flexibility to allocate staff as needed based upon existing workloads and to provide back-up coverage due to staff absences. This level of cross-training should include all Licensing Board Specialists in all units of the Office of Professional Regulation including those normally assigned to Pharmacy or Nursing.

This cross-training plan can be supported by developing a training session that at a minimum acquaints all licensing board specialists with a basic level of knowledge of all the professions regulated by OPR.

Recommendation: Develop a plan to cross-train all licensing board specialist so that during the cyclical peak workload seasons, all staff can be assigned to assist, even outside of their normal area of assignment.

(4) Additional Online Education Materials and Training Sessions Should be Developed to Support Covered Professions and Made Available on the Secretary of State's Website.

Opportunities exist to expand and further support the various professions regulated by OPR by providing additional educational materials regarding regulations relevant to the applicable profession, professional practice guidelines (by profession), and emerging trends or topics related to the profession. These educational and informational materials can be provided both in handout format, as well as through the implementation on webinar and online training courses. For purely educational documents, such as materials outlining new professional regulation requirements or other changes to state legislation, OPR should consider recording online webinars that can then be provided on the link as "on demand" training materials for individuals

unable to participate in the original training session. This approach will enable training and educational materials to be made available as needed by members of the profession, and reduces the amount of time staff must spend conducting training sessions in person.

Recommendation: Greater online educational materials should be developed to support the covered professions. Checklists and educational materials should be available on the website and cover topics including ethics, registration procedures, continuing education requirements, and practice issues.

Recommendation: Additional training sessions should be developed over time. Specific focus should be placed on developing a series of online webinars that can be utilized at the convenience of the registrant. Topics covered should include ethics, registration procedures, practice issues, the complaint procedure, etc.

(5) The Division Should Adopt Performance and Workload Targets for its Operations.

To support the overall approach undertaken across all divisions to increase transparency and focus on service delivery, the Corporations Division should adopt a select set of performance and workload measures for operations. These measures could include the following:

- Percent of new professional registrations processed within one week of receipt,
- Percent of renewal professional registrations processed within one week of receipt,
- Percent of complaints reviewed within two weeks of receipt with determination,
- Percent of open investigations completed within 180 days,
- Percent of open investigations completed within 360 days, and
- Average time (in days) from closure of investigation phase to initiation of prosecution.

Additionally, select key workload indicators to be monitored to provide a leading indicator (in conjunction with the performance indicators listed above) of potential work loads that exceed existing staff capacity. These workload indicators should include, at a minimum, the following:

- Number of licensure applications processed per licensing board specialists (tracked by individual position as well as an overall average),
- Number of investigations (open and closed) per investigator,
- Number of disciplinary actions per profession (both in total number and as percentage of licensed members). This metric can be useful when trended over time or where it represents a large percentage of licensed professionals that warrant additional educational materials or training sessions to be developed regarding professional practice.

These metrics for the Office of Professional Regulation should be tracked on a monthly basis and posted on the website. Additionally, an annual summary should be included in the annual report of the Vermont Secretary of State.

Recommendation: Standard performance targets for key OPR functions should be established for processing license/registration renewals, investigations (initial determination of whether an investigation is warranted, and length of time for conduct of the investigation). A monthly report of performance against the established performance targets should be prepared and posted on the website and annual performance included in the annual report.

(6) Make Additional Efforts to Modify the E-Licensing Software to Expand Online Services.

The greatest opportunity to further streamline processes and eliminate manual processing relates to the handling of renewals. At the present time, no renewals can occur online. OPR should work with staff and IT to incorporate into the long-range IT plan, the allocation of funds to support implementation of modifications that will enable online renewal registrations. This will require some modifications to enable both online payments and the submission of required documentation that is required to be

submitted for renewals occurring more than 30 days following expiration. Additional modifications may be required to address issues related to online payments and required fee calculations.

Recommendation: Future modifications to the e-licensing software should include additional functionality to handle late registrations (including late fee calculations, online submittal of required training documentation and practice plans, and online payments).

11. VSARA

This chapter outlines the evaluation of staffing and operational issues related to the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration of the Vermont Office of the Secretary of State.

1. MINOR MODIFICATIONS TO THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND STAFFING ALLOCATIONS WOULD IMPROVE EFFECTIVENESS OF VSARA AND PROVIDE STAFF NEEDED TO ADDRESS EXISTING WORKLOADS.

