



10x

YEAR IN REVIEW

FY 2018

This annual report looks back at the expected and actual number of projects funded in fiscal year (FY) 2018. It covers challenges, results yielded, and insights derived from these projects. It also looks ahead at plans and expectations for FY19.

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LETTER FROM THE TEAM

Welcome to our 10x annual report, a record of our second full year working on and iterating the 10x incremental investment fund model.

Last year was all about getting the mechanics of the 10x program right — ensuring that our financial model was viable, our deliverables were effective, and our funding structure was the right size and shape. This year has been all about expanding the program's range, including:

- Pushing more projects along to later phases
- Expanding pitch opportunities to government employees outside of General Services Administration (GSA)'s Technology Transformation Services (TTS) and outside of GSA
- Building bridges to other parts of the government to help us develop and sustain our products and services
- Exploring public participation in the 10x process

This report is a reflection on how we've done in these regards, as well as on everything we still need to do.

We intend to remain as transparent as possible in sharing our process. On that note, we invite you all to visit the new website we launched this year at 10x.gsa.gov! We'll be using the site to track many

of the improvements we make and capture associated learnings.

Finally, we've been gratified by the response we've gotten this past year from other parts of the federal government (and other governments, as well) to the 10x investment model — so much so that we're planning to develop our documentation in a direction that will make it easier for other agencies who want to do something similar to adapt our approach.

We still believe as strongly as ever in the 10x model as a way to source and support ideas from civil servants on the front lines of doing the work of government, and turn these ideas into products and services that improve the way government functions. We hope this report helps you feel the same.

Regards,

Lane Becker, Nico Papafil, Will Cahoe, Carolyn Dew
The 10x Team



INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS 10x?

10x is an incremental investment fund inside the United States federal government. 10x lives within TTS and is managed by the Office of Products and Programs (OPP). We fund internal projects that possess groundbreaking ideas or technology that can scale across the federal government or significantly improve how our government builds technology for the public good.

Our approach is based on modern venture capital practices and is designed to spend fewer taxpayer dollars while also ensuring that the best products and services are funded.

We're aiming for 10 times the value of the initial investment to the federal government or the American public, measured through cost savings, improved efficiencies, or scale of impact.

HOW DOES 10x WORK?

10x is the management vehicle for the Digital Services Fund (DSF): a portion of the Federal Citizen Services Fund designated for new, good-for-government products and services. 10x invests these appropriated funds into new ideas with the potential for significant impact across the government. OPP manages these products and services until they are placed in a permanent location, in GSA or elsewhere.

10x evaluates all ideas submitted recommending a selection of those for its incremental project funding based on three criteria: clarity, alignment, and impact.

10x starts its funding small — only magnifying its investment across four “Phases” as an idea develops, step-by-step, into a sustainable project. This iterative approach, based on modern technology and investment practices, ensures that the best ideas turn into the best government products and services — funded with fewer taxpayer dollars.

HOW IS 10x DIFFERENT?

10x aims to uncover and elevate the most promising ideas for technology transformation while minimizing risk to the government.

Government traditionally budgets for new technology by specifying a lump sum of money for a project to be spent over a period of months or years. This approach sometimes results in continuing to spend money even after an agency or project lead determines that the project should not continue, simply because the budget already exists.

In contrast, 10x explores a lot of ideas at once with a small initial investment in each. 10x attempts to spend the smallest amount of funding necessary at each stage of a project to determine whether or not it's worth pursuing.

This staged approach to investing allows us to save money while ensuring that the products and services we fund meet a real, verifiable need in the federal marketplace.

THE SUBMISSION PROCESS

10x projects undergo a phased funding process that begins with problem identification and pitch submission. At the initial phases of funding, the head of 10x is the ultimate approver for project funding requests. At later phases of funding, project teams present their proposals to the 10x Program Advisory Board (PAB).

IDENTIFY A PROBLEM

10x starts by gathering ideas from federal civil servants. These idea proposals are intentionally short — no more than one or two paragraphs — to stay focused on a specific, concrete problem.



Teams spend two-to-three weeks exploring the idea to define what it would take to be successful — uncovering risks, roadblocks, and opportunities.

Teams gain a detailed understanding about the industry, problem, market fit, finances, timeline, regulatory environment, and how to scale. The team analyzes what could go right and wrong, and creates an initial strategy to address these issues.

The team develops a functional minimum viable product (MVP) with at least one active customer. Additionally, the team creates a product roadmap, conducts a market analysis, and establishes a long-term spend plan.

The team brings the product or service to the largest possible audience.

