



U.S. Department of Labor
Digital Government Strategy (DGS) Milestone #6.3 – **Improving Digital Services**

Last Updated: May 22, 2013

Introduction

This document summarizes the U.S. Department of Labor’s (DOL) overall status and approach for implementing DGS Milestone #6.3, *Improving Digital Services*, which the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requires federal agencies to “ensure all new digital services follow services and customer experience improvement guidelines.”

Background

On May 23, 2012, the Federal Chief Information Officer (CIO) initiated the DGS entitled *Building a 21st Century Platform to Better Serve the American People*. The primary goal of the DGS is to leverage digital technology and information to better manage and improve the delivery of digital services across the Federal Government. The DGS describes ten agency milestones that are to be implemented within 12 months of the release of the strategy document.

To ensure the successful implementation of the DGS milestones, the DOL Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) and Office of Public Affairs (OPA) are leading and working collaboratively in implementing the Department’s DGS and complying with OMB’s DGS milestone requirements.

The scope of DOL’s digital services include: open data and content on DOL’s Internet and Intranet websites, social media sites, public DOL communications, public API, public mobile app services, as well as digital services associated with internal DOL IT systems and services. OPA is responsible for overseeing and managing the Department’s digital services and data management activities including the Department’s Internet and Intranet websites, social media sites, public DOL communications content, public Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), as well as public mobile application (app) development activities and mobile app services. The OCIO is responsible for overseeing and managing the Department’s digital services and data management activities associated with the internal agency IT investments.

Overall Status

Based on OMB’s DGS guidance and reporting instructions, DOL’s status for milestone #6.3 is: **Complete as of May 15, 2013**. It is important to note that activities associated with this

milestone will be ongoing to ensure all new DOL digital services follow the services and customer experience improvement guidelines as described in the next section.

Approach

This section describes DOL's approach to utilizing the services and customer experience improvement guidelines to improve DOL's digital services.

In response to DGS Milestone #6.1, the Digital Services Advisory Group and the Federal Web Managers Council developed ten Guidelines for Improving Digital Services and Customer Experience. The Department of Labor is using the guidelines for measuring our progress towards improving the customer experience by improving DOL's digital services. The following is a summary description of DOL's activities and overall status for each of the ten guidelines:

Guideline 1: Digital Strategy – Ongoing Improvement

DOL produced its Information Resources Management (IRM) Strategic Plan providing the Department's Information Technology (IT) vision, mission, and strategic goals for the next three to five years. In addition, DOL updated its Enterprise Roadmap (ER) which describes DOL's current IT business architecture, target architecture, and the transition strategy being pursued to achieve the target architecture for FY2013. A component of both the IRM Strategic Plan and ER is DOL's Digital Strategy including an updated IT Governance structure including the DGS. These two documents also summarize DOL's API development initiative and open data services.

Guideline 2: Governance, Policies, and Standards – Ongoing Improvement

DOL's IT Governance structure is described in DGS Milestone #4.2 - *Digital Government Governance* including various organizational entities and the associated IT committees and forums that comprise the structure. DOL has a number of existing policies, standards, and procedures in place that address and support the delivery and implementation of quality digital services to the American public. Additional DGS related policies, standards, and guidance will be added as necessary and applicable including for example policy and guidance with respect to the May 9, 2013, Executive Order – Making Open and Machine Readable the New Default for Government Information and the associated OMB Open Data Policy, M-13-13.

Governance for DOL's websites is described in Secretary's Order 2-2005 (Delegation of Authority and Assignment of Responsibility for DOL Enterprise Communications Initiative). The Secretary's Order defines the lead role OPA plays in public communications via the Web, Web applications and mobile applications and provides the structure for OPA and DOL's agencies to create policies and guidelines for these communications channels. OPA's governance structure

includes three tiers: Policy, Programs and Technical. All Web-related policies are under review with a specific focus on improving the customer experience.

Guideline 3: Cross-Agency Collaboration and Shared Services and Tools – Ongoing Improvement

DOL is committed to utilizing shared services including existing eGov related shared services (i.e., Benefits.gov and Disability.gov) and internal shared services (e.g., the GSA E-Gov Travel Service (eTS), eCPIC for IT investment budget management, and the Departmental Electronic Budgeting System (DEBS), which is utilized internally and by several federal agencies supporting their budget management activities).

In July 2012, the DOL implemented the USA Search tool across DOL.gov, replacing an in-house search engine that had become costly to maintain while providing sub-standard search results. Additionally, DOL transitioned to the Google Analytics solution, replacing a costly Web metrics solution contract.

