



Federal Election Commission

**Information Technology Strategic Plan
FY 2025-2026**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Information Technology (IT) Strategic Plan for the Federal Election Commission (FEC) covers the period from October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2026. The plan focuses on aligning IT activities with FEC objectives and government wide policies including IT modernization, security and customer experience as outlined for federal agencies by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The Federal Election Commission's Fiscal Years 2022 through 2026 Strategic Plan¹ and Delivering a Digital First Public Experience² were used to guide the development of this IT strategic plan. This plan will cover a shorter period than past plans as we align our IT strategic plan with our agency-wide strategic plan.

Across government and at the FEC, agencies are challenged to deliver and receive digital information and services, anytime, anywhere and on any device. We must also do so safely, securely and with fewer resources. Each year, the FEC has more data and information to store, manage, share and protect as it meets its strategic objective to engage and inform the public about campaign finance data. Changes in the way political committees raise and spend funds have resulted in a stark increase in the number of transactions disclosed to the FEC each year. This ever-growing volume of campaign finance disclosure data must be received, processed and made available to the public within the agency's tight deadlines for public disclosure, and must be safeguarded to ensure the integrity and accessibility of the information.

Rapidly evolving technologies also challenge us to ensure that security, privacy and data protection is built into the entire technology lifecycle to help safeguard the security of our systems and the integrity and accessibility of our data. Our challenge for the next several years is to adopt new solutions that support the concept of securing data itself and ensuring that it is only shared with authorized users.

As a federal agency, the FEC must implement the guidance in the 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act (21st Century IDEA) and make sure that it meets the requirements to make our services and websites available in formats that meet requirements for accessibility, design, usability, security and customer service. This builds on previous efforts to make improvements and meet expectations of the public in providing access to digital data and tools.

In order to meet these increased demands and challenges, the IT strategic plan includes not only modernization of the technology infrastructure but, just as important, changes in the way the FEC works. Modernization of legacy systems and databases is needed in order to meet the demand for data and also to align with the FEC's strategic objective to foster a culture of high performance. It is essential that OCIO staff have the skillsets needed to administer cloud operations, ensure the implementation of cybersecurity directives and disaster recovery strategies and undertake modernization efforts. Thus, strategic objectives included in this Plan focus on our efforts to modernize the skillset of OCIO staff. Moreover, OCIO must prudently plan for the future of its staff through succession planning and workforce recruitment strategies.

¹ https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/FEC_strategic_plan_FY_2022-2026.pdf

² <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/M-23-22-Delivering-a-Digital-First-Public-Experience.pdf>

MESSAGE FROM THE CIO – ALEC PALMER

I am pleased to present an update to the IT Strategic Plan for the Federal Election Commission which illustrates the agency's strategic vision and direction for technology initiatives while providing guidance to agency decision makers as they make their investment decisions. Each year we make investments in technology in order to support the vital programs and services that serve constituents and the FEC's mission efficiently and effectively. These technology investments will also focus on providing our internal customers better tools that will enable the FEC staff to better serve their stakeholders and customers.

As digital services and IT modernization efforts have the potential to transform every aspect of government, it is important that those investments be strategic and effective in delivering services and information with excellence. The way political committees raise, spend and report their financial activity, and the way citizens expect to access campaign data, has fundamentally changed over the past fifteen years. The FEC has kept pace with these changes.

By making strategic investments in technology, government serves citizens in a manner that provides them the convenience, access, choice and control over technology empowering their interactions with campaign finance data. With the FEC's systems now migrated to the cloud, the goals and objectives focus on modernizing our legacy systems, enhancing our security posture, meeting Digital First requirements and updating OCIO skillsets to ensure we meet the public's expectations for information availability and customer service in the most efficient, effective and cost-effective way.

This Plan continues to focus on securing the critical technology infrastructure as well as continuing up the capacity and skill-level of the technology workforce while planning for future staffing needs. Finally, the Plan also highlights the continuing efforts to ensure the successful continuation of current technology initiatives as the FEC seeks to receive, process and make available an increasing volume of campaign finance information.