FY18 IN REVIEW

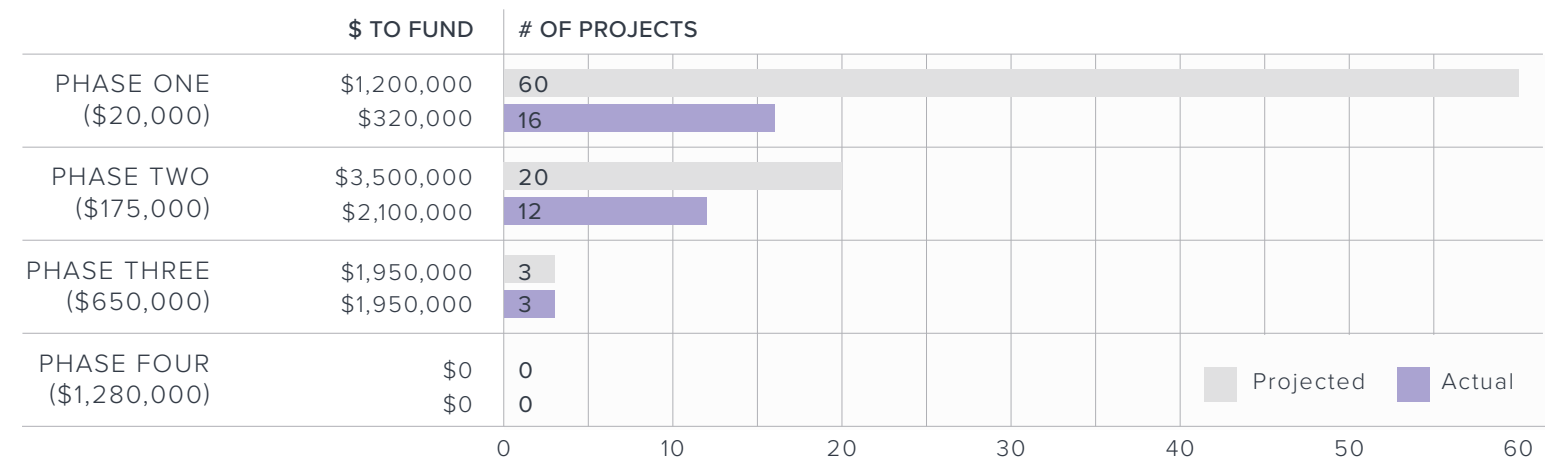
At the onset of FY18, the total amount of funding available in the DSF, including the year's appropriation and the budget carryforward from prior years, was **\$12,890,414**.

Over the course of FY18, **\$4,329,145** of DSF funds were obligated, resulting in **\$8,561,269** of FY18 funds remaining at the end of the year.

Total FY18 carryforward (includes funds for login.gov)	\$6,990,414
+ Total FY18 appropriation	\$5,900,000
▫ Total FY18 funding	\$12,890,414
▫ - FY18 amount obligated	\$4,329,145
▫ Amount remaining	\$8,561,269

10x works with a “no-year” budget, which means the total amount available to use per year is the combination of the funding appropriated for that fiscal year plus unspent funds carried over from the previous fiscal year. This allows 10x-backed projects the ability to cross over fiscal years without any disruption.

The projects funded by 10x were split across Phases One, Two, and Three. Originally, 10x had projected a higher number of projects for funding than were actually funded in FY18, due to factors outside the team's control. The reasons for this discrepancy and what was done to address it are discussed in more detail in the “FY18 Challenges” section of this report.

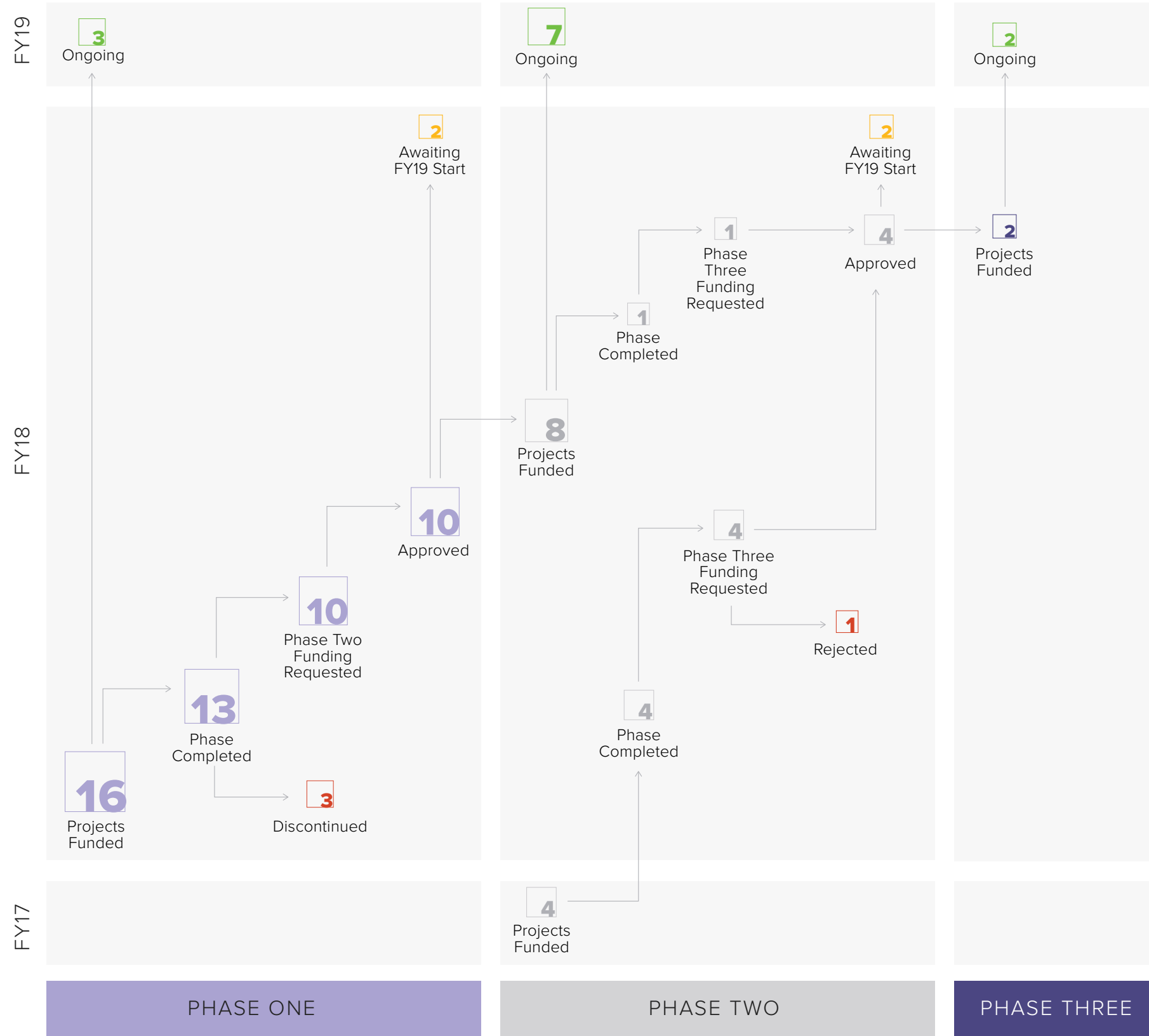


PROJECT JOURNEY

HOW DID PROJECTS ADVANCE THROUGH THE FUNDING PHASES?

