SACNet

Creating a Collaborative Community

Introduction

STATEMENT OF INNOVATION PRIORITY

Create a deployment plan for the SACNet online technology platform that powers the State Agency Collaboration Network (SACNet). As a Proof of Concept (PoC) demonstration site, this platform houses Cal-IPGCA Moonshot projects. It provides for an annually iterated suite of technology tools to meet the dynamic programmatic and social networking features needed for the success of SACNet.

As stated by Secretary Crowfoot on the Jan 27 Exec Panel, *". . . our moonshot is, simply put, to transform our workplace. Beyond just the talking points to the really fundamentally changing their work experience."* –Secretary Wade Crowfoot, CNRA – Cal-IPGCA Executive Leaders Forum – Moonshot Projects January 27, 2022

EVOLUTION OF SACNET PLATFORM

Since the inception of SACNet, the online platform has centered around a vision to empower and enable State employees to rapidly share knowledge, skills, abilities, and resources. The 2021 Cohort report contained recommendations for an online platform, including suggested functions and elements. The work and input provided by the 2021 Cohort beta testers and trainees identified great potential for the online platform, but also highlighted necessary modifications and limitations.

As California emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic and adapts to a hybrid workforce, the online platform recommendations must expand to meet the priorities of a changing landscape. The different areas of expertise and experience from the 2022 Cohort, the Cal-IPGCA Champion Summit participants, and the Hackathon volunteers have brought forward new ideas and tested platform features that reflect the changing work environment.

While the value of the 2021 online platform concept remains intact, the 2022 Cohort refined these ideas and developed a Deployment Blueprint that will transition concepts to reality. The following figure illustrates a high-level evolution of the online platform.

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CONCEPT TO DEPLOYMENT

- Start small and grow–pilot programs with sponsor departments.
- Develop user agreements addressing individual participation.
- Beta test online management systems to find the platform that is able to offer a multitude of features that support the SACNet concepts.

2022 EXPANSIONS & REFINEMENT

- Build an online platform–continuing and expanding usability and opportunities (career and group connections, affinity group affiliation, cross-department special projects).
- Develop user agreement targeted at individuals' (users) participation in the platform.
- Expand Skills Bank concept through robust user profiles to support individual growth and collaboration with other users.

2021 MOONSHOT CONCEPTS

- Build an online platform for SACNet.
- Create a departmental Memorandum of Understanding for SACNet.
- Develop Skills Bank to provide skills, training, and career exchange opportunity.

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The expansions and refinement of the online platform concepts include the following, with additional items detailed further in appendices as noted.

- Develop networking infrastructure on the platform that includes cross-agency organizational charts, user profiles, and user agreements. The Cohort 2022 took much of the work from the Cohort 2021 to identify these cornerstone elements necessary to ensure functional requirements exist and are operational. For example, the priority placed on user engagement shifted the focus from an inter-agency memorandum of understanding (MOU) to individual user agreements. We recognize both are needed. Additionally, the broader **SACNet Platform**, built on Tovuti Learning Management System, beta tested the creation and launch of robust user profiles. These critical infrastructures support the success of the platform use cases.
- Connect career-or job-related groups, including affinity groups, within State service for more effective coordination, reduce redundancy, create homogeneous policy, share information, and create communities for systemic cross-departmental collaboration and innovation to occur. **[See Appendix A]**
- Create an employee job share program that leverages the online platform's technology elements to identify available human resources for special projects and present the opportunity for employees to apply for cross-department projects. **[See Appendix B]**

DEPLOYMENT PLAN SUMMARY

The task of the 2022 Cohort is to outline the steps to deploy the online platform. In direct coordination with the new hybrid work culture and finalized Future of Work policies, California is exploring a new way to collaborate. The online platform, as a digital tool, will support and transform collaboration between State agencies like never before. Also, in alignment with the spirit of equality, diversity, fairness, and inclusion, the online platform embodies the core values of a "California for All" by making unified State resources easily accessible in one location and connecting all State employees regardless of classification or department. Counties and federal agencies, as well as private sector companies, colleges, state contractors, other state partners and the general public as a whole will also benefit from a seamless, connected State workforce.

The online platform will connect career and affinity groups within State service for more effective coordination and collaboration, easy access to resources and expertise, reduction of redundancy, an opportunity to share information, and a large selection of communities to support State employees work and personal life. In addition, it will allow agency managers to identify available human resources for disaster management, continue operations and special projects, and present the opportunity for employees to apply for cross-department projects.

