



**REPORT TO PANDEMIC RESPONSE
ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE:
COVID-19 IT SUPPLEMENTAL**

U. S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

June 25, 2020

Background

In March 2020, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) moved to an unprecedented maximum telework posture in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. To assist OPM in managing a new operating environment, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act | Public Law 116-136, March 27, 2020) provided the Office of Personnel Management with “...an additional amount for “Salaries and Expenses”, \$12,100,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021, **to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus, domestically or internationally, including technologies for digital case management, short-term methods to allow electronic submissions of retirement application packages in support of paper-based business operations, and increased telecommunications:** *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.”

Prior to receiving CARES Act funding, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) developed and successfully tested an emergency technical solution to allow for the electronic submission of retirement applications to OPM. The solution was presented and accepted by Retirement Services as a viable option for payroll and HR providers should they need it moving forward. OCIO remains ready to assist Retirement Services in supporting this solution, as well as expanding testing to all payroll providers across government.

This supplemental IT spending is enabling OPM to maintain day-to-day operations in a maximum telework environment while also being able to introduce new tools to achieve greater efficiencies across the IT enterprise. Through the introduction of modern tools, employees will be better connected and more productive in a mobile environment.

Agency Prioritization

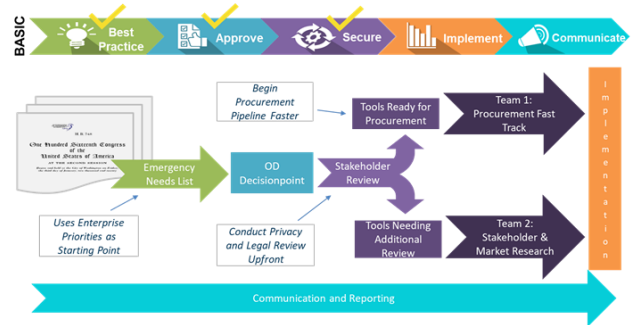
OPM Acting Director Michael Rigas determined the emergency supplemental could provide the greatest impact if used to procure enterprise information technology that would improve cross-agency business processes in a maximum telework environment and serve OPM over the long-term as it continues efforts to modernize IT. Acting Director Rigas designated OCIO to identify products that would improve the efficiency of work processes, increase collaboration, reduce administrative burden, and better serve the agency’s customers.

Cross-OPM Collaboration

To support OCIO and fast-track this effort, the Office of the Acting Director stood up an intra-agency team led by the Office of the Director and Office of Procurement Operations and comprised of representatives from OCIO, Procurement, Privacy, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, and the General Counsel to provide rapid support, guidance, review, and approval of the products and solutions identified and slated for procurement.

The team established a BASIC model for creating momentum around this project and supporting a rapid process to share **B**est practices in IT solutions, **A**pprove the procurement, **S**ecure the necessary privacy, security, and legal approvals, **I**mplement the procurement, acquisition, and funding process, and **C**ommunicate the results to OPM’s stakeholders.

This new way of doing business at OPM worked quite well and has been viewed internally as a successful model for future enterprise projects.



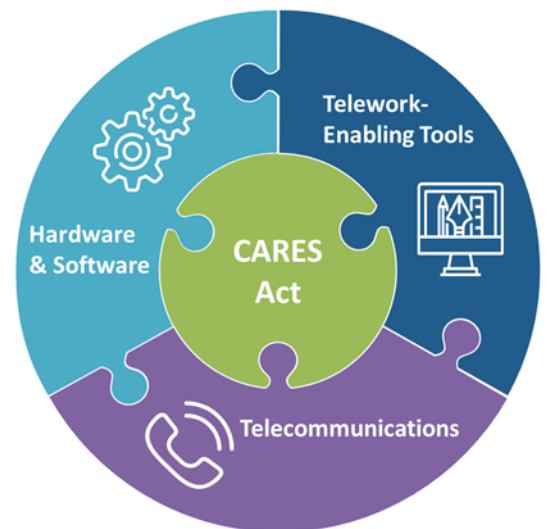
Process for Selecting Enterprise Products

OCIO established two key objectives in determining which products should be prioritized under COVID-19 funding. OCIO would select products that would:

- Source interim digital collaboration, electronic signature and case management platforms to enable OPMs remote workforce with telecommunication tools
- Digitize manual paper-based business operations that are challenging to maintain with a remote workforce

Further, OCIO focused on implementing enterprise solutions to address emergency needs in three categories: **Telework-Enabling Tools, Telecommunications, and Hardware & Software** prioritized by risk, impact, and execution timeline. The identified solutions will operate together to enhance the agency’s agility to respond to current and future crises and align with planned long-term OPM-wide operational improvements to better serve our customers.

