



Department of Government Operations

Division of Finance Strategic Plan

The Division of Finance's Strategic Plan serves as a roadmap to achieve the overarching goals of the Department of Government Operations (GovOps). By aligning our objectives—enhancing financial reporting, strengthening internal controls, improving customer service, leveraging technology, and investing in workforce development—we directly support the Department's vision for a more efficient, effective, and collaborative government.

Core Foundation

- **Our Vision:** To promote trust and integrity as the cornerstones of financial governance, modeling excellence in efficient, effective, and ethical financial management practices. We aim to elevate operations through innovative technologies for the benefit of all Utah citizens.
- **Our Mission:** To promote the highest standards of trust and integrity in managing taxpayer funds by consistently providing accurate, timely, and unbiased financial information. We believe the ethical use of these funds supports the economic prosperity of all Utah citizens .
- **Core Values:** Integrity, Accountability, Innovation, Service Excellence, Collaboration, and a high-performing, inclusive Culture.

About the Division & Our Teams

We manage the state's financial operations, ensuring the responsible and transparent use of taxpayer funds. Our core teams include:

- **Compliance:** Reviews risks, designs internal controls established by policy, and monitors their effectiveness by conducting audits and transaction reviews.
- **Customer Solutions & Innovation:** Drives continuous improvement, project management, and collaborative technical solutions.
- **Financial Information Systems:** Manages and maintains the databases, servers, and software applications used for state financial operations.
- **Financial Reporting:** Compiles, analyzes, and publishes the state's financial records, including the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR)
- **Office of State Debt Collection (OSDC):** Recovers debts owed to the state, local governments, and crime victims.

- **Payment Operations:** Manages payroll, W-2s, ACH/check payments, garnishments, 1099s, and PCI compliance.
- **Training & Communication:** Develops comprehensive educational resources, manages the Help Desk, and supports system users.
- **Travel and Expense Reporting:** Manages the SAP Concur system and enforces statewide travel and purchasing card policies.

Division Challenges

To achieve our mission, the division must navigate several critical challenges:

- **Managing Employee Workload & Capacity:** As the state's budget and service demands grow, workload remains significant. Historically, essential functions have concentrated on a small number of highly skilled employees. Specifically, the recent rollout of the new HCM system has placed a disproportionate burden on key individuals, highlighting the critical need for better capacity planning and workload distribution to prevent burnout.
- **Data Privacy & Security Mandates:** New data privacy laws and GovRAMP certification requirements have introduced significant administrative burdens. Navigating new privacy impact assessments and complex data sharing rules requires careful coordination with the Division of Technology Services (DTS) and State Purchasing to streamline workflows and avoid project delays.
- **Retaining a Highly Talented Workforce:** We must navigate a competitive landscape for accounting and technical talent, retaining high-performers and preserving institutional knowledge as long-tenured employees retire.
- **Adapting to Rapid Technological Change:** The fast pace of technology presents both risks and opportunities. We must leverage data-driven prioritization to manage stakeholder expectations and focus our resources effectively.

Strategic Goals & Objectives

1. Building a Highly Talented Team

Why this is our top priority: *A talented team is necessary to achieve every goal that follows. Without a skilled workforce capable of figuring out complex problems and adapting to new, emerging technologies, none of our other strategic objectives would be possible.*

- **Objective:** Attract and retain a highly skilled workforce by hiring for behavioral traits, providing robust onboarding, and connecting work to citizen impact. We will heavily utilize project management (Jira) to improve capacity planning, properly distribute workload, and prevent burnout—specifically targeting the strain caused by the HCM system rollout.

- **Champion:** Ally Branch
- **GovOps Pillar:** Empowering Workforce
- **Timeline:**
 - ● FY 2027: Purpose-Driven Recruitment, Onboarding, & Workload Distribution
 - ● FY 2028: Mentorship & Performance Integration
 - ● FY 2029: Market Alignment & Retention
- **Strategies:**
 - ● Execute and monitor the end-to-end onboarding program, ensuring new hires successfully integrate and understand the broader purpose of their impact on Utah citizens.
 - ● Leverage the Project Management Office (PMO) and Jira to automate project templates, focusing heavily on capacity planning to properly distribute the workload of key personnel supporting the HCM system.
 - ● Incorporate project management principles and capacity planning metrics into standard employee performance evaluations.
 - ● Monitor and proactively adjust compensation packages to align with market benchmarks for similar positions to remain competitive.
- **KPIs:**
 - Reduction in year-over-year employee turnover rate.
 - Positive employee feedback scores on the end-to-end onboarding program.
 - Successful tracking of capacity/workload distribution within Jira.
- **Budget Request:** No additional budget anticipated.