The Deployment Blueprint is employee-centered and puts people at the core of the process and system.
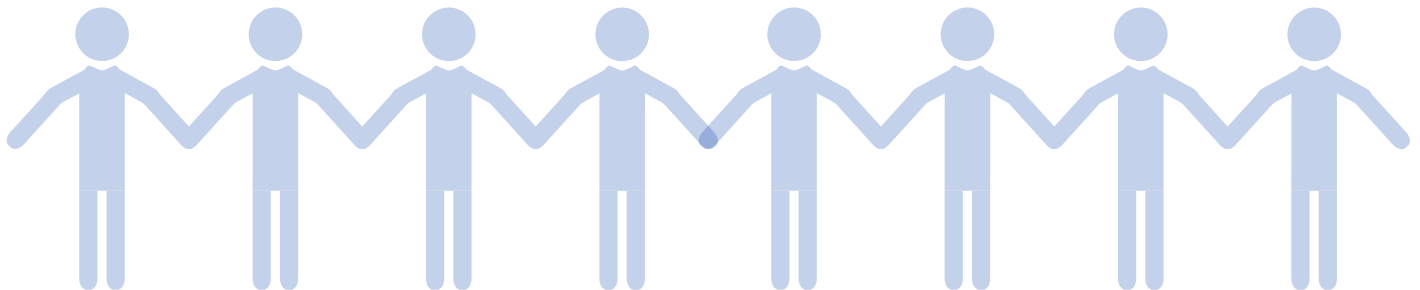
"My priority as employees return from the pandemic is to "shift the culture of the workplace . . . actually come back with more dynamic workplace and a culture that supports more of our employees in better ways."
–Secretary Wade Crowfoot, CNRA – Cal-IPGCA Executive Leaders Forum – Moonshot Projects January 27, 2022

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URGENCY AND OPPORTUNITY

California State government resources are fragmented and the State as an employer has a long-standing history of under-utilizing human capital. The nature of these factors lead to stagnant employee growth opportunities and a lack of organic connection. The unfortunate outcome of these combined factors ultimately result in a slow, ineffective, and under-engaged State employee workforce. The 2021 Cohort Report lists out multiple research findings that highlight these outcomes in greater detail.

These shortcomings have been exposed and magnified with the recent emergence of major health and environmental crises. As we have seen, these factors have generated a lack of cohesion across government that exacerbates scattered emergency response efforts and results in duplication of work that inhibits rapid response timeframes. Many times, this leads to an increase in costs and a decrease in efficiency and performance. The COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with California's continuous state of emergency response, revealed a strong and immediate need for workforce diversity and workforce agility.

"... what we started to learn was that we needed to interact more comprehensively with our employees on the question of organizational health and make sure that as we were working with our employees to give structure to our return to work and work force of the next century..."
–Karla Nemeth, Director, DWR, Cal-IPGCA Executive Leaders Forum – Moonshot Projects January 27, 2022
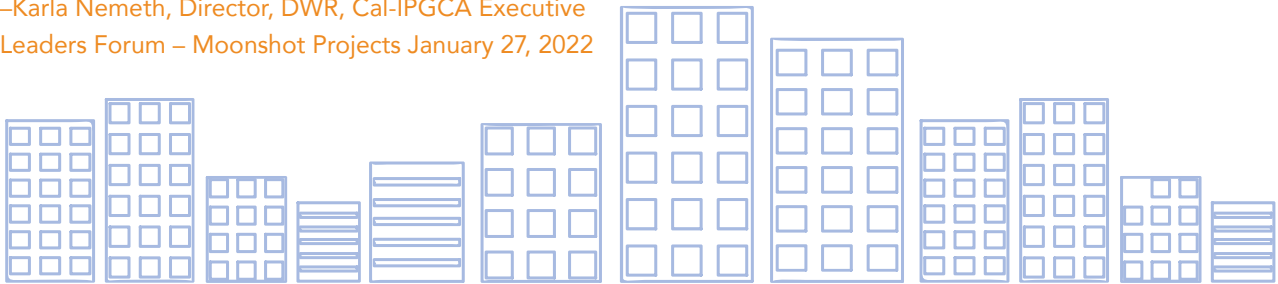
When there are problems, there are opportunities. The 2022 Cohort, Cal-IPGCA Champion Summit participants, and Hackathon volunteers felt that opportunities to address these urgent issues exist in the following areas:

- Increase opportunity to grow a support/collaboration network for state agencies and their employees that goes beyond what exists in their own departments and agencies.
- Increase opportunity for State employees to develop skills through training in pursuit of upward mobility. This supports the workforce in self-pursuit of a "career by design" which, in turn, accelerates the State of California to the position of an employer of choice.
- Allow State leadership a conduit for deployment of real time strategic advisory to collectively guide statewide innovation projects and rapidly respond to emergency situation.
- Enhance scalable workforce planning by providing expanded resource utilization opportunities.
- Enhance scalable employee engagement by leveraging cross-departmental skills and capabilities to meet real-time needs.
- Strengthen cross-departmental connectivity and collaboration that accelerates departmental growth, performance and resource management, and statewide real-time response measures.

