

## [GSA Announces HUD RFIs, OPM Centers of Excellence](#)

A brief background on GSA's Centers of Excellence, including quick updates on the organization's progress with federal agencies HUD and OPM.

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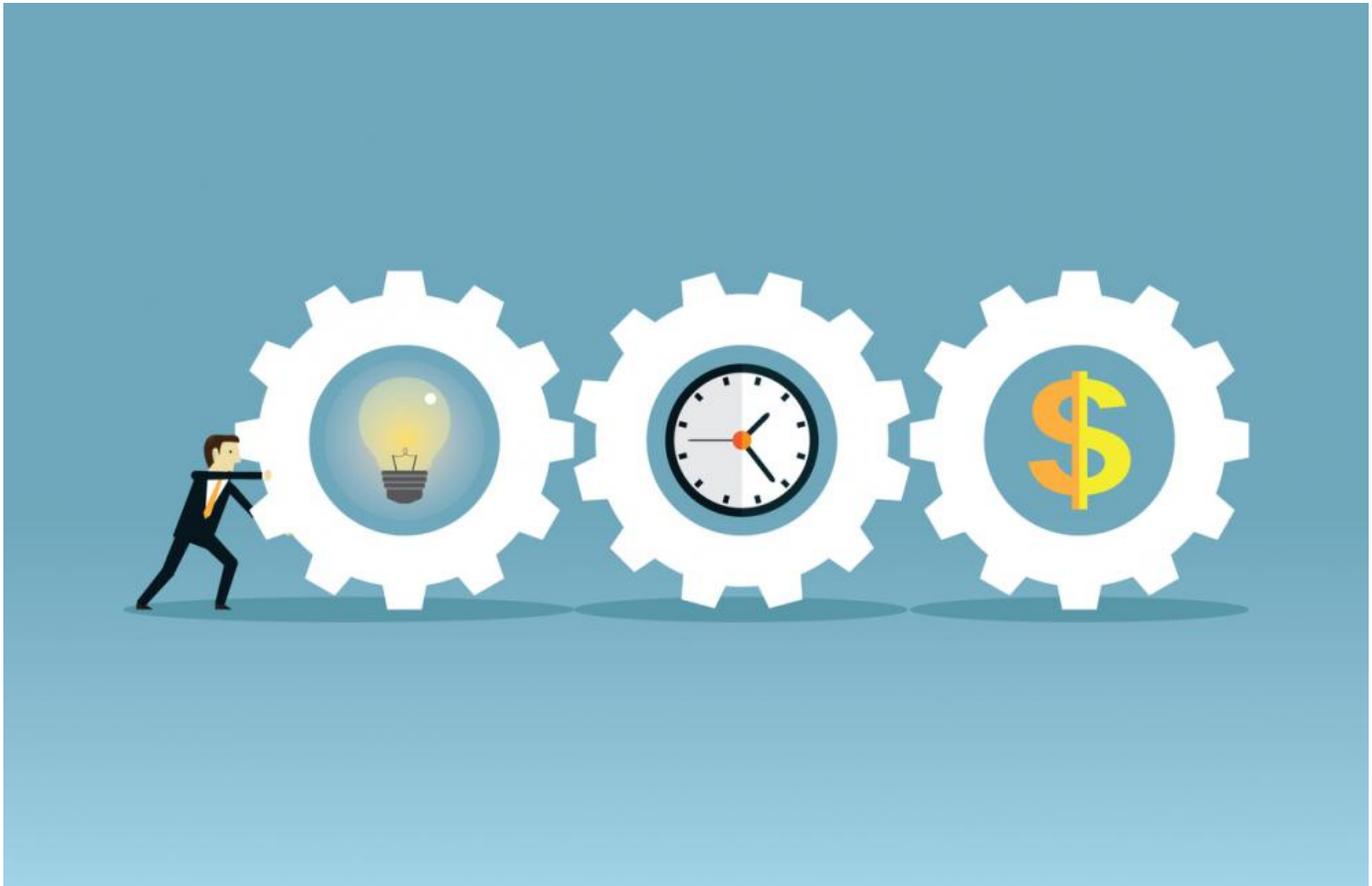


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The General Services Administration's second phase of its Housing and Urban Development Center of Excellence is seeking input from industry regarding improving the agency's procurement methods before going forward with an IT modernization and transformation strategy at HUD.

Six IT modernization needs were identified for HUD in the previous phase of the program: improve cloud adoption, contact center support, customer service experience and data analytics processes. Examples include quicker migration from

paper-based forms to web-based forms, establishing a centralized knowledge-based contact center, and creating an Office of the Chief Data Officer to “manage data as a strategic asset across HUD,” according to an agency press release.

“We want to help our agency partners make modernization the norm at their agencies so they can continue to keep up with advances in technology and more easily deliver their critical missions,” GSA Centers of Excellence Executive Director Bob De Luca said in the release.

GSA introduced its Centers of Excellence in October 2017 within the agency's Technology Transformation Services. It was stood up as part of the White House Office of American Innovation's (OAI) request to improve federal IT modernization efforts, an effort that is further emphasized as one of the three key drivers of transformation in the [President's Management Agenda](#).

The request in government IT, specifically, was for “an internal organization that could centralize technical knowledge and transformation expertise that could be embedded within a department and assist in large-scale, holistic transformation,” wrote former White House Fellow Jeff McLean in a 2018 [case study report](#). This centralized change management resource, in brief, would allow agencies to deliver government services more efficiently by accelerating IT modernization, reducing legacy IT spending and rapidly spreading documented best-practices throughout agencies, bringing agency transformation up-to-speed with private-sector-level progress.

Designed as separate IT modernization centers, each possessing their own distinct area of expertise, the five established centers ultimately overlap in their efforts to support partner agencies' overall transformation processes. They include cloud service adoption, contact center operations, customer service operations, service delivery data analytics and IT infrastructure optimization.

Once a partner agency is established, center teams comprising tech official from GSA deploy to the select agency to apply private-sector thinking and solutions best aligned with the agency's needs. The two stages teams work through include an initial phase involving a discovery and assessment period of the agency's needs to build a robust success strategy and a second phase, the implementation period of that plan.

In its latest move, GSA has partnered with the Office of Personnel Management,

marking OPM as [the third Center of Excellence](#) agency and the beginning of the agency's "sprint-based discovery phase," or pre-Phase I. According to GSA, the agencies plan to focus on areas of improvement that include workforce planning, IT planning and governance, mainframe and disaster recovery planning, and retirement services technology.

"Aging IT infrastructure at OPM has put the agency in an unsustainable position and hurts OPM's critical human capital mission," OPM Acting Director Margaret Weichert said in a statement. "By partnering with GSA — a proven leader in federal IT and technology contracting — through the COEs, we are taking steps toward long-overdue transformation in OPM's IT infrastructure and operations."

The centers had two agency launches to date, including the program's first lighthouse agency, the Department of Agriculture, in October 2017, and HUD in September 2018. The centers will continue expanding agency collaboration and outreach throughout this year.

Look for an upcoming podcast GovCast episode with [Center of Excellence Director Matt Montano](#).

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