2. Improve Customer Service

- **Objective:** Actively seek agency feedback, provide proactive support, and enhance collaboration through standardized branding and intentional networking events to foster a highly collaborative working environment.
- **Champion:** Ally Branch
- **GovOps Pillar:** Enhancing Reputation & One in Purpose and Execution
- **Timeline:**
 - ● FY 2027: Annual Summit, Continued Outreach, & Branded Communications
 - ● FY 2028: Proactive Guidance & Feedback Integration
 - ● FY 2029: Data-Driven Analytics & Continuous Service Improvement

- **Strategies:**
 - ● Host an annual, all-day Budget Accounting Officers meeting each June to communicate fiscal year closeout procedures, provide continuing education, and facilitate networking and trust-building.
 - ● Standardize communications using newly established branding so agencies immediately recognize Division messaging and required actions.
 - ● Continue direct feedback sessions with state agencies to deeply understand their operational priorities and immediate pain points.
 - ● Engage division personnel to provide tailored guidance to agencies on optimizing existing processes, and selectively turn on optional system features to improve the user experience.
 - ● Regularly analyze aggregated agency feedback and help desk data to proactively anticipate agency needs and implement service changes before issues escalate.

- **KPIs:**
 - Successful execution of the annual June Budget Accounting Officers summit (attendance/satisfaction).
 - Number of direct feedback sessions and outreach meetings conducted annually.

- **Budget Request:** No additional budget anticipated.

3. HCM/Payroll (Vantage) System Stabilization

- **Objective:** Stabilize the Vantage system. Alongside stabilization and the automation of manual post-go-live processes, manage significant compliance updates (OBBBA tax law, SB 229, and SB 307), establish clear cross-departmental governance, mitigate risk by eliminating single points of failure, and optimize the overall user experience by prioritizing employee acceptance, training, and development.

- **Champion:** Ally Branch

- **GovOps Pillar:** One in Purpose and Execution

- **Timeline:**
 - ● FY 2027: Stabilization, Triage, Compliance, & Baseline Automation
 - ● FY 2028: Optimization, Process Refinement, & People Development
 - ● FY 2029: Continuous Improvement & Long-Term Scaling

- **Strategies:**
 - ● **Help Desk & Triage:** Leverage the existing Help Desk ticketing system to track response times, resolution metrics, and other key data points to efficiently resolve critical system errors and stabilize core payroll functions.

- ● **Risk Mitigation & Knowledge Transfer:** Document and cross-train on critical manual interventions currently reliant on just one or two individuals with specialized knowledge. Eliminating these single points of failure is essential to prevent painful and expensive errors or omissions.
 - ● **Compliance Execution:** Implement large-scale updates and ensure compliance with Federal and State laws, specifically including the OBBBA tax law, SB229 for Benefits and Retirement, and SB307 for garnishments.
 - ● **Governance & HR Collaboration:** Define the roles and governance of the ERP across all end users. While Finance is the primary responsible party, partner actively with HR to define responsibilities—particularly regarding new functionality/configuration for SB229 and ensuring the data feeding payroll is current.
 - ● **User Acceptance & Change Management:** Prioritize customer service for our employees by heavily focusing on User Acceptance and system familiarity. Acknowledge the difficulty of change by actively addressing user struggles and making the employee experience a core focus.
 - ● **Gap Analysis:** Conduct a gap analysis using Help Desk data to identify manual workarounds and system pain points, mapping out specific processes targeted for immediate improvement and automation.
 - ● **Workflow Automation:** Develop and deploy automated workflows for routine payroll processes and data entry tasks to significantly reduce administrative burdens.
 - ● **People Development:** Continue the FY2027 focus on people by investing in the development and training of current employees, tracking processes effectively, and hiring new talent to maximize the utility of our tools.
 - ● **Documentation:** Update system documentation and training materials to reflect newly automated processes, optimized workflows, and defined governance roles.
 - ● **Proactive Analytics:** Transition to a proactive improvement cycle relying on system analytics and automated reporting dashboards for real-time data visibility.
- **KPIs:**
 - Core system stability and uptime.
 - Reduction in critical payroll support tickets and costly manual errors.
 - Successful deployment and compliance tracking for OBBBA, SB229, and SB307.
 - Completion of automated workflows (replacing manual processes).
 - Reduction of single-point-of-failure processes through tracked cross-training and documentation.
 - User acceptance and customer service metrics (measuring employee familiarity and satisfaction).
- **Budget Request:** No additional budget anticipated.