In FY18, 10x accepted both new project proposals and oversaw the continuation of projects that were still ongoing from FY17. The journey of these proposals through the 10x process is illustrated in the chart to the right.

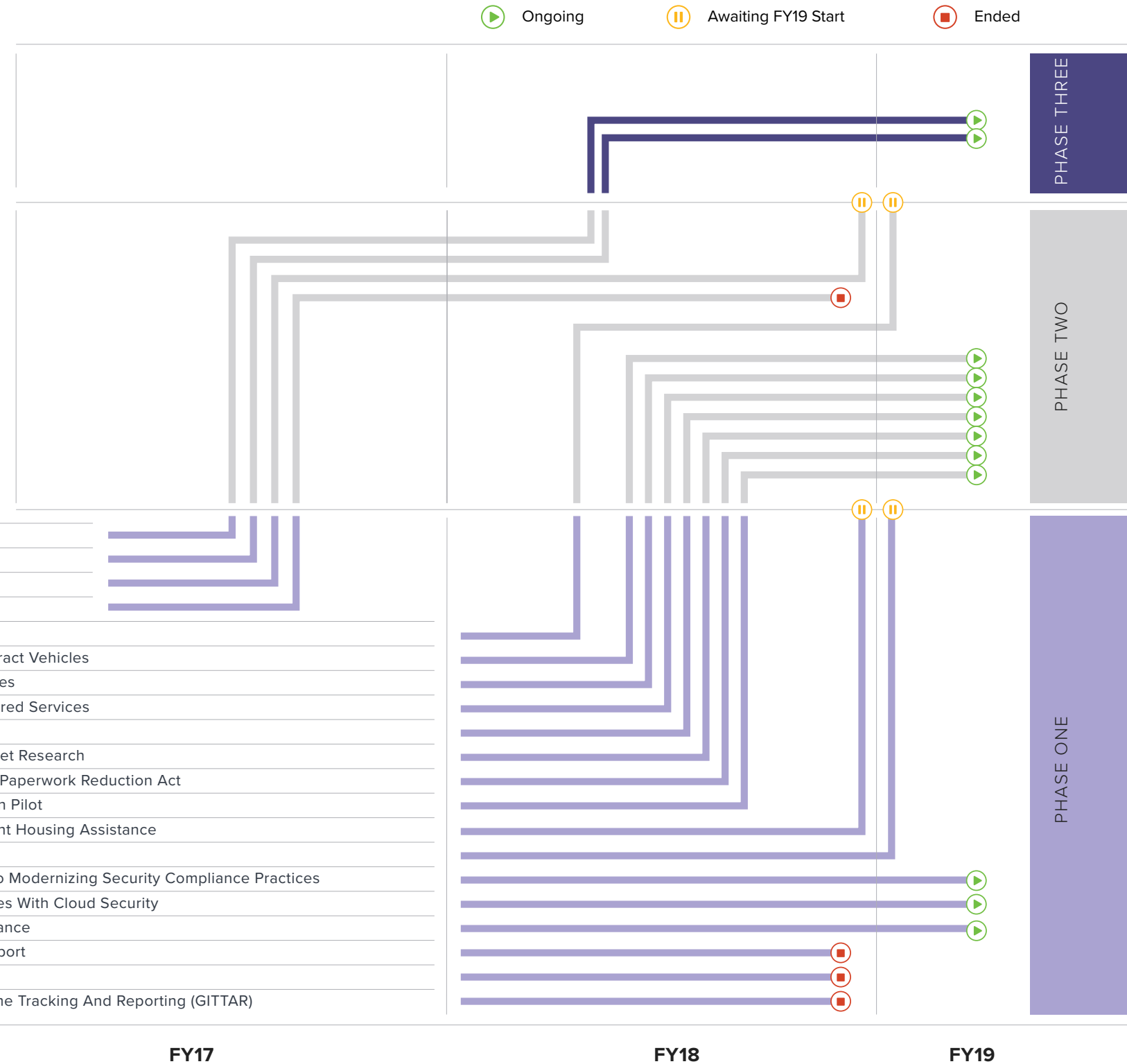
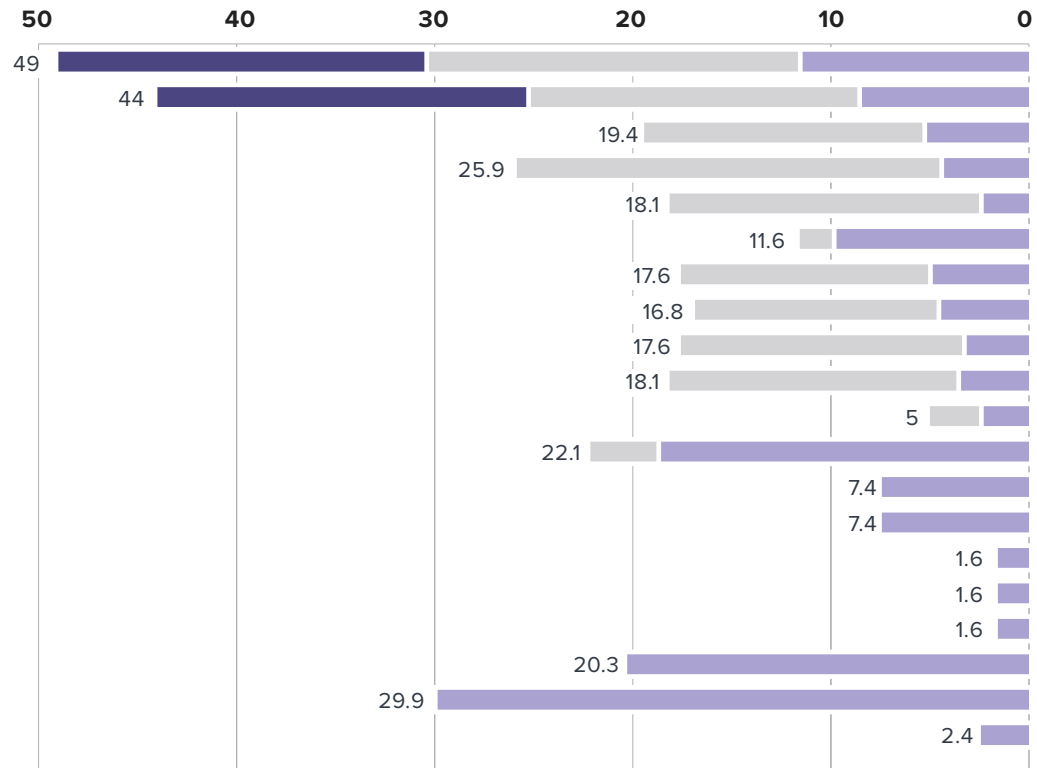
Projects did not continue through the investment pipeline for a variety of reasons. In some cases, projects proposed additional funding at future phases and were rejected by 10x. In other cases, individual project leaders chose not to pursue additional funding upon completion of a previous phase. Ultimately, even the projects that did not advance to additional rounds of funding represent a success for the 10x program in its efforts to ensure that funding is provided only to those ideas that truly require it.