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Recommendation: ACTION!

COHORT 2022 DELIVERABLES

The previous cohorts have done due diligence in verifying the values of a SACNet. Their work proved that the creation of the online platform can achieve the opportunities identified. It can empower and enable employees to share their knowledge, skills, abilities, and best practices to foster an agile inter-agency synergy. It can connect resources across State government and kick start cross-system innovation. The 2022 Cohort acknowledges the work done to foster this vision and seeks to demonstrate how implementation can be achieved. Our team has identified three options to deployment and recommend **option 3** as the path forward.

Strategy

Solution

Plan

Teamwork

Commissioner Ray stated, **"The best part about CHP's pioneer records management moonshot project is that it incorporates CalHR's leadership values, 'building collaborative relationships' & 'improving our organization,' which are important deliverables for this project."** –Amanda Ray, Commissioner, CHP, Cal-IPGCA Executive Leaders Forum – Moonshot Projects January 27, 2022

OPTION 1: MAINTAIN STATUS QUO

Continuing to develop an online platform through Cal-IPGCA future cohorts has value because each year, new features are discussed, and the overall platform concept evolves. However, without action, there is no deployment. Furthermore, annual cohort handoffs result in setbacks and confusion. Subsequent cohort efforts to beta test platforms without a long-term work plan does not move the needle. An organized multi-year work plan is needed in order to build upon efforts and move the concept of an online platform into reality.

OPTION 2: FULL-SCALE IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION

Although exciting and impressive, full-scale implementation is too aggressive. An online platform of this magnitude needs to be planned and thoughtfully built from the ground up, with strategic guidance from agency management. That takes time. Our priority is to build the online platform centered around the State employee user experience. Immediate full-scale implementation rushes this timeline and risks failure because it is not user-driven, nor does it incorporate the detailed use cases under development. Full scale implementation also requires a tremendous amount of resources, including funding. Without first obtaining statewide user buy-in, any substantial financial commitment to this project will result in a short-lived endeavor and a waste of state resources.

OPTION 3: PILOT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing a pilot program with parallel projects is the most efficient way to move the SACNet program forward. It will allow use cases to inform the development of the platform and actionable pilot projects. The platform infrastructure and the pilot projects under development by the 2022 Cohort teams include:

1. Working with the California Department of Technology (CDT) to build the platform infrastructure. These include iterating the technological functionality of the SACNet platform to validate the advantages and disadvantages of the existing Tovuti software to advance a robust user profile. It also sets the standard for user participation by developing an all-encompassing user agreement, signed by all platform users and associated departments. The user agreement is an evolution of the 2021 Cohort idea of a MOU for the online platform. MOU's will be implemented to support the broader Human Systems SACNet.

2. Connecting career- or job-related groups, including affinity groups, within State service for more effective coordination, ensure accessibility of resources, reduce redundancy, create homogeneous policy, share information, and create community. This pilot program supports the 2022 Cohort TeleTeam, Middle Management, and JEDI team use cases.

3. Building an employee job share program to identify and connect available employees with projects within and across State agencies. This pilot program evolved from the 2021 Cohort idea of incorporating a Skills Bank into the online platform. Although the terminology has shifted to encompass a broader range of personal and professional goals, the concept remains to include a space within the platform to identify and validate skills, and expand upon conduits of training that will further employees' careers.

By securing pilot groups to execute the blueprint, with a full integration of people and process, the final deployment process across all State agencies can be seamless and only utilizes the most efficient and effective technology to create a robust and user-friendly platform. For example, our volunteer Champion Summit participants and Beta Testers highlighted the importance for the final online platform to ensure privacy and security while remaining user-friendly to elicit trust from all users. This solution will give pilot program users an opportunity to test the platform and find a resolution that addresses those concerns. The pilot program can also serve as further promotion of the online platform to engage State employees and departments for future use.

WHY THIS BLUEPRINT WORKS: INCENTIVES

With any new platform engagement, users will want to know 'What's in it for me?' Integration with an online platform offers benefits to individual users and departments that will assist with current and future workload, and catapult work-product into a new dimension.

