GSA

GSA Open Government Plan

Version 3.0

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Fiscal Years
2014-2016

U.S. General Services Administration
Open Government Plan
2014-2016

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I. Plan Overview

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) has been a leader in fulfilling both the letter and spirit of President Obama's Open Government Directive. Through aggressive public engagement and collaboration across the public, private and nonprofit sectors, GSA has made significant strides in helping to create an open, transparent and accountable government. Today, GSA continues to provide tools that create a more effective and responsive government for the American public. This report highlights those initiatives and builds on the successes of earlier ones.

GSA's *Open Government Plan* builds bridges between the government and the public it serves. Individually, these tools smooth communication pathways between government acquisition programs and the business community, e-recyclers and Federal IT users, agencies with challenges that need solutions and the creativity of the private sector. Collectively, they represent an unprecedented step toward a modern, responsive government that invites open and direct engagement with the broader public.

This is GSA's third *Open Government Plan*. It raises the bar on good management and demands higher standards of accountability by asking the public to become active participants in our government. As Federal agencies become more responsive to the public, they will become better stewards and smarter users of taxpayer dollars. Like its predecessors, this *Plan* directs the agency, and by extension, the entire Federal Government, to become savvier buyers and users of goods and services. As the key Federal procurement agency, GSA recognizes that the industry partners that provide those goods and services are important stakeholders. One of the agency's six key priorities is to provide an excellent customer experience for our partner agencies and vendors; another is to expand opportunities for small business, which is the engine of the economy. GSA offers opportunities to businesses to grow and create jobs through our contract vehicles and through the contracts we award for other agencies. The open government initiatives outlined in this plan will help our industry partners gain access to tools and data they need to do business with the government. They will also give the public ready access to information about government spending.

While we're proud of the tremendous work that has gone into the open government plan, we recognize that our work is far from finished. Therefore, we are inviting the public to contribute ideas about how we and our government can become more accessible and transparent. We welcome your feedback at open.gov@gsa.gov as we build a more accountable government for today and tomorrow.

A. Introduction

GSA is responsible for annual purchases of more than $65 billion in products and services, nearly 10,000 buildings nationwide and more than 200,000 government vehicles. GSA touches the lives of nearly every person in this country. The GSA Federal Acquisition Service is the lead organization for procurement of products and services for the Federal Government. The GSA Public Buildings Service acquires space on behalf of the Federal Government through new construction and leasing, and acts as a caretaker for Federal properties across the country. The Office of Government-wide Policy develops analysis-based government-wide policies to encourage agencies to develop and utilize the best, most cost effective management practices for the conduct of their specific programs. The Office of Citizen Services and Innovative Technologies and the leading-edge 18F innovations team are making advanced technological solutions available for all agencies to use in providing quality citizen services. Since we are the business arm of the government, and an agency with government-wide policymaking duties, it is particularly important for GSA's operations, processes and initiatives to be as open as possible.

GSA is at the forefront of open government, implementing signature open government projects such as Data.gov and Challenge.gov, which go hand-in-hand as powerful tools to support the administration's open government efforts. Data.gov helps Federal agencies open their information and data to the public. It helps the public harness vast amounts of government data, ranging from seismic activity trends to energy usage. Challenge.gov is a platform for agencies to tap into the collective wisdom of the public and draw out the best and brightest ideas for solving the nation's challenges.

GSA continues to engage the public through Data.gov; Challenge.gov; Interact.gov for the Federal acquisition community; USA.gov, the U.S. government's official website and award-winning portal to government; and DigitalGov.gov, where we post tools for implementing the Federal Digital Government Strategy. In 2014, we have directed our focus to engage the industry partners who rely on GSA acquisition programs in selling up to $500 billion in goods and services to the government. One of GSA's top 10 acquisition priorities is to improve vendor/supplier satisfaction, so we established an acquisition ombudsman to be a voice for industry, make sure we are hearing their concerns and help them navigate the bureaucracy.

GSA's flagship initiative, ***Procurement Innovation Tools,*** will greatly improve their ability to identify, understand and take advantage of government procurement and funding programs. It consists of a suite of open-source tools that will make it easier for businesses, the public and other stakeholders to find and participate in Federal business opportunities. These tools will be available for use online at GSA.gov, and as stand-alone websites. The code for these projects is posted publicly online on GitHub, a software code repository, and the team encourages developers at other agencies to use it to build new features into their own Web sites. We discuss the flagship initiative and our work on other new and ongoing initiatives in subsequent sections of this Plan.

B. General Framework

Open Government aligns with GSA's strategic goals, which are to provide Savings, Efficiency and Service. GSA strives for continuous improvement that will help us save taxpayers' money, leverage the market presence of the Federal Government, and deliver meaningful and useful solutions for our customers, industry partners and employees. GSA's overall performance framework for open government focuses on driving greater transparency and openness in government. We are adopting agile technologies, processes and expertise for public engagement. We plan to meet our commitment by incorporating open government principles into our daily operations.

GSA established leadership roles to guide the agency's Open Government effort, assigning senior executive sponsors to oversee open government planning. GSA's Chief Financial Officer was designated the senior accountable official to implement the quality framework over financial data; and the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) was provided the authority and responsibility to store, manage, and protect datawithin GSA, for both internal agency use and sharing with external stakeholders. A new Data Management Working Group, reporting to the CIO, was appointed to lead the implementation of the Open Data Policy for GSA.

