



Fall 2020

# Improving Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery

Overview

# A growing consensus across government recognizes the importance of experience

Whether seeking a loan, Social Security benefits, Veterans' benefits, or other services provided by the Federal Government, Americans expect Government services to be efficient, intuitive, and responsive to their needs, just like services from leading private-sector organizations.

Yet on the 2019 American Customer Satisfaction Index, the Federal Government remains the lowest-ranked sector, lagging over seven points below average

In Forrester's 2020 index (at right), the Federal government raised to its highest average yet, though still ranked last behind utilities, airlines, and insurance companies. Several HSPs made strong gains.



**Federal government**



RANK			PERFORMANCE	
2020	2019	BRAND	2020	2019
1	1	National Park Service (NPS)	77.2*	73.8
2	2	United States Postal Service (USPS)	69.6	67.6
3	6	Bureau of Consular Affairs	66.8*	61.7
4	3	Tricare	66.5	66.0
5	4	Medicare	64.4	62.5
6	10	Medicaid	63.5*	59.6
7	9	US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)	62.9*	59.8
<b>Industry average</b>			<b>61.1*</b>	<b>59.7</b>
Very poor (0-54)    Poor (55-64)    OK (65-74)    Good (75-84)    Excellent (85-100)				

RANK			PERFORMANCE	
2020	2019	BRAND	2020	2019
8	8	Small Business Administration (SBA)	60.7	59.9
9	5	Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)	60.6	62.1
10	7	Social Security Administration (SSA)	59.0	60.2
11	11	Transportation Security Administration (TSA)	57.3	59.4
12	13	Internal Revenue Service (IRS)	56.2*	53.0
13	12	Department of Education (ED)	52.4	53.4
14	14	HealthCare.gov	51.5	50.9
15	15	USAJOBS.gov	46.9	46.5
Very poor (0-54)    Poor (55-64)    OK (65-74)    Good (75-84)    Excellent (85-100)				

\*Statistically significant difference over previous year

## Key Takeaways

**Despite Gains, Federal CX Remains Weak**  
The 15 federal agencies and programs in Forrester's CX Index earned an average score of 61.1. That's a gain of 1.4 points from 2019 and Washington's highest score ever. Unfortunately, the federal average is still the lowest of the 14 verticals that we studied. Although five agencies' scores had statistically significant increases this year, 73% of agencies still fall into the poor or very poor category.

**Poor Federal CX Hurts Mission Performance**  
Customer experience (CX) quality affects six customer behaviors that affect agencies' abilities to accomplish their missions. Weak federal CX leaves customers unwilling to trust agencies, comply with federal directives, seek authoritative information, apply for optional services, speak well of agencies, or forgive them for mistakes.

**Agencies Fail On Key CX Drivers**  
We studied the effects of 47 CX drivers, then grouped them into seven thematic categories. We discovered that agencies struggle with all seven, including the three most influential: offices, customer service, and services.



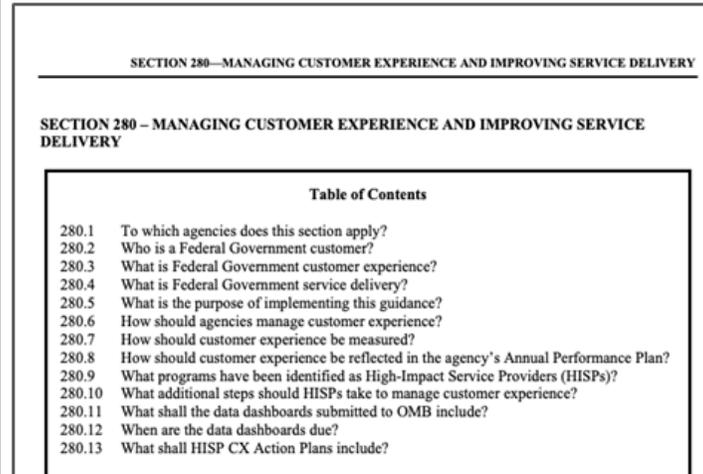
# Recent policy and legislation changes have made customer experience a focal point



Reform Plan



President's Management Agenda



Office of Management and Budget Circular A-11 Section 280



21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act (IDEA)



**Improving experiences  
improves trust in  
government**



# Improving customer experience is worth the investment, driving critical outcomes for government agencies around the world



