

Offered by Councilor Brian Worrell and Gabriela Coletta Zapatapa



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

Ordinance Codifying the Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT)

WHEREAS: The City of Boston increasingly relies upon data infrastructure and technology to establish programming, deliver services, and ensure equitable access to community resources; *and*

WHEREAS: The use of data in policymaking, program-making, and decision making will be increasingly vital as we work to build healthy, safe communities and effective, responsive institutions; *and*

WHEREAS: The recent citywide technology assessment highlighted significant fragmentation in technology use across departments, underscoring the need for DoIT to take the lead in coordinating cybersecurity protocols, digital infrastructure upgrades, and data governance policies to ensure system reliability, security, and equitable service delivery for all Boston residents; *and*

WHEREAS: Current practices in the City of Boston, combined with a lack of authorizing language in the City Code, result in jurisdictional ambiguity and intensify siloization of policies and best practices, limiting the City's ability to adopt a unified, strategic approach to technology management; *and*

WHEREAS: Providing the Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT) with clear powers and authority will help streamline city services, ensure interagency compatibility, reduce costs, and improve data access, quality, and security; *and*

WHEREAS: DoIT plays a crucial role in facilitating interdepartmental collaboration through the establishment of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between city departments, quasi-independent agencies, and external partners to enhance data sharing, streamline procurement processes, and standardize technology governance across Boston; *and*

WHEREAS: Sibling cities including Pittsburgh, San Francisco, and Austin, Texas, have empowered their IT departments by giving them authority over software and hardware procurement, data management, and technology strategy, demonstrating the benefits of a centralized and well-governed technology framework; *and*

WHEREAS: Formalizing DoIT's authority will allow the department to strategically invest in modernizing digital service delivery, ensure accessible and secure technology for city staff and residents, and expand digital equity initiatives that bridge the gap for

underserved communities, particularly in broadband access, online public services, and workforce development in the technology sector; *and*

WHEREAS: The Boston City Council has made it a priority to ensure that City agencies are responsive, collaborative, and equipped to provide modern, efficient services;
NOW THEREFORE

Be it ordained by the City Council of Boston as follows:

That the City of Boston Code Section 5 shall be amended by adding the following new sections and subsections after Section 5-10.2

Section One.

Section 5-11 Department of Innovation and Technology

Section 5-11.1.1 Appointment of Department Head:

There shall be in the City a Department, known as the Department of Innovation and Technology, which shall be under the charge of a Department Head, known as the Chief Information Officer, who shall be appointed by the Mayor for a term expiring at the close of the municipal year after the next biennial municipal election at which a Mayor is elected.

Section 5-11.1.2 Duties of Department Head:

It shall be the duty of the Department of Innovation and Technology, and more especially of the Department Head, to set and execute a technology strategy for the City of Boston and all of its governmental agents and agencies. Unless otherwise provided by law, it shall be the responsibility of the Department Head to, at a minimum:

1. Develop and Execute a Unified Technology Strategy

- Establish a high-quality service development, delivery, and maturity framework that ensures City departments operate efficiently, securely, and in alignment with evolving technological needs.
- Facilitate interdepartmental collaboration and transparency by coordinating citywide technology work, minimizing redundancy, and fostering cross-agency compatibility

2. Standardize Data Governance and Interdepartmental Agreements

- Establish and maintain Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between City departments and quasi-independent agencies to streamline data-sharing protocols, ensure secure access to critical information, and support evidence-based policymaking.

- Lead the centralization and oversight of citywide data assets, ensuring interoperability, security, and adherence to privacy laws while aligning with national data standards and best practices.

3. Oversee Technology Procurements, Infrastructure, and Security

- Set comprehensive standards for the procurement, development, use, maintenance, and decommissioning of technology assets, including software, hardware, and digital infrastructure.
- Implement fiscal accountability measures for technology investments by advising the Finance Department on responsible budgeting, cost-efficient procurement, staffing models, and funding prioritization for technology work—including ensuring that departmental technical staffing complements, rather than duplicates, centrally provided services from DoIT.
- Establish and enforce cybersecurity, data storage, and access protocols to ensure the integrity, protection, and responsible use of resident and City data.

4. Enhance Workforce Digital Literacy and Service Accessibility

- Develop, maintain and disseminate citywide digital training programs to ensure all City employees can effectively utilize technology resources, reducing operational inefficiencies.
- Expand Boston’s digital equity initiatives, bridging the gap in digital services for historically underserved communities.
- Unify and update the City’s web presence, ensuring accessibility, transparency, and seamless service delivery for residents.

The Chief Information Officer shall exclusively have the powers and perform the duties of a department head with respect to the appointment, suspension, discharge, compensation, and indemnification of subordinates for the Department of Innovation and Technology.

Section 5-11.2 Severability

If any provision of this shall be held to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, then such provision shall be considered separately and apart from the remaining provisions, which shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 5-11.3 Implementation

The provisions of this ordinance shall be effective upon passage.

Filed in City Council: May 9, 2025