GSA's citizen-facing websites, e.g., USA.gov, GobiernoUSA.gov, Kids.gov and others, routinely solicit feedback from the public and also conduct usability tests to improve their usefulness to the public. Our industry-facing activities are also conducting dialogues with the vendor community, in general, and small businesses, in particular, to gather ideas for improving the ease of industry's ability to interact with our online procurement information tools.

C. GSA's Achievements in Open Government

Data.gov remains GSA's key ongoing contribution to the government-wide Open Government effort. As manager of this portal to all public datasets of Federal agencies, GSA has taken numerous steps to increase its functionality by "harvesting" agency metadata, by moving to open-source software and content management system and by sharing code on the commonly used GitHub repository.

Flagship initiatives undertaken under Version 1 are now well integrated into GSA's offerings and widely used by Federal agencies to facilitate public participation in government:

- Terms of Service Agreements for Social Media—legal agreements that GSA negotiated with more than 70 social media and other business tools to enable all government agencies to use their services to engage the public.
- Open Government Public Engagement Tools—a platform available for agencies to use to conduct dialogues with the public
- Challenge.gov—a GSA-managed challenges and prizes platform that all agencies can use to conduct crowd-sourcing competitions seeking good ideas from the public. In 2014, this platform was awarded the prestigious Harvard University *Innovations in American Government Award.*

We have completed the following flagship initiatives since Version 2 of GSA's Open Government Plan:

- Created and incubated Business Breakthrough, a program to arm businesses with information to help them learn how to navigate government contracting and compete for Federal purchases through GSA.
- Established the ePubs U.S. Government Bookstore, to make popular government publications available for free download.
- Created the Facilities Management Institute (FMI.gov), a public-facing 'cloud institute" to implement the requirements of the Federal Buildings Personnel Training Act.
- Issued a draft Electronic Waste Disposal (eWaste) policy and subsequent Proposed Rule, Disposal and Reporting of Federal Electronic Assets guiding all agencies in disposing of electronic waste, ensuring agency compliance, and reporting on the Federal Government's disposal efforts.

D. Status Updates on Major GSA Initiatives

Following is a status update on these initiatives and other significant GSA Open Government initiatives.

1. ***Data.gov***

Data.gov was established as a flagship program of the President's Open Government Initiative in 2009. It created an easier way for people to find, download, and use machine-readable Federal Government datasets. Data.gov provides descriptions (metadata) of the Federal datasets, information about how to access the data, and tools that help people use government datasets.

As Data.gov makes government more transparent and accessible, it also encourages users to be creative in sharing the data to help citizens use money wisely, enable entrepreneurs to start businesses and create jobs, and more. At Data.gov, a user can search through and download data on everything from what different hospitals charge for medical procedures to credit card complaints to weather and climate measurements. Billions of people have already used products, services, and applications that were created as a result of agencies releasing this data. Noting that open data has the potential to generate more than $3 trillion a year in additional value in sectors including finance, consumer products, health, energy and education, Data.gov/impact lists some of the new and growing companies that leverage open government data. These include Zillow, BillGuard, and LinkedIn, among many others.
In 2013, GSA continued to improve the Data.gov platform, by:
- Expanding Data.gov to include an Application Programming Interface (API) catalog that centrally aggregates APIs posted on agencies' developer pages. There are now more than 450 Federal agency APIs listed on Data.gov.
- Incorporating CKAN (Comprehensive Knowledge Archive Network) as its data management system. Developed by the nonprofit Open Knowledge Foundation (OKFN), CKAN is used

by many sites around the world. Because it is open-source, there are no licensing fees and enhancements are created for free by developers worldwide, which will also result in substantial cost savings for ongoing enhancements. The Data.gov catalog, now running on CKAN, features more than 91,000 datasets.

- Launching a number of special communities, including the Cities, Counties, and States communities, opening the way for city, county, and state data to join the Federal information on the site; Smart Disclosure, to help consumers make better-informed choices about health insurance, educational opportunities, housing, and more; and the Research and Development and Agriculture communities to support the economic and environmental needs of the farming community. The Agriculture community work led to the creation of the Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN) initiative, an international effort to help rural farmers around the world through open data. The Data.gov communities, also referred to as Topics, make it easier for greater participation and collaboration by government agencies and the public around specific issues.

The process of developing new Data.gov capabilities and adding new data is transparent and focused on an open dialog with citizens, researchers, data scientists, entrepreneurs, and developers:

- Anyone can suggest a new dataset be included on Data.gov. Agencies are required to respond to each request and the suggestion and response are available publicly.
- Anyone can view the current status of technical development on GitHub at https://GitHub.com/GSA/data.gov/issues.
- As new enhancements or existing bugs are identified, the Data.gov team works on the technical development in the open on GitHub. The public can contribute "issues", be part of the discussion on improvements, and follow them to resolution. Issues are integrated from suggestions on other social media (such as Twitter, Google+, and blogs). By working in the open and using open-source technologies such as WordPress and CKAN, the code developed for Data.gov is reusable by other governments. At the same time, Data.gov can benefit from code contributed by the open-source community. This code is also provided as a component of the Open Government Platform, a partnership with the U.S., India, Canada, Ghana, and Mexico.
- Federated local government data was added to the Data.gov catalog, creating a national platform for accessing data across all levels of government.