Over the past five years alone, the number of financial transactions disclosed to the agency has increased. During the 2020 election cycle, filers reported more than 600 million financial transactions, which were reviewed by FEC staff and disclosed to the public on the FEC's website and through the agency's API. This is more than double the number of transactions reported in the previous election cycle, and a nearly 400% increase compared to 2016, the last presidential election cycle. During the 2022 election cycle, these filers reported more than 590 million financial transactions, also which were reviewed by FEC staff and disclosed to the public on the FEC's website. This is a nearly 120 percent increase compared to 2018, the last nonpresidential election cycle. The Plan outlines activities conducted by OCIO to continue to handle this massive increase in transactions while basically maintaining staffing and budget levels. OCIO has demonstrated that a focus on IT modernization has been successful, but it is essential to continue working on these activities in order to ensure the 21st century FEC delivers results and effectively serves its 21st century constituents.

1 Introduction

The FEC IT Strategic Plan FY2025-2026 enables the agency to set goals and support cross-functional and cross-divisional priorities to achieve our mission. This plan is intended as a guide to help define goals and objectives for the FEC workforce and support delivery of modern, innovative and efficient services and solutions to the public and FEC staff.

OCIO will align to these strategic goals to support our mission. The plan will be executed collaboratively across the agency. The backbone of this plan and the most critical factor to its success will be the 40 talented and committed professionals that comprise the FEC OCIO workforce.

1.1 Strategic Goal of the Office of the Chief Information Officer

To support the FEC's Strategic Objective 1: Engage and Inform the Public about Campaign Finance Data and Strategic Objective 4: Foster a Culture of High Performance through the modernization and enhancement of the agency's IT infrastructure, ensuring transparency, accessibility and security in the campaign finance disclosure process.

1.2 Role of the Office of the Chief Information Officer

The OCIO consists of four units: (1) Enterprise Architecture; (2) Operational Support; (3) Database Management; and (4) Information Security. The OCIO provides secure, stable and robust technology solutions for Commission staff and the public.

OCIO ensures agency employees have a technology infrastructure that allows them to perform their day-to-day responsibilities administering and enforcing campaign finance law. OCIO also develops and supports analytic reporting tools that help staff perform their disclosure and compliance duties.

In addition, OCIO develops and maintains the systems that serve as the public's primary source of information about campaign finance data and law. In this way, OCIO serves a pivotal role in ensuring the FEC protects the integrity of the federal campaign finance process by ensuring that the public has access to reliable data describing how candidates raise and spend funds to support their campaigns.

The OCIO bears the primary responsibility for pursuing the agency's first strategic activity, as identified in the FEC Strategic Plan: to ensure easy public access to both raw data and data summaries on the FEC website and to communicate the availability of disclosure resources to the public. Thus, in addition to supporting agency-wide information technology operations, OCIO places a special emphasis on ensuring that campaign finance data and information is collected, maintained and made available to the public in a manner that ensures the integrity and accessibility of that information.

2 FEC Mission Statement, Strategic Goal and Strategic Objectives

2.1 FEC Mission Statement

The mission of the Federal Election Commission is to protect the integrity of the federal campaign finance process by providing transparency and fairly enforcing and administering federal campaign finance laws.

2.2 FEC Strategic Goal FY 2022 – 2026

To fairly, efficiently and effectively administer and enforce the *Federal Election Campaign Act*, promote compliance and engage and inform the public about campaign finance data and rules, while maintaining a workforce that delivers results.

