

**ITS Service Level Agreement**Objective

A Service Level Agreement (SLA) describes the IT Service, documents Service Level Targets, and specifies the responsibilities of the IT Service Provider and the Customer.

The ITS Service Level Agreement (SLA) includes:

* Global Service Levels: General areas of support and targets that are applicable to every ITS service
* Service SLA for each service: Levels of support and targets applicable to a specific service to include responsibilities of ITS and the customer.
* MOU: Optional customer specific requirements (additions or changes)
* If there are content differences, information documented in the Service SLA takes precedence over the information stated in the Global Service Levels. In addition, information contained in an MOU associated with a standard service also takes precedence over the information contained in the Service SLA and/or the Global Service Levels.

**Global Service Levels
  
Service Support**

The ITS Service Desk operates 24 x 7 and offers a single point of contact for all customer inquiries related to ITS services for the State of North Carolina's business and technical infrastructures. The Service Desk agents provide business and technical infrastructure analysis, problem solving, and first and second level diagnostics.

**Hours of Operation**

ITS Services are available 24 x 7, excluding planned outage maintenance windows and unavoidable events. Maintenance windows are used only when needed for planned changes that have gone through the ITS Change Management Process. In addition to the Standard ITS Maintenance Windows, site-specific changes may be coordinated with customers at non­standard times.

ITS Standard maintenance windows include:

* 4:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. each Thursday
* 4:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. each Sunday

Any service maintenance windows outside of these standard windows are documented in the service specific SLA.

**Contacting Support and Ticket Escalation**

The ITS Service Desk is the single point of contact for initiating all Incidents and Service Requests, including any requests for ticket escalation. Customers may contact the ITS Service Desk at 919-754-6000 or toll free at 1-800-722-3946 or via email at [ITS.Incidents@its.nc.gov](mailto:ITS.Incidents@its.nc.gov). The Agency Relationship Manager assigned to your agency is available to address any questions regarding ITS services, processes or information technology business needs. You may contact your Agency Relationship Manager directly or initiate a Service Request with the ITS Service Desk.

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**Incidents and Service Requests
  
Ticket Creation and Prioritization**

Two types of tickets may be created by contacting the ITS Service Desk. An Incident is any disruption of service. A Service Request is a request for information or a request for a new service or to change an existing service. Customers may open an Incident or a Service Request ticket by calling or initiating an email to the ITS Service Desk.

**It is important to note that tickets received via email are categorized as a low priority**. Therefore, any critical or high Incident or Service Request should be **initiated by calling** the ITS Service Desk. If a critical or high Incident or Service Request is initiated by e-mail**, it must be followed up with a telephone call to the Service Desk** to ensure proper prioritization. Failure to call may result in a low priority ticket. When sending an email, summarize the nature of the Incident or Service Request in the Subject field.

Upon ticket creation, the customer will automatically be emailed a Receipt Confirmation with the ticket or reference number. This confirmation notes that the Incident or Service Request has been logged at the ITS Service Desk and that it is being assigned to a work group. Customers are responsible for ensuring their email address is provided to the ITS Service Desk for update and resolution notification purposes.

The ITS Service Desk assigns a Priority to every initiated Incident or Service Request. The ITS Prioritization Model is used to ensure a consistent approach to define the sequence for a ticket to be handled and to drive the assignment of resources.

The Priority assigned to a ticket depends upon:

* The Impact on the business: size, scope and complexity of the Incident
* The Urgency to the business: time within which resolution is required

**Ticket Target Resolution Times**

The Incident Target Resolution Time is the total time from ticket creation to Incident resolution (restoration of service to the user). Service may be restored either through a workaround or a permanent solution. ITS is committed to resolve ninety percent (90%) of Incidents within the time frame specified for each Priority.

The following chart shows the target resolution times by Priority after the initial assessment/assignment of an Incident by the Service Desk.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Incident Priority** | **Target Resolution Time** |
| **Critical** | 4 hours or less |
| **High** | 8 hours or less |
| **Medium** | 24 hours or less |
| **Low** | 3 business days |

**Change Management**

ITS has a Change Management Process with the goal of protecting the shared environment of the State’s infrastructure from unintended impacts as a result of changes made to the various systems, applications, and equipment operating on the enterprise network and in the State Data Centers managed by ITS. Additionally, ITS sponsors the Enterprise Change Advisory Board (ECAB), whose membership consists of agency and ITS representatives. The ECAB meets regularly to communicate all Major and Significant changes to its members.