2. **_Performance.gov_**

The mission of Performance.gov is to assist the public in learning more about how the government is working to get the most from taxpayer dollars and to deliver the best service possible to the American people. The website consolidates all core agency strategic plan information and annual performance reports in a searchable and machine readable format, and invites public suggestions for improving Federal performance management. It offers a window to the Administration's efforts to deliver a more effective, smarter, and leaner government, giving the public, agencies, members of Congress, and the media a view of progress underway in cutting waste, streamlining government, and improving performance. It advances the President's commitment to communicate candidly and concisely what the Federal Government

is working to accomplish, how it seeks to accomplish its objectives, and why these efforts are important.

In 2013, GSA updated the site to meet the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010, which requires regular progress updates on the top agency-specific performance goals. This law set in motion a variety of reforms to modernize the Federal Government's nearly two-decade-old performance management framework. Congress included transparency provisions in the Act, which require the following:

- Develop and deploy a single Federal website that complies with the act and provides performance information for Federal and agency priority goals;
- Develop a consolidated list of Federal Government programs for inclusion on the site; and
- Consolidate all core agency strategic plan information and annual performance reports on this website in a "searchable and machine readable format."

All Cabinet departments and nine other major agencies have agency pages on Performance.gov. Each describes the agency's mission and lists the agency's strategic goals, objectives, and priority goals. Each agency's home page also provides links to the agency's strategic plan, annual performance plan, and annual performance report; reports agency progress on government-wide management initiatives; and shows agency contributions to cross-agency performance (CAP) goals. To date, Performance.gov highlights:

- 15 Cross-Agency Performance Goals
- 80 Agency Priority Goals
- 98 Strategic Goals
- 302 Strategic Objectives
- 183 Performance Indicators.

3. _FMI.gov_:

The Facilities Management Institute (FMI) is a "cloud" institute bringing together government, industry and academia with the goal of integrating, aligning and innovating all aspects of the facilities operations and management profession through continuous collaboration on core competencies, curriculum, continuing education and knowledge networking. It is an open site where the public, Federal agencies, professional societies, industry associations, training providers and academic institutions can collaborate on every aspect of reducing the cost of government building operations while increasing productivity and sustainability. The site provides the public with updates on program milestones and data they can use, along with data provided on sites like energy.Data.gov and from the Energy Information Administration, to monitor the effectiveness of the training mandated by the Federal Buildings Personnel Training Act (FBPTA).

Incorporating input from customer agencies and the public as described in its 2013 update, GSA has updated FMI's Core Competencies and Recommended Curriculum in conjunction with an interagency FBPTA Competency Advisory Group. This update provides a methodology for agencies to apply the Competency Model to their facility management organization, and identifies qualifications which meet the competencies.

FMI is developing a comprehensive continuing education program to maintain "state-of-the-art" high performance core competencies and to continually advance skill-sets through the development of "next generation" core competencies. It is also in the process of developing an Administrator-approved method for modifying Facility Management Service contracts to ensure performance contracting and to insert the requirements for contracted personnel to possess and demonstrate high performance core competencies comparable to those required by Federal employees performing the same tasks.

In March 2014, FMI hosted an industry day and presented the status of the FBPTA Program and introduced a number of the "FBPTA-Aligned" vendors exhibiting at the event. These training providers have been reviewed and formally mapped to the FBPTA Core Competencies giving individuals and agencies clear resources for demonstrating compliance with the Act. GSA also discussed the process prospective training providers can use to map their products to the FBPTA Core Competencies.

Continuous improvement of FMI and FMI.gov is ongoing

4. **eWaste**:

GSA has issued a proposed rule to address the management and disposal of Federal electronics, as part of the National Strategy for Electronics Stewardship, an initiative started by President Obama in 2011 to address responsible use and disposal of electronics in the Federal Government.

The new policy will require disposal of non-functional electronics to third-party-certified recyclers, and will prohibit the land-filling and incineration of electronics, among other provisions. Computers, phones, monitors and other electronics that would have been thrown out must instead be sold or offered to other agencies, or donated to schools, state and local governments or non-profits. The rule also proposes that agencies submit more detailed data on all disposed electronics, which will be reported publicly on Data.gov.

GSA plans to have the final rule issued by the end of FY 2014.

II. GSA's New and Expanded Initiatives

Since launching our Open Government initiatives in 2010, GSA has gained valuable insight and experience on how best to engage the public to improve delivery of our mission. GSA's citizen-facing offices (e.g., the Office of Citizen Services and Innovative Technologies, home of USA.gov and GobiernoUSA.gov) routinely solicit feedback from the public and also conduct usability tests to improve the usefulness of GSA programs to the public. Our industry-facing activities are also conducting dialogues with the vendor community, in general, and small businesses, in particular, to gather ideas for improving the ease of industry's ability to interact with our online procurement information tools. We are applying what we have learned to our new initiatives, and enhancing our tools and training.

A. Open Data

In a memorandum issued February 14, 2014, GSA Administrator Dan Tangherlini prescribed a set of governing principles to form the foundation for a new IT policy for data and information management within GSA to promote interoperability and openness of structured information.

