

1. Does the Department of Agriculture (USDA) plan to utilize funds from the recent “Supply Chain Risk Response” Technology Modernization Fund (TMF) award to evaluate new tools to replace or supplement any current or existing tools that have had a supply chain breach?
 - a. The TMF award will not be used to replace or supplement any tool that had a supply chain breach. USDA identified a capability process gap when the agency responded to the SolarWinds supply chain incident in December 2020 through January 2021. USDA incident responders did not have visibility into encrypted traffic to search for or identify malicious activity. The USDA plans to use the TMF award to evaluate a new tool to gain visibility into encrypted network traffic.

2. In Mr. Washington's testimony, he stated that USDA will utilize TMF funds to adopt and implement new tools to “improve visibility of encrypted network traffic.” Will those tools improve “network availability” for USDA’s network and for the various services that USDA Office of the Chief Information Officer provides? If so, how?
 - a. The new tool will provide visibility into USDA’s encrypted network traffic. By way of preventing denial of service and other cyberattacks, the capability will protect the availability of USDA’s networks.