

Office of the Internal Auditor

Advisory Memorandum

November 2023

Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS)
Implementation





Advisory Memorandum

Background

In 2019, Citizens completed a comprehensive strategy for Unified Communication and Collaboration (UCC) with support from Gartner that identified areas with significant opportunities for improvement and made recommendations to address challenges and deliver benefits.

The UCaaS Program is a collection of individual projects to address business needs and realize the potential benefits put forth by the Unified Communication portions of the UCC strategy.

Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) is a cloud-delivered unified communications model that supports six communications functions: enterprise telephony, meetings (audio/video/web conferencing), unified messaging, instant messaging and presence, mobility, and communications-enabled business processes. The UCaaS provider owns, operates, maintains, and delivers the infrastructure. Citizens intend to migrate to a cloud-based UCaaS solution that will be flexible enough to accommodate internal, remote, and seasonal workers.

Citizens awarded Verizon as the technical implementation and services vendor for the UCaaS project, with a contingent vendor also awarded. The solution will use a combination of services from Microsoft Teams and Verizon's Telephony network to provide a holistic unified communications platform. This solution will provide multiple benefits to Citizens, such as a scalable on-demand service for quick response and additional technical capabilities and is a cloud-based solution with less administration and capex costs.

Citizens plans to extend the UCaaS implementation in 2024 with a Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS) solution.

Objectives and Scope

Management requested Internal Audit to monitor and to provide advisory services to support the UCaaS implementation. The scope included a review of critical controls around the program and project management, incident and problem management, availability and capacity management, change and release management, and information security to ensure the program objectives were met. Alignment with cloud strategy, communication strategy and Enterprise Architecture principles was also reviewed.



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Results

Enterprise Operations management oversees the implementation project with consideration and active management of applicable risks. During the project, it was noted that Enterprise Operations leadership proactively addressed key decisions. Internal Audit confirmed that telephone capabilities are now integrated with the Microsoft Teams instant messaging solution. Internal Audit further confirmed that 1,000 phone numbers were successfully tested, and additional phone numbers were ordered from Verizon to support additional independent adjusters above the currently anticipated levels. The porting of existing phone numbers is almost complete. While most employees and contractors will use a softphone, orders for physical handsets are also in progress. Internal Audit confirmed that Enterprise Operations proactively managed this project closely with Verizon.

Internal Audit determined that the implementation program conforms with established Citizens' processes and procedures. The next phase of the program, Contact Center as a Service, has also begun and is in its initial stages.

This is an interim memo, and Internal Audit will continue the advisory throughout 2024 until the completion of the program.

We thank management and staff for their cooperation and professional courtesy throughout this advisory.



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The External Auditor

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