- **Workload:** The online platform identifies available human resources for specific projects to increase current human capacity, capitalize on available human resources, and decrease the cost to contract with outside workforce.

- **Resources:** The online platform provides a space to share resources, training, tools, ideas, etc. to streamline and manage workload across all departments. All users can access existing resources rather than starting from scratch, saving time and money.

- **Efficiency:** The online platform provides opportunity to contact and integrate the involvement of subject matter experts quickly to cut down on wasted time. This direct link inspires innovation and problem-solving techniques, while reducing duplication and increasing shareability.

- **Diverse input and Professional Mobility:** As demonstrated by the 2022 Cohort teams, Champion Summit participants, and beta testers, provide users with the ability to collaborate on innovation projects across departments and professional classifications. This streamlines redundancies and heightens design integrity, function and use. It allows the state's workforce to promote themselves and reach aspirational career goals across all State departments. Users will more easily be able to explore mentoring/coaching opportunities with subject matter experts, and self-direct their career progression.

- **Social Engagement:** Similar to other social networks, the online platform allows users to connect directly with others who have similar skills, interests, positions, and personal passions. As we move through a post-pandemic world, we see it is more important than ever to engage in human relationships. The online platform inspires and creates conduits for human connection at its core.
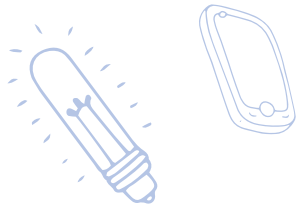
"The pandemic created communication challenges and that you couldn't take communication for granted. Rather it as an opportunity to purposefully connect with people – make sure they're okay, make sure that your colleagues are connected, brainstorming."
–Liana Bailey-Crimmins, CDT, Executive Leaders Forum – Digital Upskilling, February 10, 2022

WHAT WE NEED TO GET STARTED: RESOURCES TO SUPPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Sponsorship:** Department sponsors assign dedicated teams to support and expand the launch of the pilot program.
- **Funding:** The pilot program requires a fund source to support the program management and procurement of the digital platform.
- **Technology:** To iterate and evolve the features of an online platform and to execute deployment, computer programmers, a storage facility server, and software are needed.
- **Management:** A management group for stewardship and oversight ensures the platform runs smoothly.
- **Support:** The Cal-IPGCA leadership team is critical for the success of the overall SACNet program and the continuity of the pilot program from infancy to implementation.

Deployment Blueprint
Concept to Reality

The Cal-IPGCA program has brainstormed, discussed, conducted focus groups, and beta tested cross-collaboration of people, process and technology to bring the best ideas forward. Consistent with the message of "We Recommend Action!" the Deployment Blueprint defines the steps to implementation.

SUCCESSFUL PLANNING: THE FOUNDATION

Milestone One

Step One: Identify priority use cases and infrastructure for pilot projects. The SACNet team priority use cases include group connections (professional, social fabric, wellbeing, and personal interests of the workforce) and a job share program (State agency project-based job-sharing network). The highlighted platform infrastructure includes user experience elements (e.g., user agreement, personal profiles) and employee connect tools (e.g., organizational chart). Ensure companion 2022 Cohort teams' use cases (Telework, Middle Management, JEDI) are included as priority pilot projects and that the online platform infrastructure also supports those use cases. **[See Appendix A and B] COMPLETED by 2022 Cohort**

Step Two: Finalize and fully define the priority use cases and platform feature requirements to support the use cases, initiated by the 2022 Cohort and previous cohorts.

Milestone two

Step One: Through cross-collaboration, State Departments identify use cases, infrastructure needs, and recommended pilot projects as testbed activities. Participating state departments to include GovOps and the California Department of Technology (CDT) working in collaboration with Cal-IPGCA, will lead the effort to identify and assure best available technology is hosted, via the online platform, to meet the needs of the use cases identified.

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Milestone three

Step One: Present priority use cases to Cal-IPGCA executive sponsors to identify agencies and departments for pilot project deployment.

Step Two: Presentation to executive leaders in identified agencies and departments. Time and commitment from high-level managers at involved agencies is required!

Keeping in mind the overarching goal of the SACNet program (people, process, and technology), it is imperative to build the online platform technology while addressing findings and gaps from the pilot projects evaluation data.

ACCOUNTABILITY & MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Accountability and metrics will be a key to success in rolling out the blueprint of the online platform. Recommended accountability measures from the Cal-IPGCA program and focus groups include:

1. Ensure involvement and inclusion from a diverse departmental state workforce.
2. Individual user agreements including elements of responsible, accountable, consulted and informed (RACI) guidelines.
3. Ensure alignment with CalHR and CDT policies.
4. Collaborate with State employee collective bargaining units.
5. Establish key performance indicators (see below).
6. Perform ongoing risk management.