DOL has established an open government public website where it shares data, datasets, source code, and software development kits (SDKs) to support the development of mobile Applications and Application Programming Interfaces (APIs). DOL has also released several mobile applications (which can be found at <http://www.dol.gov/dol/apps/>) and a “Was This Page Helpful?” web application. Each of these applications’ source code can be found on GitHub (i.e., a software development collaboration website for open source and private software development projects; <https://github.com/>) as repositories that the public can easily download and modify or incorporate into their own projects. DOL is currently working with GSA on code-sharing projects and education efforts for other federal agencies. DOL plans to continue cross-agency collaboration, implement and/or utilize shared services and/or tools going forward to leverage the enhanced capabilities, economies of scale, and operational efficiencies associated with these activities. For example, DOL is researching the feasibility of leveraging the myUSA service.

Guideline 4: Technical Considerations – Ongoing Improvement

Although somewhat decentralized, the Department’s websites, social media sites, public DOL communications content, APIs, as well as mobile app development activities and services are managed under one set of DOL established guidelines and standards that are followed by all agencies. As our channels of communication have expanded, additional standards have been added. For example, as DOL was developing mobile applications, standards – stressing the importance of designing mobile apps according to the relevant operating system GUI principles – were created then shared throughout the Department.

Guideline 5: Content Quality – Ongoing Improvement

DOL has implemented various processes and/or tools to support and empower DOL's agencies to improve the quality of their website content. For example, DOL provides:

- **Website Monitoring** - Daily link checking reports are provided to the agencies so that website issues can be identified and fixes can be applied quickly.
- **Content Review Guidance** – DOL has developed content review procedures, which are shared with the agencies. They provide specific guidance for streamlining websites and deleting unused or duplicative content.
- **Approval Process** - Agencies have developed content approval processes to ensure that content is accurate, timely and authoritative.
- **Website Standards** - A common look and feel has been applied across all public websites to ensure a consistent experience for customers.
- **Web analytics** - All agencies have access to Web analytics information that can be used to evaluate their most popular and least used content.

Guideline 6: Open, Sharable Content – Ongoing Improvement

Most public-facing department websites are manually maintained using HTML. DOL is implementing the open source Drupal platform to incorporate improved accessibility features, responsive design, easily repurposed content and properly tagged content. As DOL moves to this new platform, each DOL agency will be required to conduct a full content audit based on the relevance of the information and website metrics gained from our Web analytics solution.

DOL has been a leader in making data available via our Open Government website and our one API portal that provides access to 175 data tables within 32 datasets for easy public consumption. Additionally, software development kits (SDKs) were created for six platforms allowing novice application developer's quick entrée into using DOL data. One recent development was the revision of the SDKs to work with data from more than 25 other federal agencies and cross-agency initiatives. Support for APIs from additional federal agencies will be added over time.

Guideline 7: Usability and Accessibility – Ongoing Improvement

DOL has made great strides in improving the accessibility of our digital services. More than two years ago, DOL added a full time resource for accessibility, and created an accessibility working group with DOL agencies to create an accessibility policy.

DOL participated in the General Service Administration's (GSA) First Fridays Usability Testing Program to determine some quick-fix items that would improve the customer experience. The

results were very useful and several user experience items were updated based on the testing. We anticipate revising the website interface as we move to the Drupal platform to take advantage of new content repurposing capabilities and different ways to display navigation.

Guideline 8: Privacy and Security – Implemented

DOL visitor privacy and security is a high priority at DOL. In accordance with DOL’s Privacy Policy, no information is collected from visitors without their consent. Tier 2 persistent cookies are used only for Web metrics collection.

DOL’s primary website, DOL.gov, is protected by a content delivery network that shields the Web server from direct interaction with our users, minimizing the possibility of a denial of service attack while speeding up content delivery to the end user and our Web applications employ an additional layer of protection.

Guideline 9: User Feedback – Ongoing Improvement

DOL employs metrics from several sources to determine how our digital products are used:

- Google Analytics (Website Metrics)
- Add This (Content Shares)
- Gov Delivery (Email Subscription Rates/Open Rates)
- Customer Satisfaction Survey (User Feedback)
- Customer Contact (User Feedback)
- Social Media Tools
 - Facebook (Insights)
 - YouTube (Insights)
 - Twitter (Twitter Metrics)
- Mobile App Stores (Downloads/Ratings)

DOL has incorporated a website page rating tool called “Was this page helpful?” to gain insight into customer reactions to individual portions of content on the various DOL websites. Agency website managers monitor this feedback on a regular basis and create quarterly reports on identifiable trends and actions taken to improve website content and submit these reports to the Customer Service Program Office for review. The tool asks for a simple “yes” or “no” answer to the basic question and then provides the user with a text field to supply more information. These comments lead to some quick fixes and to some longer-term goals for website improvement.

Guideline 10: Evaluation – Ongoing Improvement

DOL is using guidance from GSA (e.g. the Web Metrics Toolkit) to build a better feedback and improvement loop for the metrics we are gathering.

For the “Was this page helpful?” tool, DOL’s Customer Service Program Office (CSPO) collects quarterly feedback from DOL agencies on external comments and identifies trends leading to changes in DOL’s website.

Next Steps

DOL plans to continue its efforts to improve its digital services and the overall customer experience associated with its services and use the guidelines for measuring our progress.