

**STATEMENT OF  
MS. PHAEDRA CHROUSOS  
COMMISSIONER  
TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMATION SERVICE  
U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
AND  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM  
“18F AND U.S. DIGITAL SERVICE OVERSIGHT”**

**June 10, 2016**

Good morning Chairmen Hurd and Meadows, Ranking Members Kelly and Connolly, and members of the Committee. My name is Phaedra Chrousos, and I am the Commissioner of the Technology Transformation Service (TTS) at the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), which includes 18F. Thank you for inviting me to this hearing concerning 18F’s efforts to improve the way government uses information technology. GSA’s mission includes providing the best value in technology services to government and the American people, and the work of 18F is a vital part of this mission.

**What is 18F?**

18F is a fee-based digital consultancy inside GSA’s Technology Transformation Service. 18F’s mission is to make the government’s digital services simple, effective, and easier to use for the American people. GSA recruits cutting-edge technologists and designers from industry and the public sector to help drive efficiency and transparency, deliver cost savings, and help federal agencies buy, build, and deploy technology the way the private sector does today. Launched in March 2014 with a team of 15 staff, 18F has grown to more than 185 software engineers, designers, and other innovation specialists and support staff as demand for services has increased.

**What does 18F deliver?**

18F is working with agencies to change the way the government approaches technology in the following ways:

1. **We partner with agencies to build prototypes, web applications, and software that model ways to use modern technology methods and practices used by top technology companies.** For example, we partnered with

the Federal Election Commission to transform its legacy website with dense information and navigation difficulties. 18F launched beta.FEC.gov, a new website with an improved interface that provides better access to the public to a wide variety of data. This project embodies the way 18F works: a focus on data, a close partnership with stakeholders and users, building in the open, and the opportunity for the transformation of practices and processes with our partner agencies.

2. **We provide acquisition services to help our agency partners become smarter buyers of private sector technology services and products.** 18F has partnered with GSA's Federal Acquisition Service to award the Agile Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA), a contract that connects 18F and our agency partners to vendors, including a number of small businesses that specialize in agile delivery services. 18F is working closely with the BPA vendors to continue to use innovative approaches to improve the acquisition process for vendors and agencies alike to deliver results for our agency partners.
3. **We build shared technology platforms that can be used across the government to address common challenges.** For example, we are developing cloud.gov, a platform built on an industry-backed, open-source solution that helps our agency partners access cost-effective vendor-supplied cloud infrastructure services.
4. **We provide agency partners with education, workshops, training, outreach, and communication tools to help them develop core capacities for building and managing digital services in the government.** For example, in two days, our consultants worked with a team at the Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division to take the printed Field Operations Handbook and create an internal prototype of an online, searchable version.

To date, 18F has worked on more than 150 projects with 63 federal entities. Our work to date shows that the application of modern technology approaches is helping agencies spend more wisely and improve interactions between the American people and their government.

## **The Path Forward**

18F was launched as a start-up in government, and as is the case with start-ups in the private sector, we are learning to scale, mature, and improve 18F as an organization. We value transparency and welcome continued independent oversight of all our efforts.

The scale and scope of the technology challenges facing federal agencies are larger than 18F will be able to address on its own. Addressing the challenges we face in this area demands continued leadership and close partnership with the Office of Management and Budget, including the Office of the Federal Chief Information Officer, other federal agencies, and the private sector, which will continue to play a critical role in delivering the technology solutions agencies need.

GSA has often been the first to take the innovative lead when it comes to technology in the federal space, just as we were one of the first agencies to put the internet on every desk 20 years ago, and the first agency to move to the cloud five years ago. We look forward to continuing to provide cutting-edge technology support to our partner agencies and bringing the government's digital services in line with the best private sector services.

The American public deserves a government that is transparent, effective, responsive, and secure. As we continue to find ways to improve the way the federal government delivers, buys, uses, and shares technology and digital services, 18F, and all of GSA, will continue to play a strong role in improving and modernizing the way we do so.

GSA appreciates your interest in and oversight of this important program, and I will be happy to answer any of your questions.