Increase trust



Achieve stated missions



Meet or exceed financial goals



Reduce risk



Deepen employee engagement

## Across the globe ...

**Satisfied** customers are

9X

more likely to trust government

**Satisfied** customers are

9X

more likely to agree agencies achieve their mission

**Dissatisfied** customers are

2X

more likely to reach out for help 3+ times

**Dissatisfied** customers are

2X

more likely to publicly express dissatisfaction

**Long-term org success** is

50%

driven by its health, and is mutually reinforced by CX

# We're working towards a vision of a 21st century service delivery organization

## **Understand customer needs first.**

Invite the public, agency staff, and other stakeholders to participate in journey mapping efforts to better understand the moment an individual or business interacts with government to accomplish a task and enable actual user needs to drive problem solving and co-creation, leading to better solution design.

## **Streamline the navigation of government.**

Build on customer needs identified to create optimal experiences by taking a holistic view of the environment, actors, materials, and channels in an interaction.

## **Build digitally, iterate, and adapt continuously.**

When it comes time to build, acquire, and implement, we must accept that perfection will never be achieved at the start. Agile development can create mechanisms to continually collect data on performance and real-time feedback from customers and employees. Forms can be accessed, completed, and submitted online and on a mobile device.

## **Create accountability and transparency.**

Adopt a whole of government view of managing customer experiences and coordinate journeys across agencies and levels of government, providing accountability structures for experiences that cross organizational silos. Services create transparency and communicate with customers at each step of a process, customer-facing federal programs collect customer feedback consistent with OMB standards and publish that data through Performance.gov.



# We're starting with 25 of the nation's highest impact service providers (HISPs)

## Department of Agriculture

U.S. Forest Service  
Farm Service Agency  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

## Department of Commerce

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (Trademarks)  
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (Patents)

## Department of Education

Federal Student Aid

## Department of Health & Human Services

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (Health Insurance Marketplace)  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (Medicare)

## Department of Treasury

Internal Revenue Service

## Department of Homeland Security

Transportation Security Administration  
U.S. Customs and Border Protection  
Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Federal Emergency Management Authority

## Department of Housing and Urban Development

## Department of Interior

Bureau of Trust Funds Administration  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

## Department of Labor

Occupational Safety & Health Administration  
Office of Worker Compensation Programs

## Department of State

Bureau of Consular Affairs

## Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration  
Veterans Benefits Administration

## Office of Personnel and Management

Federal Employment Services  
Retirement Services

## Social Security Administration

## Small Business Administration

Field Operations

## Interagency Initiative

Recreation.gov (U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Archives)



# OMB Circular A-11 Section 280 institutionalizes CX practices and measurement

SECTION 280—MANAGING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY

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Office of Management and Budget  
Circular A-11 Section 280



Conduct an **annual self-assessment** against CX maturity model



Collect **customer feedback across government-wide metrics** and report quarterly, through public-facing dashboards



Develop **action plans** in line with annual agency strategy and budget efforts to improve customer experience maturity and measures



# We established government-wide CX measures

## Trust

*Ex. This interaction increased my trust in [Program/Service name]  
I trust [Agency/Program/Service name] to fulfill our country's commitment to [relevant population].*

## Satisfaction

*Ex: Please rate your experience [5 star option].  
I am satisfied with the service I received from [program/service name].*



Trust and Experience Drivers	Driver Sub-Categories
<b>Reliability + Consistency</b>	Effectiveness / Value My need was addressed / My issue was resolved. / I found what I needed. / My question was answered.
	Ease / Simplicity It was easy to complete what I needed to do. / It was easy to find what I needed.
	Efficiency / Speed It took a reasonable amount of time to do what I needed to do. / I found what I needed on the site quickly.
	Equity / Transparency I was treated fairly / I understand what was being asked of me throughout the process.
<b>Transparency</b>	Employee Interaction / Warmth / Helpfulness / Competence Employees I interacted with were helpful. / The Call Center Representative was committed to solving my problem.
<b>Humanity</b>	



# We're working with HISPs to map how they manage their "services"

## Occasion

**(the why)** A customer\* situation and goal. Can be written as a story describing their intent or a life event. Include information on the scale of the demand or impact of the problem and characteristics of the person.

\* = 'customers' are individuals or companies seeking to be served by your agency

## High-Impact Service

**(verb)** the process a customer goes through - and the sum of the help provided by an agency and it's partners throughout - to obtain or make use of the offering.