Overall, staffing levels within VSARA are established at a level sufficient to provide a basic level of service in all functional areas. However, in many cases, service levels are impacted by limits in staff time and availability.

(1) VSARA was Evaluated Against the Organizational Criteria.

The following table summarizes the evaluation criteria utilized and the findings that resulted from the evaluation of the organizational and operational practices of the Corporations Division:

Evaluation Criteria	Key Comments / Observations
Alignment with Organizational criteria such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Facilitates objectives and policiesFacilitates decision making and planningFacilitates management of operationsAccess to key decision making and planningCritical functions near key managersKey programs with organizational prominenceNo gaps or overlaps in servicesSimilar functions are grouped together	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Functions allocated to the VSARA Division are generally appropriate in that they centralize similar functions related to document management, document retention, document conservation, etc.Functions allocated to VSARA do not overlap or duplicate that presently performed by other staff or divisions within the Secretary of State's office.Similar functions are appropriately grouped.One functional area that should be considered for reallocation is the legislative functions (including legislative numbering) currently performed by VSARA that are often conducted in other States by staff in legislative branches.The administrative rule making processes performed by VSARA are ones that were allocated to this unit by a transfer of function, many years ago, from the Elections & Administration Division of the Secretary of State's Office. While this function is not a "core" function of Secretary of State operations in other states, if it is to be performed by

Evaluation Criteria	Key Comments / Observations
	the Vermont Secretary of State Office, it is most likely located in the most appropriate division. Alternatively, the Deputy Secretary of State could perform this duty.
<p>Alignment of Staffing / Managerial Control criteria such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Span of control is “appropriate” • Decision making at line level where possible • Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined • Distinction of roles among staff are clear • Management systems support structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spans of control within this unit are extremely narrow with the span of control for the State Archivist at 1 to 4 being the broadest. Other supervisory/managerial spans of control in this unit ranges from 1 to 3 (two positions) to 1 to 2 (two positions). • There are two notable gaps in current staffing allocations. These include: (1) the lack of dedicated personnel to staff the Reference Room and the limited staff allocated to archival processing work (one position with a second currently grant funded). The second is a mid-level position that can assist with development of procedures and analytical tasks. The State Archivist typically takes on these duties. • While span of control is very narrow in this organizational unit, given the technical nature and the uniqueness of the functions provided, the project team is not recommending changes in the organizational structure to broaden these spans of control. • Role distinction among staff is very clear. • Decision-making is appropriately allocated within the organizational structure. • Software support is not sufficient to meet organizational needs or to support the services provided to external customers. As a primary support mechanism to all other State Agencies, the need for on-line support and access to information is critical. This need has already been identified and there are plans to address it in future years of the Secretary’s multi-year IT plan.
<p>Alignment with External Entities / Organizational Design Practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization structure and makes “common sense”/“meets industry standards” or “best management practices” • Effort to make the organization “flat”/maximize managerial positions • Staffing levels are in line with recognized “best management practices” and associated workload/service levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational structure generally in alignment with organizational approaches seen in other state’s surveyed. Though in limited cases, the Archive function was an organizational unit of a Department other than the Secretary of State. • Staffing levels are highly dependent upon the requested services from other state agencies. Of most critical needs identified is the need for the Secretary of State to develop the required records retention plan and have it implemented. This will require, at least for a temporary period, a dedicated staff position to complete. While in other entities this position would likely fall under an Administration Unit, given the Secretary of State’s Office oversees VSARA having the individual responsible for compliance reporting to the State Archivist is beneficial.

The following sections summarize the key organizational findings regarding the organizational structure and management staffing in VSARA.

(2) While Overall Organizational Structure and Staffing Levels are Appropriate, Several Minor Modifications Should Be Implemented to Enhance Service Delivery of VSARA.

As previously noted, overall, the staffing levels within VSARA are sufficient to provide a basic or minimal level of service to perform allocated duties of the Division. However, there are three specific areas where changes in staffing levels or the classification of the position should be implemented to enhance service delivery.

