

Date: July 17, 2026

Agenda Item No. 2(B)(9)

October 20, 2026

To: Honorable Chairman Anthony Rodriguez
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Daniella Levine Cava *Daniella Levine Cava*
Mayor

Subject: Report Related to Evaluation of Decentralization of Information Technology Operations
and Functions – Directive No. 250601

This Report is in response to Resolution R-986-25, sponsored by Commissioner Raquel Regalado, and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners (Board), on October 9, 2025. The Resolution directed the County Mayor or the County Mayor designee to evaluate countywide Information Technology (IT) service delivery models, including the potential decentralization of certain IT functions. My Administration continuously evaluates County operations and makes ongoing improvements to ensure we deliver services as efficiently, effectively, and securely as possible, in alignment with departmental business needs.

Executive Summary

As part of the County's broader WISE305 initiative and ongoing efforts to continuously evaluate and improve County operations and ensure every taxpayer dollar is spent as efficiently as possible, the Administration has been reviewing centralized and decentralized service delivery models across operations. The analysis conducted for this report considers governance approaches intended to enhance operational efficiency, accountability, flexibility, and responsiveness to departmental business and mission requirements. **The Administration found that an enhanced hybrid information technology model – which combines centralized governance and enterprise services with dedicated departmental support and customer focused collaboration – remains the most effective and cost-efficient approach for Miami-Dade County.**

The County's current IT structure, managed by the Communications, Information and Technology Department (CITD), reflects a hybrid model – providing countywide services that deliver stability and security, alongside targeted support that responds to specialized departmental priorities within the context of larger countywide needs. This configuration supports both operational efficiency and effective service delivery by providing our customers with the ability to access dedicated tailored solutions and support while still relying on shared enterprise platforms, without duplicating infrastructure and delivering quality services at a lower cost.

Attempting full decentralization would increase costs by adding redundancies, reducing negotiating power for contracts and licenses, and increasing the need to hire expensive, highly technical and specialized staff in a very competitive job market. The County would risk duplicating platforms, creating inconsistent cyber controls, and fragmenting data in ways that undermine AI and analytics. This would also reduce important economies of scale and introduce technological and security risks. Full decentralization is counter to the principles of our WISE305 initiative aimed at continuing to build a more efficient, streamlined County government.

Moving forward, the County will work towards enhancing the existing hybrid model by scaling successful collaboration practices through cross-functional teams to improve responsiveness and tailored support. In

addition, supported by a unified, countywide governance structure, the department will maintain centralized core functions ensuring consistency, reducing duplication, and promoting countywide efficiencies. As a result of the consolidation of the Communications and Customer Experience Department (CCED) with the Information Technology Department (ITD), customer experience is already embedded as a core operational priority within IT – enabling more seamless, transparent, and responsive services for residents and County departments. Under leadership with extensive private-sector experience, the department will serve as an innovation and communications partner, aligning technology, messaging, and service delivery to drive efficiencies, accelerate outcomes, and continuously improve how the County communicates, engages, and serves its customers. Together, these efforts align operations with recognized government and industry best practices: operate efficiently, modernize effectively, and deliver successfully.

Current Hybrid Operating Structure

The current IT operating model is not centralized; rather, it functions as a hybrid model designed to leverage the strengths of both centralized control and dedicated support offering several important benefits:

Centralized Core Functions

A key strength of the hybrid model is that CITD not only operates core countywide technology services but also provides the centralized governance required to keep them secure, consistent, and aligned with County priorities. CITD maintains essential functions necessary for countywide stability and security, including network transport, the Enterprise Data Center and countywide computing infrastructure, the countywide contact center, countywide IT security, and the centralized IT Service Desk.

Centralized identity and access management, uniform security monitoring, and enterprise technology standards enable countywide zero-trust practices and make it possible to deploy standardized software platforms and hardware configurations that would be cost-prohibitive to replicate in multiple departmental silos. This governance and operating model ensure consistent security protocols, technology standards, and compliance across the organization, significantly reducing risk.