Telework-Enabling Tools. Procuring tools that would fully support and enhance work productivity of a telework-enabled OPM workforce, such as messaging and communication tools, phone and screenshare capabilities, internal digital document management system, project and product management. These tools will assist OPM employees within programs such Health Insurance (HI), Retirement Services (RS) and HR Line of Business (HRLOB) to create remote and communicate with remote teams, host meetings, collaborate on key initiatives and manage their projects.



In addition, these investments will allow OPM programs to start using modern cloud-based platforms (e.g. digital case management, electronic signature) to replace paper-based business operations and capabilities. This will allow the employees in these programs to focus on high value tasks and reduce administrative overhead.

Telecommunications. Investing in telephony and telecom infrastructure improvements across OPM to support the surge of remote employees, for example, telephony circuit upgrades, increased VPN capacity, network monitoring and cloud-based phone service (softphones) to allow OPM employees to easily dial-in to meetings and make phone calls while they are in maximum telework.

These investments will upgrade the OPM infrastructure so that programs such as RS, HI, HRLOB and staff offices are able to take advantage of the technologies mentioned above without the burden of purchasing, installing and maintaining on-site infrastructure. This delivery model of cloud-based services mitigates technology risk, reduces the upfront investment, and allows the agency to take advantage of the latest collaboration technology at a fixed subscription cost.

Hardware & Software. Review and rationalization of operational gaps due to sub-scale and/or missing hardware/software capabilities within OCIO that pose risk to the agency during 100% telework environment. Examples of high-risk areas include Infrastructure Operations (Network, Hosting, Platform), Applications and Software (Dev & Testing), Data and Analytics etc. This will benefit program offices such as RS, HI, HRLOB and staff offices since this review will assist in the implementation of the technologies mentioned above and improve technology decision-making through better operational data.

Specific examples of solutions identified in each category can be found in the attached document.

Current Status

As of June 17, 2020, we're proud to report that OPM has identified \$9,432,101 in open commitments to date, obligated \$1,266,438, and expects to have the remaining funds committed in the coming weeks.

OPM'S CARES ACT SPEND PLAN

Fund	Object Class	Description	Comments	Annual Amount
Telework Enabling / DevOps Tools				\$3,885,000.00
Multi-Year S&E (CARES Act)	25B	Document Management System	OPM's primary correspondence routing system is broken and the agency is entirely reliant on moving paper and electronic documents into and out of existing DMS systems to perform basic agency clearance of formal correspondence. Providing a modern cloud-based solutions with digital case management capabilities will assist programs such as Retirement Services (RS), Health Insurance (HI) , HR Line Of Business (HRLOB) and OPM staff offices to electronically receive, route and approve internal documents. This will allow the employees in these programs to focus on high value tasks, reduce administrative overhead while introducing best practices that can be built upon for additional use cases.	
Multi-Year S&E (CARES Act)	25B	Meeting Solution/Web Conferencing	OPMs current conferencing solutions are almost entirely audio based using a platform that is strained under current loads. Existing web conferencing tools are poor and not widely used, while other web conferencing tools are procured without coordination or review. During this time of emergency and self-isolation it is critical that we have standard conferencing tools that keep the agency visually connected and communicating securely. This will make it easier for OPM employees in programs such as RS, HI HRLOB and OPM staff offices to stay productive by easily hosting meetings, sharing their screen and being able to call into meetings from one tool.	
Multi-Year S&E (CARES Act)	25B	Electronic Signature & Routing	OPM offices and processes prefer to utilize wet signatures, which are impossible to accommodate with a majority telework workforce. We have existing tools for some digital signing needs, but these need to be extended with document routing functionality and better standardized and the workforce better trained to use them.This will make it easier for OPM employees in programs such as RS, HI, HRLOB and OPM staff offices to electronically send and accept signatures reducing reliance on wet signatures and submission of non-electronic requests.	
Multi-Year S&E (CARES Act)	25B	Persistent Chat	OPMs dominant communication tools are telephone and e-mail. During this time of emergency and self-isolation, a modern persistent group chat solution will allow remote teams to be drastically more effective and connected. Similar tools already in use (Skype, and Slack) are being utilized in a fragmented and siloed manner. This will make it easier for OPM employees in programs such as RS, HI, HRLOB and OPM staff offices to stay productive by creating and communicating with remote teams	
Multi-Year S&E (CARES Act)	25B	Project/Task Management	OPM offices rely on in-person or e-mail coordination to ensure work is assigned and managed. Majority telework introduces challenges in estimating workload and getting tasks appropriately assigned and tracked. Modern project and task tracking tools are necessary for a remote workforce and generally promote transparency and collaboration across offices. This will make it easier for OPM employees in programs such as RS, HI, HRLOB and OPM staff offices to stay productive by collaborating and managing projects remotely.	