The first area of note relates to the Administrative Services Unit of VSARA. An Administrative Assistant B who oversees two Administrative Assistant As and one Program Services Clerk is the head of this division. The Administrative Assistant B position is organizationally classified only one pay grade differently than the Administrative Assistant A positions it oversees. As noted in the prior subsection, there is a lack of support for the State Archivist in performing certain duties, including developing and writing operating procedures and conducting data analysis. These duties are ones that would be appropriate to include within the Administrative Services. However, existing job descriptions do not include these duties and it would therefore not be appropriate to assign these duties to an existing position. Unlike our analysis in OPR, this organizational unit is not large enough to realistically support the creation of a Deputy Director position at this time. We recommend converting the Administrative Assistant B position to a higher-level supervisory position (such as Administrative Coordinator) that could perform the ongoing data analysis, procedure development and writing, and support to the State Archivist in handling policy issue. If feasible, selection of an individual with prior archives and/or records management experience would be most beneficial and provide the greatest level of support to the State Archivist.

The second staffing issue identified relates to the staffing allocated to the reference room. Currently, the reference room is staffed Tuesday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Staffing for the reference room comes from allocation of one of the Archivist positions supplemented by staff drawn from other units as needed. To provide a consistent staffing level and eliminate the frequent need to pull staff from other divisions to staff the reference room, an additional position of Reference Archivist should be established. This position could be established in alignment with the existing Archivist track (i.e. – Archivist I, II, or III) dependent upon availability of suitable staff and financial resources – given reporting relationship to the Archivist III, it would best be established at a level comparable to the Archivist I or II position. This position would report to the Archivist III position and be allocated 100% to staffing the reference library. During absences (i.e., sick leave, vacation, etc.) primary backup staffing would come from the Archivist unit with staff from the Administration Services Unit and the Records Management Unit only assisting as a last resort. In addition to enabling the reference library to be open an additional day per week, this approach will address the concerns noted by other units of impacts on their ability to complete assigned work activities due to providing coverage in the Reference Library. It is estimated that annual salary costs for this position would be approximately \$45,000 to \$55,000. Since this position is already half funded by general funds, the net impact to the Office would be the additional salary costs of \$22,500 to \$27,500.

The third recommended staffing change is also within the Archivist unit. At present, one of the Archivist positions is grant funded (at the 50% level) and that grant is set to expire in the near future. To continue providing services at the existing level,

this position should be converted to one funded directly by the State. This will require an increase in salary and benefits of approximately \$50,000 to \$65,000 to cover the full costs of the position.

The final recommendation is to utilize temporary staffing to hire a limited duration position to assist VSARA in bringing the Secretary of State's Office into compliance with the Records Retention regulations by developing and implementing the required records management program. While in many agencies this function is assigned to an Administration Unit, given that the Secretary of State oversees VSARA and the records retention program for the State, having this position within VSARA is appropriate and ensures a close working relationship.

Recommendation: The existing position of Administrative Assistant B should be replaced with a higher-level position and assigned responsibility for handling data analysis, procedure development, and assisting with policy implementation to provide necessary support to the Director.

Recommendation: A new full-time position of Reference Archivist should be implemented to dedicate a resource to staffing the Reference Library and increase the hours of service to the public. The estimated annual salary cost will be \$50,000 to \$65,000,

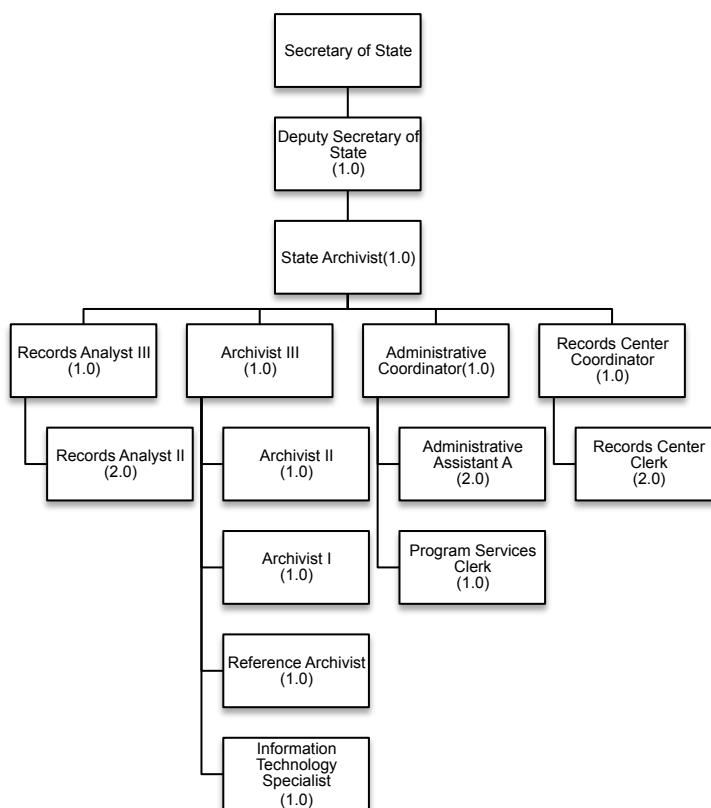
Recommendation: The position that is currently grant funded should be converted to a position funded by the state at the expiration of the grant funds at an estimated annual salary cost of \$22,500 to \$27,500.