2.3 FEC Strategic Objectives FY 2022 – 2026

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| Objective 1: Engage and Inform the Public about Campaign Finance Data | Objective 2: Promote Compliance with the FECA and Related Statutes |
| Objective 3: Interpret the FECA and Related Statutes | Objective 4: Foster a Culture of High Performance |

3 FEC Information Technology Strategic Objectives FY 2025 – 2026

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| Objective 1: IT Modernization | Objective 2: Security and Privacy |
| Objective 3: Customer Experience | Objective 4: Develop and Maintain Results- driven Workforce |

3.1 IT Strategic Objective Context

IT Objective 1: IT Modernization

Ensure that the FEC's IT systems are capable of handling the growing volume of campaign finance data, enhancing application performance, security, and accessibility.

IT Objective 2: Security and Privacy

To support information sharing and collaboration, we must build in security, privacy and data protection throughout the entire technology life cycle. We must also adopt new solutions, such as continuous monitoring, identity and authentication and credential management that support the shift from securing devices to securing the data itself and ensuring that data is only shared with authorized users.

**IT Objective 3:
Customer Experience**

The Delivering a Digital-First Public Experience memorandum provides guidance to ensure the Federal Government is meeting the needs of all people, the 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act¹ (21st Century IDEA) directs agencies to maximize the number of Federal services available to the public in a digital format and establishes or reiterates requirements for accessibility, design, usability, security, and overall customer experience of Federal websites and digital services. The implementation guidance for the 21st Century IDEA contained in this memorandum builds on previous efforts to create a digital government by helping executive agencies further harness user-centered design and agile delivery practices to provide integrated digital experiences and interactions across agencies, services, and channels.

**IT Objective 4:
Develop and Maintain
a Results-driven
Workforce**

Foster a high-performance culture by enhancing workforce skills, recruitment, and retention to support IT modernization efforts.

4 Strategies for Achieving Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives described in Section 3.1 represent the FEC's high-level performance commitments for FY 2025-2026. To distill those objectives into actionable next steps, the FEC has further enumerated strategic activities to make significant progress on by FY 2026.

The FEC is committed to the successful completion of each strategic activity. The agency identified a leader for each activity, and heavily involved those leaders in defining and finalizing the strategic activities. Leaders will provide the Commission with updates on staff progress related to strategic activities.

The OCIO strives to successfully execute the strategic activities outlined in the plan. However, the completion of these initiatives depends on securing adequate funding and retaining the skilled staff necessary for their implementation. The OCIO notes that the FEC’s budget has not kept pace with inflation. Without sufficient resources, the agency faces potential delays or setbacks in advancing critical IT modernization efforts and achieving key strategic objectives. Funding the strategic activities in this plan is essential to ensuring that the OCIO—and, by extension, the agency—can fulfill its mission-critical responsibilities and achieve its strategic objectives. Successfully completing these projects will enable the FEC to continue operating efficiently, fairly, and effectively while also helping the agency comply with recent government mandates related to customer service.

Objective 1: IT Modernization

4.1 Strategic Activity 1: Electronic Filing Software (FECFile) Modernization

Activity Description: Continue development of the new electronic filing software and begin transitioning FECFile Desktop electronic filing software users to the new web-based software that includes enhanced user interface, data validation, and security measures. Ensure faster and more secure access to campaign finance data.

4.2 Strategic Activity 2: Data Pipeline Modernization

Activity Description: Conduct a thorough needs assessment and begin planning to upgrade the agency’s data process architecture and infrastructure for processing transaction-level data to handle the increasing volume of reported transactions, ensuring quick and accurate disclosure to the public.

4.3 Strategic Activity 3: Infrastructure Modernization

Activity Description: Modernize IT infrastructure by upgrading legacy hardware (servers, switches, routers) and transitioning to IPv6 for high-speed and reliable service. Leverage Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) to reduce costs, decrease reliance on on-premises data centers, and enhance scalability. Implement a cost-effective disaster recovery strategy by rapidly deploying a DR site for faster recovery time, enhancing cost efficiency, and creating a collaborative approach to security by following the share responsibility model framework.

4.4 Strategic Activity 4: Legacy Systems Modernization

Activity Description: Refactor and modernize legacy systems to adopt cloud-native architectures, improve efficiency, and reduce reliance on physical data centers.