*The service is made up of...*

## Offering or Objective

**(noun)** Product, good, or value received / task completed, e.g., passport, flu shot, loan, tax payment, progress through a border checkpoint

### Channels

**(places)** Where to access or interact with the service, e.g., communication letters, websites, contact centers

### Roles + Operations

**(people)** Tasks to perform and who does do them, e.g., concierge, county office employee, auditor, chat bot

### Tools + Technologies

**(things)** Foundational building blocks for delivering services, e.g., systems, tools, physical capital



# What's a Federal "service"?

Occasion	Offering	Service	Service Type
April 15th	Tax Payment	Online filing	<b>Compliance:</b> Completing required actions such as filing taxes, submitting information for or engaging with an auditor, environmental reporting, or completing a survey mandated by law
I'm traveling internationally	Passport	Passport Application / Renewal	<b>Administrative:</b> Requesting or renewing items that do not require an extensive eligibility determination or multi-stage review processes such as getting a license, passport, or social security card.
I'm taking over my grandparents' farm	Access to Financing	Microloan Program	<b>Benefits:</b> Applying for or progressing through more complex government processes to determine eligibility and degree of benefit such as immigration, Medicare, Veterans' Health services, or a small business loan.
I want to take my kids on a vacation	Parks Pass	Vacation Planner (recreation.gov)	<b>Recreation:</b> Utilizing a public space such as national parks, historical sites, or visiting museums
I had a child	Vaccine Recommendations	CDC Vaccine Schedule App	<b>Informational:</b> Providing authoritative knowledge-based resources to the public such as designing labels, releasing warnings, requiring disclosures, or providing health recommendations.
I'm planning my company's growth strategy	American Housing Survey Data	Census Data Release	<b>Data and Research:</b> Conducting or funding research, maintaining and preserving artifacts, collecting, analyzing, reporting, and sharing data
I have unexplained fees on my credit card statement	Legal recourse	Financial product complaint reporting	<b>Regulatory:</b> Providing clear guidance to support commerce, transportation, employment rules, workplace safety, public safety (e.g., ensuring clean water, safe medicines); enabling reporting of grievances (e.g., consumer protection)



# HISPs at diverse points in CX maturity have taken actions to improve experiences



For the first time, SBA is conducting a customer experience survey through its 68 district offices, the point of delivery for most SBA programs and services



Monitoring search terms and call-center questions, *recreation.gov* discovered that the term “walk-up” was confusing to users on their site; changing that language to “first-come, first-serve” resulted in a 78% reduction in user searches and user comments



NextGen FSA consolidated multiple websites into a single, digital front door: StudentAid.gov. With this new site, students, parents, and borrowers will be able to access all the information and tools they currently use through an improved interface



The Office of the Special Trustee of the American Indians is in the midst of its first-ever customer journey mapping effort to visualize the “current state” of the beneficiaries' journey as they interact with OST at all touchpoints and through multiple channels



The Bureau of Consular Affairs has empowered certain front-line employees (even below the GS-13 level) with delegated authority to make decisions on opening a passport agency during the weekend or after hours for U.S. citizens who need to quickly reach family members abroad in extreme scenarios.



The General Services Administration launched *Touchpoints*, a low-cost, simple, and secure survey tool that enables agencies to easily spin up feedback surveys, with GSA managing a central PRA clearance averaging 2 days to cleared



Over 90% of outpatient customers of the Veterans Health Administration trust the VA to fulfill the country's commitment to Veterans



