

Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) Executive Order: Early Implementation

January 27, 2025

On January 20, 2025, President Donald Trump issued an executive order (EO) titled “[Establishing and Implementing the President’s ‘Department of Government Efficiency’](#)” (DOGE), which reorganizes an existing entity in the Executive Office of the President (EOP), the U.S. Digital Service, as the U.S. DOGE Service, using the same acronym as its predecessor (USDS). The EO directs the reorganized USDS to “implement the President’s DOGE Agenda, by modernizing Federal technology and software to maximize governmental efficiency and productivity.” Two additional EOs identify other USDS activities related to agency hiring freezes and hiring plans. This Insight describes the reorganized USDS’s duties and activities as outlined in the DOGE EO, historical operations of the legacy U.S. Digital Service, and potential areas of interest for Congress.

Issuance of the Executive Order

The “[Establishing and Implementing the President’s ‘Department of Government Efficiency’](#)” EO reorganizes and renames the existing U.S. Digital Service (hereinafter “legacy USDS”) as the United States DOGE Service (also abbreviated as USDS), to be led by a USDS administrator who reports to the White House chief of staff. The EO also establishes within USDS a [temporary organization](#) referred to as the U.S. DOGE Service Temporary Organization (USDSTO), also led by the USDS administrator, which “shall be dedicated to advancing the President’s 18-month DOGE agenda” and terminates on July 4, 2026.

The EO also directs each [agency](#) head, in consultation with the USDS administrator, to establish a “DOGE team” of at least four employees within each agency. These teams will “typically include” a team lead, an engineer, a human resources (HR) specialist, and an attorney. According to the EO, agency team members may include current agency personnel or new hires designated as “[special government employees](#).” Each agency’s team is directed to coordinate with USDS and advise its agency head on implementing the DOGE agenda.

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The EO also directs the USDS administrator to implement a “Software Modernization Initiative,” which would seek to improve the efficiency of federal software and information technology (IT) systems as well as promote interoperability among agency networks and systems. To facilitate this effort, agency heads are directed to provide USDS “full and prompt access to all unclassified agency records, software systems, and IT systems.”

This EO follows a [prior announcement](#) by then-President-elect Trump that a DOGE would be established under the leadership of Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy. According to the statement, the DOGE would look at topics including regulations, expenditures, and restructuring of agencies. The announcement also described the DOGE as providing “advice and guidance from outside of Government” by partnering with the White House and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). In comparison with this prior announcement, the EO appears to focus on agencies’ IT and HR management. A USDS administrator has not yet been named.

The Legacy U.S. Digital Service

In 2014, following the Healthcare.gov rollout, the Obama Administration [created what is now the legacy USDS](#) within the EOP with the [objective](#) to “continuously improve critical government services, bring top-tier technical talent to public service, partner with federal agencies to scale digital best practices, and rethink how the Government buys digital services.” In 2024, USDS [employed approximately 220](#) designers, engineers, and product managers serving one- to four-year terms, most of whom were hired using [Schedule A excepted service hiring authority](#).

The legacy USDS has been funded by the EOP [Information Technology Oversight and Reform \(ITOR\)](#) account, whose purpose is the “furtherance of integrated, efficient, secure, and effective uses of information technology in the Federal Government.” ITOR has received [annual appropriations](#), and the OMB director has authority to transfer ITOR funds to other agency accounts. Separately, USDS was appropriated \$200 million under the [American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#), which remained available through FY2024. To supplement annually appropriated funds, in the [EOP FY2025 budget submission](#), the Biden Administration requested authority for agencies to transfer to or reimburse ITOR for services rendered by the legacy USDS, up to \$30 million. Congress has not enacted this transfer authority.

Potential Areas of Interest

Additional information about USDS’s activities and the President’s “DOGE Agenda” may be forthcoming as implementation of the EO continues. Several topic areas could be of congressional interest:

- **Scope.** The EO specifies aspects of the DOGE agenda and entities with which USDS will work. Two additional EOs identify USDS roles in agency HR management (i.e., EOs relating to a federal [hiring freeze](#) and [hiring plans](#)). What will USDS’s emphases be, and how will it interact with the White House, OMB, agencies, and nonfederal persons? Additionally, are there differences between the “DOGE agenda” to be implemented by USDS and “18-month DOGE agenda” to be implemented by USDSTO?
- **Appropriations.** The legacy USDS had been funded by appropriations. As the scope of USDS’s activities may differ from the legacy USDS, Congress may consider whether and how to fund USDS prospectively.
- **Continuity of legacy activities.** The EO does not elaborate on the status of [legacy USDS projects](#) or personnel, whether projects would continue, and whether [existing employees would be retained](#).

- **Transparency.** Certain transparency statutes might apply to USDS, depending on its membership and implementation. These statutes include the [Freedom of Information Act](#), where members of the public can request agency information, and the [Federal Advisory Committee Act](#), which requires public reporting and meetings for advisory committees where at least one nonfederal member is providing advice to the federal government. Will USDS and the DOGE effort involve nonfederal persons in advisory roles? What level of public and congressional information access is anticipated?
- **Access to agency records.** The [Privacy Act of 1974](#) prescribes how federal agency records with individually identifying information are to be stored, who may access such information, and when the government may use or disclose it. How will the Privacy Act relate to USDS’s access to agency records?
- **Ethics and conflict of interest.** Certain government officials must comply with conflict-of-interest laws and regulations, including the [Ethics in Government Act](#)—which requires [financial disclosure](#)—and a [criminal conflict of interest provision](#). Are individuals involved with the DOGE covered by these arrangements?

Author Information

Dominick A. Fiorentino
Analyst in Government Organization and Management

Clinton T. Brass
Specialist in Government Organization and Management

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