

Delivering Outcomes, Building Trust – A Guide for the Future of Government

The current crisis and the subsequent long recovery we face as a nation has brought us to an inflection point—a critical moment to re-imagine how our government operates and meets public needs. In the coming months and years, policymakers must do more than just make minor adjustments to government operations. The disruptive scenarios we face as a nation (health, economic, disaster, security, etc.) are only magnified by the pandemic. As a result, agency operations, service delivery, supply chains, and procurement need to become more resilient, adaptable, and responsive

This will require new assumptions, new metrics, and investing in data-driven and outcome-focused planning. Agencies must redefine operating models to create greater efficiency and effectiveness. A key to this is improving government’s ability to leverage technology. Further, government must increase access to information and services needed by the public. Success should be measured not by how much we spend on programs, but by how well government delivers tangible positive outcomes that improve people’s health, safety, security, and economic well-being.

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American Council for Technology-Industry Advisory Council (IAC)

Description:

The American Council for Technology (ACT) is a non-profit educational organization established to create a more effective and innovative government. ACT-IAC provides a unique, objective, and trusted forum where government and industry executives are working together to improve public services and agency operations through the use of technology. ACT-IAC contributes to better communication between government and industry, collaborative and innovative problem solving, and a more professional and qualified workforce.

Stakeholder(s):

ACT-IAC Volunteers :

The information, conclusions, and recommendations contained in this publication were produced by volunteers from government and industry who share the ACT-IAC vision of a more effective and innovative government. ACT-IAC volunteers represent a wide diversity of organizations (public and private) and functions. These volunteers use the ACT-IAC collaborative process, refined over thirty years of experience, to produce outcomes that are consensus-based. The findings and recommendations contained in this report are based on consensus and do not represent the views of any particular individual or organization.

Federal Government :

The federal government impacts nearly every aspect of American life, contributing to the health, safety, security and economic stability of our country and nations around the world. Whether it's ensuring the safety of the food we eat and the water we drink; responding to national emergencies; providing benefits for veterans and those with disabilities; enhancing the safety and reliability of our transportation systems; protecting our borders; defending our nation; or issuing warnings on hurricanes, we count on our government to protect us and preserve our way of life. Despite the important work that those in federal, state and local government do for the nation, many people are unaware of the many ways that government contributes to our lives.

Americans :

In times of crisis, reliance on the federal government only increases. As the coronavirus pandemic demonstrates, the federal government plays a pivotal role in convening and coordinating a national response, leveraging personnel and financial resources the states can't match, and accessing critical tools and data to support decision making. Despite all that government does for the public, Americans' trust in the government has been declining steadily for decades.

Policymakers :

In the coming months and years, policymakers must do more than just make minor adjustments to government operations.

Agencies :

Agencies must redefine operating models to create greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Government :

Further, government must increase access to information and services needed by the public.

The Public

Vision

Services are based on analysis of data and awareness of current needs as well as anticipation of the future

Mission

To re-imagine how our government operates and meets public needs

Values

Needs: Imagine a government where people are offered services based on analysis of data and awareness of their current needs, and anticipation of what may be helpful in the future. Envision instructions on how to apply for a benefit that are easy to follow—explained through a video, or a single form customized to an individual’s need, and supported with an automated assistance agent.

Privacy: Imagine a government able to respect privacy while providing comprehensive, holistic services to an individual through common accounts and shared data. Many states are already doing this today, making the customer experience consistent and frictionless across programs and services.

Security: Imagine a government where concerns about malicious attacks on our energy, food, water, and communications systems recede—thanks to the ability to detect attempts, blunt their severity, or withstand or recover from the attack with limited impact on our lives and our economy.

Collaboration: Finally, imagine a government where federal, state, and local governments, working together towards common outcomes, are able to gain consensus and make decisions for the public good—even when they have ideological differences on how to achieve them.

Norms: All of this is not only technically viable it is occurring in instances today. But how do we make this the norm? To deliver fundamentally better outcomes and build trust through better planning, efficiency, and effectiveness, policymakers and government program leaders should work together to provide the plans and resources to achieve results in:

Citizen-Centricity: Delivering citizen-centric services that are accessible, convenient, intuitive, personalized and efficient.

Transformation: Transforming the national infrastructure, both physical and digital, making it more efficient to operate, and resilient to natural events and deliberate attack; creating a society that can withstand, respond to, and recover from adverse events.

Agility: Creating an agile government that is mission-centric, customer-driven, collaboration-enabled, delivering consistent outcomes to customers and the public, and able to accelerate and scale to keep pace with advances in technology, changes in policies, and growing public expectations and needs.

Investment: The investment and commitment necessary to make this happen transcends politics and is a national imperative. This latest crisis shows us that the quality of our society, people’s lives, and the competitiveness and economic security of the nation must be better assured.