To achieve immediate improvements, he delegated to the CIO the authority and responsibility to store, manage, and protect data within GSA, for both internal agency use and sharing with external stakeholders, and for taking the lead in implementing the Open Data Policy (M-13-13) for GSA. As a first step, the OCIO's Data Management Working Group is proactively engaging the GSA enterprise to identify datasets which can be made available to the public. The primary source for the datasets is the GSA Enterprise Data Inventory which includes data assets that are classified as public, non-public, and restricted. GSA encourages the release of data assets, or subsets thereof, as a standard and best practice across the agency and its programs. We are coordinating with the program staff and data owners to update datasets previously released on Data.gov or other public communication channels, and also to identify additional datasets that are determined to have high value to the public. GSA will continually release data on GSA.gov/data as it is approved for release by the agency.

The first distribution of GSA's Public Data Listing includes the GSA datasets previously posted on Data.gov. Many of the datasets have been updated since originally posted and have been reviewed and approved for public release through established internal clearance processes. The data assets have been inventoried using the required common core metadata from Project Open Data and other internal metadata to facilitate search and reuse of GSA data assets across the GSA enterprise.

Future distributions will contain previously posted datasets from communication channels other than Data.gov, and datasets identified in GSA program areas that have contributed a minimal number of datasets or have not previously released a dataset. Additionally, senior executives from GSA have identified datasets considered to provide high-value information to our stakeholders and the public. These datasets are under review through our internal clearance processes and will be included in the GSA Public Data Listing at GSA.gov/data as they are cleared internally.

GSA actively promotes the innovative application of agency data in public and private sectors. GSA.gov/developers connects citizen developers with APIs and tools they need to unlock government data. Software developers and researchers can use these resources to help people find useful government information. GSA requests feedback from the public through online engagement means, challenges and future hackathons to understand the public's data needs, how they are using our data, and to learn of new APIs to make our data more accessible.   Comments are welcome at opendata@gsa.gov as well as an instant customer survey being designed to gather customer comments and feedback.

B. Proactive Disclosures

GSA is continuing to improve its Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) performance and proactive disclosure through the use of technology and overall process improvement. The GSA FOIA Office goals focus on the further integration of technology to promote proactive disclosure. In every instance possible, GSA operates with a "presumption of openness" in our release of information to the public. We utilize new technology and manage our FOIA operations in a manner that strengthens our response processes, promotes proactive disclosure and maximizes our customer service level with the general public.

In addition, GSA management has prioritized several GSA data assets for release due to their potential high value to the public. The Data Management Working Group works with the data owners to enter the data assets into the internal clearance process for release. This active sourcing for high-value data sets is an ongoing activity within the agency. GSA actively seeks comments on the data needs of the public and requests comments to opendata@gsa.gov.

C. Privacy

GSA is committed to protecting Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and submits agency reports to document our actions taken for a period of time. The Senior Agency Official for Privacy reporting requirement under the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) is completed in coordination with the Chief Information Security Officer. FISMA reports are submitted quarterly and annually. Agency System of Record Notices and Privacy Impact Assessments can be found on GSA.gov. The public can access GSA's privacy webpage for all questions related to PII.

D. Whistleblower Protection

The GSA Office of Inspector General provides Whistleblower Protection guidance for employees on its web page. This includes options for making a whistleblower disclosure, filing a complaint or appeal about whistleblower retaliation, contacting the Whistleblower Protection Ombudsman, and a link to additional information on the Office of Special Counsel website.

The GSA Office of Human Resources Management provides information to new employees, current employees and supervisors on merit system principles, prohibited personnel practices and on the Whistleblower Protection Act. As part of its continual education and outreach efforts, it provides information to employees during new employees' orientation, through learning series on managing performance appraisals, through supervisor/manager training on merit systems principles and prohibited personnel practices and through courses on GSA's On-Line University. Employees can access the Merit System Principles and Prohibited Personnel Practices on GSA's intranet. GSA has also met the requirements of OSC's 2302(c) Certification Program:

- **Informational Posters** are posted at the front elevators and throughout GSA buildings. They address Whistleblower protections, retaliation, and Prohibited Personnel Practices, respectively.
- **New Employee Orientation** packages include documents about Prohibited Personnel Policies and the rights of employees under the Whistleblower Protection Act.
- **No Fear Act Training** through GSA's Online University is mandatory for all current employees and managers. This course covers the rights and remedies available to federal

employees under both antidiscrimination laws and whistleblower protection laws. New employees must take this training within 90-days of being hired. After that, training is required every two years for all employees.

E. Websites

GSA adheres to an internal web standard of continuous improvement with all of its digital products. GSA's Enterprise Web Management team resides organizationally within the Office of Communications and Marketing and has a team of two usability professionals, a senior web analyst and an expert digital team who conduct testing on the top 100 pages of GSA.gov. Additionally, the agency performs constant audience satisfaction surveys on GSA.gov and scores a high rating from the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). The ACSI survey also generates visitor comments about their experience using GSA.gov.

Instant customer surveys designed to gather customer comments and feedback are also available on top microsites on GSA.gov. Metrics on website usage are gathered on a daily basis from WebTrends and Google Analytics tools with dashboards of progress posted for public view and comment. GSA's new mobile site, m.gsa.gov, recentlyunderwent a round of usability testing before it was presented to the public. The site will be continuously tested as it grows with content.

