UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

STATEMENT OF
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CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER
U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

before the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF FEDERAL
PROGRAMS AND THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY & GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE

on

"A More Efficient and Effective Government: Examining Federal IT Initiatives and the IT
Workforce"

June 10, 2014

Chairman Tester, Ranking Member Portman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for inviting me to participate in today's hearing to examine the state of Federal information technology (IT) projects and the Federal Information Technology workforce. I am happy to be here with you today.

As Chief Information Officer (CIO) for the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), I am responsible for the IT and innovative solutions that support OPM's mission to recruit, retain, and honor a world class workforce. Director Katherine Archuleta tasked me with conducting a thorough assessment of the state of IT at OPM – including how existing systems are managed and how new projects are developed. This process has led us to identify numerous opportunities for improvement in the way we manage IT. Director Archuleta's goal is to put OPM at the forefront of IT innovation in the Federal Government.

During her confirmation process, including consultations with members of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Director Archuleta was made aware of opportunities for improvement in IT administration

at OPM and made IT among her top priorities. In her testimony, she stated her intent to develop a plan for modernizing the Agency's IT within 100 days of assuming office. Director Archuleta further committed to identifying new IT leadership, using existing agency expertise, and seeking advice from experts from inside Government and the private sector

Fulfilling the Director's promise, OPM released a Strategic IT Plan in March2014.   We developed the Strategic IT Plan to ensure our IT supports and aligns to our agency's Strategic Plan and that OPM's mission is fulfilled. It provides a framework for the use of data throughout the human resources lifecycle and establishes enabling successful practices and initiatives that define OPM's IT modernization efforts The plan also creates a flexible and sustainable Chief Information Officer (CIO) organization led by a strong senior executive with Federal experience in information technology, program management, and HR policy. OPM also understands that new IT implementation will be done in a way that leverages cybersecurity best practices and protects the personally identifiable information OPM is responsible for.

Taking a lifecycle approach, we will adopt a HR IT framework as a concept for sharing information among the various existing IT solutions and future capabilities at OPM, at other agencies, and in industry. We will provide a set of standards that will span the HR lifecycle and support information exchange. This framework will drive government and industry in creating solutions and supporting processes that provide high-quality, modern IT services and capabilities to citizens, Federal employees, and agencies, in a way that also ensures information sharing. HR IT solutions, whether developed by government or industry, will be able to share information while they support business processes and decisions. Also, by following the Strategic IT Plan, OPM will be better positioned to identify efficiencies and save resources on future IT projects, thereby allowing those resources to be re-allocated to other critical agency needs, including other IT projects. This plan will also help OPM prioritize how it allocates its IT resources and will help maximize its IT investments through collaborative and inclusive governance and IT leadership.

Director Archuleta's Strategic IT Plan encompasses IT systems across the HR lifecycle from USAJOBS to retirement processing. We seek to simplify USAJOBS to ease the burden on applicants and build the most highly talented workforce. USAJOBS is stable, running well and easily handling high volumes of

job announcements. USAJOBS averages 22 million visits per month, with an average of 24 million visits this past March and April. On average, over 90 million searches are conducted per month. We will continue to monitor and analyze the system, and incrementally refine features like its search and navigation functions. In FY2015 we plan to upgrade USA Staffing to create a more consistent and user-friendly application experience for the public. Ease of application is critically important considering that USA Staffing is processing over 250,000 applications each week.

Director Archuleta is making modernizing the retirement system a top priority. As such, OPM will move forward with progressive IT improvements for near term results, including a new Case Management System. While much of the retirement process remains paper-based, OPM has begun a gradual transition to a fully digital process. We seek to ensure data availability and accuracy across the lifecycle for faster retirement processing, increased accuracy of annuity calculations, and a better customer experience. We believe that incremental, progressive IT improvement will reduce the complexity of the challenge to a more manageable level. As with all IT initiatives, smaller, incremental changes reduce risk and provide more near term results, but big changes take time, and we cannot lose sight of the fact that we must begin now to understand how our IT systems must support future upgrades. As an example of how we are looking to the future, we are working with one of the payroll shared service centers to pilot receipt of data electronically. This eliminates the need for payroll providers to send paper individual retirement records. Once we complete the pilot, we will be in a position to work with the other payroll shared service providers to eliminate paper individual retirement records completely. Additionally, we are building a means by which that electronic data can automatically be fed into our annuity calculator, eliminating the need for an annuity specialist to re-enter data by hand. This increases accuracy and allows our staff to provide better customer support.