WHERE IS EACH FY18 PROJECT WITHIN THE PROCESS, AND HOW LONG DID IT TAKE?

A number of FY18 10x projects began in previous fiscal years and/or will continue to future fiscal years. This is largely due to the source of 10x funding; the “no-year” funds of the DSF allow for flexible project start- and end-dates. The charts below illustrate the journey of individual 10x projects across fiscal years and phases, along with the time that each project has been active.

DURATION BY PHASE (IN WEEKS)



FY18 CASE STUDIES

BRIDGE TO ONGOING BUG BOUNTY

Phase One Ended

This project sought to determine the demand for a bug bounty platform, both within 18F and across GSA, by researching procurement and implementation options and determining how best to engage stakeholders to launch a TTS-wide program.

The project lead interviewed program heads for a number of publicly facing applications, including cloud.gov, login.gov, data.gov, and 18f.gov. There was clear interest in the service from every division interviewed. Stakeholders were particularly interested in an affordable solution that offered the ability to split costs between divisions, without diminishing the overall security and privacy benefits that a bug bounty platform provides. Additionally, the bug bounty team developed guidance for other government agencies exploring bug bounty platform acquisitions.

Although Phase One was successful, research showed the logical path to a bug bounty platform for TTS was procurement rather than development. As such, the project lead recommended against moving forward to Phase Two and that TTS resources could be used to arrange a procurement.

The bug bounty platform award was made in September 2018, and GSA became the first civilian agency to launch a public bug bounty program.

IMPROVING COMPLIANCE WITH THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT (PRA)

Phase Two Ongoing

This project aimed to ease federal employees' frustration complying with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). The PRA is surrounded in confusion and myth, and it is difficult to find understandable, authoritative guidance.

The project narrowed the focus to an initial set of self-service users: small agencies without dedicated PRA staff. The project interviewed Policy Analysts from the OMB Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), as well as novice and senior agency staff with responsibility for PRA compliance. The project team constructed and tested a prototype to guide the initial decision of whether to apply for PRA clearance.

The project is still ongoing, but the research suggests that the best approach would be to partner with OIRA to release web-based guidance in very small increments. Working in this way should address the key remaining risks around stakeholder review and sign-off.

From the research, the project team is confident that the technical aspects of this problem are straightforward. Also, the willingness to improve the status quo is high from both OIRA and from agencies. Both sides share a vision of how information collection and management could be improved throughout the federal government as a long-term outcome of this project.

ELIGIBILITY RULES SERVICE

Phase Three Ongoing

The Eligibility Rules Service is working to address a general problem that applies to many different federal health and human services programs: federal agencies establish eligibility criteria that is given to all states, each of which must translate the criteria into software that can evaluate applicant eligibility. This process is slow, redundant, and error-prone.

The project team hypothesized that creating centralized web services for such programs that could be leveraged by states would lead to easier, more efficient implementations of eligibility rules.

The team is working to prove this hypothesis by collaborating with federal and state agencies to make federal program eligibility criteria available as a web service that the team can pilot with state agencies. First, the team proved that creating the centralized rules portion was possible by developing a prototype based on Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) eligibility criteria. Currently, the team is working with the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) program to explore the challenges around integrating with state eligibility systems. If the model proves successful, the team hopes to spread the approach to other programs.