III. Ongoing Initiatives

A. Status of GSA's Ongoing Contributions to Open Government Initiatives

Data.gov. In addition to building and managing Data.gov, GSA has posted 140 GSA datasets on this open data portal in compliance with the President's May 2013 Executive Order on making Federal Government data open and machine-readable. These range from the Fine Arts Database, which records information on the location, current condition and artists of Federally owned art controlled by GSA, to the sales volumes on GSA Schedules contracts and the current selling price for items in the National Stock Inventory.

eRulemaking. GSA is one of the 40 partner agencies supporting Regulations.gov, the eRulemaking website. The agency has posted 600 items on Regulations.gov since 2006, of which 224 are on the rulemaking docket. In addition, GSA, as manager of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) along with the Department of Defense and NASA, has posted more than 900 items related to FAR on Regulations.gov.

IT Dashboard GSA supported the development of the IT Dashboard and submits Exhibit 53 information as required each year to report the status of our IT investments. Currently, 144 GSA projects are tracked on the IT Dashboard. The agency's overall performance exceeds 90% "green," with only about 3% in the "red" category for exceeding cost targets and/or missing schedule milestones.

GWAC Dashboard In late 2012, the GSA Federal Acquisition Service created an interactive GWAC Dashboard to provide a single point of access for all data on Government-wide Acquisition Contracts (GWAC), including task order obligations, dollars spent, number of awards, agency and bureau activity, and those industry partners issued task orders by each agency.

Grants.gov GSA does not make grant awards and is not required to post to Grants.gov. However, we are modifying our tools that allow the public to investigate Federal funding opportunities to enable searches for both grants and contracts.   See the Flagship Initiative described in Section I.

SAM.gov /FSRS.gov GSA manages the System for Award Management (SAM.gov), where businesses register as federal contractors, and the Federal Funding and Transparency Accountability Act (FFATA) Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS.gov), created to report subcontracting activity on federal contracts. SAM search and registration tools are being upgraded with the development of APIs in the GSA Flagship Initiative (See Section I below).

CFDA.gov. GSA manages the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA), which provides a full listing of all Federal programs available to State and local governments (including the District of Columbia); federally-recognized tribal governments; Territories (and possessions) of the United States; domestic public, quasi-public, and private profit and nonprofit organizations and institutions; specialized groups; and individuals. Users can search CFDA.gov for assistance by type, program, keyword and eligibility

USASpending.gov and **Recovery.gov**.   GSA built the initial version of USASpending.gov. In 2013, its management was moved to the Department of the Treasury. GSA continues to submit spending reports to USASpending.gov as required. GSA also created the Recovery.gov website, which was moved to the Recovery and Accountability Transparency Board.

B. Public Notice

GSA's Office of Communications and Marketing (OCM) creates opportunities to engage new and existing stakeholders in support of GSA's mission. Our vision is to create a coordinated enterprise outreach strategy that enables GSA stakeholders to have a better understanding and to increase their knowledge of the agency and our services. With this scope of purpose, public engagement activities include:

- Use of social media outlets such as GovDelivery, Facebook, and Twitter to amplify messaging of press material, training, workshops, and informational sessions and to conduct live Twitter town halls and Facebook conversations with industry organizations on agency programs.
- Coordinating industry leader-stakeholder roundtables on various topics relating to agency activities and business
- Holding national conference calls with industry stakeholders to provide insight into agency priorities and business

- Identifying new and exciting opportunities for speaking engagements with senior leaders at a national level to address industry and small business leaders on GSA programs and initiatives
- Forming strategic partnerships with our federal partners to collaborate and amplify initiatives at local and national levels
- Collaborating with the White House Office of Public Engagement and Intergovernmental Affairs.

OCM also handles external media requests, staffs events where media will be present, and proactively pitches the agency's good news to media outlets. Our goal is to communicate GSA's strategy and plans to help create a more transparent and open agency.

With this scope of purpose, media affairs activities include, but are not limited to:

- Use of press releases and other traditional public relations to create a more transparent and open agency
- Providing public access to GSA releases, testimony and the latest agency news on the gsa.gov Newsroom
- Posting an agency blog that promotes the work of our GSA regions
- Using social media (Facebook, Twitter) to better communicate and collaborate with the public and gather input from industry leaders and citizens
- Disseminating strategic messages to help promote the agency mission and goals.

C. Records Management

GSA has taken action to significantly improve its records management program and has actively worked to meet the goals of the November 28, 2011 Presidential Memorandum – "Managing Government Records" and the August 2013 NARA/OMB Directive M-12-18. Specifically, GSA has accomplished the following improvements to the Records Management Program since 2011:

- Moved the Records Management Program from the Office of the Chief Information Officer where it resided as a minor subcomponent with two employees of a policy division to the Office of Administrative Services where it became the Records Management and Paper Reduction Branch with seven employees.
- Issued a new and more contemporary Records Management Policy to clarify roles and responsibilities for records management agency-wide.
- Created and submitted a new comprehensive records schedule to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), which will simplify the management and disposal of electronic records.
- Developed online records management training to educate GSA employees agency-wide. This training is required to be taken every year.
- Embarked on a paper reduction and digitization effort which resulted in recycling over 200 tons of paper and digitizing hundreds of thousands of documents.

GSA is also making progress in meeting the requirements of the OMB/NARA directive, M-12-18 "Managing Government Records Directive."