All ECAB members must adhere to the following guidelines:

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* Customers will have an agency representative attend and participate in the ECAB
* Customers will notify ITS and other agencies of any agency planned changes to the ITS provided infrastructure
* Customers will concur and sign off on any ITS major change that affects their agency
* ITS will concur and sign off on any agency change that impacts the ITS managed infrastructure.

There are three levels of change types (Major, Significant and Minor) which necessitate the lead times listed below for effective and efficient implementation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Change Request Type** | **Required Lead Time** |
| **Major** | 20 business days |
| **Significant** | 10 business days |
| **Minor** | 3 business days |

**Customer Communication**

ITS will update customers as tickets are being worked and upon ticket resolution. ITS will also provide communications, through the ITS Customer Communications Hub, when Incidents or outages occur that may impact the customer. Customers of ITS should visit the ITS Customer Communication Hub at https://communications.its.state.nc.us/ to self-register for communications regarding services and to view service status. Customers may also subscribe to the Projected Service Outage Report via the Communications Hub which provides information regarding upcoming change events that have the potential to impact services and lines of business.

If an Incident is causing major impact, or potentially major impact, to the business and requires a response that is above and beyond that given to standard incidents, a Major Incident Plan (MIP) may be declared. Typically, MIPs are prioritized as critical incidents and require cross-agency coordination, management escalation, the mobilization of additional resources, and increased communications. Depending upon the customer impact, ITS may provide communications to agency contacts using NotiFind. The Agency Relationship Managers work with their respective agencies to maintain updated MIP contact information.

**Security Standards and Policies**

ITS services adhere to ITS and State CIO Security Standards and Policies . The Customer is responsible for ensuring that their systems, applications, processes and data are compliant with and follow State CIO Security Standards and Policies. As an example, the Customer is responsible for classifying their data and identifying additional security that may be required for data classifications such as PII, HIPPA, PCI or IRS 1075.

**Risk Management**

ITS provides business continuity services, including assistance with continuity planning strategies, to help agencies comply with G.S. 147-33.89. Other services include the availability of dual sites for application hosting, testing, and disaster recovery. ITS conducts a minimum of two disaster recovery exercises each year for its critical applications; hosted agencies are invited to participate. The customer is responsible for determining their disaster recovery objectives and purchasing any additional services or equipment that may be required to meet those objectives.

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**Customer and ITS Access and Assets**

* **Protection of equipment**
* Agencies/Customers must protect all ITS owned assets that are resident at agency locations or being used by agency personnel or contractors. (NC State Security Policy Chapter 2) While the agency/customer is responsible for the physical security of the assets, ITS is responsible to replace ITS owned assets that are lost, damaged or stolen while on agency premises and/or in use by agency employees or contractors.
* **Site Environmentals**
* Agencies/Customers must provide, protect, control and monitor any onsite environmentals associated with the presence of ITS owned assets. (NC State Security Policy Chapter 9) This includes HVAC, Static electricity, humidity, air circulation, electrical circuits and line fluctuations, flooding, physical access, space management, and BCP/DR plans for the environmental controls.
* If a new location or site is being considered for ITS Services, a site survey will be conducted by ITS staff to determine if there are environmental concerns or other issues that need to be addressed as part of the service provisioning process. Any issues that cannot be addressed or that are non-standard will be documented in an MOU, including additional costs (if applicable) and other actions needed to mitigate the risk or concern.
* **Customer Access to Agency Owned Assets**

The customer shall have access rights to their assets for the purpose of application monitoring and for managing software licenses and application code.