CHALLENGES IN FY18

Over the course of the year, the 10x program adjusted its investment strategy in recognition of several factors. At the outset of the year, 10x projected the following:

PHASE ONE	PHASE TWO	PHASE THREE	PHASE FOUR
30 projects	15 projects	4 projects	1 project

As the year progressed, it became apparent that none of the Phase Three projects would yet be ready to advance to Phase Four, due to three factors: A halt in all hiring and contractual activity during Q1 FY18 as a result of leadership changes; challenges in the 18F staffing process tied to the hiring freeze; and the 10x team's ongoing learning about the length of time it takes to successfully execute Phase Two and Three projects. Consequently, 10x revised its projections to increase the number of Phase One and Two projects it would fund, while removing the projected funding for a Phase Four project. The shift resulted in the following projections:

PHASE ONE	PHASE TWO	PHASE THREE	PHASE FOUR
60 projects	20 projects	3 projects	0 projects

Up until the final months of FY18, it appeared that 10x was on target to hit these projections. Ultimately, a number of projects were not able to be funded in FY18 due to concerns about the legal scope of the DSF funding authority. 10x worked with GSA's Office of General Counsel (OGC) to talk through these concerns, and a number of the projects that were projected for FY18, will instead be approved for funding in early FY19. The final count of projects approved for funding by 10x in FY18 are as follows:

PHASE ONE	PHASE TWO	PHASE THREE	PHASE FOUR
60 projects	14 projects	3 projects	0 projects

However, the final count of projects whose funding was ultimately obligated in FY18 was:

PHASE ONE	PHASE TWO	PHASE THREE	PHASE FOUR
16 projects	12 projects	3 projects	0 projects

LOOK AHEAD TO FY19

In FY19, the 10x team intends to continue to grow the program and better measure the outcomes of our projects.

MAINTAIN

10x expects that a number of projects will advance through the project lifecycle, including our first-ever project to enter Phase Four. Based on our end-of-year projections, we anticipate that we will invest \$7,880,000 across over 70 projects in FY19. More details about the number and type of upcoming projects are included in the graphic to the right.

REFINE

We have begun exploring grouping projects by common goals and problem types, in order to develop a more strategic outlook on the work we deliver. The result will be a portfolio of projects that benefit from shared assumptions and can better support each other, both strategically and technically. 10x intends to ensure that these portfolios are well-aligned with GSA's strategic goals and the goals and actions described in the President's Management Agenda.

SUPPORT

10x is broadening the way in which it solicits and staffs project proposals. Traditionally, the majority of 10x projects have been submitted and staffed by TTS employees. In FY19, 10x is looking to increase not just the number of projects that are submitted but also submission sources by expanding its traditional project funding model to solicit ideas from partner agencies across the federal government.

EXPAND

10x plans to develop a significant new source of idea submissions through a new program using the U.S. Government's prize authority. The program, codenamed "The 10x Prize," will leverage Challenge.gov to solicit ideas from the private sector and the general public. 10x is developing the first iteration of The 10x Prize in partnership with the White House Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Federal Chief Information Officer (FCIO) and OMB's Data Incubator.

Funding phases	# of projects		*Phase amount		Total
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PROJECTED FOR FY19 (10x CLASSIC)

Phase One	50	x	\$20,000	=	\$800,000
Phase Two	20	x	\$175,000	=	\$2,900,000
Phase Three	5	x	\$650,000	=	\$2,350,000
Phase Four	1	x	\$1,280,000	=	\$1,280,000
					\$7,330,000

PROJECTED FOR FY19 (10x PRIZE)

Phase One	10	x	\$10,000	=	\$100,000
Phase Two	5	x	\$50,000	=	\$250,000
Phase Three	1	x	\$200,000	=	\$200,000
					\$550,000

* The exact phase amount value will vary based on rate differences between 18F and the contractor marketplace.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The 10x program believes that all good ideas deserve consideration. For that reason, we encourage anyone with an idea to pitch to do so.

Our initial idea selection process is anonymized, removing most indications of the team or individual who has submitted. 10x aims to evaluate and select all Phase One ideas on their merits, and to the greatest extent possible we have tried to build a selection process that provides equal treatment to all submitted ideas.

We are always looking for additional ways to broaden the 10x process to solicit ideas from a diverse range of sources. Looking ahead to future years, we are hoping to complete the following actions to help broaden the program's inclusiveness:

Review 10x language in marketing materials, websites, and other communications products to ensure that it is broadly inclusive.

Work with the Office of the General Counsel, the Office of Civil Rights, and the TTS Diversity Guild Leads to conduct a voluntary demographic survey of 10x project participants.

The 10x team recognizes the sensitivities associated with gathering and using demographic data and is keen to safeguard that information. We believe, however, that it is important to grasp the extent to which 10x has developed an inclusive process that solicits ideas from a range of perspectives and the extent to which more work needs to be done.

FY18 PROJECT APPENDIX

PHASE ONE

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	OUTCOME	REQUEST ORIGIN
Modernizing Security Compliance Practices	<p>Security control requirements are complex and challenging, but existing public documentation does not provide substantial real examples of control implementations in System Security Plans (SSPs). This effort would seek to publish a full existing SSP to enable groups, such as NIST's Open Security Controls Assessment Language (OSCAL) and industry's OpenControl community, to test compliance automation tools and standards against a real example. This example SSP would demonstrate modern best practices (cloud-native, DevOps, agile, and open source) in a FedRAMP JAB Moderate system.</p> <p>Not only would this effort help identify opportunities to improve security compliance tools and practices, it would also demonstrate useful control examples for cloud service providers and federal teams working on ATOs. We believe this could especially support small businesses pursuing FedRAMP Authorization and small business federal contractors who help write SSPs.</p>	Ongoing	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F
Automating Continuous Compliance	Agencies find that Continuous Monitoring is hard, expensive, inaccurate, and inextensible. Screenshots are the state of the art, and there are no public reference implementations for automatically generating compliance evidence for the US government even though there are technologies available to assess compliance. TTS will investigate the possibility of using existing solutions to validate ATO'd systems and explore ways to publish a reference implementation.	Ongoing	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F
Examining Customer Experiences With Cloud Security	TTS will explore using data from current FedRAMP Cloud Service Providers (CSPs) and TTS services to analyze trends in how they address security controls. This effort would explore what it would take to inventory information in existing System Security Plans (SSPs) and conduct data mining on various measures to establish a common understanding of current pain points and create a set of targeted improvements. This data will inform FedRAMP and TTS service owners about where common opportunities to improve security practices and guidance may be, as well as model behavior and provide examples for other agencies.	Ongoing	OPP Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/OPP
Bridge to Ongoing Bug Bounty	The current Bug Bounty pilot expires at the end of January. There is general agreement that work should continue; however, additional effort to turn this into an ongoing, sustainable program is needed. TTS will capture the lessons learned from the pilot, and will work towards developing a new procurement to support this as an ongoing program.	Decision was made not to continue this project at the \$175k Discovery phase because the project team was able to find a permanent situation for the Bug Bounty program by the end of Phase One. The project team was able to perform technical reviews, investigate various products, adhere to legal regulations, and to secure funding for the platform. GSA awarded HackerOne a \$2m / 5 year contract, which was the best outcome the project team could have asked for.	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F