- By 2019, Federal agencies will manage all permanent electronic records in an electronic format – GSA is on track to meet this target
- By 2016, Federal agencies will manage both permanent and temporary email records in an accessible electronic format – GSA is on track to meet this target
- Agencies must designate a Senior Agency Official (SAO) – GSA met this target
- SAO shall ensure that permanent records are identified for transfer and reported to NARA – GSA has met this goal for records stored in Federal Records Centers and will complete this target by September 30, 2014, for records stored within GSA facilities.
- Agency Records Officers must obtain NARA Certificate of Federal Records Management Training – GSA has met this target
- Agencies must establish records management training – GSA has met this target
- SAO shall ensure that records are scheduled – GSA is on track to meet this target.

D. Freedom of Information ACT (FOIA) Requests

GSA has processes and systems in place and properly functioning to efficiently and effectively analyze and coordinate FOIA requests. GSA does not have what the Department of Justice defines as a significant backlog. GSA has a very small backlog of FOIA requests. The majority of these are extremely voluminous requests or ones that require significant research and search time and coordination across many regions and offices throughout the agency.

GSA continues to improve FOIA performance and proactive disclosure through the use of technology and overall process improvement. The GSA FOIA Office goals focus on the further integration of technology to promote proactive disclosure. In every instance possible, GSA operates with a "presumption of openness" in our release of information to the public. We utilize new technology and manage our FOIA operations in a manner that strengthens our response processes, promotes proactive disclosure and maximizes our customer service level with the general public.

The GSA FOIA Office has an easily accessible website at gsa.gov/foia that includes: (1) a description of our organizational structure for FOIA operations, with all specific contact information for the agency Chief FOIA Officer, FOIA Public Liaison, and the FOIA Requester Services Center Program Manager; (2) descriptions and instructions about the process for responding to FOIA requests and how to submit a FOIA request; and (3) links to agency FOIA Reports, including annual and quarterly FOIA Reports and Chief FOIA Officer Reports. The site also contains other pertinent information regarding the GSA FOIA office and operations and information to assist the general public.

E. Congressional Requests

GSA's congressional liaisons quickly respond to inquiries and report a variety of tasks that include preparing briefings for congressional hearings and handling phone calls, emails and written correspondence. Our Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs maintains an organization page on GSA.gov and provides online access to the Administrator's Semi-annual Management Reports, other congressional reports, and Congressional Requests.

F. Declassification

GSA obtains copies of classified national security information documents from other Federal agencies or departments to complete our mission. We are only authorized to destroy classified documents or return them to the original creators for declassification.

G. Participation

From the start of the Obama Administration, GSA has been the leading agency advancing its drive to increase opportunities for public participation in government. As manager of USA.gov and its Spanish version GobiernoUSA.gov, we have long managed the official websites of the U.S. Government. We provided platforms for the first White House public webinars and the first government-run online national dialogues, including the National Dialogue on Improving Federal Websites. We negotiated "terms of service" agreements with commercial platform providers, such as IdeaScale and ChallengePost, which enabled Federal agencies to use these tools while complying with the law. Most recently, with support from GSA, the Federal Chief Acquisition Officers and Chief Information Officers Councils have just completed an open dialogue using IdeaScale's crowd-sourcing platform to "streamline, modernize and improve" the Federal contracting process. Input on reporting and compliance requirements and procurement rules and practices will help GSA reduce costs and red tape and "remove barriers and burdens for small and minority-owned businesses and new entrants with limited resources and expertise in Federal contracting."

Taking the lead in implementing the administration's Digital Government Strategy (See gsa.gov/digitalgov), GSA's Office of Citizen Services and Innovation Technologies provides many kinds of support to enable and encourage citizen engagement by all agencies across government. We leverage our Web manager community listserv, Web Manager University (now DigitalGov University), and our HowTo.gov best-practices website (now DigitalGov.gov) to help all government agencies invite public participation by providing them with dialogue platforms, training and best practices.

In 2010, GSA stood up Challenge.gov, which provides a central online space where agencies can post open challenges seeking solutions to specific problems; members of the public can find them and submit ideas of their own. It is a one-stop repository for the public to discover and engage with Federal agencies that are running crowdsourcing competitions. GSA has negotiated contracts with nearly 20 companies that provide challenges platforms and made them available to all agencies on the GSA Schedules. Since its creation, more than 300 challenges have been launched by 59 agencies, and $35 million in prize money offered to 42,000 solvers. In 2013, Challenge.gov received more than 936,000 visits and hosted 80 challenges, including those of 10 new agencies.

GSA also manages Data.gov, as is described many places in this plan. Our most recent improvements to the site—moving to open-source software and data management system (CKAN), providing tools to help people use the data, hosting 450 Federal APIs, and sponsoring dozens of user communities of interest—serve to encourage and expand public participation in

government. The Data.gov staff works closely with developers, with cities, and others working on open data and helps coordinate their systems.

The GSA Federal Acquisition Service makes information available to industry and the public via a number of online programs. The Integrated Award Environment (IAE) provides a number of tools and community forums, including Interact; the Procurement Innovation Tools under development as a Flagship Initiative; the GWAC Dashboard, a new interactive tool for assessing Government-wide Acquisition Contracts; GSA *Advantage!,* our venerable online shopping tool for GSA Schedules and its new eBuy electronic Request for Quote/Request for Proposal system. Government buyers can use eBuy to obtain quotes or proposals for services, large quantity purchases, big ticket items, and purchases with complex requirements.

