FY 20 SWOCA CIP Narrative

1. Status and Progress*

What is the status and progress of your continuous improvement plan for this past year? Briefly describe your goals, current status, and an overview of your ITC's efforts towards completion of your plan and activities.

(Please see attached CIP grid for Core Services; inclusive of goals, status and general overview of plan & activities)

SWOCA continues to maintain the CIP grid format, for ease of use and tracking. The CIP goals and updates document, referred to above, outlines ONLY the 5 goals related to CORE services, as defined by ODE, Fiscal Services; Student Records Management; State-Mandated Reporting (EMIS); Library Automation; and Internet Access & Networking Services.

Although we complete the CIP for core services, SWOCA also has in place a broader, strategic plan, adopted by the SWOCA Executive Committee, which guides organizational goals and is inclusive of the CIP for core services. See summary of strategic plan below and the summary document attached:

Our Vision	Ohio's Premier Technology Solutions Partner	
Our Mission	We provide trusted IT solutions for Government and Education	
Our Focus	**C**ommunication	We keep our internal and external Stakeholders informed
	Accountability	We keep our strategic plan front and center
	Motivation	We keep our stakeholders actively involved in our planning
	Progress	We report regularly on progress toward our goals

Our Core Values
We are guided in our decision-making by our core values
Integrity   Innovation   Empowerment   Trusted   Dependable   Customer-Focused

Strategic Priorities

Expanded Markets	Identify and serve, as appropriate, new markets
Communications	Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing and stakeholder outreach plan

Organization	Enhance SWOCA's organizational development and effectiveness
Enhance Portfolio	Diversify SWOCA's service portfolio to meet clients' changing needs
Statewide Leadership	Through advocacy, positively promote legislative changes which impact SWOCA

All goals on the CIP grid will show the status and progress of each, as well as our efforts toward completion. (See attachments)

We continue to make steady progress in all 5 of our targeted areas/goals:

1. Expanded Markets: Identify and serve as appropriate new markets.
   a. We now offer services to the following agencies, outside of K12
      • Mental Health Recovery Services -County
      • Townships
      • Municipalities

2. Develop and implement a comprehensive and stakeholder outreach plan.

   Digital marketing initiatives, as follows:
   a. Newsletter redesign and upgrades continue for all departments.

   b. The current website continues to be enhanced and is inclusive of our training calendar, services and fees. New features will continue to be included.

   c. Bi-monthly newsletters continue to be sent, by all software services departments, to end-users. This effort is made to keep our users informed of software changes, trainings, service updates and other related and important information. These updates are copied to our Superintendents and Treasurers, as well as Techs and others, as appropriate. (See attached example).

   Additionally, our Administrative and Tech team send out digital newsletters to all districts. (Example attached)

   d. We have adopted new tools into our trainings (WebEx) allowing for blended sessions and increased end-user participation. This is being done to empower a greater number of users.

   We have also, in FY19, begun to utilize Zoom, as a meeting and training tool. Districts are beginning to show interest in this tool and have asked for demos.

3. Enhance SWOCA's organizational development and effectiveness.

Using our strategic plan as our guide to improve organizational effectiveness, we have made great progress. The plan has served as a roadmap for the direction of SWOCA, and continues to help us to focus on our C.A.M.P initiative:

a. **Communication**
   We keep our internal and external stakeholders informed
   - Consistent communication with all stakeholders
   - Improving existing and developing new methods of communication with stakeholders
     - Progress has been made to create podcasts and "You Tube" type videos; easily accessible for end-users
     - ZOOM conferencing tools have been introduced and utilized for meetings and trainings
   - Regular/consistent and timely updates and newsletters
   - Over 400 training opportunities available in FY19; there will be a similar number of trainings in FY20
   - Regular/consistent user group meetings

b. **Accountability**
   Being accountable to our member districts for keeping our strategic plan front and center
   - Updates are provided to all SWOCA committees and Boards at each meeting
   - Our Executive Committee approves services/fees and monitors quality of both
   - Consistently providing stakeholders with mechanisms for feedback and decision-making
   - Information and feedback is gathered by an annual stakeholder survey, as well as training evaluations

c. **Motivation**
   We will keep our stakeholders actively involved in our planning
   - Participation in SWOCA's Governance
   - Participation on SWOCA Committees
   - Participation in user group meetings
   - Participation in service reviews

d. **Progress**
   We will report regularly on progress toward our goals
   - Survey results are provided to stakeholders

- Strategic plan updates are provided to stakeholders
- Regular communications, newsletters and updates are sent to stakeholders