Objective 2: Security and Privacy

4.5 Strategic Activity 1: Build a Strong Cybersecurity Workforce

Activity Description: To ensure the long-term resilience and security of the FEC’s infrastructure, the agency will invest in building a strong cybersecurity workforce. This involves recruiting, training, and retaining talent with specialized cybersecurity expertise, focusing on the development of skills necessary to address evolving cyber threats. The OCIO will partner with federal agencies and industry leaders to adopt best practices in talent acquisition and workforce development, ensuring alignment with federal cybersecurity priorities, including OMB Memorandum M-24-14. By building a skilled workforce, the FEC will be better equipped to safeguard its operations and meet federal cybersecurity standards.

4.6 Strategic Activity 2: Build a Strong Cybersecurity Culture

Activity Description: A robust cybersecurity culture is key to safeguarding the FEC’s network and data. The OCIO will lead efforts to continuously educate and engage employees in cybersecurity best practices, empowering them to be vigilant against threats. By fostering a security-conscious environment, the agency will strengthen its first line of defense: its employees. This initiative includes ongoing awareness programs, role-based training, and the integration of cybersecurity responsibilities into daily operations. The goal is to create a culture where cybersecurity is ingrained in every aspect of the organization’s activities.

4.7 Strategic Activity 3: Implement an OPSEC Program

Activity Description: To protect critical information from unauthorized access and potential exploitation, the FEC will implement an Operations Security (OPSEC) program. This program will focus on identifying and mitigating risks associated with sensitive information, ensuring that adversaries are denied the ability to exploit FEC’s vulnerabilities. The OPSEC program will involve a comprehensive review of agency operations, regular risk assessments, and the establishment of procedures to safeguard operational data. By adopting an OPSEC framework, the FEC can proactively manage risks and strengthen the overall security of its operations.

Objective 3: Customer Experience

4.8 Strategic Activity 1: Ensure FEC.gov and other digital services meet the requirements to be a “Digital First Public Experience”

Activity Description: OMB Memorandum M-23-22, “Delivering a Digital First Public Experience” sets out requirements for websites and digital services in the areas of

accessibility, visual design, content, search engine optimization, user experience and development. The FEC's website team led by OCIO will ensure that the agency is meeting the requirements of this memorandum.

Objective 4: Develop and Maintain a Results-driven Workforce

4.9 Strategic Activity 1: Training and Development

Activity Description: Establish a culture of continuous learning and upskilling to adapt to changing industry trends and technologies.

4.10 Strategic Activity 2: Strategic Recruitment and Retention

Activity Description: Identify gaps in the current workforce and implement targeted recruitment strategies to attract top talent with the skills and values needed to drive results.

4.11 Strategic Activity 3: Succession Planning and Talent Pipeline Development

Activity Description: Create and maintain succession planning process to ensure leadership continuity and a pipeline of future talent.

5 Contributing Programs for Strategic Objectives

The mission of the Federal Election Commission is to protect the integrity of the federal campaign finance process by providing transparency and fairly enforcing and administering federal campaign finance laws.

OCIO develops and maintains the systems that serve as the public's primary source of information about campaign finance data and law. In this way, OCIO serves a pivotal role in ensuring the FEC protects the integrity of the federal campaign finance process by ensuring that the public has access to reliable data describing how candidates raise and spend funds to support their campaigns. In addition, OCIO ensures FEC's technology infrastructure and data are secure. OCIO ensures agency employees have technology and other tools that allow them to perform their day-to-day responsibilities administering and enforcing campaign finance law. OCIO also develops and supports analytic reporting tools that help staff perform their disclosure and compliance duties.

The FEC's programs within OCIO support the strategic objectives outlined in Section 3 of this plan, as described below.

