

STATEMENT OF
DENISE TURNER ROTH
ACTING ADMINISTRATOR FOR U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
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Good morning Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Carper, and Members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to be here today.

Last year, I joined the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) as Deputy Administrator. The organization was in an ongoing period of significant, and much needed, change. In response to serious challenges at the agency, a series of reforms had been initiated to improve oversight, strengthen controls, reduce costs, and refocus the agency on its core mission.

As the Deputy Administrator, I was responsible for executing many of those reforms. I was charged with a wide array of oversight responsibilities from ensuring that revised travel and conference policies were followed to implementing a complex realignment and consolidation of major portions of the organization. While significant progress has been made, I am deeply committed to continue on this course of reform and press ahead with all of these important efforts. If confirmed, I will maintain my focus on continued execution of our ongoing reforms. These operational reforms are necessary to position GSA to successfully carry out its important mission: delivering the best value in real estate, acquisition, and technology services to government and the American people. This mission, always essential, is more important than ever before.

Since March of this year, I have served as Acting Administrator, and I have worked within the agency to seize the tremendous opportunities we have as an organization to introduce new technologies into the government, change the way we utilize the federal workspace, and modernize acquisitions. To most effectively accomplish this mission, GSA needs to proactively use our knowledge of the agencies we support to help them come up with the best solutions to support the American people.

In acquisitions, we know that agencies often develop their own solutions, either because they feel their requirements are so unique that existing solutions cannot meet them, or because they are not aware of good solutions that may currently exist. That is why I want to make sure that GSA is at the center of new efforts to dramatically improve the way the government purchases products and services by providing visibility into all of the solutions available to our Federal partners. We are moving forward with a government-wide effort known as Category Management. It is a proven approach used extensively by other public and private entities, and will enable the federal

government to buy smarter and more like a single enterprise. Under new initiatives such as Category Management, the federal government will identify core categories of spending, and develop specialized levels of expertise, share best practices, provide streamlined solutions, and manage supply and demand for each of the categories. The objective is to increase efficiency and effectiveness while reducing costs and redundancies.

To date, the Office of Management and Budget, in partnership with GSA, has identified ten government-wide categories of commonly purchased items as part of a larger move towards Category Management. The ten categories represent \$270 billion, or two-thirds, of the total federal government spend on common goods and services. A key preliminary step in Category Management is to understand the spending in each category. By bringing visibility to all of the acquisition solutions currently available in each of these categories, the Federal government will be able to reduce costly and duplicative contract vehicles; push agencies to adopt the best acquisition solutions that currently exist; and set up new and better acquisition vehicles where needed or where there is a gap.

I want to make sure that GSA continues making progress in hosting the available acquisition solutions in a far more searchable and usable form through the Common Acquisition Platform, or Acquisition Gateway. This website will be the government's go-to source for informative, agnostic, and reliable acquisition support and services. As one signal of the different approach GSA is taking to this effort, the site is being delivered in an agile manner, incorporating user-centric design so we can quickly respond to the needs of the acquisition community. These solutions are provided by Category in searchable "hallways" that group similar listings for ease of use and review. As more information is populated on available vehicles and the pricing achieved through them, the government will be able to be smarter and more deliberate in its acquisitions.

I also have heard questions from partner agencies about the pricing of GSA's acquisition vehicles. That is why it is one of my priorities that the agency is focused on transforming its 60-year old, Multiple Awards Schedule (MAS) program, to meet the current needs of Federal agencies. We are looking to provide government buyers with more competitive prices by reducing price variability across MAS contracts. We are doing this by looking at the current prices of identical products offered by suppliers through the MAS program to identify outlier pricing, and then working with MAS contractors to reduce the range of prices offered to government buyers.

This also is part of the reason I am interested in providing greater price transparency through our proposed transactional data rule, which will require vendors to report the price the federal government paid for an item or service. Understanding better what the government buys and the different prices that the government pays for similar products and services is vital to get the best value and reduce price. Using this information, GSA and partner agencies can negotiate better

prices and make more cost-effective acquisition decisions. By working with contractors to bring all offered prices into a reasonable range and providing transparency on these prices, GSA will ensure that MAS continues to be a competitive and widely used program for faster, easier, less-costly purchases and the vehicle of choice for both industry and government.

By providing greater transparency on the acquisition vehicles available to agencies, better technology to make transactions easier and more accessible, real pricing information on products and services, and continuously improving our acquisition offerings, GSA can provide significant value to government and the American people.

We also know that agencies struggle to come up with the best, most cost-effective solutions for developing information technology solutions. That is why we have established a digital delivery team of coders and designers, known as 18F, with the aim of making the government's digital and web services simple, effective, and easier to use for the American people. These individuals are bringing the leading practices of the private sector to the public sector: developing in an agile manner, building prototypes rapidly and putting them in the hands of users for feedback; measuring success not in terms of completion of a system, but through customer use; and scaling what works iteratively. Using this talent, we are working with agencies to help them build and deliver IT solutions that are more citizen-friendly, more responsive, and more cost-effective.

I want to continue working to ensure that GSA is also leading efforts to open government data to entrepreneurs and other innovators to fuel development of products and services that can drive economic growth. GSA operates Data.gov, the open government portal, which enables easy access to and use of more than 90,000 data collections from over 180 government agencies. By facilitating information transparency and access, GSA allows anyone, whether an individual or a business, to take public information and apply it in new and useful ways. A snapshot of the power of open data can be seen on Data.gov/Impact, which provides a list of companies leveraging open government data to power the economy.

By providing the tools and resources agencies and the public need, GSA can encourage better development of information technology across the Federal government.

In real estate, GSA has opportunities not only use of our knowledge of agencies to drive better solutions for them, but also has an opportunity to leverage our position in communities to act as a catalyst for economic development. GSA has a major presence in communities across the country, often determining where hundreds of jobs may be located or relocated. While these selections are driven by a competitive process focused on delivering the best value to the Federal government, we also must recognize the impact that such moves can have on communities. By partnering with State and local government, we can ensure that we are considering areas that align with that locality's long-term development goals.

Working with partner agencies, I often see challenges in developing the best, most achievable plans for optimizing an agency's real estate portfolio, as well as finding the resources to move forward on these plans. That is why I will continue working to make sure GSA plays a critical role in implementing the Administration's new Reduce the Footprint initiative. Utilizing data reported annually by agencies into the Federal Real Property Profile, agencies are currently developing initial plans for divestment of unneeded real estate. Over the next several weeks, GSA will work with all of these agencies to review these goals and offer additional ideas. These plans will bolster our efforts to identify new opportunities for consolidation and disposal, and I am committed to our goal of working more proactively with agencies to pursue projects that will more effectively achieve space reductions.

With a concerted focus on getting rid of unneeded real estate, applying all the tools available to us, and considering the long-term development goals of communities, GSA can be a part of driving significant savings and promoting economic growth across the country.

Leading at GSA starts with continuing to improve our internal operations. Utilizing this foundation of operational excellence, GSA can leverage the information we have about the agencies with which we work to proactively encourage adoption of acquisition, technology, and real estate solutions that provide the best value to government and the American people.

I have been honored to serve at GSA for the last seventeen months and, with your approval, I hope to have the honor of continuing to serve.