PHASE ONE

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	OUTCOME	REQUEST ORIGIN
Legacy Modernization Education Pilot	Every year, the federal government matches billions of dollars in funding to state and local governments to maintain and modernize IT systems used to implement federal programs, like Medicaid, child welfare benefits, housing, and unemployment insurance. Efforts to modernize those legacy systems fail at an alarmingly high rate and at great cost to the federal budget, in part because the officials who are responsible for designing, funding, implementing, and overseeing these projects lack the technical knowledge needed to make good decisions. TTS will investigate ways to design and procure successful IT system improvements in order to save the government money and improve outcomes for the public.	Decision was made to continue this project at the \$175k Discovery phase. The project team identified allies in this space, who are generally working in isolation, and we've found powerful levers that 18F can use to improve the procurement practices of states that use federal funding to purchase or build software.	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F
Improving Compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act	Agencies often cite frustration with accessing and understanding the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB's) policies on the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), which are spread across numerous inaccessible PDFs rather than centralized on an easily accessible, easily updatable website. This situation has reduced compliance and created delays in the approval of information collection requests (ICRs) by OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), which is charged with overseeing federal compliance with the PRA. Through outreach to PRA desk officers and agency staff, and in consultation with OIRA, TTS will explore what it would take to develop centralized PRA guidance in an accessible, user-friendly online interface in order to improve the way agencies can understand, interact, and comply with current OMB policies.	Decision was made to continue this project at the \$175k Phase Two. There is an opportunity to further investigate developing resources, due to a substantial amount of uncertainty stemming from inconsistent determinations and processes specific to the PRA, as well as hard-to-find information that is often incomplete or inaccurate.	OIRA Employee EOP/OMB/OIRA
Data Maturation Plan	Many government agencies are attempting to move towards a smart data, machine learning, or AI-ready future by pursuing expensive, duplicative, and laborious projects to update their existing data management tools using front-end fixes and very expensive patching. This approach will cost a fortune in maintenance and does not allow them to truly take advantage of the opportunities made possible by modern technology architectures. TTS will investigate developing a set of best practices for data maturation across the government, including investigating what platform approaches could be used, in order to save money, speed up the process, embolden teams, and lead to better systems and services.	Decision was made to continue this project at the \$175k Discovery/Prototype phase. Problems arising from the lack of a modern data infrastructure, supporting architecture, and governance plan in government abound -- from finding owners; recording and communicating issues; unifying disparate sources of data efficiently -- and affect all agencies. A related set of issues arise from an inconsistent set of standards and resources supporting efforts to deploy modern machine learning/AI tools and techniques to make federal employees' jobs and government operations easier and more efficient.	Presidential Innovation Fellow GSA/FAS/TTS/PIF
Improving Access to Government Housing Assistance	The HUD Housing Program provides affordable rate rental housing to low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. USAGov surveys clearly show that qualifying individuals, many of whom have limited time and resources, face significant obstacles locating their options for eligible housing, and there is no easy way to find rental properties that qualify for government assistance. TTS will investigate what it would take to feed government housing data into existing commercial tools or to develop an equally user-friendly tool for the public to search for eligible properties, learn about waiting list times, and determine their eligibility.	Decision was made to continue this project at the \$175k Discovery/Prototype phase. The highest value area for TTS to explore next with HUD are the points of failure in the system -- with a special focus on parts of the application that users find hard to understand or fill out.	OPP Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/OPP