* **ITS Physical and Remote Access and changes to ITS equipment on customer premises**
* Agencies and customers of ITS must provide timely physical site access to ITS Staff so that ITS can provide the necessary support for the services being provided to that location. Access must be provided to ITS assets located on agency premises, including access to server closets, wiring closets, switches and other ITS managed devices.
* ITS staff must adhere to an agency’s security access requirements, i.e. signing a visitor’s access log.
* ITS must ensure that the agency is notified when ITS staff no longer require badge access to the agency’s facility.
* When changes are made to ITS assets, ITS and customers must adhere to the security standards associated with the asset (NC State Security Policy Chapter 2) and follow the ITS Change Management Process.
* Agencies and customers of ITS agree to permit ITS to open all required firewall ports necessary for ITS to provide services and the management of ITS remote equipment in the Agency.
* **On-boarding and off-boarding of State employees and contractors**.
* Agencies need to submit a ticket to the ITS Service Desk for the on-boarding and off-boarding of agency employees/contractors when they are entitled to receive support for any ITS service. In addition, ITS owned assets deployed to agency employees/contractors must be returned to ITS for proper equipment cleanup and potential reuse.
* **Financial Authorization**
* Agencies must provide ITS with written assurances through the appropriate services provisioning process that funds are available to cover the requisition of the new equipment or services being purchased from ITS and that all invoices will be paid promptly and fully upon receipt, consistent with State accounts payable

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practices. Agencies should open a ticket with the Service Desk if there are any questions or disputes with the ITS bill.

**Service Level Reviews**

ITS will hold periodic Service Level Reviews with our customers. The reviews will be facilitated by the ITS Customer Service group and conducted at a minimum on a quarterly basis or as needed. An Agency Relationship Manager and the customer will participate in the reviews.

As a part of Service Level Reviews, Service Level Agreements will be periodically reviewed and modified as required. SLAs will also be reviewed under any of the following conditions:

* Whenever there is a significant and/or sustained change to the delivery of the service
* Whenever there is a significant change requested to the SLA that supports the ITS service
* Whenever changes are required due to legislation or executive order.

Customers may request a review of their SLAs at any time by contacting the ITS Customer

Service group. As a result of these service reviews or as other information is provided, Service Improvement Programs may be implemented.

**Metrics and Reports**

Metrics and reports will be discussed at the Service Level Reviews. Archival of all reports shall

follow the records retention schedule adopted by the North Carolina Office of Information Technology Services and the State Records Branch General Schedule, as applicable.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Report Name** | **Reporting Metric** | **Reporting Interval** | **Reporting Source** |
| SLA Report for Incidents Resolved | Resolved incidents within and outside of the SLA; Service Request Resolution Times | Monthly | Service Management Reporting Tool |
| Change  Management | Successful Changes as defined in the Change Management Process | Monthly | Remedy Change Tickets |
| Customer Satisfaction | Customers Satisfied with ITS handling of their tickets as defined in the ITS Operational Scorecard | Monthly | Ticket Survey  feedback forms |

**Dispute Resolution**

The Parties (ITS and the Customer) agree that it is in their mutual best interest to resolve disputes informally and amicably. If representatives of the Parties are unable to resolve any dispute after reasonable negotiation, such issue shall be escalated to the respective legal counsel of the Parties, and then, if necessary, to the heads of the respective agencies. If the dispute still remains unresolved, then either Party may seek resolution using the mechanism set out in N.C.G.S. 147-33.93 Fees; Dispute Resolution Panel.

**Confidentiality**

As a result of this SLA, each Party (ITS and the Customer) is likely to have access to

information or records of the other Party that is exempt from disclosure under applicable law. Such information shall be deemed “Confidential Information.” Each Party shall maintain all Confidential Information of the other Party in strictest confidence and will not at any time use, publish, reproduce or disclose any Confidential Information, except to the extent necessary to carry out the Party’s duties under this SLA or as expressly authorized in writing by the other Party.

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Each Party shall, prior to disclosing any Confidential Information to any contractor or other third party, promptly seek and obtain authorization for the disclosure from the other Party and shall ensure that the contractor or other third party is subject to a non-disclosure agreement enforceable in North Carolina. Nothing in this paragraph is intended to prevent either Party from compliance with any order issued by a North Carolina state or federal court.

**Ownership and Custody of Data**

All data or other records held or stored by ITS as a result of this SLA shall be considered the property of, and in the custody of, the Customer. Customers should ensure their backup, retention and business continuity requirements for customer owned data are clearly identified in the SLA. In the event of a request made to ITS for access to Customer records pursuant to the North Carolina Public Records Act or by other legal process, ITS will decline such requests and indicate to the requestor that ITS is not the custodian of such records. ITS will refer the requestor to the Customer and will notify the Customer of such request as soon as is reasonable under the circumstances, in order to provide the Customer with an opportunity to state or otherwise argue its own position concerning such request.

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