Department of Information Technology

Digital Solutions Section

Website Hosting & Digital Commons Platform Support

Service Level

Agreement For

“Customer”

Version Control

Author/Change Agent	Version	Reason for Change	Date
Bill Birckhead – Service Level Management Billy Hylton – Director, Digital Services	1.0	New format creation	08/23/2016
Bill Birckhead – Service Level Management	2.0	Revisions and updates - pertaining mainly to revised Incident Priority and Change Management	10/24/2016
Billy Hylton – Director, Digital Services	3.0	Revisions and updates – AWS hosting information and technical architecture details.	02/18/2018
Billy Hylton – Director, Digital Services	4.0	Digital Commons maintenance window update	04/05/2018
Billy Hylton – Director, Digital Services	5.0	Revisions and updates – file management	02/19/2020
Nicole Meister—Director, Digital Services	6.0	Revisions and updates - personnel, maintenance window	09/01/2021
Srini Sunkara—Director, Enterprise Operations	7.0	Revisions and updates	03/03/2022
Srini Sunkara—Director, Enterprise Operations	8.0	Revision to SSL cert	03/14/2022
Elena Talanker – Digital Services Manager	9.0	Revisions about Google tools	08/14/2023
Elena Talanker – Digital Services Manager	10.0	Updated repealed G.S. 147-33.89. with G.S. 143B-1331.	11/15/2023
Chris Brittingham – Technology Policy Analyst	11.0	Added under Customer Responsibilities: • Authoritative Content that is Easy to Understand • User-Centered Design • Digitization of Forms and Services	08/30/2024

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1 Objective

This Service Level Agreement (SLA) describes the IT Service, documents Service Level Targets, and specifies the responsibilities of the both the Department of Information Technology, hereafter referred to as DIT, and the Customer.

The DIT Service Level Agreement includes:

- The core Service Description
- (Optional) Definition(s) of customer-specific Service Levels; such as enhanced levels of support
- (Optional) Specific Customer Requirements: Any mutually agreed and/or binding customer specific requirements and terms. These may be referenced within the core verbiage of this Service Level Agreement, or, referenced to an accompanying, signed MOU document.

This Service Level Agreement (SLA) is entered by and between the North Carolina Department of Information Technology (DIT) - Digital Solutions and the {Agency Name} effective upon the date of signature by DIT to document the understandings, obligations and agreements of the Parties regarding {Agency} “Digital Commons” website services.

1.1 Disclaimer

As it relates, or might relate, to an individual Service or Customer engagement - if there are content and/or scope deviations between this Service Level document and the core, Global Service Level policy maintained by DIT, this Service SLA takes precedence; with the assumption that it is appropriately signed and has an accompanying MOU or other contractual document.

In addition, content or scope specifically contained in an MOU or other contractual document associated with a standard service takes precedence over this document or information contained in the Global Service Level document maintained by DIT, or any detail associated with a Service that is contained in the DIT Service Catalog.

2 Digital Commons Service Description

2.1 About the Digital Commons Platform

The Digital Commons platform runs on a customized, multi-site version of the Drupalbased Content Management System (CMS). Drupal has wide adoption in the local, state, and federal government space. The platform includes the Open Public distribution which has a suite of modules and functionality such as blog posts, web forms, content workflow, content types and taxonomies, and related capabilities.

The platform is hosted on a FedRAMP compliant instance of Amazon Web Services (AWS). Please see attached technical architecture for details.

As a Drupal multi-site architecture, many technical components such as modules, content types, add-ons, and custom features are shared across the platform. This enables a more efficient, cost-effective model for system administration and feature deployment. Digital Solutions operates in a standardized release schedule and deploys bug fixes, new features, services, and platform capabilities based on agency and user feedback. These changes happen in a formal process (Dev > Staging > Production) in coordination with agency website managers.

DIT Digital Solutions provides web and digital development and enterprise web content management (CMS) support for state government agencies, divisions, offices, and units. Digital Commons is the name of our key program and related web content platform. The program strives to create a "21st century digital presence" for the State and its constituencies.

