

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

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On January 20, 2025, President Donald Trump issued an executive order (E.O.) titled “[Establishing and Implementing the President’s ‘Department of Government Efficiency’](#)” (DOGE), which reorganized an 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 E.O. 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 executive orders identify other USDS activities related to agency hiring freezes and hiring plans. This Insight describes USDS’s duties and activities as outlined in the DOGE E.O., historical operations of USDS, and potential areas of interest for Congress.

Issuance of Executive Order

The “[Establishing and Implementing the President’s ‘Department of Government Efficiency’](#)” E.O. reorganizes and renames the existing U.S. Digital Service (hereinafter “legacy USDS”) as the U.S. DOGE Service (also abbreviated as USDS), to be led by a USDS administrator who reports to the White House chief of staff. The E.O. 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 E.O. 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 E.O., 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.

The E.O. 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

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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 E.O. follows a [prior announcement](#) in November 2024 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 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). CRS is not aware that a USDS administrator has been named publicly, but the White House described [Elon Musk as serving as a special government employee](#) under the effort.

Unlike the November announcement, the E.O. appears to focus on agencies’ IT and HR management. Subsequent press reports say that the DOGE effort involves [obtaining access to Department of the Treasury payment systems](#) that include information on millions of individuals and entities. The effort also appears to go beyond IT and HR initiatives to include areas such as [procurement](#), [real property](#), and [substantive agency operations](#). Additional reports said [DOGE teams accessed classified records](#).

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 [to improve agency digital services](#). In 2024, USDS [employed approximately 220 personnel](#) 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. 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 E.O. continues. Several topic areas and associated questions could be of congressional interest:

- **Scope.** The E.O. specifies aspects of the DOGE agenda and entities with which USDS will work. Two additional executive orders identify USDS roles in agency HR management (i.e., relating to a federal [hiring freeze](#) and [hiring plans](#)). How will USDS 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. Congress may consider whether and how to fund the reorganized USDS prospectively.
- **Legacy activities.** The E.O. does not specify whether [legacy USDS projects](#) would continue and whether [employees would be retained](#).

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- **Transparency.** Certain transparency statutes might apply to USDS, depending on its membership and implementation. These 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 provides advice to the federal government. Will the DOGE effort involve nonfederal persons in advisory roles? What transparency about the DOGE effort's staffing and activities is anticipated?
- **Access to agency records.** The [Privacy Act of 1974](#) prescribes how federal agency records with individually identifying information are to be stored and who may access such information. Further, it specifies when an agency may use or disclose information. How will the Privacy Act and other information-protection statutes 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?

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