4. Loan System Optimization

- **Objective:** Implement and optimize the newly procured, secure loan management system to enable direct account access for agencies and borrowers, streamline processing, reduce manual effort, and enhance the transparency and accuracy of loan accounting and reporting.
- **Champion:** Van Christensen
- **GovOps Pillar:** One in Purpose and Execution & Ensuring Financial Soundness and Transparency
- **Timeline:**
 - ● FY 2027: Core System Implementation, Data Migration & Borrower Portal Launch
 - ● FY 2028: System Troubleshooting, Enhancements & Process Optimization
 - ● FY 2029: Advanced Reporting & Cross-Agency Process Integration
- **Strategies:**
 - ● Execute a secure and accurate migration of all existing active and historical loan data into the new system.
 - ● Design and deploy the self-service borrower portal to provide clients and agencies with direct account access.
 - ● Complete the core implementation of the new loan management system, provide role-based training, and officially go live.
 - ● Establish dedicated troubleshooting and support protocols to quickly resolve post-launch operational issues.
 - ● Identify and execute functional system enhancements based on early user feedback to refine overall performance.
 - ● Integrate optimized workflows across participating state agencies to maximize long-term administrative efficiency.
- **KPIs:**
 - Successful migration of 100% of active loan data and official system go-live within the fiscal year.
 - On-time deployment of the borrower portal and successful verification of direct account access functionality.
- **Budget Request:** No additional budget anticipated.

5. Redesign Data Warehouse & Implement Modern Business Intelligence

- **Objective:** Redesign the existing data warehouse architecture from the ground up to eliminate unused legacy tables, lower operational costs, and improve data access efficiency. Concurrently, implement modern business intelligence (BI) tools and provide comprehensive training to empower policymakers and agencies to efficiently make data-driven decisions.
- **Champion:** Van Christensen
- **GovOps Pillar:** One in Purpose and Execution & Ensuring Financial Soundness and Transparency
- **Timeline:**
 - ● FY 2027: Agency Outreach & Architectural Design
 - ● FY 2028: Warehouse Build & BI Tool Implementation
 - ● FY 2029: User Training & Adoption
- **Strategies:**
 - ● Conduct comprehensive outreach to state agencies to audit current data usage, identifying exactly which tables are actively used, what specific data is accessed, and the operational purpose behind it.
 - ● Design a new, streamlined data warehouse architecture from scratch, purposefully omitting years of legacy bloat and unused tables to improve query speed and lower storage costs.
 - ● Build and deploy the newly architected data warehouse based on the FY27 agency data usage audit.
 - ● Procure and implement modern business intelligence and reporting tools, directly integrating them with the newly structured data warehouse.
 - ● Develop and deliver targeted training programs for policy makers, agency leaders, and end-users on how to effectively access, visualize, and extract insights using the new BI tools.
- **KPIs:**
 - Percentage reduction in data warehouse storage and compute costs.
 - Completion of the agency data usage audit and successful migration to the new architecture.
 - Number of users trained on the newly implemented business intelligence tools.
- **Budget Request:** We will fund this objective internally whenever possible; however, additional funding may be required as early phases better define the scope

6. Chart of Accounts Infrastructure Development Project

- **Objective:** Redesign the chart of accounts by establishing a uniform structure across all state agencies to ensure consistent business use of account elements, streamline data queries, improve information access for policymakers, and properly organize data to leverage AI capabilities.
- **Champion:** Van Christensen
- **GovOps Pillar:** One in Purpose and Execution & Ensuring Financial Soundness and Transparency