4. Diversify SWOCA's service portfolio to meet clients' changing needs.

Since inception of the Strategic plan, our service portfolio has expanded to offer the following additional services:

a. Adopted Strategic Solutions for document management software
b. Cyber Security training tools:
   - KnowBe4
   - Go Guardian
   - Social Sentinel
c. Implemented and offered Tech Searches as a service for districts
   - Two districts have utilized this service to date
d. Implemented server monitoring as a service
e. Implemented Technology consulting as a service
f. Adopted PowerSchool ERP for fiscal services
   - 2 districts are LIVE
   - Training for a third district has begun
g. State Software Redesign
   - 3rd district will be implementing in FY20
   - SWOCA staff member and Executive Director participate on the State Software Advisory Committee
h. Offering co-location as a service

5. Through advocacy, positively promote legislative changes which impact SWOCA.

a. Participation in meetings with Department of Administrative Services; promoting better alliance/partnership
b. Seeking better alignment with State initiatives, to better utilize and leverage existing infrastructure
   - 18 ITCs may be equipped to help ODE or other State agencies, without the recreation of needed infrastructure
c. Dialog with local legislators
   - Continue meeting with key local legislators in SWOCA territory
   - Senator Wilson was invited to SWOCA, to meet with Executive and Associate Director

2. **What are the key areas of improvement you plan to address this coming this year? Why were these key areas included? Were any needs identified in your ITC's results from the common customer satisfaction survey or your local survey? Provide an overview of the activities and professional development**

planned to address these key areas and describe what you hope to accomplish this year with those activities.

What are the key areas of improvement you plan to address this coming year?
- Cyber Security training and awareness
- New Fiscal Software implementations and migrations

Why were these key areas included?

On average, respondents to this year's survey chose new fiscal software as the most important technological challenge they anticipate facing in the next 3-5 years, with Cybersecurity being second and the rapid pace of technology change being third. (*Our stakeholders have indicated the need for training and proactive efforts from SWOCA, in order for them to gain knowledge on how to avoid ransomware and cyberattacks, of all sorts.*)

Our users (*26% of the respondents to the survey)* indicated that they wanted options for fiscal software applications. We have implemented E-Finance/PowerSchool and State Redesign.

- 2 districts are LIVE on the E-Finance ERP
  - The third district will be implementing in the Fall of 2019
- 2 districts are LIVE on the redesign

Every SWOCA district has chosen a window of time and are scheduled for their implementation to one of the two choices, Redesign or ERP.

Another 16% of respondents to our survey chose Cybersecurity as a primary focus. Therefore, Cyber Security training, insurance and policy work were chosen as a primary area of focus for SWOCA this year, for the following reasons:
- Breaches are rampant and have made many headlines; we want to help our districts to avoid a breach through thorough cyber training, as well as create policies related to vendors and their permitted use of districts' data, as well as ensuring FERPA and other compliance
- Hackers are improving their skills; we and our districts must improve our knowledge to ensure we impede the success of hackers
- The average cost of a breach, per document, is as much as $200-$300. Through proactive training and policy work, we may help districts avoid such costs
- Insurance will help to mitigate any legal and other costs, should a breach occur. Encouraging our districts to purchase Cyber Insurance will help them to lessen their own liability.

As part of our continued efforts, new Filtering application changes have already been implemented at SWOCA, for the sole purpose of student safety. Our new solution, Securly has provided better protection for students on the web, as well as, clearer information on potential dangers and weaknesses, via a more enhanced reporting mechanism. We will continue to evaluate other new solutions, as they are presented, so that we are in front of the needs of those we serve and protecting our students at all times.

Provide an overview of the activities and professional development planned to address these key areas and describe what you hope to accomplish this year with those activities.

Professional development is ongoing with SWOCA staff. We have implemented the KnowBe4 software for cyber awareness training. The same software has been implemented at the district level, for those desiring participation. The software provides a video training library, as well as management tools to create simulated/controlled mock attacks, to expose training needs.

With Cyber Security being the desired center of our focus, for our districts, one of our training events this year will be a Cyber Security Summit, with members of the FBI and other professionals attending. We will be inviting not only our districts' technical staff, but Superintendents and Treasurers as well.

Our Systems and Networking teams are working hard on expansion of our cybersecurity awareness program. We have had several districts fall victim to ransomware attacks and payroll scams. Education is the best method to empower stakeholders and will be our focus this year at Tech meetings, trainings and in our updates to districts. Internally, our staff will also be regularly instructed on Cyber Security weaknesses, threats, and protections.

In general, this is our Cybersecurity focus in FY20:
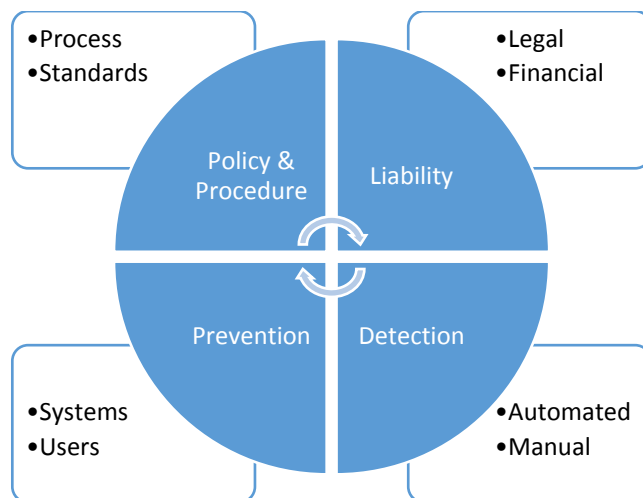
Our overall goal with all professional development at SWOCA is to empower our internal and external stakeholders with needed knowledge.