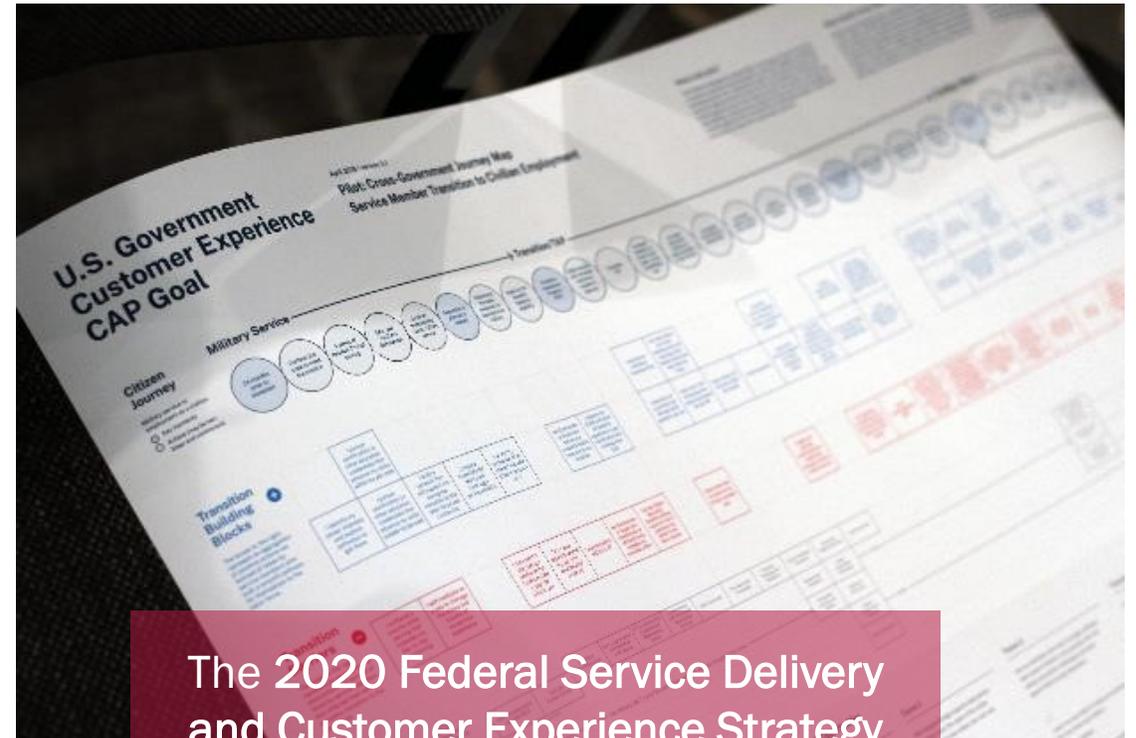
# Across high impact services, we identified a number of commonalities

## themes

- Customers experience life events, not Federal agencies
- Moments of stress often require complex decisions
- People frequently navigate Federal services on behalf of someone else
- Sometimes the confusing part isn't the website

## barriers

- CX is too often not a priority for staff at all levels, requires cross-silo coordination, and program ownership
- Program implementers don't have a deep understanding of their customer or their needs
- Frustrated employees won't provide an exceptional experience for customers
- Getting and asking for the right CX talent and services is hard



The 2020 Federal Service Delivery and Customer Experience Strategy Report further refines these initial findings and prioritizes barriers for Federal leaders to tackle

# Cross-Agency Journey Maps

## U.S. Government Customer Experience Pilot: Cross-Government Journey Map Service Member Transition to Civilian Employment CAP Goal

April 2019 / version 5.1  
 Pilot: Cross-Government Journey Map  
 Service Member Transition to Civilian Employment

