

New Delaware CIO Talks Service Delivery and Collaboration

Colin Wood | October 9, 2014



After the announcement of Delaware Chief Information Officer James Sills' [departure](#) in August, the state has a new technology leader: Gov. Jack Markell's nomination of James Collins as the new Delaware CIO was confirmed by the state Senate on Oct. 8.

"Today's unanimous vote by the Senate affirms the skills and talents James Collins possesses to lead the Department of Technology and Information (DTI) as its Chief Information Officer," Markell stated in a [press release](#). "He is not only qualified to serve in this position from his years and depth of experience in the fields of IT and data and information systems security, but also because of his commitment to ensure that Delawareans continue to receive the highest standard of service throughout the state."

Collins served as director of Delaware's Division of Professional Regulation (DPR) in the Department of State for 10 years, and simultaneously served as deputy secretary of state from 2009 to 2013. Projects under Collins' leadership include an electronic medical records system at the Delaware Veterans Home that enhanced patient care and increased revenue by 22 percent, a new Web portal for the Public Service Commission, and the Veterans Services Directory, an online searchable database of organizations that provide services veterans, military and their families.

Before joining the Department of State, Collins implemented large-scale computer technology projects as a senior consultant with Peregrine Systems, an enterprise software company; and worked at MAXIMUS Inc., a global operator of government health and human services programs.

Collins told *Government Technology* that he's ready to start in his new role and take inventory of the organization so he knows where to focus his efforts. "From everything I've gathered to this point, I think Secretary Sills and his leaders, heads of the organization, are definitely on the right path," Collins said. "I'm actually very excited, and the governor and the Senate made it very clear what a critical role this is for state government and the citizens we serve."

When it comes to approach, Collins described himself as collaborative and service-oriented. The technology agency enables the rest of Delaware state government to do their jobs, he said, so it must be a strong business partner to those other agencies.

"While we have a lot of experts on technology in our agency, they're [also] the experts in their business," Collins said. "So we can collaborate together to figure out what a solution looks like, what will be valuable to their customers and what will help them provide more services without a commensurate amount of resources. So if we can give them tools to be able to accomplish that, then I want to work closely with them to figure out what that looks like."

Receiving services from government should be as easy as buying an electric razor from a store online, Collins said. Buying a product online from a website like Amazon provides users with a product description and images, user reviews, sometimes video reviews of customers demonstrating the product, and a transparent purchase and delivery process where the customer is notified of his or her purchase's status along the way. Government should take a similar approach, Collins said.

“I have a background of continuous process improvement. I try to look at things from what makes sense. If I was a customer, what would be valuable to me? What would make this a better experience? And I try to make sure that our solutions feel like that to customers,” Collins said. “That’s what I mean when I say I’m always paying attention to the process. And when I go to do business with the state, I expect that same level of thoughtfulness in anticipating my needs and making things intuitive where I can accomplish my business in a busy life.”

Collins' official start date was Oct. 9.

<http://www.govtech.com/state/New-Delaware-CIO-Talks-Service-Delivery-and-Collaboration.html>