Timeline:

- ● FY 2027: Agency Outreach & Usage Assessment
 - ● FY 2028: Uniform Structure Development & Voluntary Pilot
 - ● FY 2029: Mandated Broad Adoption & AI Readiness
- **Strategies:**
 - ● Conduct comprehensive outreach to state agencies to understand their current utilization of chart of accounts elements and identify operational inconsistencies.
 - ● Develop a standardized, uniform chart of accounts designed to be utilized consistently by all state agencies.
 - ● Initiate a voluntary adoption phase, starting with select agencies or specific account components, to properly test the new uniform structure.
 - ● Establish a long-term runway with a firm deadline for mandatory, statewide adoption of the uniform chart of accounts.
 - ● Optimize the newly organized dataset to lay the necessary groundwork for leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) to extract advanced data insights.

KPIs:

- Completion of the statewide agency outreach and usage assessment.
- Number of agencies and components participating in the voluntary adoption phase.
- Percentage of state agencies successfully fully adopting the uniform chart of accounts by the mandated deadline.

Budget Request: We will fund this objective internally whenever possible; however, additional funding may be required as early phases better define the scope .

7. Driving Data Privacy & System Security Compliance








- **Objective:** Establish a robust program to ensure compliance with data privacy laws and navigate GovRAMP requirements. We will actively streamline privacy and security

approval workflows to safeguard sensitive information without causing undue project delays.

- **Champion:** Van Christensen
- **GovOps Pillar:** Enhancing Reputation
- **Timeline:**
 - ● FY 2027: Privacy Impact Assessments & Privacy Annotations
 - ● FY 2028: Vendor Auditing System Implementation, Privacy Disclosures, & Folder Restructuring.
 - ● FY 2029: Personal Data Inventory, Finalize Folder Restructuring, & Update Systems and Forms with Privacy Disclosures
- **Strategies:**
 - ● Partner proactively with DTS and the Division of Purchasing to develop a streamlined, parallel workflow that includes;
 - Workflows for technology purchases through statewide contracts and Finance only procurements that document privacy impact assessment timing and verify completion of security assessments.
 - Procedures to proactively communicate GovRAMP and other privacy and security requirements to vendors.
 - A standardized vendor compliance auditing system.
 - ● Document Finance's legal authority to retain records, authorized purposes of uses of records, and write privacy annotations for all record series.
 - ● Implement vendor auditing system developed in FY2027 with a continuous improvement and feedback mechanism that collaborates with contract stewards, system owners, DTS, and the Division of Purchasing.
 - ● Use legal analysis conducted in FY 2027 to write privacy disclosures.
 - ● Resume reorganizing records in network drives and Google shared drives into standardized folder structures that support retention policies and simple auditing.
 - ● Implement annual record retention and disposition for reorganized records on shared drives.
 - ● Inventory the personal data contained within record series and applications to inform system upgrade priorities.
 - ● Add required privacy disclosures and consent mechanisms to all digital systems, prioritizing public-facing applications.
 - ● Add required privacy disclosures to all paper forms.
 - ● Complete shared drives folder restructure and implement annual destruction of records that have exceeded their retention period.
- **KPIs:**

- Implementation of a unified, streamlined DTS/Purchasing security workflow for new software/vendors.
- Percentage of systems with complete privacy impact assessments.
- Completion of the personal data inventory across all record series and applications.
- Completion of privacy annotations across all record series.
- **Budget Request:** No additional budget anticipated.

8. End-User Training Program

- **Objective:** Deliver a comprehensive training program to equip statewide personnel with the knowledge to effectively use the state's accounting systems, reducing errors and improving data quality.
- **Champion:** Ally Branch
- **GovOps Pillar:** Empowering Workforce & Ensuring Financial Soundness and Transparency
- **Timeline:**
 -  FY 2027: E-Learning Development & Technical Modules
 -  FY 2028: Full Curriculum Execution & Ongoing Support
 -  FY 2029: Data-Driven Refinement & Continuous Improvement
- **Strategies:**
 -  Leverage the dedicated trainer to develop high-quality e-learning modules for foundational accounting system functions.
 -  Utilize the technical accountant to develop specialized training modules for complex topics, such as managing federal grants.
 -  Formally execute the finalized training curriculum and provide ongoing, accessible support resources (e.g., job aids, Q&A sessions).
 -  Systematically analyze help desk data to identify user pain points and update existing training modules to address them.
- **KPIs:**
 - Completion of at least one comprehensive training workshop each year.
 - Measurable reduction in Help Desk questions related to specific, trained topics.
- **Budget Request:** No additional budget anticipated.

