(Written Statement)

Hearing on "Technology Modernization Fund: Rewriting our IT Legacy,"

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Lessons on Service Delivery and Supporting the American Public: An Update from the Technology Modernization Fund

Introduction

Chairman Connolly, Ranking Member Hice, and members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Technology Modernization Fund (TMF) and the role it can play in transforming the way we deliver secure, user-centric, and cost effective technology and services to the American people.

My name is Raylene Yung, and I serve as Executive Director of the TMF Program Management Office at the General Services Administration (GSA). It is a privilege to speak to you about what's possible when it comes to federal technology modernization. I'd also like to thank the Committee for your support and vision in helping bring the TMF into existence. Before joining GSA, I founded a nonprofit that worked with hundreds of state and local government partners to improve how they use technology to deliver services. I entered public service because I believe in technology's ability to change people's lives, and nowhere is that more true than in government. Getting technology right is critical to securing our nation, improving the quality of everyday interactions with government, delivering public services and benefits, and building trust with the American people. The TMF is here to serve as a catalyst, and demonstrate a more effective way to deliver a simple, seamless, and secure customer experience when interacting with our government. I'd like to acknowledge members of the TMF Board, the Office of Management and Budget and its Office of the Federal Chief Information Officer (OFCIO), and

the Chief Information Officer (CIO) community across our government for being our partners in this exciting initiative.

The Promise of Modernization

Technology is an integral part of delivering services throughout government today, from helping connect Veterans to their health benefits, to ensuring public school lunches are safe and available, to protecting our nation's data through strong cybersecurity protections.

Prior to public service, I spent over a decade building software services and products that have scaled to serve millions of users and billions of transactions daily. I firmly believe that all the core technology the Federal government needs to deliver on its promises to the public already exists. What we need now is to bring the right combination of technology, talent, and funding together at the right time.

I hope to leave you with three takeaways from my testimony today:

- Effective Federal technology is critical to implementing policy and serving the American public, so it is more important than ever to invest in modernization more nimbly and effectively.

- The TMF is a powerful tool to drive digital transformation by emphasizing an agile, iterative approach to systems development, and pressure testing technology solutions to ensure they are capable of modernizing systems and delivering results.

- The TMF is uniquely positioned to demonstrate what agencies can deliver right now to securely meet customer needs, and will require dedicated funding to support this work to drive the level of impact the American people deserve.

How the TMF Drives Effective Federal Technology Modernization

Modernizing federal technology at scale is an incredibly difficult problem to tackle. Teams are often under-resourced and stretched thin managing outdated legacy systems, leaving little capacity to take on modernization efforts. Without the correct technology development framework and adequate technical support and expertise, agencies may end up embarking on multi-year projects that duplicate efforts by others across the government. In some instances, we have seen projects whose requirements may no longer match user needs by the time the projects are completed.

The TMF was specifically designed to address many of the institutional challenges that have caused many previous modernization efforts to underperform. Today I will share with you some of the successes we've seen since the TMF was established in 2017. With the support of

Congress, we have been able to address many of these challenges and accelerate the replacement of aging Federal information technology (IT) systems. Together, we have been wisely investing taxpayer dollars to achieve the desired results.

That being said, TMF investments go far beyond funding; and we partner with agencies and take an integrated and hands-on approach to technology modernization following these principles:

- *We act as both a financial and strategic partner:* The Technology Modernization Fund Board, chaired by the Federal CIO and comprised of government IT leaders with proven expertise in technology, cybersecurity, acquisitions, and operations, set the investment strategy. My team, the Program Management Office (PMO), assess proposals and work alongside the TMF Board, members of OMB's OFCIO and Resource Management Offices, and agency project teams to not only check in regularly but provide additional guidance to ensure success. Every active investment is reviewed quarterly by the TMF Board to provide oversight, review progress, and course-correct when necessary.
- *We are responsive to user needs*: We emphasize the user's experience and voice in every project, and help agencies validate that user input is gathered and incorporated throughout project execution and iteration. We aim to help agencies create a continuous and tight feedback loop between funding, project progress, and user needs.
- *We take an agile, incremental investment approach:* Investments are tied to the delivery of specific milestones, enabling teams to follow a more iterative, agile process that enables them to update their initial assumptions and course-correct as needed. This not only ensures results are delivered early and throughout execution, but also improves the overall likelihood of success.
- *We ensure that agencies have a stake in project success:* Agencies are required to repay the fund, and they are asked to commit to supporting long-term maintenance and operating costs for their projects out of their own operating budget, giving them an additional incentive to see the project succeed.
- *We have a broad view of technology needs across government:* Working with the Federal CIO provides a birds' eye view into the work and aspirations of many agencies tackling similar modernization initiatives at the same time, and enables us to align investments to the Administration's IT priorities. We pay attention to the similarities between the proposals we receive, and connect agencies to exchange learnings, share resources, and achieve economies of scale, allowing us to align investments government-wide to address cybersecurity needs and improve customers' experiences.

Impact of Early TMF Investments

Although many of our investments are still actively underway, we've seen that our approach works and enables agencies to get meaningful results. Here are just a few examples of recent TMF investments that are already delivering significant returns:

- **Improving processing of temporary work visas with U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)**: In 2019, TMF investment helped DOL digitize and expedite the processing of temporary work visa certifications. These certifications help ensure the integrity of the temporary work visa programs by requiring information on both U.S.-based and foreign worker availability, recruitment, and other components to help protect both from adverse impacts. In recent years, the use of temporary worker visas has grown tremendously. Processing improvements eliminated an artificial barrier to the number of certifications that could be issued daily, allowing the Department to issue 176 percent more H-2A certifications and 109 percent more H-2B certifications in a single day. DOL also created the Foreign Labor Application Gateway (FLAG) which allows agricultural businesses and other employers to complete and quickly access the status of their application 24/7. FLAG also allows DOL to share data with the Department of State, Citizen and Immigration Services, and others, helping avoid nearly $2 million in unnecessary administrative expenses annually.

- **Safer, better, cheaper management of shipping revenue with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)**: With support from the TMF beginning in 2020, CBP modernized their payment processing system, Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) Collections, by moving it off of their 30+ year old mainframe system and to the cloud – improving overall security while creating a more secure, reliable, and intuitive user experience for CBP, Partner Government Agencies, and the Trade community. As the government's second-largest revenue-collecting agency, CBP processed over $90 billion in duties, taxes and fees in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 by using ACE Collections. Support from the TMF helps DHS improve customs enforcement, revenue collections, trade protections, and user experience through improved features and business capabilities, while reducing operations and maintenance costs associated with the existing system.

- **Efficiently inspecting produce with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to feed more Americans**: USDA CIO Gary Washington is here with me today, and his team has been a great partner. The Department's Specialty Crops Inspection Division (SCID), inspects billions of pounds of fruits, vegetables, and other products annually to ensure they meet safety and quality standards. It also issues certifications that ensure the produce is of a high enough quality to be used in national feeding programs such as the Free and Reduced Lunch Program and Meals Ready-to-Eat (MREs) for the U.S. military. Previously, SCID inspectors would conduct onsite facility and crop assessments on paper and manually enter data at SCID facilities, which was frustrating and time-consuming. With support from the TMF, USDA began modernizing a new platform in 2020 that allows inspectors to tour facilities with tablets in hand, and input data directly, without having to rely on paper or travel to an office. This new inspection process has helped support an expanding network of production facilities, which increased from 28 in FY

2018 to 44 in FY 2021, ensuring faster inspections in more locations. USDA was also able to inspect 4 billion more pounds of produce in just three fiscal years, as well as inspect over 241 million servings of combat rations.

The Importance of Technology Modernization in the American Rescue Plan

The number and scale of the TMF's investments grew dramatically after receiving $1 billion in funding under the American Rescue Plan (ARP). ARP funding enabled us to improve the technical review process for project proposals and assemble the necessary expertise from across the Federal enterprise specializing in cybersecurity, user design, and research. This rapid scaling has dramatically accelerated our ability to provide agency support for IT modernization.