PHASE ONE

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	OUTCOME	REQUEST ORIGIN
Government-wide Product Market Research	TTS will perform initial discovery and explore prototyping of a market research resource as part of a larger repository for SaaS procurements offered by FAS. This project would be an addition to ongoing work at ITC to offer “self service plus” or similar market research services to the federal marketplace.	Decision was made to continue this project at the \$175k Discovery/Prototype phase. Conversations with representatives from GSA and other agencies reveal there’s much work to be done in this space. Continued research into — and the eventual creation of — a Cloud Marketplace tool would offer significant improvements in how federal employees learn about, research, and buy software, ultimately saving time that could be spent on other mission-critical activities.	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F
Government-wide Individual Time Tracking And Reporting (GITAR)	TTS will explore the need across the federal government for a cloud-based time tracking and reporting tool. If this need is legitimate, TTS will determine the best approach to offering such a tool government-wide, including the question of whether it should be developed internally or bought externally.	Decision was made to not pursue product development activity in this area at this time, as there’s not currently enough demand, across government, for the development of new time-tracking tools.	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F
Government-wide User Testing Program	Bite-sized, iterative user testing can help government teams see and prove the value of incremental development in creating better digital services. TTS will explore developing a government-wide user testing program (free, paid, or some combination of the two) to help agencies build more effective federal digital services.	Decision was made to continue this project at the \$175k Discovery/Prototype phase. It is clear that federal agencies face a host of barriers to conducting user research and testing. A government-wide resource helping unblock the most common barriers (such as PRA interpretation, user recruitment, a need for better design and research tools and resources, and an overall understanding of the value of research) would enable federal agencies to more effectively conduct user research and make smarter decisions when building or buying products.	OPP Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/OPP
Human-Centered Design of Shared Services	According to GSA’s Unified Shared Services Management Office, over 30 federal agencies are currently in the process of moving toward shared services. While 18F has helped several agencies incorporate human-centered design into the shared services they are developing, most agencies are unlikely to partner with 18F due to limited resources. TTS will explore opportunities to give broader access to the lessons that 18F has learned to help government agencies incorporate human-centered design into their shared service initiatives.	Decision was made to continue this project at the \$175k Phase Two. Transitioning to using shared services is usually challenging for agencies and we see substantial opportunity for TTS to help make shared services across the government best serve the agencies’ missions.	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F
Open Source Translation Services	60.6 million Americans are not fluent in English. Despite this, most federal web content is only available in English. Having content available in multiple languages will make the information we produce more accessible to the members of the public whose primary language is not English. This can be done with existing open source tools for delivering localized content such as Pootle and gettext. TTS will investigate whether translation services could be shared as a GSA-sponsored service or as a reusable playbook.	Decision was made to continue this project at the \$175k Discovery/Prototype phase. There is an opportunity to help consolidate and automate existing translation workflows using shared translations and terminology across the federal government.	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F
Qualitative Data Management	Each month, approximately 9,000 surveys are submitted through USA.gov and Gobierno.USA.gov. About 2,000 of these include open-ended comments. With current resource limitations, it’s challenging to take advantage of this qualitative data. TTS will explore implementing a semi-automated product and/or process, using topic extraction, word/phrase frequencies, or other applications of text analysis, to help quickly respond to user feedback.	Decision was made to continue this project at the \$175k Phase Two. There’s much work to be done in this space, and the value is likely to offer significant gain in both how we communicate with citizens searching for information on government services, as well as improving the rate at which we incorporate valuable public feedback into our services and products.	OPP Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/OPP

PHASE ONE

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	OUTCOME	REQUEST ORIGIN
Post Product Development Support	At present, TTS Acquisitions has never structured a contract to ensure that the product is sustainably operated once our engagement has ended. TTS will explore how we can conduct low-risk experiments for moving from build to maintenance contracts in order to continue to work in an agile way throughout a product's life, and will investigate what kinds of contracts are needed to support the operation and maintenance (O&M) of products built by TTS and its partners.	Decision was made to not continue the project at this time, research conducted in Phase I results do not lead us to a natural next step or project to direct further investigation or procurement development. The research will inform, however, how the TTS staff will structure procurements for existing and future software development projects.	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F
Building Modern Software Contract Vehicles	For the past two years, TTS Acquisitions has leveraged the Agile Blanket Purchase agreement (Agile BPA) to find vendors that build software products for external agencies. The current vehicle is inflexible and unable to deliver strong user research capabilities. TTS will investigate what contract vehicles or structures support open, agile, and user-centered software development to meet the needs of federal partners and potentially set up an experiment to learn how a contract might meet those needs.	Decision was made to continue this project at the \$175k Discovery phase. The project team recognized multiple areas of focus, which will allow us to learn from vendors, agency partners, and acquisition experts outside of TTS, drawing on a diverse set of experiences and applications to make recommendations about methods that can work for procurement of agile services government-wide.	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F

PHASE TWO

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	OUTCOME	REQUEST ORIGIN
Building Modern Contract Vehicles	For the past two years, TTS Acquisitions has leveraged the Agile Blanket Purchase agreement (Agile BPA) to find vendors that build software products for external agencies. The current vehicle is inflexible and unable to deliver strong user research capabilities. TTS will investigate what contract vehicles or structures support open, agile, and user-centered software development to meet the needs of federal partners and potentially set up an experiment to learn how a contract might meet those needs.	Ongoing	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F
Government-wide Product Market Research	TTS will perform initial discovery and explore prototyping of a market research resource as part of a larger repository for SaaS procurements offered by FAS. This project would be an addition to ongoing work at ITC to offer "self service plus" or similar market research services to the federal marketplace.	Ongoing	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F
Human-Centered Design of Shared Services	According to GSA's Unified Shared Services Management Office, over 30 federal agencies are currently in the process of moving toward shared services. While 18F has helped several agencies incorporate human-centered design into the shared services they are developing, most agencies are unlikely to partner with 18F due to limited resources. TTS will explore opportunities to give broader access to the lessons that 18F has learned to help government agencies incorporate human-centered design into their shared service initiatives.	Ongoing	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F