9. Rewrite Statewide Accounting Policies

- **Objective:** Modernize accounting policies using plain language to establish strong internal controls that minimize the risk of fraud, waste, and abuse, while ensuring strict compliance with laws, Federal grants, and regulations.
- **Champion:** Van Christensen
- **GovOps Pillar:** Ensuring Financial Soundness and Transparency
- **Timeline:**
 - ● FY 2027: High priority policy rewrites & best practices
 - ● FY 2028: Lower priority policy rewrites & best practices
 - ● FY 2029: Continuous review cycle and updates of policies
- **Strategies:**
 - ● Leverage the technical writer to revise and write policies as prioritized in a given year.
 - ● Complete the rewrite of the remaining backlog of outdated statewide accounting policies using standardized plain language.
 - ● Consider audit findings and determine whether policies need to be revised to help ensure compliance and address policy need. rewritten policies with the post-audit framework (Goal 9) to ensure agencies have the guidance needed to avoid audit findings.
 - ● Establish a formalized process for the periodic, ongoing review and update of all policies.
- **KPIs:**
 - Number of newly implemented policies specifically designed to close internal control gaps.
- **Budget Request:** No additional budget anticipated.

10. Monitor Agency Compliance

- **Objective:** Implement a post-audit program to ensure state agencies adhere to financial policies, promoting accountability, transparency, and responsible use of public funds.
- **Champion:** Van Christensen
- **GovOps Pillar:** Ensuring Financial Soundness and Transparency
- **Timeline:**
 - ● FY 2027: Team Onboarding, Framework Development, & Pilot Audits

- ● FY 2028: Agency Guidance & Tools
- ● FY 2029: Full Program Rollout & Continuous Improvement
- **Strategies:**
 - ● Develop a methodology, frequency, and risk-based selection criteria for post-audits.
 - ● Execute a pilot round of post-audits with select agencies to test the newly developed framework and refine methodologies.
 - ● Establish and distribute formal guidance and standardized tools for agency internal audit teams to follow.
 - ● Launch the recurring post-audit schedule across all targeted state agencies.
 - ● Provide targeted training to agencies—driven by common compliance gaps found during audits—to ensure clear understanding of financial policies.
- **KPIs:**
 - Execution of the annual post-audit schedule (number of audits completed).
- **Budget Request:** No additional budget anticipated.

11. Vendor Self Service Solution

- **Objective:** Implement and launch a portal to streamline vendor interactions, improve efficiency, and reduce fraud risk.
- **Champion:** Ally Branch
- **GovOps Pillar:** Enhancing Reputation & One in Purpose and Execution
- **Timeline:**
 - ● FY 2027: Procurement, Contract Execution, & Initial Implementation
 - ● FY 2028: System Integration, Testing, & Targeted Launch
 - ● FY 2029: Statewide Adoption, ACH Migration, & Optimization
- **Strategies:**
 - ● Issue the formal procurement (RFP), evaluate proposals, select the vendor, and finalize contract execution for the portal.
 - ● Kick off the implementation project plan, locking in the technical specifications for standardized vendor setups.
 - ● Build the portal, integrate it securely with the statewide accounting system, and conduct User Acceptance Testing (UAT).
 - ● Develop training materials and support resources for internal agency staff and external vendors.

- ● Execute the statewide go-live and launch an aggressive campaign leveraging the portal to migrate vendors from check payments to secure ACH payments.
- **KPIs:**
 - Percentage of total active vendors successfully registered on the portal.
 - Measurable increase in ACH adoption (reduction in check payments).
 - Reduction in lead time for vendor setups and profile modifications.
- **Budget Request:** No additional budget anticipated.











