

# The High Cost *of Poor* Citizen Service



FEDERAL ISSUE BRIEF

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## THE BIG ISSUE

Government needs to improve its customer service experience to meet rising expectations and to fulfill its mission.

Of the **325** federal mobile apps currently available, only **5%** of citizens actually use them and close to **60%** of citizens would rather pick up the phone than deal with government websites.

## THE STATUS QUO IS OBSOLETE



In 2017, federal agencies accounted for five of the 10 worst customer service providers across 21 major US industries.<sup>1</sup>



The 2018 American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) shows the federal government still lags 7 to 8 points behind the national average across all industries.<sup>2</sup>

500 federal employees surveyed in 2018 said compliance and approval processes took precedence over the user experience, with items requiring multiple chains of review and signatures by authorities in separate divisions.<sup>3</sup>



There are over 20,000 public-facing forms across the federal government, many of which are not accessible online.<sup>4</sup>

## PLAYERS AND POLICIES TO KNOW

### President's Management Agenda (PMA)

The Trump administration's 2018 policy blueprint prioritizes customer service reform, shared services, and results-oriented accountability.<sup>5</sup>

### GSA's Centers of Excellence (CoE)

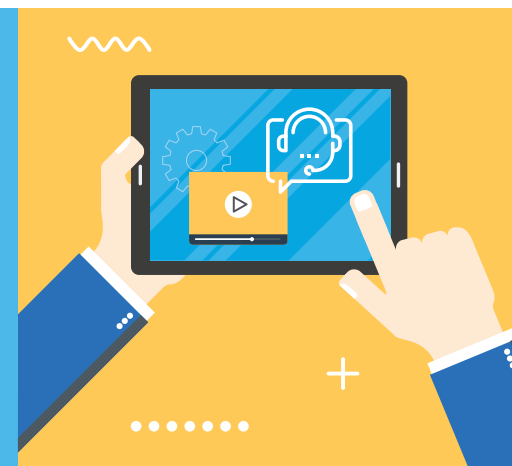
A multi-pronged effort to accelerate IT infrastructure across government by leveraging private sector innovation and existing government services.<sup>6</sup>

### Government Customer Service Accountability and Improvement Act of 2018

Would mandate the creation and implementation of customer experience metrics in agency performance plans.<sup>7</sup>

### The 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act (21st Century IDEA)

Would require federal agencies to modernize their websites, support the use of mobile devices, and accelerate electronic signatures and digital channels for citizens to access key services.<sup>8</sup>



“One of the federal government’s core responsibilities is to efficiently serve the American people. If the American people have a problem with customer service from a federal agency, they should have a quick and easy way to let their government know there is a problem.”<sup>9</sup>

-- Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.)



## WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF POOR CITIZEN EXPERIENCE?



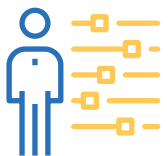
### THE LEADERSHIP GAP

Only a handful of agencies have designated Customer Experience (CX) officers with the clout to harness their workforce to create and pursue CX milestones.<sup>10</sup>



### NEGLECT OF CITIZEN-CENTRIC DESIGN

Of the 325 federal mobile apps currently available, only 5 percent of citizens actually use them. Close to 60 percent would rather pick up the phone than deal with government websites.<sup>11</sup>



### MISALIGNED PRIORITIES

80 percent of federal respondents surveyed in 2018 said their agency prioritizes perfecting technology over quality of the citizen experience.<sup>12</sup> According to the PMA, government employees are rarely trained to view citizens as ‘customers’ and often feel undervalued when stationed in citizen-facing roles.<sup>13</sup>



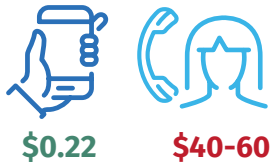
## THE BOTTOM LINE

**Agency efforts to ‘go digital’ must be driven not only by technology, but also by an acute understanding of the processes, needs, and desires of citizens and public servants.**

# RISK OF INACTION



Elevating the citizen experience is needed to fulfill government's core mission while being a good steward of taxpayer dollars:



## WASTING TAXPAYER DOLLARS

According to data from the IRS, in-person or live assistance calls to the agency cost taxpayers between \$40 and \$60 on average, while self-service digital transactions cost only \$0.22 on average.<sup>14</sup>



## INCREASED OVERSIGHT

Failure to improve the citizen experience invites increased oversight from Inspectors General, GAO, and risks severing financial support from Congress. Since 2017, OIG have issued 50 separate reports on the customer experience at various federal agencies.<sup>15</sup>



## INCREASED WORKFORCE CHURN

The federal government already has a difficult time attracting and retaining younger employees. The average tenure of millennials in government is 3.8 years.<sup>16</sup> Many experience burnout from non value-added highly bureaucratic work, which could be eliminated by refocusing on the citizen experience.



## SERVICE DELAYS

Most importantly, a poor citizen experience risks delays to the services that Americans depend on most. The botched rollout of Healthcare.gov is a classic example of ignoring the citizen experience and paying the price.<sup>17</sup>



## How DocuSign helps agencies streamline paperwork and improve their citizen experience:

You want to offer citizens and businesses the best and most expedient service, but inefficient processes and paper-based procedures lead to long delays in delivering on your agency's mission. DocuSign can enable you to easily and cost-effectively digitize workflows, instantly deliver and track forms, and reduce turnaround times for those in need.

DocuSign is authorized by the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program, or FedRAMP, and is listed on the FedRAMP marketplace with a Government Community Cloud deployment model. FedRAMP uses a standardized approach to assess, monitor, and authorize cloud computing products and services for use in government agencies.

Use DocuSign for many of the document-intensive tasks your government organization tackles every day, including:

### Citizen-facing processes

- ➔ Application for benefits
- ➔ Loan and grant applications
- ➔ Correspondence management
- ➔ Case management
- ➔ Job offer letters

### Internal-facing processes

- ➔ Interagency agreements
- ➔ Contracts/procurement
- ➔ Employee documentation (e.g., I-9, W-4, S-144)
- ➔ Inspections/auditing
- ➔ Facilities management



### DEPLOY A CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE FRAMEWORK

Federal agencies need to strategize and communicate to their employees what a CX culture looks like in practice. Fortunately, there are some excellent resources available to kickstart the process. The American Council for Technology provides a Customer Experience Playbook that includes guidance on creating a CX framework to fit each agency's needs.<sup>18</sup>

GSA and Agriculture have also made public their Statement of Work detailing roles and responsibilities of Digital Services members aiding in the Centers of Excellence initiative.<sup>19</sup>



### AUDIT CURRENT PROCESSES TO IDENTIFY PAIN POINTS

In 2018, GSA's IT Modernization team embedded within the Department of Agriculture to launch its Centers of Excellence initiative. The first phase saw officials inventory a range of problems: contact centers were host to "a hodgepodge of disjointed websites and phone numbers for users to call for help."

The product of this audit — a Journey Map that reflects the experience of producers and loan officers as they move through a typical application — is helping USDA identify pain points, improve touchpoints, and implement shortcuts to processing hurdles.<sup>21</sup>



### EMPOWER EMPLOYEES TO BE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE CHAMPIONS

Equipping public-facing employees with the authority to enact positive service changes sends a powerful signal to the whole workforce. USDA, for example, handpicked 40 members of their staff to be CX 'champions' and create strategies for how to improve and measure customer experience in the year ahead.

In the absence of funding to support new digital services, agencies can work with what they have by incentivizing their best talent to create a model for success that permeates through the rest of the organization.<sup>20</sup>



### PRIORITIZE AUTOMATING HIGH VOLUME MANUAL PROCESSES

Agencies can utilize self-service channels to save costs by automating repetitive, manual processes. Last year, IRS rolled out its new app IRS2go, which gives citizens a digital channel to answer the most common question - "Where's my refund?" - instead of burdening agency phone lines.

The app reached **23 million downloads** as of February 2018, generating huge savings for the agency and a noted increase in citizen satisfaction.<sup>22</sup>

## END NOTES

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