### What is this pilot?

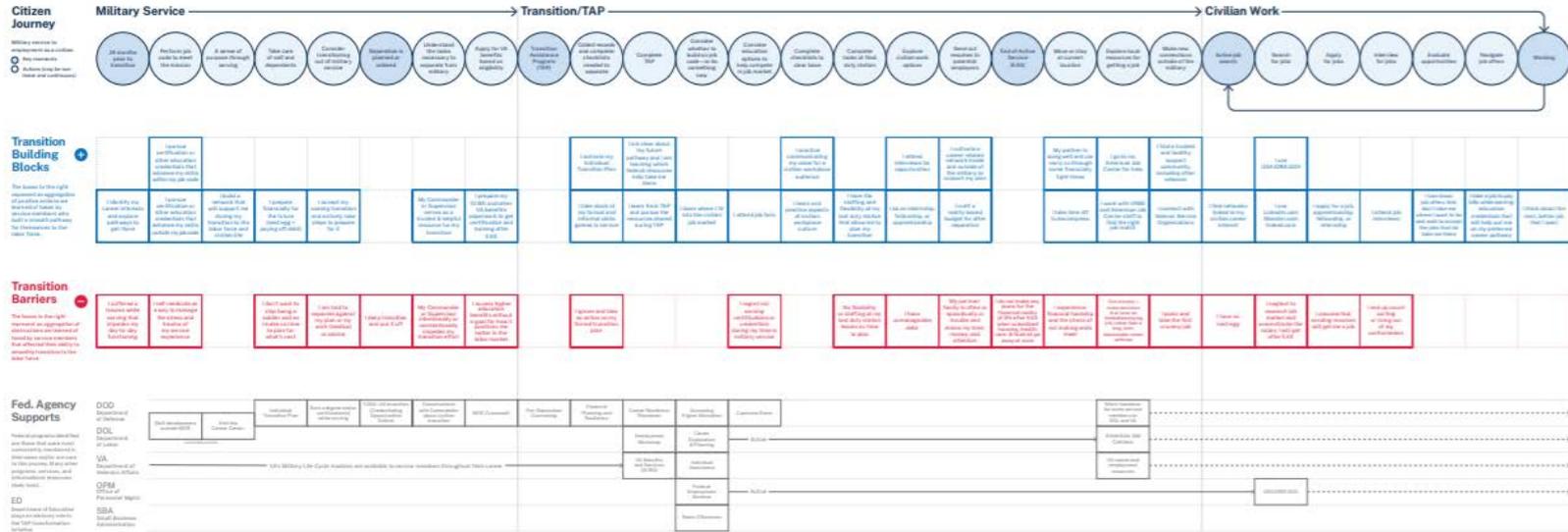
The President's Management Agenda (PMA), Cross Agency Priority (CAP) team and Customer Experience team prepared for a central CAP capability in the Military and Department of Defense for the use of cross-agency government-wide partner agencies. The program is for the year 2019-2020. The program is designed to help service members transition to civilian employment. The program is designed to help service members transition to civilian employment. The program is designed to help service members transition to civilian employment.

### What should I know about journey maps?

Journey maps are a visual representation of the customer's experience. They are a tool for understanding the customer's journey and identifying areas for improvement. They are a tool for understanding the customer's journey and identifying areas for improvement. They are a tool for understanding the customer's journey and identifying areas for improvement.

### What is this map about?

This map illustrates the customer's journey from military service to civilian employment. It shows the various steps and touchpoints that a service member experiences during this transition. The map is designed to help identify areas for improvement and to ensure that the customer's experience is as smooth and successful as possible.



### Perspective

Transition Data	Research Data/Demographics
<b>Transitioning service members</b> 2017 total: 290,133 - Enlisted: 250,000 - Officer: 38,862 - Warrant Officer: 239 - Active duty only: 67,827 - Active duty Reserve, Nat. Guard: 46,000 - Discharged: 1474	<b>Qualitative interviews conducted</b> - Transitioning service members: 25 - Discharge Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine, Coast Guard - Age range at separation: 20-47 / Average age: 32 - 21 Discharged and 4 Officers - Average years of service: 10 - Male: 14, Female: 11 - Various income and education represented - Military experience: 18 non-military experience: 6 - 4-10 year: 14-28
<b>Transitioning service members</b> - 100% of service members participate in TAP program, with some exceptions - 2018, 2000 met the goal of 85% of eligible active duty service members participating in TAP. That year, 85-100 active duty service members transferred out of the military. - 85% Participated in TAP (131,208) - 8% Status unknown - missing data (58,002) - 2% Did not participate in TAP (4,147)	<b>Agency representatives</b> 18 - Department of Defense (DOD) - Department of Labor (DOL) - Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) - Office of Personnel Management (OPM) - Small Business Administration (SBA) - Department of Education (ED) - Department of Health & Human Services (HHS)
<b>Subject matter experts</b> 10 - Nancy Ann Harris, Director of Commerce - Susan Arnold - VA Rights Advisory Board - Former U.S. Chief Technology Officer - Researcher/representative from two veterans' SBA branches - Veteran advocate	

### Findings & Opportunities

#### Theme 1

Service members are often unfamiliar with the civilian work force. For many, a military career is all they know — they may require support in learning to adjust their military mindset to the needs of today's civilian jobs.

I applied for 40 to 45 jobs. Many interviews reached the second or third round and I wasn't getting any offers. There was a lot of rejections and rejections. My connections weren't deep enough or focused enough.

- Sara, Veteran

I thought I would get out of the military and go to work. I was in a lot of interviews. I was in a lot of interviews. I was in a lot of interviews. I was in a lot of interviews.

- Clayton, Veteran

#### Theme 2

Well-designed bridge programs help service members learn the ropes of the civilian workforce in a low-stress, low-cost way.