Digital Commons program benefits include:

- Cost savings from aligning to a consistent design framework and enterprises content platform
- Increased efficiency due to ability of non-technical staff to manage digital content without coding or IT- related processes (i.e. FTP file transfer)
- Effective, efficient interactions arising from predictable navigation across websites
- Improved ability to find content through search engines, and end-user oriented layout and design
- Uniform adoption of the state brand
- Responsive, mobile-first websites optimized for multiple devices
- The Digital Commons platform is designed to reduce barriers to content for visitors with disabilities by implementing requirements that allow an inclusive, accessible online experience for users with assistive technology.
- Guidance and training on effective management and governance for State agency websites

3 Vendor Service Levels specific to Digital Commons

3.1 Amazon Web Services

- Amazon EC2 Service Level Agreement
- Amazon S3 Service Level Agreement

4 DIT Roles and Responsibilities, Specific to this Service

4.1 Environment Management

- Development
- User Acceptance Test (UAT)
- Staging
- Production

4.2 Data

- Platform Administration ○ Core Drupal version updates at schedule determined by

  DIT Digital Solutions ○ Module updates at a schedule determined by DIT Digital

  Solutions ○ Management of shared site themes and templates

  - Security patching and site scanning. Note: Security maintenance may happen at any time. DIT will work to provide as much advanced notification as possible to client.
  - Feature and functionality development.

- Website data (content on website pages) will be backed-up daily and can be retrieved in the event of a catastrophic failure. Please note that the Digital Commons platform is not classified to contain sensitive PII, HIPAA, PCI or IRS 1075 data.

4.3 File Management

- All Digital Commons website files (i.e. PDFs, .CSV, PPT files) are stored and managed in the Amazon Web Services system. Digital Commons file storage is intended only for use with website pages and may not be used as an independent and reliable file management service (i.e. DropBox or One Drive) or FTP solution. Consult your appropriate agency IT personnel for file management support. DIT reserves the right to disable internet access to files not linked to website pages.
- DIT may allow or disallow specific file types to mitigate existing or emerging security vulnerabilities.
- Files (PDFs, Word, etc.) are not backed-up but use S3 file versioning. An original copy of each file must be managed within the agency on a separate platform.

4.4 Technical Support

Bugs and website technical issues will be communicated to DIT in the form of tickets (ServiceNow system) per support terms below. The support model undergoes occasional revision.

4.5 Maintenance Windows

4.5.1 The Digital Commons service maintenance windows include:

- 6:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. each Thursday.
- Maintenance includes security patching, feature updates, and related technical updates to the Drupal application and underlying hosting environment. In most instances, maintenance is 10-15 minutes and end-users do not notice a site outage (due to “cached” website content).
- Maintenance is communicated through the DIT Communications Hub (details below in Global SLA information) and the Digital Commons user dashboard. Maintenance typically happens every other Thursday during this window.
- 4:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. each Sunday - as per standard DIT Global Maintenance Window.

4.6 Security

DIT Digital Solutions works closely with the DIT Security Office to operate in a security aware fashion. For example, regular system vulnerability scanning is conducted through the DIT Security Office. Digital Commons service owners and customers must adhere to the practices and guidelines outlined in the Statewide Security Manual.

5 Customer Roles and Responsibilities Specific to the Service

5.1 Authoritative Content that is Easy to Understand

5.1.1 One Answer

- Remove outdated or inaccurate content and create redirects to new or more accurate content.
- Retire duplicate websites and digital services to eliminate redundant content.
- Get user feedback on content by providing and monitoring a feedback option on agency websites.
- Utilize landing pages and avoid creating standalone websites that unnecessarily duplicate information or content.

5.1.2 Plain Language

- Write content in plain language by using language that is clear, concise, well-organized, and follows other best practices appropriate to the subject or field and intended audience.
- Write and test content for the intended audience to make sure that information is easy for the audience to read and understand, aiming for clarity at an eighth-grade reading level.
- Write content in conversational language and avoid using slang, jargon, and acronyms.
- Avoid unnecessary legal and bureaucratic language that may inhibit public comprehension.

5.2 User-Centered Design

- Start with users' wants and needs and conduct generative user research to identify pain points and opportunities for improving existing experiences or to design new solutions.
- Engage users throughout the design and development and assess the entire user experience.
- Test with representative cross-section of users and continually conduct usability testing for websites and digital services.
- Make data-driven design and development decisions, including measuring task completion, analyzing user flows and behavior with web analytics, assessing satisfaction via feedback surveys, optimizing web pages for performance, and researching user burden.

- Ensure language accessibility and seek to align the languages of agency websites and digital services with the preferences and requirements of their constituents.

