

16E.07 NORTH STAR.

Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** (a) The definitions in this subdivision apply to this section.

(b) "Core services" means accessible information system applications required to provide secure information services and online applications and content to the public from government units. Online applications may include, but are not limited to:

- (1) standardized public directory services and standardized content services;
- (2) online search systems;
- (3) general technical services to support government unit online services;
- (4) electronic conferencing and communication services;
- (5) secure electronic transaction services;
- (6) digital audio, video, and multimedia services; and
- (7) government intranet content and service development.

(c) "Government unit" means a state department, agency, commission, council, board, task force, or committee; a constitutional office; a court entity; the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities; a county, statutory or home rule charter city, or town; a school district; a special district; or any other board, commission, district, or authority created under law, local ordinance, or charter provision.

Subd. 2. **Established.** The office shall establish "North Star" as the state's comprehensive government online information service. North Star is the state's governmental framework for coordinating and collaborating in providing online government information and services. Government agencies that provide electronic access to government information are requested to make available to North Star their most frequently requested public data.

Subd. 3. **Access to data.** The legislature determines that the greatest possible access to certain government information and data is essential to allow citizens to participate fully in a democratic system of government. Certain information and data, including, but not limited to the following, must be provided free of charge or for a nominal cost associated with reproducing the information or data:

- (1) directories of government services and institutions, including an electronic version of the guidebook to state agency services published by the commissioner of administration;
- (2) legislative and rulemaking information, including an electronic version of the State Register, public information newsletters, bill text and summaries, bill status information, rule status information, meeting schedules, and the text of statutes and rules;
- (3) supreme court and court of appeals opinions and general judicial information;
- (4) opinions of the attorney general;
- (5) Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board and election information;
- (6) public budget information;
- (7) local government documents, such as codes, ordinances, minutes, meeting schedules, and other notices in the public interest;

(8) official documents, releases, speeches, and other public information issued by government agencies; and

(9) the text of other government documents and publications that government agencies determine are important to public understanding of government activities.

Subd. 4. **Staff.** The chief information officer shall appoint the manager of the North Star online information service and hire staff to carry out the responsibilities of the service.

Subd. 5. **Participation; consultation; guidelines.** The North Star staff shall consult with governmental and nongovernmental organizations to establish rules for participation in the North Star service. Government units planning, developing, or providing publicly accessible online services shall provide access through and collaborate with North Star and formally register with the office. The University of Minnesota is requested to establish online connections and collaborate with North Star. Units of the legislature shall make their services available through North Star. Government units may be required to submit standardized directory and general content for core services but are not required to purchase core services from North Star. North Star shall promote broad public access to the sources of online information or services through multiple technologies.

Subd. 6. **Fees.** The office shall establish fees for technical and transaction services for government units through North Star. Fees must be credited to the North Star account. The office may not charge a fee for viewing or inspecting data made available through North Star or linked facilities, unless specifically authorized by law.

Subd. 7. **North Star account.** The North Star account is created in the special revenue fund. The account consists of:

- (1) grants received from nonstate entities;
- (2) fees and charges collected by the office;
- (3) gifts, donations, and bequests made to the office; and
- (4) other money credited to the account by law.

Money in the account is appropriated to the office to be used to continue the development of the North Star project.

Subd. 8. **Secure transaction system.** The office shall plan and develop a secure transaction system to support delivery of government services electronically. A state agency that implements electronic government services for fees, licenses, sales, or other purposes must use the secure transaction system developed in accordance with this section.

Subd. 9. **Aggregation of service demand.** The office shall identify opportunities to aggregate demand for technical services required by government units for online activities and may contract with governmental or nongovernmental entities to provide services. These contracts are not subject to the requirements of chapters 16B and 16C, except sections 16C.04, 16C.08, and 16C.09.

Subd. 10. **Outreach.** The office may promote the availability of government online information and services through public outreach and education. Public network expansion in communities through libraries, schools, colleges, local government, and other community access points must include access to North Star. North Star may make materials available to those public sites to promote awareness of the service.

Subd. 11. **Advanced development collaboration.** The office shall identify information technology services with broad public impact and advanced development requirements. Those services shall assist in the development of and utilization of core services to the greatest extent possible where appropriate, cost-effective, and technically feasible. This includes, but is not limited to, higher education, statewide online library, economic and community development, and K-12 educational technology services. North Star shall participate in electronic commerce research and development initiatives with the University of Minnesota and other partners. The statewide online library service shall consult, collaborate, and work with North Star to ensure development of proposals for advanced government information locator and electronic depository and archive systems.

Subd. 12. **Private entity services; fee authority.** (a) The department may enter into a contract with a private entity to manage, maintain, support, and expand North Star and online government information services to citizens and businesses.

(b) A contract established under paragraph (a) may provide for compensation of the private entity through a fee established under paragraph (c).

(c) The department, subject to the approval of the agency or department responsible for the data or services involved in the transaction, may charge and may authorize a private entity that enters into a contract under paragraph (a) to charge a convenience fee for users of North Star and online government information services up to a total of \$2 per transaction, provided that no fee shall be charged for viewing or inspecting data. A fee established under this paragraph is in addition to any fees or surcharges authorized under other law.

(d) Receipts from the convenience fee shall be deposited in the North Star account established in subdivision 7. Notwithstanding section 16A.1285, subdivision 2, receipts credited to the account are appropriated to the department for payment to the contracted private entity under paragraph (a). In lieu of depositing the receipts in the North Star account, the department can directly transfer the receipts to the private entity or allow the private entity to retain the receipts pursuant to a contract established under this subdivision.

(e) The department shall report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the house of representatives and senate committees with jurisdiction over state government finance by January 15 of each odd-numbered year regarding the convenience fee receipts and the status of North Star projects and online government information services developed and supported by convenience fee receipts.

History: 1997 c 202 art 2 s 63; art 3 s 13; 1998 c 366 s 46; 1998 c 386 art 2 s 15; 1999 c 250 art 1 s 114; 1Sp2003 c 1 art 2 s 59; 2005 c 156 art 5 s 17,23; 2009 c 131 s 13; 2013 c 142 art 3 s 24; 2021 c 31 art 2 s 13