There are many fellowships for transitioning service members — [include companies], [include DOD Branch, government], and more. These are great because they introduce you to people who can help you once you get out of the military.

- Mike, Veteran

I work as a mentor to new veterans. I see a lot of veterans who are very smart but they just don't know how to work.

- Mike, Veteran

#### Theme 3

Service members who most strongly articulate their sense of identity and purpose with the military encounter challenges and also report benefits during their search.

I was in my way ready to hang up my boots... All I ever knew was military.

- Joshua, Veteran

[When I was told to separate] I went into confusion because I planned to serve until retiring.

- DL, Veteran

#### Theme 4

Accredited certification programs can help service members build their credentials in a certain trade before they transition to the labor force.

I've helped a lot of my own girl learn the Signal and Project Management certifications and I think that will give them an edge once they get into the labor force... I think someone has done the same for me.

- David, Retiring Officer

If you don't have the right certification, that makes you out of the running for about a third of the jobs in our market right now.

- Staff with American Job Center

#### Theme 5

A Commander or Supervisor has an outsized influence on whether the service member is granted the time, space, and accommodations to pursue their personal career transition.

My Supervisor saw TAP as an inconvenience. Like, Oh god, you are going to the lab for a week... I was like my Supervisor assumed they have no time to do anything.

- Tabia, Veteran

Sometimes, a service member is just afraid of asking their commander whether they can take the time to do a transition work.

- Mike, Veteran

#### Theme 6

Many enlisted service members have little experience managing a civilian budget that does not include allowances for food, housing, and health care. Financial hardships may lead them to take the first job offered, which is likely to have ripple effects across their careers.

"I think they are worried... housing is a huge deal. Service members don't have to pay for food, housing, health care, and health care. Financial hardships may lead them to take the first job offered, which is likely to have ripple effects across their careers."

- Mike, Veteran

It took me months, after I got out, to figure out how to manage money so that I covered my bills... I didn't know about electricity bill going up or the water or unexpected medical bills.

- Cary, Veteran



# CAP Goal Activity Summary

## agency enablers

Created “CX Strategist” [position description](#) for GS-13/14/15 levels w/ associated competencies, task descriptions, and interview questions / guides

Conducted [government-wide SME-QA CX hiring pilot](#) to hire more than 20 CX Strategists at more than 10 agencies

[CX Strategist SME-QA Hiring Effort](#) lessons learned, now being used by Data Science hiring effort

Created “[CX Buying Guide](#)” in alignment with CX maturity roadmap on types of services and how to navigate procurement

Worked with OIRA to create new umbrella clearance package, as well as entirely new “[CX Desk](#)” workflow

[Developed trainings for agencies](#) on customer journey mapping, each element of the CX maturity model in collaboration with MITRE, website analytics, and service definition workshop

[Facilitated a C-suite / Assistant Secretary CX roundtable](#) with the Office of American Innovation

Developed no-cost, PRA-covered survey tool: [Touchpoints](#)

[Ongoing coaching](#) with HISPs on their CX programs

CX Data Case Studies on [EX<<>>CX: TSA, VHA](#)

“[CX Cookbook](#)” plays and success stories

## central capacity demonstration

Published first-ever guidance on CX (OMB Circular [A-11 Section 280](#))

[Conducted deep-dives with all 25 High Impact Service Providers to assess maturity](#) and identify priorities for development

Developed [cross-agency journey map](#) for Service Member transitioning to civilian employment

Supported the design of a [\\$1M challenge with DOL](#), DOD, and VA based on journey map findings

Completed analysis of government-wide CX feedback data

[Publicly released CX Action Plans for all HISPs](#)

Built individual HISP pages to share CX data on performance.gov

Supported budget examiners in the FY20, 21, and 22 budgeting processes to allocate dollars to promising CX investments in alignment with CX Action Plans

*Amplify* Customer Understanding Program for agency teams across government – [all self-serve modules online](#)

[Individual with a disability customer journey map \(CMS, DOL, ED, SSA, HUD\)](#)

[Individual surviving natural disaster customer journey map \(FEMA, SBA, HUD, HHS\)](#)

2020 Federal Customer Experience Strategy project (in progress)

connect

**[Performance.gov/cx](https://www.performance.gov/cx)**

**[cx@omb.eop.gov](mailto:cx@omb.eop.gov)**

