

Labor Wants Platform for Mobile Computing and Open Data

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The Department of Labor is requesting additional IT funds for FY 2015 to develop a platform for mobile computing and open data, and build on its ongoing IT modernization initiative.

The Digital Government Integrated Platform (DGIP) is designed to complete another set of prerequisite and basic IT capabilities department-wide to include VOIP, VTC, and wireless access in Labor national, regional and field office locations. The platform would be used by all agencies at Labor to build and deploy mobile computing and data sharing applications. The FY 2015 Exhibit 53 IT budget request shows Labor asking for \$9 million in FY 2015 for the effort.

However, the fate of the initiative rests with the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies spending bill which could be stalled for months. No draft of the bill is available and no markup has been scheduled.

Labor strives to promote the welfare of job seekers, wage earners, and retirees in the US, but in recent years has been somewhat hampered by lack of new IT tools. Despite the challenges, Labor staff members have been able to launch several new initiatives. Earlier this year, the department successfully moved 17,000 employees to a cloud-based e-mail environment.

FCW recently spoke with Labor's Deputy CIO Dawn Leaf about the DGIP effort. According to Leaf, "...using the platform would save us about 50 percent, than if the agencies went out and built it and bought it individually." The majority of costs savings will come from the reduced need for systems integration. "Sometimes people think because you're using cloud that it's simpler, but it's not really. Your external cloud provider will have requirements, all of your suppliers will have requirements and you'll have to integrate them." Cost savings from DGIP will come from deploying the platform department-wide rather than individually at each agency, cutting down on integration costs.

Leaf stated that the initial stage of the design platform is complete. "The hardest part might be over – assuming funding is made available," she said.