

OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE AND DATA FORMATS POLICY

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to state agencies as they consider Open Source Software and the use of Open Data Formats, in accordance with RSA 21-R:11 – 13, when making decisions about procurement of software, IT solutions/services, when considering new or replacement applications.

Scope: This policy is applicable to all state agencies.

Policy: **OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE**
Open Source Software often has a lower initial cost as compared with proprietary software solutions, primarily because there is usually no direct charge for licenses. However, there may be additional costs related to the selection of an Open Source Software solution.

- Agencies decisions on whether to utilize Open Source Software shall actively and fairly consider *all* types of available software (including but not limited to Open Source Software and proprietary software) and be made within the context of total cost of ownership and on a value-for-money basis as defined by RSA 21-R:11.
- The selection of any software solution, whether open source or proprietary, shall be based on whether the proposed solution meets the business objectives of the agency.
- Agencies shall provide a brief analysis of the purchasing decision, including cost factors, as part of the procurement/contracting process.
- It is recognized there may be areas where Open Source Software is not yet available for consideration

OPEN STANDARDS / OPEN DATA FORMATS

Open systems and specifications are often less costly to acquire, develop, and maintain and do not result in dependence upon a specific product or vendor. Component-based software development based on Open Standards allows for a more cost-effective "build once, use many times" approach. The use of Open Data Formats facilitate the interoperability of State systems, avoid vendor "lock-in," and support transparency in government.

- All IT investments shall comply with Open Standards and Open Data Formats unless specific project requirements preclude use of an Open Data Format or if the Open Standards are not appropriate.
- Existing IT systems shall be reviewed for Open Data Format compatibility where appropriate.
- Open Standards and Open Data Format solutions shall be reviewed and considered for selection when existing systems are to be retired or replaced, where appropriate.