GSA Auctions is one of the most popular sites on GSA.gov. It enables individual members of the public and non-profit organizations to bid on surplus Federal property online. GSA is developing a streamlined Web presence that permits easy and appealing access to the auction site on any device, to meet Internet-age customer expectations.

The GSA Public Buildings Service is revamping its long-standing tenant satisfaction survey, a survey to assess satisfaction with major projects, and a survey to assess satisfaction with service calls. PBS will be revising the frequency of the survey, the length of the survey, the questions asked and the action planning process to follow.

The PBS Green Proving Ground program leverages the GSA real estate portfolio to evaluate innovative sustainable building technologies. It harnesses the potential of innovative buildings technologies and practices that accelerate environmental efficiency in building operations. By evaluating and adopting new ideas and technologies on a limited and carefully controlled basis, this program tests and evaluates innovative technologies and practices in selected GSA-owned buildings across the country and makes the results available online for public use.

H. Collaboration

Collaboration with our customers, stakeholders and citizens is a critical component of GSA's Open Government initiatives and in the delivery of our mission. There are several ways in which we collaborate to drive our messaging, solicit feedback and input, and ask our customers to participate in our decision making. GSA hosts Town Halls in person at our headquarters, via teleconference, and virtually on sites such as Gitchat and Twitter. We have used teleconference technologies such as TeleForum for soliciting input on our eWaste policy, which allowed companies, agencies and citizens to understand the direction of the draft policy but also to ask questions in real time. We recently announced the use of a new free social media platform, NewsGenius, to unlock the collaborative "genius" of citizens and communities. This tool allows users to enhance policies, regulations and other documents with in-depth explanations, background information and paths to more resources. In the hands of government managers it will improve public services through citizen feedback and plain language, and will reduce costs by delivering these benefits on a free platform that does not require a contract.

I. Flagship Initiative: *Procurement Innovation Tools*

As the centralized procurement arm for the Federal Government, GSA offers products, services, and facilities to Federal agencies serving the public. In turn, GSA offers businesses the opportunity to sell billions of dollars' worth of products and services to those agencies. To help the business community take advantage of its offerings, GSA has an obligation to support and encourage companies in general, and small and disadvantaged businesses in particular, to become government suppliers.

Historically, many vendors have found the Federal procurement process challenging. To address this, GSA is developing a suite of open-source tools that will make it easier for businesses, the public and other stakeholders to find and participate in Federal business opportunities and to use procurement and grants data. These tools will make it easier to search for Federal contract and grant opportunities, analyze Federal spending obligations, register to do business with the Federal Government, and search for registered vendors.

The GSA Federal Acquisition Service's Integrated Award Environment (IAE) is transforming into an open platform for Federal awards information and opportunities. IAE will provide a set of tools, including Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), to enable ease of access to data in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov), Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS.gov), Federal Business Opportunities (FedBizOpps.gov) and others, such as the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA.gov), FFATA Subaward Reporting System (FSRS.gov), the Electronic Subcontracting Reporting System (eSRS.gov), and more. These functions will be integrated onto a common platform with a focus on openness and availability of data. The tools are being deployed as they are completed. GSA anticipates the full set of tools will be available and usable by Spring 2015.

Built on open-source software, they will provide transparency into the Federal award datasets and development processes, improve GSA's service to its customers, and make the following processes more transparent and participative:

1. Searching for Federal contract and grant opportunities via FBOpen, a set of open-source tools to help companies search for opportunities to work with the U.S. government. The FBOpen website, fbopen.gsa.gov, is a simple, Google-style page where one can search for available Federal contracts, grants, and other opportunities. Anyone can add an FBOpen query to their own website using the FBOpen widget-maker. Programmers can use the FBOpen API to build custom query pages and analysis tools. The code is open-source and available at our GitHub repository. This tool is currently available as a prototype, and the public can download its code from GitHub. A refined version will be released in Fall 2014.

2. Analyzing Federal spending obligations for contracts, grants and other funding opportunities reported on Federal websites like USASpending.gov and Grants.gov. The FBOpen prototype API makes it easier for the public to find meaningful information about government funds obligated for Federal procurements and grants. Future releases and any related APIs will be made available on API.Data.gov.

3. The Federal business registration process, System of Award Management (SAM)
Federal Acquisitions Regulations require all Federal vendors to be registered in SAM before they can be awarded a Federal contract, basic agreement, basic ordering agreement, or blanket purchase agreement. Around 600,000 businesses and users are currently registered in SAM. Small business owners can "self-certify" their status by registering their companies' size and socio-economic status and certifying that the information provided is correct. The tools being developed will make it faster and easier for vendors to register with SAM.

4. Finding companies that are registered to do business with the government
SAM enables businesses, agencies, and contractors—and the public—to search for any entity doing business with the Federal Government—based on its products/services, size, location, experience, ownership and more. SAM also identifies firms certified by the SBA under the 8(a) Development and HUBZone Programs. We are developing a robust search function that will significantly enhance the quality of search results.

The new suite of tools will significantly improve the vendor community's ability to identify and participate in opportunities for Federal contracts and grants, and it will encourage public engagement in the use of these data sets.

Engaging stakeholders. Many small businesses have had problems understanding the Federal procurement system, identifying government opportunities, and becoming eligible to apply for grants and bid on contracts. The tools being developed will address those issues and suggestions for continuous improvement.