How well does the platform support and guarantee the success of the pilot program? The following are suggested metrics to indicate how well the platform is performing and the success of the deployed pilot projects.

1. Timing for the reassignment of department staff to cross-department special projects.
2. Demographics of use case participants (gender, race, ethnicity, diversity, equity, inclusion, etc.)
3. Efficient emergency response and continuity of government.
4. Qualitative data review, including survey feedback results from staff and management on job satisfaction and impact to quality of life and motivation.
5. Quantitative data review, including outcome results from cross-department special projects.
6. Fiscal cost analysis to identify overall improvement of costs in collective person hours and timeliness of project completion.

RECOGNITION AND BENEFITS FOR STATE EMPLOYEES

It is important for quality of life, job satisfaction, and engagement to recognize the accomplishments of State employees. The online platform will provide work- and social-related recognition tools and allow departments and agencies to publicize their achievements by highlighting success stories. Furthermore, engagement in the online platform will help employees feel more productive and connected to their colleagues.
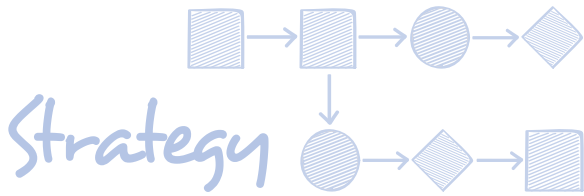
Strategy

"As CalTrans developed their IT strategic plan, 'people first' became their priority and most prominent goal and they plan to mature their culture to continue to emphasize their employees."
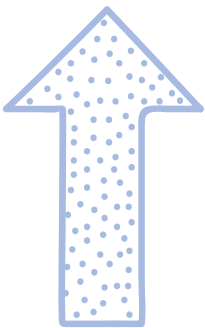–George Akiyama, Director of Information Technology at Caltrans, CIO Caltrans, Cal-IPGCA Digital Upskilling, February 10, 2022

Group Connections

1. Collaborative ongoing involvement of the platform user groups within the testbed use cases.
2. Achievement badges on the user profile for completing training or collaborative projects.
3. Engagement icons to indicate when a "conversation booster" participates in a thread or comment.
4. Ability to thank or leave positive posts on a colleague's profile or the virtual bulletin board.
5. Online certificates obtained through online platform engagement (e.g., training courses, group admin) available through user profile.

Career Boosters

1. Electronic "employee folder" for archiving of volunteer engagement and training activity, as well as thank you's and shoutout's. This is available in addition to the online resume for promotion, inter-agency projects, and career advancement.
2. Internal mechanism to track and document active engagement in the platform to potentially meet prerequisites or qualifications for lateral or promotional State job opportunities.
3. Active engagement in the platform can potentially meet prerequisites or qualifications for lateral or promotional State job opportunities.
4. Invitation and coordination of team-building gatherings.

"Whether it's training courses, mentorship, job shadowing, apprenticeships—whatever strategy that we're using, I think the opportunity now is to hopefully be much more intentional as to setting what expectations there are for that experience."
–Sarah Gessler, CalHR, Cal-IPGCA Digital Upskilling Executive Forum, February 10, 2022

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Transition & Hand-off

The emergence of major health and environmental crises has sparked innovative opportunities for State government to improve not only the quality and efficiency of service delivery, but also promote its human capital. Transforming State government is a massive undertaking, but the time to take action is now.

The first step to success for future cohorts is to obtain a strong understanding of the evolution of the SACNet program and SACNet online platform through review of 2021 and 2022 Cohort documents. The 2022 Cohort SACNet team is eager and available to facilitate this initial step.

We strongly believe the outlined deployment blueprint is a realistic step-by-step approach to action that prioritizes people, process, and technology.

While future cohorts are encouraged to continue building upon these innovation priorities, it is vital that we begin deployment small, adapt and address concerns through trial, and scale up. Only through this approach, can the state build an effective online platform that is both financially prudent and people-centered.

REFERENCES

Cohort 2021 Cohort SACNet Pilots Report
Cohort 2021 O.N.E Report

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Thank you to the Executive Leadership Forum leaders and strategic advisors for their encouraging words, clear vision, and inspirational enthusiasm for a dynamic and world-class State workforce.

We extend a warm thank you to our companion Cohort 2022 teams who collaborated with us during our journey and have so perfectly complemented our vision for the online state employee collaboration network.

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