Recommendation: To bring the Secretary of State's Office into compliance with records retention regulations, the Office should utilize temporary staffing to fund a position focused on these duties.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES WOULD RESULT IN A NEW ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR THE VERMONT STATE ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION DIVISION.

With the implementation of the recommendations above related to staffing for VSARA, the new organizational structure, based upon the structure and existing staffing in place at the time of the review, would resemble the following:

**Vermont Secretary of State
Proposed VSARA Organizational Chart**



3. THERE ARE SEVERAL OPERATIONAL CHANGES WITHIN VSARA THAT SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED TO IMPROVE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS.

The following table summarizes key operational issues identified throughout the engagement and through the best management practices assessment. Following this table is a more detailed discussion of key recommendations:

Issue	Analysis and Discussion	Recommendation
Are there services that should be reallocated to or from VSARA?	At the present time, the services provided by VSARA are unique and not overlapping or duplicative of those provided by other organizational units with the exception of the shared responsibility with Elections for the legislative clerk functions. There are several functions, most notably the handling of legislative records that are more commonly provided by legislative clerks with the legislative branch of government. Consideration should be made to work on making the required statutory changes to reallocate these functions from the Secretary of State's responsibility.	The Office should work to make required statutory changes to reallocate the responsibility for legislative records (including bill numbering) that are more typically performed by legislative staff in other states. Additionally, the functions related to administrative rule making that are currently split between VSARA and Elections should be combined within VSARA if they cannot be reallocated elsewhere in the state government organization.
Are operations within Administrative Division appropriate? Are there operational improvements, service enhancements or alternatives for service delivery that should be considered within VSARA?	A high priority should be the development of the Secretary of State's records retention plan. Since VSARA is responsible for assisting all other State Agencies in the development and compliance with this responsibility, the Secretary of State should be viewed as the "model" for compliance.	A concerted effort should be undertaken to develop the records retention plan for the Secretary of State's Office. As previously noted in an earlier recommendation, an additional position should be allocated to ensure this is accomplished in a timely manner.
	VSARA staff should develop additional educational materials including checklists and frequently asked questions to educate their stakeholders about how to comply with records retention, disposal and disclosure requirements.	To address the desired support identified by stakeholders in the survey, VSARA staff should develop additional educational materials that enable stakeholders to further understand statutory requirements and how to comply with them. Where applicable, technology such as the use of webinars should be utilized to enable customers to utilize the seminars at their convenience.

Issue	Analysis and Discussion	Recommendation
	Additional training for State Records Officers/Liaisons should be provided regarding key provisions of the state statutes and how to comply with records retention and disclosure. Training sessions should also be archived online to enable individuals to review and access as needed and at their convenience.	Additional training sessions should be developed for State Records Officers and Records Liaisons focused on their individual roles and responsibilities. These sessions should be archived online for participants to review at their leisure for refresher training.
Is technology appropriately utilized within VSARA?	Software is not designed or fully functional to meet all service needs. Existing software consists of a variety of in-house developed databases and applications. The updating of technology in this area will complete the updating of the major systems in use throughout the entire Secretary of State's Office and represent a much-needed IT system refreshment.	Of highest importance to VSARA is the development and implementation of more functional technology solutions to support their mission. This need has already been identified by the Secretary of State's Office and included within the already-developed high-level IT Plan.

Each of these issues not previously addressed is discussed in the following sections.

(1) The Secretary of State Should Undertake Discussion with Appropriate Parties within the State Organization to Reallocate Selected Functions.