After the ARP's enactment, the TMF received over 130 proposals from more than 60 agencies (and components) totaling over $2.5 billion. From ARP funds, the TMF has made 12 new investments totaling nearly $400M in under a year, compared to the 11 investments totaling $76 million in the 3.5 years prior to the ARP.

These investments represent the Administration's strong commitment to improving the public's interactions with government and to bolstering the security of those interactions. They directly respond to the need to improve the nation's cybersecurity, as outlined in Executive Order 14028. TMF investments are helping to protect the data of 100 million students and borrowers, 2 million civilian federal employees, millions of Veterans, tens of millions of Selective Service registrants, millions of users of government-wide shared services, and the security of hundreds of facilities.

- Our **Login.gov** investment will transform authentication for the federal government and provide for easy multi-factor authentication across the board. It will also fund the development of an identity proofing solution that ensures equitable access to government services, prevents fraud, and protects individual privacy.

- Our **Veteran Identity Modernization** investment will allow our nation's Veterans to easily and securely access their benefits. It will boost security without compromising usability as Veterans access the VA's services, enabling a pathway for all users seeking those services, whether online or in person.

- Our investments also support small agencies by bolstering cybersecurity and protecting the personal information of tens of millions of **Selective Service** registrants at the Selective Service System and equipping the **US Postal Regulatory Committee** with the resources and technology needed to more effectively provide oversight of USPS operations.

- We are also piloting a cohort-based investment model to address critical cybersecurity needs. Three of our recent investments (at GSA, the Department of Education, and the

Office of Personnel Management) are **Zero Trust projects.** As early adopters in the Federal government's move to this new approach, these agencies are meeting regularly to actively collaborate and learn from what's working. We intend to circulate these lessons to other agencies seeking to implement Zero Trust capabilities to accelerate their projects and save taxpayer dollars.

- One of our newest investments will help the **National Archives and Record Administration** (NARA) bring their paper-based records request process online. Despite NARA's best efforts, lack of automation recently created a backlog of over half a million veteran requests for their military service records, which is an issue well known to this Committee. Among other benefits, this investment will help Veterans and their families electronically request and receive their records and increase the number of records that federal agencies can order electronically, reducing both processing times and the risk of future backlogs.

We're greatly looking forward to sharing the impact of these and additional investments with you in the future.

What's Next for the TMF

The work of the TMF is just beginning. After receiving unprecedented demand, we aim to allocate all of the funds provided for the ARP this year, and we are continuing to improve our approach and push forward on delivering better technology for the American people. We are collaborating closely with stakeholders across government, including the Federal CIO, Federal Chief Information Security Officer, and agency technical leadership, to maximize our impact and ensure that our next investments are strongly aligned with Administration and government-wide technology modernization priorities.

In the coming weeks and months, we will be especially focused on furthering the work outlined in:

- Executive Order 14028, Improving the Nation's Cybersecurity, including Zero Trust initiatives,

- Executive Order 14058, Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government, and

- The President's Management Agenda, Priority 2, Delivering Excellent, Equitable, and Secure Federal Services and Customer Experience.

We work closely with the broader cybersecurity community to invest in projects and pilots that help agencies across the federal enterprise adopt a Zero Trust framework. The TMF is also well-

positioned to make a large impact on federal customer experience by leveraging technology to improve life experiences that span agencies, as well as drive innovation across the High Impact Service Providers – those Federal programs that impact the most customers, have the highest volume of annual transactions, or have an outsized impact on the lives of the people that we serve.

Conclusion

The TMF is an important long-term investment in the federal government's ability to deliver simple, seamless, and secure services to the public and show that technology modernization projects can be successful at scale. The money appropriated to it so far has already begun to demonstrate tremendous impact. The President's FY 2023 budget request for $300 million builds on this success. We ask for the Committee's support for this investment, to continue delivering the level of services that taxpayers expect and deserve in the 21st century.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the TMF's role in modernizing technology and identifying opportunities to drive secure digital transformation across government. It's been a wonderful experience to work on this innovative investment program so far, and I'm very excited for what's to come. I appreciate the opportunity to testify and look forward to your questions.