A unified, centrally governed network and data center underpin countywide initiatives such as countywide GIS, analytics, and AI, which rely on secure, high-quality shared data and infrastructure. The County's capital budget further confirms the centralized approach to infrastructure investment, with dedicated programs for Cloud Infrastructure (servers, storage, backup) and Infrastructure Improvements (network edge switches, virtual desktops, and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) deployment).

Dedicated Departmental Support

For departments requiring specialized, high-touch technical assistance, CITD provides an enhanced, dedicated service level. Departments such as WASD, RER, PortMiami, and DTPW receive dedicated CITD support aligned to departmental operations and business priorities. Because these resources remain fully integrated with the broader CITD organization, they can respond to issues and requests more quickly, prioritize work based on real-time operational needs, and escalate to specialized countywide teams when needed. This structure delivers faster resolution, reduced downtime, and more predictable support for mission-critical services.

For example, in addition to the CITD resources that provide countywide support for infrastructure and security services, CITD also currently assigns approximately 85 dedicated resources to WASD, 57 to RER, 14 to PortMiami, and 38 to DTPW. These embedded teams support critical line-of-business

applications, operational reporting, and day-to-day service requests, acting as each department's "first line" IT partner while leveraging the full capabilities, standards, and economies of scale of the centralized CITD organization.

To strengthen this model, CITD is expanding the use of Fusion Teams, or formal collaboration teams, which will serve as cross-functional groups that combine embedded departmental knowledge with the technical depth of countywide experts. These teams enhance responsiveness, ensure solutions align with enterprise standards, and continue to make operations more effective and cost-efficient by reducing duplication, improving compliance, and enabling shared investments in technology and security.

Customization Capabilities

While standardization drives efficiency, CITD still develops custom solutions tailored to specific departmental needs. The Fusion Security Operations Center situational awareness application, for example, was designed from the outset as a countywide service, providing a centralized view of security-related activity across County assets. Because it was built on shared enterprise platforms and services, the Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces (PROS) Department was able to quickly reuse the same solution and configure it for its own mission, gaining near real-time visibility into events and incidents across more than 100 facilities without the need to fund or build a separate system. This "build once, configure many" approach allows CITD to deliver customized capabilities faster, at lower cost, and with far less duplication than a decentralized model. It also reinforces the value of a unified governance structure, which ensures that custom solutions remain secure, scalable, compliant, and aligned with countywide standards, maximizing both operational effectiveness and fiscal stewardship across the organization.

Alignment with WISE305 and supporting industry research

The current IT structure and strategic direction are strongly aligned with the objectives of the WISE305 initiative as well as with leading global research and advisory firms.

WISE305 Mandates

Through the WISE305 strategic initiative the County continues to streamline government and save taxpayer dollars by empowering employees, eliminating inefficiencies, and investing in ongoing technology-driven improvements.

Industry Advisory Imperatives (Operate Efficiently, Modernize Effectively, Deliver Successfully)

A leading industry advisory firm recommends that government organizations focus on three critical imperatives to navigate operational complexity and achieve strategic goals:

- *Operate Efficiently*: Centralization provides essential benefits, such as consolidation of trusted data for centralized analytics, which eliminates information silos and streamlines operations.
- *Modernize Effectively*: Focusing IT investments on county-wide systems (like the migration of Enterprise Asset Management System to the Cloud and the modernization of key legacy systems) supports mission success and scalability.
- *Deliver Successfully*: The hybrid model supports faster implementation of projects by leveraging a superior centralized talent pool and knowledge base, including specialized teams dedicated to key operating departments, along with coordinated contract allocation, overcoming many inhibitors to delivery.

Efficiencies and Economies of Scale

The hybrid structure is essential for realizing efficiencies and economies of scale, which are key tenets of fiscal responsibility under WISE305. Decentralization would threaten these operational benefits and increase costs. Equally important, a strong central governance framework is what allows the County to actually capture these benefits: by setting common standards, consolidating demand, and prioritizing investments at the countywide level, governance drives the standardization, shared platforms, and coordinated purchasing that make economies of scale and sustainable efficiencies possible for all departments, including proprietary operations that depend on reliable, cost-effective technology to support fee-based services, capital programs, and regulatory compliance.