Some of our efforts to date, related to Cybersecurity, are as follows:

- We are currently utilizing KnowBe4 cyber security training software
- The Executive Committee of SWOCA, in July 2019 adopted the security framework for NIST
    - Our Security Officer has begun work on NIST standard security policies
- NIST standard security policies will guide our Cyber Security efforts, as well as, lessen SWOCA's liability
- Currently implemented
    - Secure account maintenance policies
    - Regularly scheduled vulnerability scanning
    - Refined incident response planning
    - Security auditing software
    - Improved malicious code protection

3. **How do you obtain input from customers, governing board, and staff in identifying the key areas identified in question #2? Did you do anything new or different in developing your new plan?**

How do you obtain input from customers, governing board, and staff in identifying the key areas identified in question #2?

We obtain input from all stakeholders via an annual survey, as well as specific surveys related to projects and applications.

A common practice at SWOCA is, at the end of training sessions, to send evaluations to all attendees. These evaluations help us to improve upon any indicated or perceived weaknesses. In 2019 we hosted in excess of 400 training sessions.

At the end of each training a survey is sent to each attendee, to evaluate the quality of training and relevance of the event. Those surveys are read by department team leads and administrative staff, to monitor for any needed improvements. Action is taken if improvements are indicated.

Through monthly and other meetings during the year with Superintendents and Treasurers, who are serving on the SWOCA Executive, Planning, and Finance Committees, as well as others, we are able to hear directly from district leadership as to the needs, desires, and quality of services provided to our members. Our members are not shy and will offer input, and we will act upon any input received.

Did you do anything new or different in developing your new plan?

We did not change our process in developing our new plan. We continue to utilize proven processes and methods, which includes feedback from all internal stakeholders/participants.

Our Stakeholder feedback on this year's survey, with 223 usable responses, clearly indicates our methods and practices are what our Stakeholders desire:

MCOECN Statewide ITC Survey Results

- The survey was designed to capture responses regarding <u>overall value</u> and the <u>likelihood to recommend</u> SWOCA service
- Key finding: **Loyalty among SWOCA respondents is higher than the LRC average and the average Ohio ITC**
- Key contributors to higher customer loyalty:
    - Customer Service
    - Software Support
    - Reputation

A Few Stakeholder Survey Comments:

"If you could change one thing about SWOCA...."

- "Not a thing. Great people, great service to our district".
- "Nothing. The EMIS and Fiscal Staff have made positive changes in the past year by adding webinars as a way to communicate their training modules."

- "Its location. I love meeting up with SWOCA staff, but the drive is long. (I know we can't change that, but it was worth a shot.)"
- "Not a thing! We trust your vision towards our future".

4. **Highlight examples of new or recent collaboration with other entities, or new products or services where collaboration could be valuable. Do you anticipate these efforts will directly contribute to your ITC's service improvement? If so, explain.**

   Examples of current collaborative efforts between SWOCA and other entities:

   - Collaboration efforts include ongoing partnerships with neighboring ITCs and includes the following joint efforts:
     - Collaboration and shared legal expenses for policy work
     - Standardized pricing of new services
     - Joint implementations of new fiscal software to build expertise and knowledge, as well as expanded support and training for districts
       - Currently partnering with WOCO

   - AESOP Substitute Collaborative; two ESCs and SWOCA formed a consortia to provide centralized payroll services for substitute teachers in each county, using a single instance of the AESOP software. This model creates a considerable cost savings, as well as time efficiencies.

   - Public fiber build; partnered with two municipalities and two member school districts. This will benefit all entities by creating efficiencies and a long-term return on investment, when excess capacity is leased out to additional entities.

   - Currently partnering with two neighboring ITCs for INFOhio support for member districts. This has been a productive partnership, allowing service continuity when staff are on a vacation or sick day; provides expanded training opportunities for district staff.

   - Partnering with two ITCs for software training on new application (HealthMaster)

   - Partnering with an ESC to co-write a grant for electronic resources, for curriculum purposes

Do you anticipate these efforts will directly contribute to your ITC's service improvement? If so, explain.

Any collaboration with another entity, to share costs, is core to SWOCA's values and will improve services and costs for the stakeholders we serve. Our philosophy remains, when it makes sense, provides a better service for entities served and dollars may be saved, we will consider sharing services for the benefit of our owners.