Yellowstone County Information Technology

Proposal: Replace the Assistant IT Director with a Senior Systems Analyst

Larry Ziler, IT Director · November 17, 2026

Recommendation

Replace the vacant Assistant IT Director position with a new Senior Systems Analyst position. Because the position is vacant, the change affects no current employee, and it uses an existing budgeted position, so it adds no new headcount. It fills a real gap: no one on the IT team is dedicated to managing the County's application systems, including the public safety systems law enforcement and detention staff rely on. It also gives the County two senior positions, Senior Systems Analyst and Web Development Administrator, that can grow into future IT Director candidates and mentor the rest of the team.

Current vs. Proposed

	Assistant IT Director (current)	Senior Systems Analyst (proposed)
Primary focus	General assistance to the IT Director; "assigned area of expertise" left undefined	Public safety and enterprise application systems: LERMS/New World, CAD, Motorola in-car, GIS
Day-to-day work	Oversees operations mainly when the Director is absent	Hands-on systems management, projects, vendor coordination, CJIS compliance
Deputy duties	Yes	Yes — acts for the IT Director when absent
Mentoring	Assists with staff development	Technical lead and mentor to IT staff
Succession pipeline	One presumed successor, implied by the title	Two peer senior positions: Senior Systems Analyst and Web Development Administrator

1. Fill IT Coverage Gap

No one on the IT team is dedicated to managing the County's application systems today. The Development team, led by the Web Development Administrator, owns websites, in-house applications, and databases. Support and Infrastructure own end users, networks, and servers. The vendor systems that run County operations fall between those teams.

The Assistant IT Director class specification does not close that gap. It describes general duties such as assisting with budget, policy, and staff, and refers to an "assigned area of expertise" without naming one. A candidate hired under it could be strong in any area, or in none the County most needs.

The Senior Systems Analyst description names the work directly:

- **Public safety systems:** LERMS/New World records and CAD, Motorola in-car and mobile systems, and GIS used for dispatch and field operations.
- **Enterprise applications:** Visions, Taxwise, eProsecutor, NICE: lead technical resource for the vendor systems departments use, including upgrades, interfaces, and troubleshooting.
- **Security and compliance:** CJIS compliance, recovery planning, and coordination with Infrastructure.
- **Projects and vendors:** evaluation, implementation, and vendor management for new systems.

These systems run 24/7 and carry legal and public safety risks. The named owner reduces downtime, keeps upgrades from breaking integrations, and gives departments one accountable contact.

2. Extended Pool of IT Director candidates

An Assistant Director title signals a single presumed successor. If that person leaves, is not ready, or is not the right fit, the County has no internal alternative and must recruit externally for a department head.

With two peer senior positions, the County develops two strong internal candidates, each with a different and complementary background:

- **Web Development Administrator:** leads a team, manages development projects, and owns in-house applications, websites, and web security.
- **Senior Systems Analyst:** owns public safety and enterprise systems, manages vendors and implementations, and serves as deputy when the IT Director is absent.

Both roles already carry IT Director-level responsibilities: project leadership, coordination of others' work, stakeholder relationships, and security. When the Director position opens, the County can choose between two proven internal candidates instead of relying on one. The IT Director can also assign acting duties to the Web Development Administrator from time to time, so both candidates gain experience running the department.

3. Deeper Leadership

Two senior positions mean two mentors for the rest of IT instead of one. Each mentors staff in a different area, so more of the team has a clear path upward:

- **Development path:** Development Specialist and Database Engineer staff grow under the Web Development Administrator.
- **Systems path:** Support and Infrastructure staff who work with applications, public safety systems, and vendors grow under the Senior Systems Analyst.

This spreads knowledge of critical systems across more than one person, which lowers the risk when someone leaves. It also gives the County a pipeline below the senior level: today's specialists become tomorrow's senior staff, and eventually IT Director candidates themselves. A clear path also helps the County keep good staff in a competitive IT job market.

Cost and Next Steps

This is a repurpose of an existing, currently vacant position, not a new one, so total IT headcount does not change. The vacancy makes this the right time to act: the County can recruit directly for the Senior Systems Analyst instead of filling a role with an undefined focus. It is anticipated the Senior System Analyst role would be of equal pay classification as the Assistant IT Director role, which exists in the budget, and therefore should not create any financial increase on part of the County payroll.

1. HAY & HR reviews the attached Senior Systems Analyst job description and assigns class code, grade, FLSA, and EEO category.
2. IT and HR compare the new grade with the Assistant IT Director grade and confirm the budget impact.
3. The Board of County Commissioners approves retiring Assistant IT Director position and adding the Senior Systems Analyst.
4. IT posts and fills the position.