Centralization of countywide services allows the County to leverage economies of scale through the bulk purchasing of licenses and equipment, significantly reducing per-unit costs compared to individual departmental purchasing. This avoids the added expense of duplicative systems and contracts, reduces administrative effort associated with managing multiple vendors and platforms, and captures cost avoidance that would otherwise be required to maintain parallel solutions. The current operating model has strengthened the County's negotiating leverage. For example, recent renegotiations secured the most favorable statewide wireless rates with AT&T, benefiting not only CITD but also other County departments that manage their own wireless devices. As a result, departments such as Water and Sewer, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue, and the Office of the Sheriff now receive the same discounted rates and cost savings achieved through these negotiations. Together, these economies of scale and administrative savings deliver higher-quality technology services at a lower overall cost to taxpayers.

Operational Efficiencies and Mitigating Duplication

Implementing consistent, Countywide technology standards streamlines operations and significantly reduces the cost and effort associated with application maintenance, support, and system integration. Standardization improves interoperability across departments, supports Countywide initiatives, and enables a more unified delivery of government services. The County's hybrid IT operating model strengthens oversight and accountability by reducing duplicative technology leadership and coordinating technical direction, investments, and policy compliance through a single enterprise governance framework. Departments continue to receive mission-specific support through embedded IT resources, while benefiting from shared expertise, standardized practices, and consistent management.

Security and Risk Mitigation

Centralized IT enforces a uniform security policy across all departments (including access controls, encryption, monitoring and patch management), minimizing the fragmented IT landscape that creates security vulnerabilities and increases exposure to cyber threats. A centralized security team can coordinate prevention, detection, and ensure quick incident response across the entire network more quickly and consistently than multiple small security units operating independently,

Collaboration and Cross-Functional Matrixed Teams Countywide

To strengthen service delivery and ensure technology investments support countywide priorities, departments must collaborate closely with CITD through structured, cross-functional engagement models. Improving the customer experience is at the core of CITD's mission and a central focus of this approach is improving how CITD engages with its internal customers—listening proactively, gathering requirements collaboratively, and delivering technology solutions that are responsive to real operational needs.

Collaborative, Cross-Functional Matrixed Teams

Under the County's hybrid model, departments and CITD work together through multidisciplinary teams that pair operational leaders and subject-matter experts with IT and data professionals to address specific business needs. This approach promotes direct communication, shared priorities, and joint ownership of solutions—rather than “throwing requirements over the wall.” As departmental missions evolve and the demand for technology-enabled solutions increases, aligning project scope, timelines, and resources becomes increasingly essential. These teams work together in a structured way to collaboratively define requirements, assess resource needs, and sequence work in order to reduce delays and ensure projects are realistically planned and supported.

These cross-functional groups blend business and technical expertise with shared accountability for results and give departments the proximity, speed, and co-ownership often associated with decentralization. At the same time, they leverage centralized platforms, contracts, governance, security, and data standards that keep costs and risks in check. By tapping into both departmental knowledge and the County's deep enterprise technology bench, teams are able to accelerate solution delivery, improve user experience, and provide a consistent, scalable mechanism to advance AI and data-driven initiatives.

In summary, the existing structure already operates as an effective hybrid model, balancing the stability of centralized services with the tailored support required for specialized departmental missions – avoiding duplication and saving money. Full decentralization would undermine the economies of scale, operational efficiencies, and unified governance that currently protect the County from unnecessary costs and heightened security risks. The most effective path forward is to optimize this hybrid model by expanding collaborative practices to improve responsiveness and alignment with departmental priorities while preserving the centralized core services and governance necessary for countywide consistency, security, and long-term sustainability. The merger of the former CCED with ITD, now operating as CITD, places customer service at the center of how technology is planned, delivered, and evaluated. Under new department leadership that brings a strong commitment to operational excellence and customer-focused service, CITD continues to build stronger relationships with its departmental clients defined by responsiveness, transparency, and measurable results. The Administration will continue to monitor service delivery outcomes and welcomes ongoing dialogue with the Board as these improvements are implemented.

Pursuant to Rule 5.06(j) of the Board's Rules of Procedure, this report will be placed on the next available Board meeting agenda. Should you require any further information, please contact Jorge Olazabal Director, Communications, Information and Technology Department at 305-596-8200.

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