



Client story

Fostering workforce resilience

Elevating Job Service North Dakota's core applications for secure, high-volume transaction processing

Objectives

- Enhance employment security and manage workforce needs by processing unemployment claims and benefits while complying with new government programs
- Drive digital transformation and increase agility by extending the capabilities of mission-critical systems and applications
- Continuously modernize applications and databases to meet changing business requirements by migrating to Azure

Solution

- Deployed **ClearPath® Gold MCP Software Series for Microsoft Azure** to transition the agency's unemployment insurance software applications to Azure Government cloud services with support from Azure Site Recovery
- Developed and maintained mission-critical applications
- Replaced the physical backup process, including remote system monitoring, database administration, batch operations and systems administration, with an Azure-based virtual tape library
- Migrated on-prem SQL Server and Oracle SQL DB to Azure SQL Database in 2023



...We need to be more agile than ever in developing and deploying new applications to deliver benefits to citizens in immediate need. ClearPath MCP Software Series for Azure, combined with Unisys Cloud consulting solutions in the Azure GovCloud, enables us to achieve our goal while reducing costs, streamlining IT operations and enabling compliance with regulations.

Pat Kelly, IT Director, Job Service North Dakota

Results

- Extended life of custom ClearPath applications by transitioning to Microsoft Azure
- Increased production processing speed by 300% (from 25% capacity to a peak of 100%)
- Accelerated recovery time from up to two weeks to a few minutes using virtual tape backups
- Maintained all mission-critical applications during the transition
- Reduced capital equipment and maintenance costs by eliminating a physical tape backup system
- Augmented retiring IT staff with 24/7 access to expert Unisys resources

Job Service North Dakota (JSND) provides workforce and unemployment services to individuals, businesses and community leaders across the state, including distributing state and federal payments, which is highly regulated. For more than 40 years, JSND has relied on the ClearPath MCP Software Series to support its processes. The agency faced a significant challenge at the beginning of the pandemic to manage a surge in unemployment claims and distribute billions of dollars in federal aid. The agency needed an immediate solution to boost system performance without disrupting existing processes or requiring extensive recoding. Additionally, JSND wanted to guide its long-time staff, who were well-acquainted with the agency's core systems and technology, through a transition to new processes.

Facing an unprecedented rise in unemployment claims and benefits, JSND had a clear focus. The agency needed to swiftly move its existing environment to the cloud to accommodate the spike in aid claims. This transition, with help from Unisys, aimed to preserve critical processes while enhancing the agency's resilience.

Evolving custom applications to a safe and secure cloud environment

Unemployment agencies operate within a complex environment governed by state and federal regulations. Therefore, JSND needed to extend the life of its mission-critical applications, maintain reporting capabilities and plan for staff preparing to retire.

JSND's shift to the cloud presented an opportunity to cut down on capital equipment and maintenance expenses. The agency achieved this by leveraging Unisys ClearPath MCP Gold Software Series across its production, development and disaster recovery environments. This move simplified application development, enabling JSND to evolve its existing applications and take a cloud-native approach without the need to recode or perform costly back-end reconfigurations.

Enabling mission-critical, high-volume transaction processing

During a 30-day kickoff phase, Unisys documented staff processes and took over management of JSND's platforms. It included onboarding a new development team that assumed responsibility for modifying and maintaining applications and expanding existing programming to support payments in compliance with federal law.

While ClearPath MCP remained essential in complying with state and federal requirements, it was imperative that JSND incorporate solutions to enrich and extend the life of its mission-critical systems and applications. Partnering with Unisys, the agency successfully transitioned its applications to an Azure Government cloud using ClearPath MCP Software Series for Microsoft Azure with assistance from Azure Site Recovery.



The agency also upgraded its backup system, retiring its outdated DOS batch programs and physical tape backups, which could result in an up to two-week recovery window. It replaced this process with an Azure-based virtual tape library, accompanied by round-the-clock staffing from Unisys professionals.

Unleashing digital agility amid unprecedented demand

In fewer than 90 days, the agency transitioned its operations to a cloud-based platform. It now runs its unemployment insurance applications solely in the cloud on Microsoft Azure. This new cloud platform delivers up to a 300% faster production processing speed. It reduces the agency's disaster-recovery response time from two weeks to a few minutes with real-time failover to another Azure region.

The cloud-based system facilitates remote system monitoring, database administration, batch operations and system administration, providing necessary support as IT staff transitioned into retirement. A dedicated Unisys team continues to operate the system. At the same time, developers collaborate with JSND leadership to continually enhance the platform's capabilities, introduce innovative new features and create new opportunities to integrate other systems using ClearPath MCP. With its new platform and support from experienced Unisys developers, the agency has extended the lifetime of its custom application services codebase by a decade.

Embracing cloud technology provides JSND with many benefits, including:

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- Accelerated backup recovery time from two weeks to a few minutes
- Maintained all mission-critical applications during the transition
- Reduced capital equipment and maintenance costs
- Replaced retiring IT staff with 24/7 access to expert Unisys resources

"JSND no longer has to worry about power space cooling and housing that mainframe," said Ryan Alexander, Unisys account director. "The agency extended the life of its software by ten years and has peace of mind that its systems will function securely with improved management and customizability."

The collaboration between JSND and Unisys demonstrates the remarkable impact of digital agility. This partnership has been crucial in maintaining JSND's service continuity and preparing the agency for future resilience and operational efficiency. Equipped with its new cloud platform and backed by Unisys' consistent support, JSND stands ready to navigate future complexities and continue to provide essential services to the citizens of North Dakota.

To explore how ClearPath delivers digital innovation to your current environment, visit us [online](#) or [contact us](#).

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