



CIO Leadership for Cities & Counties

The Evolving Role of the CIO

From technology manager to organizational leader

Still evolving

The role has expanded because government has become more dependent on technology

THEN

Technology was often treated primarily as a support function.

NOW

Technology touches operations, strategy, risk, service delivery and public outcomes.

NEXT

The CIO must continually adapt as the technology and expectations change.

From IT Director to CIO

The title changed as the scope of the work changed.

IT DIRECTOR

Operations
Service delivery
Infrastructure
Management

CTO

Technology
direction
Architecture
Solutions
Technical depth

CIO

Enterprise scope
Strategy
Governance
Executive
relationship

The real question is authority / responsibility

A CIO title means little if the organization does not give the role the ability to lead.

Authority comes from your position, while leadership comes from taking on the responsibilities

Title → What is the role called?

Scope → What does the role actually cover?

Authority → What can the CIO decide?

Access → Who can the CIO influence?

Resources → What can the CIO realistically accomplish?

The job has transformed

The role is moving from technologist toward leader with strong people and relationship skills.

TRADITIONAL STRENGTH

- Technical expertise
- Hands-on systems knowledge
- Operations
- Problem solving

EXPANDING STRENGTH

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Negotiation
- Business relationships
- Emotional intelligence

What empowered CIOs have in common

Executive support and an empowered position are recurring characteristics of successful CIO environments.

AUTHORITY

Clear decision
rights

ACCESS

Executive
involvement

TRUST

Confidence
in the CIO

Professional development is part of the job

CIOs need continuing education just as other public-sector professionals do.

Continuous learning

Professional / peer networks

Leadership development

Technology trends

Governance and management skills

Three recurring CIO pain points

There are patterns that helps explain why CIOs struggle to become strategic.

1 • EXECUTIVE SUPPORT

Need a champion who understands and supports technology.

2 • REACTIVE WORK

75–95% of time can be consumed by fires instead of strategy.

3 • RESOURCES

Staffing, training and modernization compete for scarce dollars.

Ten things the CIO is expected to do

The CIO is simultaneously planner, coordinator, people leader, communicator, buyer, operator, strategist and security steward.

Enterprise leadership

- Plan
- Coordinate
- Hire /train /develop
- Communicate
- Recommend solutions

Stewardship

- Procure / manage
- Maintain infrastructure
- Budget / resource plan
- Policies / access
- Security

Strategic and operational at the same time

The CIO has to keep today working while preparing the organization for tomorrow.

RUN

Operations
Reliability
Service

PROTECT

Security
Risk
Continuity

CHANGE

Modernization
Projects
Innovation

LEAD

People
Communication
Alignment

IT governance

Governance aligns technology decisions with organizational goals.

CENTRALIZED

Consistency
Standards
Economies of scale
Risk: bottlenecks

DECENTRALIZED

Speed
Local autonomy
Business fit
Risk: fragmentation

FEDERATED

Shared standards
Local flexibility
Risk: complexity

**One Authority
Control / Consistency**

**Local Authority
Autonomy**

**Shared Authority
Balanced**

Enterprise security and risk management

Security has moved from a technical concern to an enterprise accountability issue.

Protect the data

Protect the systems

Protect the service

Protect the public trust

Human resource development

Technology may run on machines, but the capability lives in people.

RECRUIT

Compete for
scarce technical
talent.

DEVELOP

Training,
mentoring,
certification and
growth.

RETAIN

Recognition,
career paths,
morale and
meaningful work.

Records, knowledge, open data and analytics

The CIO increasingly manages the systems that preserve, organize and make information useful.

Records & knowledge

- Retention
- Archives
- Shared repositories
- Institutional knowledge

Data & analytics

- Open data
- Data quality
- Privacy
- Analytics / Bi

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

ERP is a technology project—but its hardest problems are organizational.

PROMISE

Integration
Shared data
Efficiency
Lower
redundancy

REALITY

Complexity
Cost
Change
resistance
Multi-year effort

LEADERSHIP

Process mapping
Training
Phased rollout
Vendor
management

Financial management and performance measurement

The modern CIO must be comfortable in the budget office as well as the server room.

BUDGET

Capital
Operating
Subscriptions

BUSINESS CASE

Cost
ROI
Benefits
Risk

PERFORMANCE

Metrics
Milestones
Benefits
realized

Green IT, ethics and social equity

Technology decisions have environmental, ethical and human consequences.

Sustainability

- Energy efficiency
- Virtualization
- Smart facilities
- Resilience
- E-waste

Ethics & equity

- Integrity
- Privacy
- Transparency
- Accessibility
- Digital inclusion

Change management and time management

The chapter makes an important distinction: implementing technology is not the same as achieving adoption.

CHANGE

Communicate
Involve
Train
Adopt
Realize value

TIME

Prioritize
Delegate
Protect strategy
Manage
interruptions

OUTCOME

Technology used
Value realized
Capacity created

Questions 1–5: Authority, Priorities and Capacity

1. Whom will I report to?
2. What were the previous CIO's strengths and weaknesses?
3. What are the primary opportunity and challenge?
4. What are the jurisdiction's top five priorities?
5. What is the current IT capital budget?

Questions 6–10: Authority, Priorities and Capacity

6. Who ultimately decides the IT budget?
7. How involved is senior management?
8. How involved are elected leaders?
9. How will my success be measured?
10. How competent is the current IT staff and leadership team?

Questions 11–20: Culture, Innovation and Support

11. What are the five biggest IT problems from the past year?
12. How is IT perceived by other departments?
13. How much latitude will I have for innovation?
14. How should IT interface with other departments?
15. What support exists for my professional development?

Questions 11–20: Culture, Innovation and Support

16. What resources exist for staff development?

17. How is “IT” defined here?

18. How is the technology strategic plan created and updated?

19. What political support can I expect?

20. How do you prefer to be kept informed?

The role is not narrowing

Technology change, demographic change and rising service expectations will continue to expand the CIO's challenge.

CYBER

Security
Continuity
Trust

MODERNIZE

Cloud
Legacy
replacement
Automation

SERVE

Digital services
Self-service
Citizen
expectations

LEAD

People
Agility
Public value

The CIO role is not what it used to be

And it will continue to evolve.

THEN

Technology was the primary focus.

Technical expertise was the center of gravity.

NOW

Technology is the domain.

Leadership is the multiplier.

**“Regardless of technology or the speed of innovation, people are still people. And all the rules of humanity still apply.”
— Simon Sinek**