We are in continuous communication with our stakeholders to identify further improvements. IAE has established an online industry community on Interact.gsa.gov and held "industry days" in December 2013 and April 2014, to solicit comments from vendors on IAE's plans to modernize SAM. In May, IAE held a webinar, reaching out for a third time to our industry stakeholders. The vendor community is encouraged to engage with each other and GSA employees online at Interact.gsa.gov.

In addition, GSA is seeking input from the American Council for Technology-Industry Advisory Council (ACT-IAC), which represents nearly 500 industry members of the Federal-procurement community, primarily small business leaders. We surveyed:

- **Small Business Conference attendees:** We solicited input from approximately 350 small (and larger) business owners who attended ACT-IAC's annual 2014 Small Business Conference. We asked about their experiences finding procurement information and engaging with the agency online and what improvements they would like to see. We are actively addressing their suggestions.

- **ACT-IAC Small Business Alliance and Acquisition Special Interest Group:** GSA is sharing its plans for creating a suite of procurement innovation tools with two subgroups of ACT-IAC that represent government contractors, small businesses in particular. The objective is to get the users' input into the design and development of these tools.

GSA will evaluate the success of this flagship initiative by measuring adoption (the increase in use of the tools we use and user satisfaction. We will also continue to engage our industry partners and solicit their feedback. Our Integrated Award Environment Industry Community is a key means of interaction with these stakeholders.

The use of open-source technology to create these tools will ensure the sustainability of this effort. The software code will be hosted in a repository on GitHub that anyone can use to build their own tools to make use of the data. We hope eventually to see a proliferation of APIs that build upon and continuously improve the usefulness of the Federal procurement data.

J. Public and Agency Ideas

GSA actively solicits ideas from individuals within the agency and from the public.

Consultation with Civil Society. GSA consulted with representatives of Civil Society in creating and implementing this plan. We will address their concerns in implementing our open government initiatives, to the extent possible.

Great Ideas Hunt. GSA holds a "Great Ideas Hunt" periodically to crowd-source ideas from GSA employees for ways to save the agency millions of dollars, improve our employee engagement and build a better government. The first Great Ideas Hunt in 2012 generated 632 ideas via the web from employees across the country. The five that were implemented right away led to savings of at least $5.53 million. Another Great Ideas Hunt was held in April 2014, with employees submitting ideas by intranet and later meeting face-to-face in groups to discuss the top 10 ideas. They have been sent to the GSA offices for further evaluation. Each office will assign subject matter experts to evaluate the ideas and report back on them.

Challenges. The agency has conducted five challenge competitions to crowd-source ideas for $110,000 in prizes. They included:
- Travel Data Challenge
- "Win a Usability Test" Video Contest
- "Help Answer the Public's Questions" Video Contest
- Next Generation Design Competition
- Kids.gov "How do I become President" Poster Competition.

APPENDIX: GSA MISSION, STRAGEGIC GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Our Mission

The mission of GSA is to deliver the best value in real estate, acquisition, and technology services to government and the American people.

Our Strategic Goals

1. **Savings:** Provide savings to Federal departments and agencies
2. **Efficiency:** Improve the efficiency of operations and service delivery
3. **Service:** Deliver excellent customer service

Our Priorities

Delivering Better Value and Savings. By using the purchasing power of the Federal Government, we will drive down prices, deliver better value, and reduce costs to our customer agencies. As a result, these agencies can focus their resources and attention on their core missions. We will also step up our efforts to save agencies money by creating 10 new ways that the entire government can purchase resources smarter and more efficiently. In addition, we are looking to maximize the value of our real estate assets and reduce our Federal footprint.

Serving our Partners. GSA will ensure that doing business with us is as easy and reliable as possible by simplifying and streamlining our processes and systems. We are dedicated to providing an excellent customer experience for our partner agencies and vendors. GSA will create a culture of continuous improvement by always searching for better ways to meet our customers' needs and expectations.

Expanding Opportunities for Small Businesses. Delivering the best value for government and the American people requires taking advantage of all resources. Central to that approach is expanding opportunities for small businesses throughout the country. GSA will share ideas and best practices across the organization and with our customer agencies. We are working with the small business community, including businesses owned by veteran, women, minority, and disadvantaged entrepreneurs, to strengthen partnerships and support the success of our vendors.

Making a More Sustainable Government. We are committed to a sustainable government that reduces energy and water use in Federal buildings, responsibly disposes of electronic waste, and greens the Federal fleet. GSA will also continue to work with businesses to make sustainable products and services readily available and affordable to our partner agencies. We include life-cycle costs in our planning and decision making. We are beginning to implement innovative technologies and best practices from sources such as our own Green Proving Ground. Through our efforts, we can reduce our government's environmental and fiscal footprints.

Leading with Innovation. GSA is a leader of innovation in public service. GSA was the first agency to move to the cloud and to offer a process to streamline security of cloud services for the entire Federal Government. We are promoting an innovative, flexible, open workplace that will shrink the Federal footprint while also serving as a model for Federal offices for the future. We will continue to develop innovative cost-saving solutions that will be shared across the government.

Building a Stronger GSA. We must provide our own employees with the same high-quality service and support that we provide our partner agencies. Within GSA we need to give our employees the very best training and resources available so that they can deliver our mission as efficiently as possible. We will emphasize collaboration and cooperation across our business lines and throughout the agency so that our customers are receiving the best service from GSA. We will guarantee that when we do something, we do it once and do it well.