SYSTEM MODERNIZATION
BEST PRACTICES

Rebekah Hibbs
Working Group Member
• Systems Modernization Working Group began April 2015 and completed the best practices in January 2017

• Representatives from all AAMVA Regions and industry partners as technical advisors

• Both of the AAMVA Directors of Member Support provided guidance to working group
Chapters were selected to provide the critical aspects of a system modernization project.

Each chapter provides:
- General requirements
- Best practices
- Summary and recommendations

Not designed to give step by step instructions or all procedures for each step of the project.
The best practices document includes:

- Deciding on who supports the system
- Governance, funding and writing a business case
- Procurement and project/contract management
- Architecture, technology, requirements, testing and long-term support
- Organizational change management
- Communication
- Training
- Resources and recommendations for keeping your project on the right track
• A quick reference tool in the form of a checklist is provided at the end of the document

• The checklist sections mirror the chapters and provide high level best practices

• This can be a good starting place to ensure you are doing all the right things. More details can be obtained by referring back to the chapter.
AAMVA webpage contains:

- Current Best Practices document
- Examples and templates from jurisdictions
- News articles from jurisdictions about system modernization projects

http://www.aamva.org/system-modernization/
To start any legacy modernization effort, a good rule, taken from Stephen Covey, is to begin with the end in mind. Agencies need to define the future state and develop plans around that vision. *During initial project steps, learn all there is to learn from others who have taken the journey and visit those who have both failed and succeeded to determine what contributed to those outcomes.* Integrate plans with business and IT to ensure alignment. *Remember, the more time spent on planning the roadmap, the easier the journey.*
Agencies need to weigh the pros and cons when deciding on their legacy modernization journey, particularly when it comes to MOTS/COTS or custom builds, and then ultimately how the system will be managed over time. All of these decisions should be carefully considered before writing and issuing an RFP.
Communication is fundamental when requesting a large amount of funding for system modernization programs. **Knowing what sources of funding will be necessary for the project before and after implementation will assist with receiving appropriate spending authority.** Furthermore, communicating a specific ROI and providing prior experience in successfully managing large funds within the agency can assist in receiving necessary funding. It is vital that team members and subject matter experts educate legislators thoroughly about the required funding and the long-term effect the lack of funding would have for the program.
Many jurisdictions completing legacy modernization efforts have learned the hard way that contract management can be a single point of failure for a system modernization project. Ensure adequate resources and processes are in place to track contractual requirements against project activities.

Being aware of the signs of a troubled project is a first step. Knowing the signs and taking immediate action will help keep the project on track.
As mentioned in the introduction, *data cleansing and data migration activities are not usually given the recognition required for the amount of complexity, effort, and time needed to be successful*. The project management plan should include data cleansing and migration in the overall timeline, incorporate milestones for such activities, and dedicate the appropriate amount of knowledgeable resources to ensure success. Data governance is essential for these activities during the project lifecycle, and *consideration should also be given to implementation of data stewardship for operational activities related to maintaining data integrity and quality*. 
Change within agencies, programs, and projects is difficult. An OCM plan is a critical part of any system modernization program. It provides an approach to managing the agency’s organizational structure and keeps everyone informed. **Communication, ownership, outcomes, flexibility, and participation are critical principles that govern the OCM plan. Stakeholders and employees at all levels of the organization should be included.**
Testing should be identified as a key milestone in project delivery. *Sufficient time should be allotted to ensure quality testing and reduce the potential for issues at and after go live.* Communicating testing needs and priorities creates a better end product. Ensuring testing strategies and timelines are maintained is a key element in project success and eliminates a huge project risk.
System readiness should be thoroughly covered in the project management plan to ensure that all aspects of implementation are taken into consideration early to allow for changes and adjustments as they may be needed. Planning and communicating needs and timelines will help identify gaps. A clear, well-defined plan should be communicated to all involved entities. Do not underestimate the communication and outreach required during system readiness.
Modernization is no longer a finite project, but an iterative process as new technologies evolve. Ensuring the availability of long-term and ongoing support maintains the longevity of the delivered system. *Funding, support, and maintenance are ongoing efforts that require the agency’s constant attention.*
QUESTIONS?