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Multi-Year S&E (CARES Act)	25B	Change Management and Training	Any technology insertion for the enterprise should be paired with a change management/training contract to ensure adoption. This will provide all OPM program and staff offices training in order to understand the capabilities of the communication and collaboration tools and use them in a safe and effective manner.	
Hardware and Software				\$850,000.00
Multi-Year S&E (CARES Act)	25B	IT Capability Analysis	Operational gaps due to sub-scale and/or missing capabilities within hardware/software functional areas in CIO that pose risk to the agency during 100% telework environment. Examples of high risk areas include Infrastructure Operations (Network, Hosting, Platform), Applications and Software (Dev & Testing), Data and Analytics etc. This will benefit program offices such as RS, HI, HRLOB and staff offices since this review will assist in the implementation of the technologies mentioned above and improve technology decision-making through better operational data.	
Telecom				\$7,365,000.00
Multi-Year S&E (CARES Act)	25B	Help Desk	Many Helpdesk actions, such as software installations or troubleshooting, require helpdesk specialists to provide in-person support. The helpdesk may lack remote administration tools, or these tools may need to be improved or reconfigured (for instance, to pass the specialist's administrative credentials) to allow specialists to effectively support a majority telework organization. This will provide program offices such as RS, HI, HRLOB and staff offices faster resolution of help desk requests and more proactive troubleshooting that will enable faster and more seamless access to the OPM network when employees are remote.	
Multi-Year S&E (CARES Act)	25B	Telephony	Employees are teleworking only to find that they do not have access to their office phone number. This impacts their ability to remain in contact with their partners and teammates. This will provide program offices such as RS, HI, HRLOB and staff offices software on their desktop to dial-in to meetings and call colleagues when communicating remotely.	
Multi-Year S&E (CARES Act)	25B	Server Infrastructure	As more people are simultaneously attempting to log in remotely our Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP) and Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) solutions (perfectly adequate for occasional work from home) are being stressed to the limit. We are determining the feasibility of moving servers from the general population into VDI to improve operations. Presently, we are prioritizing users since there isn't enough capacity for the whole agency creating a disparate employee experience. This purchase will benefit program offices such as RS, HI, HRLOB and staff offices by improving their access to the OPM network and the tools/applications hosted and accessed via our environment. In addition, going to a consumption based model will give the agency more flexibility and insight into managing capacity depending on the number of remote employees.	

OPM'S CARES ACT SPEND PLAN

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Multi-Year S&E (CARES Act)	25B	Network	<p>Since the advent of the maximum telework directive we have had to drastically increase our maximum VPN capacity. We rapidly deployed additional VPN hardware but the shifting requirements and short time frame of the deployment required that we implement supporting infrastructure on the hardware that was available. This has introduced several single points of failure and required the use of hardware that is not datacenter quality in terms of functionality and redundancy. Additionally, we have taken manual proactive measures to avoid saturating our existing internet circuits during maximum telework. Specifically we have limited streaming media access to sites like YouTube, we monitor and manage the impact of collaboration tools on network capacity, and we are limiting the patching of end user workstations connected to the VPN to small batches twice per day during non-peak hours. This purchase will benefit program offices such as RS, HI, HRLOB and staff offices by improving their access to the OPM network and the tools/applications hosted and accessed via our environment. In addition, eliminating single points of failure in our network will improve reliability and allow us to scale while providing OPM employees minimal restraints to perform their work (access to streaming media, collaboration tools etc).</p>	
Multi-Year S&E (CARES Act)	25B	Network	<p>As part of the migration to maximum telework we have expanded our monitoring functionality on several platforms in an attempt to proactively address network issues as they arise, monitor the infrastructure, and model traffic across the enterprise network. We have also had to employ a number of mechanisms to control and limit traffic on the network that might impact other services or which could create contention for resources with VPN users. As a result of our increased scrutiny we have identified several areas where our network monitoring and traffic analysis tools are lacking, and areas where we need additional visibility as a result of teleworkers accessing new virtualized hardware and services. We are also looking to purchase a single enterprise tool that allows us to provide centralized quality of service to traffic across the network. We will then be able to stop manually manipulating traffic and rate limiting connections separately on multiple hardware platforms. This purchase will benefit program offices such as RS, HI, HRLOB and staff offices by improving their access to the OPM network and the tools/applications hosted and accessed via our environment. In addition, proactive monitoring of our network will improve reliability and allow us to scale while providing OPM employees minimal restraints to perform their work.</p>	
Multi-Year S&E (CARES Act)	25B	Telephony	<p>Mobile Overages: Mobile minutes overage amount and unlimited cell phone minutes for roughly 900 hard phones for the COVID maximum telework period</p>	
Total				\$12,100,000.00