Prioritization: But, where should we direct our efforts and resources? Delivering customer-centric services, transforming the national infrastructure, and creating an agile government all rely on leveraging data, developing a strong workforce, mitigating cybersecurity risks; applying intelligent automation, and expanding partnerships. Going forward, government leaders and Congress should commit to prioritizing investments of time and resources in five key areas: data, the federal workforce, cybersecurity, intelligent automation, and partnerships.

Data: Data is both a catalyst for decision making and a driver for the economy. Focusing on how to leverage data as a strategic asset, while still providing protections against misuse, is key. More can be done to engage the public in how their data is used—both to their benefit and the benefit of others. That requires new thinking to implement measures that are not strictly to “restrain” use of private data, but to “explain” the value proposition for broader use, with proper assurances. As one of the largest producers of data in the world, the federal government is firmly at the center of the growing data tsunami. Enhancing access to government data can improve public understanding of government

programs and performance and increase public trust. Agencies need a purposeful strategy around data for customer-centric and strategic insights. Better data will result in increased productivity, improved and more transparent decision-making and will empower workforce transformation with data-rich analytical tools.

Workforce: The Federal Workforce has knowledge, experience, and insight that is integral to the mission of their organizations. However, the challenge in a rapidly changing environment is twofold: (1) how to evolve and optimize the existing workforce to keep pace with changing technology, business practices, and policies in order to meet emerging needs; and (2) how to attract and retain new talent with the technical skills in emerging technology areas. Both these challenges will require making bold changes in government workforce management policies. Agencies must increase their ability to attract, develop, compensate, re-skill, and retain top talent, while addressing issues with those who are unwilling to adapt to the new environment.

Cybersecurity: Cybersecurity will continue to be a critical factor in the ability to deliver outcomes reliably and build trust. So much of our lives play out in cyber space. Providing controls to ensure identities and personal data are protected is essential to building and maintaining trust. Improving outcomes, delivering services, managing risk, transforming infrastructure (especially digital), and increasing agility all require strong and evolving cyber capabilities. The cyber paradigm is changing significantly. Security protections are up front—not at the audit tail end—and software-driven analytics provide enhanced monitoring, detection, and response protections. Indeed, in a mobile, web-based, virtual world, new approaches to cybersecurity that embrace concepts like zero trust will be crucial to embrace.

Automation: Intelligent Automation is the convergence of two technological concepts that have been around for many years: artificial intelligence (AI) and automation. Intelligent automation is often perceived as a threat to the workforce, but when leveraged in strategic ways, it can and does create opportunities for higher-level knowledge work. Intelligent automation can create new roles that otherwise would not have existed, and can play a unique role in empowering and optimizing the workforce. AI can help analyze the growing volume and complexity of data to inform business decisions. It can also enable greater efficiency and speed, thus providing tangible benefits to people seeking assistance and services.

Partnership: Partnerships between governments, the private sector, and the not-for-profit sector can create new ways to share costs and burdens, leverage other perspectives and knowledge, and enlist a broader group of stakeholders in the mission and the public good. Delivering positive, sustainable results using evidence-based decision making, and finding new ways of engaging with the public to build effective partnerships, are both critical responsibilities for elected officials, career government leaders, and those who inform and advise them.

1. Outcomes

Build outcome focus into all aspects of management at all levels.

All employees and leaders should have outcome-based measures as a way of recognizing and reinforcing every individual's contribution and accountability.

1.1. Metrics

Make outcome measure data available.

Making agency outcome measure data available can improve public understanding of government programs and increase public trust.

1.2. Leaders

Establish agency "outcome leaders".

We recommend establishing within agencies accountable "outcome leaders" for each agency and cross-agency commitment, initiatives, or mission result. These designated outcome leaders and leadership teams should have decision, resource, and risk authority. In addition, these designated outcome leaders can be long-term or temporary roles depending on the nature of the effort. Outcome leaders should be appointed by the Agency Deputy Secretary with delegated decision authority to work within and across agencies to align resources, resolve issues, build partnerships, and lead development of plans and reporting.

Stakeholder(s):

Outcome Leaders :

Such Outcome Leaders would be temporary in nature, with the objective to disband once the objectives of a particular Outcome Office have been met or when the office is otherwise deemed unnecessary.

1.3. Collaboration

Work together to achieve desired outcomes and deliver end-to-end services.

Agencies should work together to achieve a desired outcome or deliver an end-to-end service effectively. This will help eliminate duplication across agencies; break through silos or stove-piped services to reimagine seamless, customer-centric services, and foster collaborative delivery of key outcomes; facilitate agility in meeting an emerging need through coordinated planning and resource management; reduce complexity by rationalizing operating environments and eliminating technology, process and data stovepipes that lead to complex, inefficient operations; and leveraging the workforce across agencies and programs, where and when needed, to deliver the result.

