

[GovCast, a Podcast about the People Behind the Headlines, Launches This Week](#)

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This week marks an exciting milestone for GovernmentCIO Media: the rollout of our weekly podcast GovCast, aimed at highlighting the tech personalities behind the headlines.

GovCast will tell the personal stories of the government and industry leaders transforming the public sector, and the bits and pieces typically not covered by federal IT publications. We'll share untold stories about how these influencers got to where they are, their passions in and outside of technology and the roadblocks they've conquered. You'll find these stories are not always what you'd expect them to be.

Slated for launch on Wednesday, the inaugural episode features Jose Arrieta, who runs acquisition at the Health and Human Services Department. His career didn't start in government but on the basketball court. That professional path took a dramatic turn on Sept. 11, 2001, when his coach came into the gym where Arrieta was practicing, saying two planes had hit the World Trade Center.

As Arrieta watched the event unfold on TV, he realized being an athlete no longer mattered.

"I said to myself, you know, I got to do something different with my life, and I decided to move to Washington, D.C.," Arrieta told us. "And I just kind of decided I wasn't going to do . . . basketball and [instead] try to have an impact."

He didn't give up basketball entirely, however.

In D.C., Arrieta began pursuing his MBA while also coaching a traveling basketball team that played 11 months of the year and practiced twice weekly. He kept that going until he and his wife decided it was enough.

That life as a college athlete and a coach did give him some important lessons to draw from when he eventually ended up in the government, Arrieta said.

"Every play, you may win something on it and you may lose something on it," he said. "You really have to be mentally resilient and grind it out. And there's always somebody better . . . and I think it's made me very resilient. I'm not afraid to be laughed at, I'm not afraid to miss a shot."

In his role at HHS, Arrieta's sports background proved especially helpful. Rather than scouring for outside IT talent for an internal HHS blockchain program, he leveraged the skills of the people he already had on his team. But he doesn't think of it as training and educating his workforce. Rather, he's "creating an experience," he said, another approach Arrieta learned from coaching.

"We're trying to create an experience for our workforce, so that they can learn about blockchain and what these technologies can do in a natural way," Arrieta said. "And you create an experience through action."

To hear the rest of Arrieta's story, make sure to listen to the inaugural episode of GovCast on Wednesday. He'll also talk about blockchain and artificial intelligence, and how emerging technologies are changing government.

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