Pennsylvania State Geospatial Coordinating Board

GeoBoard Recommendation   *Establish and fund the position of PA Geospatial Information Officer within the Commonwealth*

Number   **2018Q1 - 1**

Sector(s)   Public Safety   General Government   Environmental   Economic Development

Cost

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Background   The State Geospatial Coordinating Board (GeoBoard) created by Act 178 of 2014 operates primarily with volunteer labor. Modest administrative assistance is currently provided by OA. Leadership roles for strategy and management, as well as most appointee positions, are filled by people with executive or managerial roles in demanding jobs; knowledge they have in those roles is essential to informed decision-making.

Over the first 18 months of operation the GeoBoard has found that coordinated GIS requires more time than all the members can dedicate. The draft strategic plan of the GeoBoard recognizes the need for committed GIS leadership. Many other states have addressed GIS leadership by creating the position of GIS Coordinator or Geographic Information Officer (GIO). This individual typically facilitates collaboration and cooperation across jurisdictions, develops awareness and enhances communication in the state. Perhaps best described as an "ombudsman", the fundamental roles of this position, as identified in the GeoBoard Strategic Plan, will include but are not limited to:

- Take opportunities initially identified with one or a few entities and present solutions that focus on coordination, collaboration, and cooperation among the many
- Facilitate better communication across (and within) Pennsylvania's organizations
- Promote general awareness and education of GIS throughout the Commonwealth
- Identify funding opportunities that promote collective benefits to stakeholders
- Understand state-wide geospatial technology needs and projects from the federal to the local level as well as private, non-profit, and academic interests
- Seek, organize, and distribute information on federal grant opportunities, private funding support, collective funding from counties, cities, and regional organizations
- Possess awareness of the current state of GIS and develop a network of GIS professionals to facilitate active communication
- Educate the GIS user community regarding the services delivery model for data, functionality and software

The GIO role needs to be defined based on the need for liaison and data access from local governments as well as the interface to federal and regional agencies for grants and program access. The lack of such a role makes duplication of effort and likelihood of waste more likely.