5.3 Digitization of Forms and Services

- Prioritize digital forms over paper or electronic forms whenever possible.
- When revising forms with both digital and paper versions, design the digital form first and use it as a baseline for the paper form redesign.
- Establish internal review processes to promptly identify non-digital forms and prioritize their digitization, focusing on forms with the highest impact on the public.
- Ensure information collected via a digital form stays digital throughout its lifecycle and avoid unnecessary conversion or transformation into paper or electronic formats unless strictly necessary.

For further understanding of 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3, reference the Statewide Digital Accessibility and Usability Standard.

5.4 Additional Responsibilities

- Agency is the website owner and is responsible for the content of the website, including text, images, taxonomy, menus, multi-media, metadata, and related items.
- Agency is responsible for creating accessible content that follows the WCAG 2.1 (Level AA) compliance standards, as proposed by federal guidelines and Americans with Disabilities Acts Title II, for accessibility. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
    - Image elements have alternative text (alt attribute).
        - Image elements that are decorative only are designated as decorative (null or empty attribute).
        - Complex images such as charts, graphs, and maps have a text alternative.
        - Images containing text have an alt description that includes the image text.
    - Headings - used to introduce content and appropriate level; headings do not skip levels.

- Lists - A collection of related items uses bullets or numbered lists.
- Tables have headers and have captions.
- Videos have captions.
- Audio files have transcripts available.
- IFramed content has a title.

- Agency is responsible for ensuring that any third-party integrations, such as a Twitter feed or embedded YouTube video, are secure and do not introduce security vulnerabilities.
- Agency is responsible for providing DIT Digital Solutions with Admin level access to free Google Data Analytics tools to ensure Google Search, Google Analytics and Google Tag Manager are properly enabled.
- Agency is responsible for site access management, including assigning roles to new users and limiting access when needed (e.g., terminated employee).
- Agency may not introduce any custom code or separate modules, and will rely on DIT for security updates, version upgrades, and customization.

6 Post Implementation requests for changes to the Customer's Service

The formal Change Management process is detailed further within this Service Level document. Requests for changes to the existing service are detailed as follows:

Change requests follow the DIT standard global change procedure for changes that pose risk to the service (i.e. impact other websites running in Drupal) or have interdependencies on other DIT sections, such as DNS changes. These changes will be submitted and will comply with the DIT change management process.

Change requests, such as new features or capabilities that affect the Digital Commons Platform will be considered and weighed by the Digital Solutions team to ensure platform existing platform capabilities could not satisfy customer requests without additional development This might include new ways to present content on website pages such as tabs or accordions. Change requests can be communicated in workgroup meetings or directly to the Digital Solutions group through digital@its.nc.gov. These changes will be submitted through the DIT change advisory board (CAB) and may require seven days' notice or longer for implementation.

Customizations to websites made by our customers are discouraged. Either the platform has functionality built-in that will achieve the needed result, or functionality can be built that will meet not only the single customer need, but also benefit the entire platform.

Agency is responsible for maintaining any code introduced to the platform for the long-term, even as Agency personnel change. To that end, the Website Manager must inform Agency management of these customizations and keep a list of pages that have been altered.

6.1 Other requests include:

- Creation of new sub-sites (Dev, Staging, and Production site instances)
- Addition of new modules, plugins, or add-ons to the Drupal system (i.e., calendars, web forms, social media tools, utilities, interactive functionality, multimedia galleries, and related).

  Changes to Drupal admin functionality on back-end or front-end. For example, a request to make the homepage slider cycle automatically—not just on user input would be considered but not necessarily implemented.
- Agency should request a code review from Digital Solutions before publishing an iframe (embedded map, embedded chart, or embedded webform that is not in Drupal) or any other code.

7 Standard Global Service Levels

Standard, General and Operational areas of support (such as Incident and Change Management) applicable to every DIT service unless specifically detailed in the Service Details, are listed within this document section.

7.1 Service Support

The DIT Service Desk operates 24 x 7 and offers a single point of contact for all customer inquiries related to 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.

7.2 Hours of Operation

DIT 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 DIT Change Management Process. In addition to the Standard Maintenance Windows, site-specific changes may be coordinated with customers at non-standard times.

DIT 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 section.

Note: Digital Commons Services do have non-standard Change and Maintenance windows. Standard maintenance windows are included in this section for reference to other Services.

7.3 Contacting Support and Ticket Escalation

The DIT Service Desk is the single point of contact for initiating all Incidents and Service Requests, including requests for ticket escalation.
Customers may contact the DIT Service Desk at *919-754-6000*

- Toll Free at *1-800-722-3946*, or,
- ServiceNow at https://ncgov.servicenowservices.com/sp_dit

The Business and Relationship Management (BRM) Leader assigned to your agency is available to address any questions regarding DIT services, processes or technology business needs. You may contact your Business and Relationship Management Leader directly or initiate a Service Request with the DIT Service Desk.

