

Addendum to Acceptable and Supportable Use of Technology

POLICY NUMBER: 210-1000-004

ADDENDUM NUMBER: 7

ADDENDUM TITLE: Domain/Website Purchasing Policy

EFFECTIVE DATE:

REVISION DATE:

APPROVED BY:

Ordinance No. _____

Dated the ____ day of _____ 2026

STATEMENT OF ADDENDUM

The purpose of this policy is to prohibit departments, offices, and other entities of the Columbus Consolidated Government (CCG) from independently purchasing, registering, hosting, or otherwise acquiring internet domain names and websites.

This policy establishes centralized security governance and oversight of all CCG domains and websites. It provides an exception-based process under which the IT Director or their designee may grant explicit prior approval following a security and risk review. In the absence of such approval, the acquisition of any domain name or website is not permitted.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All departments, offices, boards, authorities, and agencies of the CCG to include any state or local governmental entity which is provided by CCG with email accounts, or computer equipment, or non-public system access (“a Governmental Affiliate”)
- All employees, contractors, consultants, volunteers, and third parties acting on behalf of CCG or its Governmental Affiliates.
- All domain names, subdomains, websites, web applications, and externally hosted web services representing or affiliated with CCG, regardless of funding source

Policy Statement

- The acquisition, registration, renewal, transfer, hosting, or operation of any internet domain name or website on behalf of the Columbus Consolidated Government is prohibited due to cybersecurity, operational, and reputational risk
- Such activity may occur only with explicit prior approval from the IT Director or their designee, following a security and risk review. No Department, office, or entity has implied or automatic authority to acquire or operate domains or websites
- If approval is granted, the requesting department, office, or entity shall be responsible for providing funding for all required security components, including but not limited to SSL/TLS certificates, necessary for the secure operation of the approved domain or website
- Any domain name or website acquired, renewed, hosted, or operated without the required approval shall be considered unauthorized and may be subject to immediate corrective action

Approval Requirements

Departments must obtain approval before:

- Registering or purchasing a new domain name
- Creating or purchasing a website or externally hosted web service
- Renewing an existing domain or website not currently under CCGIT management
- Transferring ownership of an existing domain or website
- Engaging third-party vendors for website development

Approval must be granted by the IT Director or their designee

Approval Criteria

Requests will be evaluated based on, at a minimum:

- Business justification and public purpose
- Alignment with government branding and naming standards
- Cybersecurity and risk considerations
- Data privacy and compliance requirements
- Hosting, maintenance, and lifecycle management plan
- Cost and funding source

Prohibited Activities

The following activities are prohibited:

- Purchasing or registering domains using personal accounts, email addresses, or payment methods.
- Allowing vendors to register on behalf of the Columbus Consolidated Government without IT oversight
- Hosting official CCG content on unapproved platforms.
- Creating websites that represent CCG without approval
- Using unofficial domains for official communication or services

Existing Domains and Websites

- All existing domain names, websites, and externally hosted web services representing or affiliated with the Columbus Consolidated Government are subject to this policy
- Any existing domain or website not currently managed by CCGIT must be reviewed and approved by the IT Director or their designee
- Renewal of any existing domain or website shall not occur without prior approval and must follow the approval process outlined in Section 4.1. Domains or websites renewed or operated without approval are considered unauthorized and may be subject to corrective action by CCGIT

Website Naming Convention

The standard and required naming convention for departmental and service websites shall be path-based under the primary domain.

- <https://columbusga.gov/<department-name-or-approved-abbreviation>

This policy is intended to supplement and operate in conjunction with the Columbus Consolidated Government Acceptable and Supportable Use of Technology Policy (Policy No. 210-1000-004).