1.3.1. Duplication

Eliminate duplication across agencies.

1.3.2. Services

Break through silos or stove-piped services to reimagine seamless, customer-centric services, and foster collaborative delivery of key outcomes.

1.3.3. Agility

Facilitate agility in meeting an emerging need through coordinated planning and resource management.

1.3.4. Complexity

Reduce complexity by rationalizing operating environments and eliminating technology, process and data stovepipes that lead to complex, inefficient operations.

1.3.5. Leverage

Leverage the workforce across agencies and programs, where and when needed, to deliver the result.

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2. Strategy

Create a government-wide acceleration and change strategy.

Incorporate milestones, measures, and metrics into the responsibilities for all roles and at all levels of government to transform government's ability to harness emerging technologies; partner with the private sector; and drive stakeholder engagement, change management strategies, and initiatives across agencies. The Acceleration Strategy should support and enable the management agenda, agency strategies, and learning agendas. The strategy should include an operating framework that addresses how different roles (e.g.; CIOs, CTOs, CISOs, CXOs and business leaders), organizations (e.g.; US Digital Services, GSA's Technology Transformation Services, agency innovation centers, OPM Lab, the Office of Federal Procurement Policy, etc.), and methods and resources (e.g., human-centered design, innovative acquisitions), can be better aligned, integrated and simplified to promote speed and agility. The overall government acceleration strategy should be a product of the President's Management Council and a major focus of their active oversight and management of the executive branch.

2.1. Metrics

Incorporate milestones, measures, and metrics into the responsibilities for all roles and at all levels of government to transform government's ability to harness emerging technologies.

2.2. Partnerships

Partner with the private sector.

2.3. Engagement & Change

Drive stakeholder engagement, change management strategies, and initiatives across agencies.

2.4. Agendas & Strategies

Support and enable the management agenda, agency strategies, and learning agendas.

2.4.1. Roles, Methods & Resources

Addresses how different roles and methods and resources can be better aligned, integrated and simplified to promote speed and agility.

Stakeholder(s):

Agency Innovation Centers

CIOs

CTOs

CISOs

CXOs

Business Leaders

US Digital Services

GSA's Technology Transformation Services

Agency Innovation Centers

OPM Lab

Office of Federal Procurement Policy

3. Risk Officer

Create a government-wide Enterprise Risk Officer at OMB.

Stakeholder(s)

OMB

This officer would lead cross-agency efforts to quantify and drive effective actions to address the growing risk to the government and private sector's information, operations, and intellectual property. This strategy will provide risk management for a whole-of-nation perspective, looking at both physical and cyber risks to our government and critical infrastructure industries. It will provide a mechanism for taking action to mitigate risks arising from overlap and duplication and uncoordinated silos, which create vulnerabilities and gaps, especially in the supply chain. As an example, this strategy would address the challenges in getting appropriate inventories of personal protection equipment and medical devices during the current crisis; and in recognizing that the country was at risk by relying on a supply chain of mainly overseas suppliers, with no backup plan, to mitigate the risk due to disruption.

3.1. Quantification & Action

Quantify and drive effective actions to address the growing risk to the government and private sector's information, operations, and intellectual property.

3.2. Risk Management

Provide risk management for a whole-of-nation perspective, looking at both physical and cyber risks to our government and critical infrastructure industries.

3.3. Overlap & Duplication

Mitigate risks arising from overlap and duplication and uncoordinated silos.

4. Workforce & Leadership

Establish a new workforce and leadership model for the digital workforce.

Stakeholder(s)

Digital Workforce

Create cross-government rotational opportunities and expectations, particularly for the Senior Executive Service, public-private sector talent exchange opportunities, and programs to attract and retain talent at an executive and practitioner level. This model must develop: (a) a technology workforce adept at seeing the potential of technology and with the talent and experience to adopt it; (b) an acquisition workforce knowledgeable in acquiring technology faster and with greater success; and (c) a mission-focused workforce with an understanding of how to leverage the power of technology to drive change and effectiveness. This will help better develop, attract, and retain talent, and also cut through organizational stovepipes by providing workforce talent where and when it is needed. These recommendations will provide the means necessary to create a more impactful government that the public can trust and count on. They will serve the interests of government leaders, both political and career civil servants, because they ultimately serve the needs of the American people, who deserve and expect a government that efficiently and effectively protects and advances the public interest.

4.1. Technology

Develop a technology workforce adept at seeing the potential of technology and with the talent and experience to adopt it.

Stakeholder(s):

Technology Workforce

4.2. Acquisitions

Develop an acquisition workforce knowledgeable in acquiring technology faster and with greater success.

Stakeholder(s):

Acquisition Workforce

4.3. Missions

Develop a mission-focused workforce with an understanding of how to leverage the power of technology to drive change and effectiveness.

Administrative Information

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