8 Incidents and Service Requests

8.1 Ticket Creation

Two types of tickets may be created by contacting the DIT Service Desk.

Incident: An Incident is any disruption of service.

Service Request: 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 DIT 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 DIT Service Desk. If a critical or high Incident or Service Request is initiated by email, 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.

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 DIT Service Desk and that it is being assigned to a work group. Customers are responsible for ensuring their email address is provided to the DIT Service Desk for update and resolution notification purposes.

8.2 Ticket Prioritization

The DIT Service Desk assigns a Priority to every initiated Incident or Service Request. The 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.

8.3 Incident 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. DIT is committed to resolve ninety percent (90%) of Incidents within the time frame specified for each Priority as part of the standard, Global Service Levels.

The following chart shows the target resolution times by Priority after the initial assessment/assignment of an Incident by the Service Desk. Resolution times are measured in clock hours and/or minutes unless otherwise specified.

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

9 Global, Standard Change Management

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

All ECAB members must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Customers will have an agency representative attend and participate in the ECAB
- Customers will notify DIT and other agencies of any agency planned changes to the DIT provided infrastructure

There are three levels of change types utilized to facilitate Customer Change Requests; and necessitate the lead times listed below for effective and efficient implementation:

Change Request Type	Required Lead Time
Extensive/Widespread	30 Calendar days
Significant/Large	14 business days
Moderate/Limited	7 Calendar days

10 Customer Communication

DIT will update customers as tickets are being worked and upon ticket resolution. DIT will also provide communications through the DIT Customer Communications Hub when Incidents or outages occur that may impact the customer. In addition, the Digital Ninjas Teams channel space is used for communication of best practices and tips, training opportunities, maintenance, patching, and more. It is restricted to Website Managers of Digital Commons websites.

If you are a customer of applicable Services updated via the DIT Communications Hub, please visit the site to self-register for communications and notifications relative to the Service in order to view and receive communications and status.

- The DIT Communications Hub registration and access is restricted to government and educational agencies.

The link to the DIT Communications Hubis https://ncconnect.sharepoint.com/sites/it_ext/com_hub

- If you are unable to access the new DIT Communications Hub please contact the DIT Service Desk at 919-754-6000 or its.incidents@its.nc.gov.
- The link to the Digital Ninjas Teams channel is https://teams.microsoft.com/_#/conversations/General?threadId=19:0277d93a4a0f4c04bc6301fda7f3cf48@thread.skype&ctx=channel

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.

11 Security Standards and Policies

DIT services adhere to DIT 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, HIPAA, PCI or IRS 1075. Note: The Digital Commons platform is not classified to contain sensitive PII data, HIPAA, PCI or IRS 1075.

12 Risk Management

DIT provides business continuity services, including assistance with continuity planning strategies, to help agencies comply with G.S. 143B-1331. Other services include the availability of dual sites for application hosting, testing, and disaster recovery. DIT 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.

13 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 DIT 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 DIT handling of their tickets as defined in the DIT Operational Scorecard	Monthly	Ticket Survey feedback forms

14 Confidentiality

As a result of this SLA, each Party (DIT 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.

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 nondisclosure 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.

15 Performance and Limitations on Resources

DIT will provide services under this SLA in accordance with the applicable Service Level Agreement. In the event of a natural disaster, other emergency or any event outside the

reasonable control of DIT that results in abnormal availability or constraint on DIT resources, the Agency shall have no priority or greater right of access to available resources of DIT than any other customer or source. In such event, notwithstanding any other provision of this SLA, DIT may implement emergency procedures to allocate available resources and services as it may determine necessary or practicable in its reasonable judgment, and any failure or delay of performance during such period shall be excused.

16 Signatures of Approval and Agreement Date

WHEREFORE, intending to be bound hereby, this Service Level Agreement is executed by the undersigned authorized representatives of each Party; effective as of the date of execution of all Parties hereto.

Agency Head or Designee:

Name	Title	Signature	Date

DIT

Name	Title	Signature	Date
Elena Talanker	Digital Solutions Services Manager		

17 Appendices/Attachments:

Technical Architecture

Digital Solutions AWS Infrastructure - Core Drupal Resources