The flagship initiative of Director Archuleta's Strategic IT Plan is enterprise information management. Providing technology at the enterprise level will allow us to reduce duplication and save on licensing fees. Equally importantly, the enterprise initiatives will help us work better across programs and improve service to our stakeholders, including job seekers and retirees. In accordance with the Open Data Policy (OMB Memorandum M-13-13), we are inventorying our data and determining what data can be publicly released. We are also conducting other inventories, including one of business processes throughout OPM. These inventories will help us better understand our technology, information, and process

landscape to both successfully implement these initiatives and also find new opportunities to take an enterprise approach to deploying technology, using information, and conducting our work. Taken together, these initiatives serve other agencies and entities by providing clear HR data standards for service providers to follow, thereby improving interoperability and leading to cost avoidance.

In alignment with OPM's mission we offer a range of HR services to other agencies, such as USAJOBS, the USA Staffing talent acquisition system, USA Hire's assessment services, and USALearning's education and training services. We also regularly use other service providers' offerings, for example, the General Services Administration's payroll service. The clearer the standards, the easier it is to securely exchange data with and among these systems.

OPM also has responsibilities in connection with the February 2014 "Suitability and Security Processes Review: Report to the President," which was generated following the tragic September 16, 2013 shooting at the Navy Yard facility. OPM, as Suitability Executive Agent, is working with other agencies to leverage technology to shift to the use of a Continuous Evaluation (CE) approach and to develop a government-wide IT strategy to implement the new CE model. OPM conducts more than two million investigative actions each year for over 100 Federal agencies representing 95 percent of all background investigations, and we continually work with our agency customers to ensure the efficiency and quality of our investigations.

OPM is playing a leading role in the effort to formalize Federal IT program management. OPM worked with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to add the title "IT Program Manager" to the Job Family Standard for Information Technology, and to develop IT Program Manager competencies and the "IT Program Management Career Path Guide." The Federal Acquisition Certification for program and project managers (FAC-P/PMs) builds upon this work and adds core-plus specialized certifications, the first one being in the area of IT. This development support's the Administration's Smarter IT Delivery Agenda. The Smarter IT Delivery Agenda aims to increase customer satisfaction with top Government digital services; decrease the percentage of Federal Government IT projects that are delayed or over-budget; and increase the speed with which we hire and deploy qualified talent to work on Government IT projects.

OPM also understands that agencies may need flexibilities to meet their IT hiring needs. OPM has partnered with the CIO Council to communicate the various hiring and pay authorities available to attract and hire the talent needed. Over the years, OPM has provided agencies with a number of expedited hiring authorities where suitable justification has been given. This includes government-wide Direct-Hire Authority for select cybersecurity professionals in the Information Technology Management series. OPM is working with agencies to cut down on the timeline of an average hire from the posting of a vacancy announcement to bringing employees on-board. OPM can also help agencies more effectively evaluate applicants against job requirements with USA Hire, OPM's applicant assessment and testing system.

An important aspect of cultivating the Federal IT workforce includes anticipating cyber workforce needs and ensuring that the Federal Government is prepared to meet those needs. Pursuant to the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education, OPM supports the government-wide development of qualified Federal cyber personnel through workforce planning, recruitment, training and development, and other initiatives. This development is informed by routine data analysis that OPM conducts to assess the needs arising from the Federal cyber workforce, as well as agency progress toward meeting cyber workforce targets. In addition, OPM has launched the first-ever complete inventory of all cyber positions in the Federal Government, to be housed in our Enterprise Human Resources Information system. Agencies are currently working to populate this database with a designation code for all positions that conduct work related to cybersecurity. Through the Electronic Human Resources Integration (EHRI) data set, OPM and agencies will have clearer visibility on current and projected cyber workforce needs.

OPM's goal is to be at the forefront of IT innovation in the Federal Government. Director Archuleta is committed to reforming IT within OPM and utilizing OPM resources to improve IT across the Federal sector. We are excited about the release and implementation of our Strategic IT Plan and look forward to updating the committee of its progress. Furthermore, OPM continues to work with the CIO Council to provide guidance and training curriculum on Federal IT project management, and to educate agencies on their hiring flexibilities for critical IT positions.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today and I am happy to address any questions you may have.