Objective 1: Engage and Inform the Public About Campaign Finance Data

Providing a transparent system that timely and accurately discloses the reported sources and amounts of funds used to finance federal elections is one of the most important responsibilities assigned to the FEC by the FECA. The Commission relies heavily on its information technology systems to make financial reports filed by federal political committees easily and readily accessible to the general public, the media and academics. OCIO is responsible for creating and maintaining a state-of-the-art electronic filing system to collect financial disclosure reports from federal candidates and political committees, as well as a campaign finance disclosure system that presents disclosure data that are easily searched, retrieved and understood.

The FEC is also committed to providing support and aid to the public in finding and understanding the vast store of data available on the FEC website in a timely, efficient and useful manner.

FEC Strategic Objective 4: Foster a Culture of High Performance

OCIO plans for, develops and maintains an integrated system of hardware and software, including its cloud infrastructure. It helps support the Commission's responsibility for providing public disclosure by aiding in the data analysis of all campaign finance reports. It maintains the agency's databases and IT systems in direct support of the FEC's transparency objective, other aspects of the FEC mission and non-mission related data.

Three modernization projects in particular are essential components of the FEC's long-term strategy to meet the increase in both reported transactions and public demand for this data:

- efforts to modernize the FEC's eFiling software and the eFiling System Infrastructure;
- the modernization of the campaign finance data pipeline; and
- the modernization of legacy applications migrated to the cloud during previous fiscal years, including those that support the critical tasks of data review and management workflow and the voting and certification system used by the Commission.

The successful completion of these projects will ensure the FEC can continue to efficiently, fairly and effectively achieve its mission, as well as help the agency comply with recent government mandates concerning customer service.

OCIO secures the Commission's IT infrastructure against the ever-present threats of data misuse, destruction or inappropriate disclosures, while ensuring continuity of operations in the event of a disaster. The Commission continually takes aggressive actions to secure its IT infrastructure, including implementing cybersecurity directives from the Department of Homeland Security as well as holding a mandatory security awareness training program for its employees and contractors. In addition, the FEC must continue to develop strategies and initiatives relating to risk assessments of operations, disaster recovery and continuity of operations in the event of a disaster.

6 External Factors Affecting Strategic Objectives

This Strategic Plan includes an assessment of significant external factors that may influence OCIO's success in achieving its goal and objectives. In order to achieve success in our strategic plan we will need to have resources and funding approved by the Commission. These resources will include not only systems and tools, but also workforce support. In order to meet the IT modernization objectives identified in this Plan, OCIO staff will need the skillsets, training and environment necessary to adopt new processes and practices to support a modern IT infrastructure.

In its examination of external factors, OCIO considered a broad range of possible events, including the possibility for significant or substantial changes to the FECA that could change the nature of the FEC's work; continued and accelerated changes in technology that could require additional skills, training and expertise among OCIO and other FEC staff; and information technology developments that could require the FEC to significantly change the methods it uses to make campaign finance information available to the public.

FEC operations are influenced by a variety of external factors. Some of the most critical of these are:

- Significant and substantive amendments to the FECA and significant judicial opinions construing the FECA, the Commission's regulations or other final actions taken by the Commission.
- Significant changes in the level of competition in federal election campaigns, the volume and intensity of fundraising and technological developments that significantly alter the way campaign funds are raised and spent, as well as increased public demand for the data.
- The number of candidates who run for federal office, the number of filers involved in the election cycle, the amount of activity reported to the Commission and the number of presidential candidates who participate in the presidential public funding program, and their level of financial activity. (Although the number of elections for federal office held in any election cycle is fixed, various factors, such as the number of open-seat races, can affect the number of candidates running for those seats.)
- Technological developments related to communications and data storage and retrieval that require the FEC to significantly change or upgrade its disclosure systems.
- Unfunded mandates and insufficient resources affecting core mission activities.

These and other unanticipated events can influence the amount of money and specific types of activity to be regulated by the FEC each election cycle. OCIO workloads are driven by such factors as the number of reports filed and transactions to be processed and the volume of requests for information, data and assistance.