There are several functions that have been allocated to VSARA that may be more appropriately performed by other entities within State Government. The Secretary of State and State Archivist should undertake discussion with these entities to determine the feasibility of reallocating these functions to a more appropriate location to increase efficiency in the performance of these duties. These functions are outlined in 3 V.S.A. § 107 and relate to the duties of the Legislative Clerk which include:

- (1) To prepare a copy of the acts and resolutions for the printer designated by the commissioner of buildings and general services
- (2) To prepare the joint assembly journals
- (3) To keep a register of lobbyists

- (4) To prepare and distribute certified copies of resolutions as directed by the general assembly
- (5) To prepare index and tables of laws for the acts and resolves, and
- (6) Such other legislative duties as the secretary shall assign.

The first recommended change relates to the support provided in processing legislative acts and the assignment of numbers to these documents. This is a function that more appropriately would be performed by legislative staff to eliminate excessive handling of documents between agencies. It is the project team's understanding that some preliminary discussions on this topic have occurred in the past and consideration was given to this change, but it did result in a change due to the fact that no funding or staffing are allocated to perform this function within the legislature. Future discussions should focus on the benefits of changing this practice and then determining how the funding and staffing issue can be addressed if it is collectively determined that processes and timeframes could be improved by having this function performed by legislative staff.

The second issue area is related to this effort and related to the handling, processing and authentication of legislative acts and resolves and also includes related duties performed by Elections staff in the compilation of legislative acts. The duties performed by VSARA and Elections should, at a minimum, be consolidated into a single division for efficiency (if transfer to another entity is not feasible) but, more appropriately, should be performed by legislative staff also.

Recommendation: The Office should work to make required statutory changes to reallocate the responsibility of the legislative clerk, specifically numbering legislation and preparation and distribution of certified copies of resolutions that are more typically performed by Legislative Staff in other states to be performed by Legislative Staff.

(2) Despite Best Efforts to Date, There Remains a Need for Additional Education and Training of Staff in Many State Agencies and for Town Clerks Regarding Statutory Requirements and Procedures to Develop Records Management Programs.

Staff in VSARA should continue to develop additional educational and training materials, in addition to holding training sessions, related to compliance with the State's Record Management and Retention statutes. These materials should be developed in a clear approach and written in "plain English" to enhance understanding by a variety of individuals who are assigned to implement records management programs. Specific attention should be placed on ensuring both Records Officers and Records Liaisons have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of their assigned positions. Once developed, these materials should be prominently displayed and available on the Secretary of State's website. When training sessions are conducted (especially for Town Clerks) the session should be recorded so that it can be made available, on demand via the website for use by Town Clerks at their individual convenience.

Recommendation: To address the desired support identified by stakeholders in the survey, VSARA staff should develop additional educational materials that enable stakeholders to further understand statutory requirements and how to comply with them. Where applicable, technology such as the use of webinars should be utilized to enable customers to utilize the seminars at their convenience.

Recommendation: Additional training sessions should be developed for State Records Officers and Records Liaisons focused on their individual roles and responsibilities. These sessions should be archived online for participants to review at their leisure.

(3) There is Recognized Need to Improve the Technological Resources that are Supporting the Provision of Services by VSARA. A Defined Plan for Future Implementation to Address this Need is Necessary.

The Vermont Secretary of State has made a significant investment in technological improvements throughout the organization over the last several years. This investment is paying off through the implementation of new software systems that were long-overdue, which are enabling staff throughout the organization to improve business process, processing times, and the ability to analyze data regarding work activities. Additionally, use of services available online to the public and other key stakeholders of the Secretary of State's Office is increasing significantly.

The Office has already identified the need to implement new technology solutions for VSARA and action in this regard will be undertaken as soon as resources – both finances and staff – are available, following completion of the upgrades in other Secretary of State Divisions. During the next update of the long-range IT plan, VSARA staff should work with staff in Administrative Services Division – specifically IT staff – to develop a multi-year plan and cost estimate for the necessary software upgrades to address the known needs. This will enable planning for the financial resource, and enable IT staff to begin planning for the support they will have to provide during the development and implementation phase of this effort. The updating of software for VSARA should be given the highest possible priority that the organization can support. VSARA is the last remaining division to have its systems upgraded and, like other divisions, is utilizing many systems that are difficult to support today due to age. Additionally, few of VSARA's software systems are integrated – they are essentially stand-alone programs serving a specific and limited function.

Recommendation: Of highest importance to VSARA is the development and implementation of more functional technology solutions to support their mission. This need has already been identified by the Secretary of State's Office and included within the already-developed high-level IT Plan.