12. Bank Validation System Implementation

- **Objective:** Implement a robust, automated bank validation system that serves as a proactive defense against financial fraud. This solution will verify that every outbound state dollar is directed to a legitimate, authenticated entity prior to disbursement, thereby securing vendor EFT processes and increasing overall operational efficiency.
- **Champion:** Ally Branch
- **GovOps Pillar:** One in Purpose and Execution & Ensuring Financial Soundness and Transparency
- **Timeline:**
 - ● FY 2027: Contract Finalization, Privacy Assessments, & Initial Integration
 - ● FY 2028: System UAT, Policy Modification, & Procedural Rollout
 - ● FY 2029: Vendor Management Training & Agency Communication
- **Strategies:**
 - ● Finalize contract terms and conditions with the selected vendor and establish the implementation timeline.
 - ● Complete all necessary Privacy Impact Assessments (PIA), privacy and records reviews, and security access controls.
 - ● Propose and integrate EFT Vendor Setup changes by modifying internal policies, writing standard operating procedures (SOPs), and updating the F1171 form.
 - ● Conduct User Acceptance Testing (UAT) for the new Bank Validation System and ensure proper firewall and system connections are updated by DevOps.
 - ● Deliver comprehensive training for the Vendor Management Team, host an agency forum to discuss process changes, and distribute statewide communications regarding procedural updates.
- **KPIs:**

- Successful integration and launch of the selected Bank Validation System.
- Measurable reduction in vendor payment errors and increased fraud prevention.
- Improved operational efficiency regarding EFT vendor setups and process workflows.

Budget Request: No additional budget anticipated.

13. Tax Refund Payment Tracking Integration

- **Objective:** To create a seamless, automated interface between the Tax Commission's GenTax system and the Vantage Financial and FINDER systems. The goal is to provide taxpayers with a single point of access for refund status, payment tracking (EFT/Check), and debt offset information via the Taxpayer Assistance Portal (TAP), thereby reducing manual inquiries and improving transparency.
- **Champion:** Ally Branch
- **GovOps Pillar:** One in Purpose and Execution & Ensuring Financial Soundness and Transparency
- **Timeline:**
 -  FY 2027: Privacy Assessments, Discovery with Tax Commission, Defining System Requirements
 -  FY 2028: Interface Development, Testing, Policy Modification, & Procedural Rollout
 -  FY 2029: Go-live for all state taxpayers.
- **Strategies:**
 -  Draft and execute a formal memorandum of understanding between the Division of Finance and the Tax Commission regarding data governance.
 -  Map data fields between GenTax (refund records) and the Finance FINDER/Vantage Financial databases (EFT/Check tracking).
 -  Conduct Privacy Impact Assessment(s).
 -  Program the system to automatically display debt offset details if a refund is garnished, pulling directly from the FINDER system.
 -  Build the secure API/interface that allows the Taxpayer Assistance Portal (TAP) to query Finance databases in real-time or some established frequency.
 -  Train Disbursements staff on how to guide taxpayers to use the new portal features.
 -  Open the integration to all state taxpayers for the primary tax season. This would also include marketing of the updated websites on the automated phone system.
- **KPIs:**

- Measurable decrease in phone calls and emails to the Division's disbursements team during tax season.
- Garnished refunds display the specific entity for the FINDER offset.

Budget Request: No budget request anticipated; diversion of existing resources.

Funding & Resources

The Division of Finance receives its funding primarily from two sources: general fund appropriations and internal rates charged to other agencies for services provided. Maintaining sufficient funding is crucial for supporting the division's strategic initiatives, especially in key areas like modernizing technology and developing the workforce.

To ensure the sustainability of the state's financial and payroll systems, the division is planning to explore a potential shift in funding strategy. This may involve moving towards a model where the ongoing maintenance of these critical systems is funded primarily through internal rates billed to the agencies that utilize them.

Conclusion

The Utah Division of Finance is committed to advancing its mission of ensuring responsible and transparent use of taxpayer funds through innovative strategies and a dedicated workforce. By focusing on enhancing financial reporting, strengthening internal controls, improving customer service, leveraging technology, and investing in workforce development, the division will continue to serve as a model of excellence in financial management for the State of Utah. This strategic plan outlines the division's roadmap for achieving its goals and objectives over the next five years, ensuring that it continues to deliver high-quality financial services to the citizens of Utah.