PHASE TWO

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	OUTCOME	REQUEST ORIGIN
Improving Compliance with the PRA	There is an opportunity to further investigate developing resources, due to a substantial amount of uncertainty stemming from inconsistent determinations and processes specific to the PRA, as well as hard-to-find information that is often incomplete or inaccurate.	Ongoing	OIRA Employee EOP/OMB/OIRA
Legacy Education Pilot	Every year, the federal government matches billions of dollars in funding to state and local governments to maintain and modernize IT systems used to implement federal programs, like Medicaid, child welfare benefits, housing, and unemployment insurance. Efforts to modernize those legacy systems fail at an alarmingly high rate and at great cost to the federal budget, in part because the officials who are responsible for designing, funding, implementing, and overseeing these projects lack the technical knowledge needed to make good decisions. TTS will investigate ways to design and procure successful IT system improvements in order to save the government money and improve outcomes for the public.	Ongoing	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F
Open Source Translation Services	60.6 million Americans are not fluent in English. Despite this, most federal web content is only available in English. Having content available in multiple languages will make the information we produce more accessible to the members of the public whose primary language is not English. This can be done with existing open source tools for delivering localized content such as Pootle and gettext. TTS will investigate whether translation services could be shared as a GSA-sponsored service or as a reusable playbook.	Ongoing	OPP Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/OPP
Users First (formerly Government-wide User Testing Program)	Bite-sized, iterative user testing can help government teams see and prove the value of incremental development in creating better digital services. TTS will explore developing a government-wide user testing program (free, paid, or some combination of the two) to help agencies build more effective federal digital services.	Ongoing	OPP Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/OPP
Eligibility Rules Service (formerly Eligibility and Enrollment)	TTS is funding an investigation of the value and feasibility of building an API-based eligibility rules web service for a non-Medicaid human services program, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), to help federal human service agencies facilitate the adoption of multi-benefit eligibility determination. The project is currently in the process of selecting an agency partner with whom to develop the product prototype.	Decision was made to continue this project at the \$650k Development phase. The PAB believes this project has a lot of potential and is excited to see progress continue. They highlighted several questions and concerns they want the project team to keep in mind and focus on during the build stage: Get client involvement early to maximize adoption potential, be aware for any policy changes that may help or hinder adoption of this tool, secure stakeholder commitment to ensure the product is used after Phase 3 funding has ended, and ensure that TTS has the legal authority to work with States. The TTS Commissioner has offered to help connect the project team with contacts at USDA--one of the project's primary stakeholders.	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F
Federal Grantee Reporting	Identifying opportunities to improve the federal grant reporting process — by eliminating redundancies and creating efficiencies through improved technology — with the goal of generating a prototype that could be adapted across federal programs, thereby increasing federal grant programs' efficacy to those being served as well as taxpayers' return on investment. This project is aligned with OMB and GSA priorities regarding technology improvements to the Grantee Reporting environment.	Decision was made to continue this project at the \$650k Build phase. The PAB believes this project has “transformative potential” and was encouraged by Phase 2 results. They have advised the project team to consider the hand-off of product ownership and get OMB involvement early on in Phase 3.	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F

PHASE TWO

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	OUTCOME	REQUEST ORIGIN
Notifications as a Service	A shared notification services platform that federal agencies could use to coordinate and deliver public notifications through communication channels such as SMS and email, ranging from low-traffic two-factor authentication needs for government-facing services to extremely high volume applications for agencies that have frequent interactions with the public. The project is currently developing an internal prototype in order to demonstrate the viability of an internal approach to this service.	<p>The PAB saw promise in the idea, but there were underlying concerns that led them to the decision against proceeding to Phase 3. The major concern was that TTS is not yet ready to take on another large-scale project with high up-front costs when we currently have both Login and cloud.gov struggling to become cost recoverable. A further concern was the ability of TTS to sustain a dedicated team for this project in the long-term. The PAB is open to considering NaaS again at some point in the future.</p> <p>There are still a lot of lessons to be learned from the great work the team undertook. We want to emphasize again that the PAB expressed interest in revisiting this project in the future — perhaps a year from now if the staffing and financial situation at TTS has changed.</p>	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F
Qualitative Data Management	Each month, approximately 9,000 surveys are submitted through USA.gov and Gobierno.USA.gov. About 2,000 of these include open-ended comments. With current resource limitations, it's challenging to take advantage of this qualitative data. TTS will explore implementing a semi-automated product and/or process, using topic extraction, word/phrase frequencies, or other applications of text analysis, to help quickly respond to user feedback.	The decision was made to continue this project at the \$650k Development phase. The work the QDM team has done applying natural language processing to determine content quality for comments submitted to USA.gov was very impressive. Phase Three funding was granted with the expectation that the team would continue to improve the prototype developed to work with USA.gov while also expanding their pilot offering to at least one other type of program inside GSA with a different kind of content analysis need, in order to prove that the technology could be made more broadly applicable beyond the single use case developed up to this point. The team was also asked to explore what would be required from a technology, process, and people standpoint in order to offer natural language processing for qualitative comment submissions as a government-wide service as part of OPP.	OPP Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/OPP
U.S. Data Federation	TTS will focus on making capital investments in reusable tooling and processes that will benefit future federated data efforts. TTS will also seek to clarify the federal government's role in these efforts moving forward.	Decision was made to continue this project at the \$650k Development phase. 10x is funding this project because federated data efforts are increasingly seen as an engine for transparency, economic growth, and accountability, yet collecting that data remains a challenge. Despite the fact that efforts of this sort are increasing in frequency, agencies often have to build new efforts from scratch. Investment in reusable tools and approaches will streamline federated data efforts in the years to come. The PAB has requested regular check-ins with the project team going forward to ensure that implementation and partner milestones are proceeding as planned.	OPP Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/OPP

PHASE THREE

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	OUTCOME	REQUEST ORIGIN
U.S. Data Federation	TTS is funding this project because federated data efforts are increasingly seen as an engine for transparency, economic growth, and accountability, yet collecting that data remains a challenge. Despite the fact that efforts of this sort are increasing in frequency, agencies often have to build new efforts from scratch. Investment in reusable tools and approaches will streamline federated data efforts in the years to come.	Awaiting Start	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F
Eligibility Rules Service	10x is funding this project because federated data efforts are increasingly seen as an engine for transparency, economic growth, and accountability, yet collecting that data remains a challenge. Despite the fact that efforts of this sort are increasing in frequency, agencies often have to build new efforts from scratch. Investment in reusable tools and approaches will streamline federated data efforts in the years to come.	Ongoing	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F
Federal Grantee Reporting	Identifying opportunities to improve the federal grant reporting process — by eliminating redundancies and creating efficiencies through improved technology — with the goal of generating a prototype that could be adapted across federal programs, thereby increasing federal grant programs’ efficacy to those being served as well as taxpayers’ return on investment. This project is aligned with OMB and GSA priorities regarding technology improvements to the Grantee Reporting environment.	Ongoing	18F Employee GSA/FAS/TTS/18F

“Technology is a word that describes something that doesn’t work yet.”

—*Douglas Adams (Author)*



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