

State Chief Data Officer Archetypes:

The Evolving Roles and Capabilities of CDO Offices

Insight into how CDO offices take shape and evolve across diverse contexts can help data leaders advocate for greater funding, authority, and expansion.



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Executive Summary

Full Report:
beeckcenter.org/hubreport



The State CDO Archetypes report is an advocacy tool for CDOs looking to expand understanding of the role and the conditions that contribute to its success. It addresses why offices with similar aspirations function so differently in practice, and serves as a tool for data leaders seeking to increase funding and authority through strategic conversations with decision-makers and data management stakeholders.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- There is no “optimal” model. An office’s archetype reflects tradeoffs among competing institutional priorities. It is dynamic, not linear, and offices blend characteristics as goals and maturity evolve.
- Funding constraints are persistent across all maturity levels. Inadequate funding is a consistently cited challenge, indicating that resource pressures are structural.
- Reporting structure shapes strategic orientation. CDOs remain predominantly aligned with IT leadership, which enables execution of technical initiatives but can limit influence over data strategy, governance, and policy.
- Some challenges and priorities evolve alongside data maturity, while others—particularly data quality and cross-agency data sharing—persist.
- Building strategic relationships and trust is essential. Strong partnerships with top administration officials and IT leadership are foundational for implementing enterprise-level data strategies.

Six Archetypes of State CDO Offices

The report analyzes the six archetypes across four distinct components: mandate, capacity, influence, and maturity. These components shape how a CDO office operates in practice and what it can accomplish. CDO offices may not fit neatly into one archetype—the most successful ones tend to align with multiple archetypes.



Lone Builder

Early-stage office with limited authority and resources



IT-Aligned Executor

Technical CDO office embedded within IT structures



Policy Strategist

Executive-aligned, prioritizes policy over technical delivery



Internal Consultant

Well-resourced shared services hub for agency data support



Network Weaver

Relationship-driven, advances goals through coalitions



Governance Steward

Standards-focused, establishes enterprise data policies

MATURITY					
Early, with foundational capabilities still forming	Mid to high operational maturity, with uneven governance maturity	High governance maturity and variable technical maturity	High in analytics, sharing, and operational service delivery	Above average in data sharing and variable in governance	High in governance frameworks and variable in analytics or service provision
MANDATE					
Narrow to emerging, often informal or administratively established	Operational and IT aligned, with a primary focus on infrastructure	Broad and policy-centric, often statutory or established through executive action	Formal support function with multi-year stability	Moderate, with influence often exceeding formal authority	Strong governance and statewide authority
CAPACITY					
Low, with a lean team and limited budget	Moderate to high, with staffing concentrated in technical roles	Small to moderate, with high-skill generalist staff	High, with large teams and diversified roles	Moderate, with roles emphasizing partnerships and coordination	Moderate to high, with staffing focused on governance and compliance roles
ECOSYSTEM AND INFLUENCE					
Limited alliances, mostly ad hoc collaborations	Strong internal IT ties and limited policy or executive visibility	Strong alliances with the governor's office, budget office, and cabinet leaders	Strong internal agency demand and broad partnership reach	Very high, with extensive cross-sector relationships	Strong ties to legal, privacy, compliance, and security offices

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