

Project Closeout Report

Submitted to Project Oversight on 07/01/2025

GENERAL INFORMATION

Project Name: NDFOODS 5.0

Agency Name: North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI)

Project Sponsor: Linda Schloer/Lynelle Johnson

Project Manager: Brenda Bulawa

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As a result of the non-competitive Technology Innovation Grant (nTIG) from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) has determined that there is a need to transition their legacy system to a different vended system. This project will replace the system used to manage Child Nutrition and Food Distribution Program business and administrative operations with a commercial-off-the shelf (COTS) product.

SCHEDULE AND COST METRICS

	Project Start Date	Baseline End Date	Baseline Budget	Funding Source	Actual Finish Date	Schedule Variance	Actual Cost	Cost Variance
Original Baseline	12/15/21	07/27/26	\$3,099,806	Federal: USDA nTIG Grant	08/23/24	(41%)	\$550,756.15	(17%)
Final Baseline		07/27/26	\$3,099,806	Federal: USDA nTIG Grant	08/23/24	(41%)	\$550,756.15	(17%)

Notes:

On 08/23/24 the project contract with LINQ was terminated and the project was cancelled. Three deliverables were completed, a final negotiated payment of \$76,698 was made for partial work completed on other deliverables.

MAJOR SCOPE CHANGES

Contract terminated and project cancelled

OBJECTIVES

Business Objective	Measurement Description	Met/ Not Met	Measurement Outcome
Internal staff will be able to create ad-hoc reports.	Internal staff will be able to run 100% of all ad-hoc reporting needs at time of request for internal and external stakeholders at go-live.	Not Met	Contract terminated and project cancelled

Business Objective	Measurement Description	Met/ Not Met	Measurement Outcome
USDA Management Evaluations (ME) and Financial Management Reviews (FMR) will result in no audit findings associated with system processes.	Internal staff will compare number of system-related audit findings in the current MEs and FMRs conducted prior to go-live to results of MEs and FMRs 1 year after the new system is implemented. Based on the compare there will be no reported findings associated with system processes.	Not Met	Contract terminated and project cancelled
Fiscal staff will reduce the time needed to complete monthly, quarterly and closeout reports by 25%.	The Child Nutrition Grant Manager will conduct a time and effort survey 2 months prior to go-live on the current system fiscal reports. Another time and effort survey will be conducted 6 months after go-live. These reports will be compared and there will be a 25% decrease in the amount of time fiscal staff need to complete these reports.	Not Met	Contract terminated and project cancelled
Reduce the number of spreadsheets used by internal staff by 50% to track data outside of the system.	Reduce the number of spreadsheets used by internal staff by 50% by comparing the number of spreadsheets (or other tools) used to track information outside of the system prior to implementation to the number needed after implementation.	Not Met	Contract terminated and project cancelled
Decrease the current amount of time needed for External Program Sponsors (i.e., Bismarck Public Schools, Great Plains Food Bank, Tribal Organizations) by 25% to complete program applications and renewals.	Internal staff will survey External Program Sponsors with 5 or more sites 2 months before and 6 months after go-live on the amount of time needed to complete program applications and renewals. There will be a 25% decrease in the amount of time it takes to complete program applications and renewals 6 months after go-live.	Not Met	Contract terminated and project cancelled
Increase program accountability and oversight of External Program Sponsors by assessing the risks of applicants before they receive Federal awards.	100% program applications and renewals will include a risk assessment and approval process as required by Federal regulations conducted by Internal Staff at go-live.	Not Met	Contract terminated and project cancelled

KEY LESSONS LEARNED AND SUCCESS STORIES

A lessons learned effort is performed after the project is completed. This process uses surveys and meetings to determine what happened in the project and identifies actions for improvement going forward. Typical findings include, “What did we do well?” and “What didn’t go well and how can we fix it the next time?”

Key Lessons Learned and Success Stories
Well documented requirements will prove to be beneficial if a vendor can or cannot meet the state requirements. Projects should spend the time creating detailed requirements, so their needs are clear, even if it extends the schedule.
The contract between the state and a vendor must provide a detailed escalation process and viable next steps if the vendor could not meet their contractual obligation. This information also needs to be included in the Project Plan. This will ensure no unnecessary grant money would be spent for a product that did not meet the state’s needs.
Do not allow ambiguity during Request for Proposal (RFP) review when a vendor says that their system cannot meet a requirement but that they will work with you to get it done. Do not leave it open ended as it could allow vendor to come back and ask for additional money. Validate with vendor that this work will be done during the project.
The state should ask either in an RFP or at the demo to present a sample roadmap for implementation based on requirements.
The state should ask vendor(s) during demo(s) to walk through their entire analysis process, including documentation, based on a few published requirements.
Ensure that the vendor sales team and their implementation team understand all the requirements. Vendor interpretation may be different than the state’s.
Make sure there is enough time/turnaround between analysis meetings for the vendor and state to review documentation and investigation.
Validate vendor resource availability during RFP or demo including number of projects they are working on.
Validate with vendor during RFP or demo their process of getting answers to questions in a timely manner. Check to identify if they are shared resources or siloed for the state project.
Contact as many states as possible that are using a potentially viable COTS product to have open conversation about the vendor. (i.e. USDA meetings, State Program meetings)