

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Office of the Chief Technology Officer



Fiscal Year 2024 & 2025 Performance Oversight Hearing

Testimony of
Stephen Miller, Chief Technology Officer
Office of the Chief Technology Officer

Before the
Committee on Government Operations
The Honorable Brianne Nadeau, Chairperson
Council of the District of Columbia

February 19, 2025
Room 123
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20004

Good afternoon, Chairperson Nadeau, members of the Committee on Public Works and Operations, and staff. I am Stephen Miller, the Chief Technology Officer for the Government of the District of Columbia and the Director of the Office of the Chief Technology Officer – or OCTO. I am honored to testify today on behalf of Mayor Muriel Bowser and her administration regarding the performance of OCTO during Fiscal Years 24 and 25.

This past year, we made great strides in continuing to ensure that the District Government is innovative, secure, and efficient. We tackled new initiatives like implementing the Mayor's Order on Artificial Intelligence, continued to improve how the District works with residents through the Business Portal and our soon to be launched family portal for out of school programs, and continued to ensure our technology is safe and secure with various cybersecurity efforts that I'll turn to now.

Safe and Secure Technologies

In Fiscal Year 24, OCTO and our partner agencies have been working on:

- Assessing technology to reduce vulnerabilities and increasing reliability.
- Developing a 3-year cybersecurity strategic plan and a risk management framework to address technology risk within DC in coordination with the agencies.

- Training DC Government employees to protect themselves and the system from bad actors and phishing.

Focusing on these areas ensures we protect DC Government from bad actors by shoring up our technology, mitigating risk, and empowering employees who are at the front lines of protecting our network.

For safety and security in Fiscal Year 25, you will see OCTO continue to implement best practices based on lessons learned from DC Government and Global impacting cyber events to ensure continuous growth and improvement within our cyber security team. You'll also see a continuation of training for the DC government workforce on security functions, including their role in protecting the District's data, systems, infrastructure, and residents.

Innovative IT Solutions

In addition to keeping our information and technology safe, we also must provide IT solutions to make it easier for DC employees, residents, and those doing business with DC Government to get what they need. One example of our efforts in Fiscal Year 24 is the business portal.

The business portal, now in its second year, has helped make it easier for people to get the licensing they need from DC government. More than 1,300

entrepreneurs have furthered their dreams by starting the business licensing process in the portal.

OCTO has been engaging various District stakeholders across sectors to identify needs for portal expansions and to provide transparent, more accessible and efficient support for District residents as they engage with DC Government. One of these newer portals will focus on unifying and simplifying after school and out-of-school time programs. This project includes partnerships across our education, recreational, and youth orientated agencies and programs.

In Fiscal Year 24, Mayor Bowser's Innovation Team, known as the iTeam, joined OCTO. The iTeam is a Bloomberg Philanthropy funded project that addresses city challenges through an innovative and human centered design approach. Among other accomplishments, in Fiscal Year 24 the iTeam:

- Hosted 3 Gratitude Events honoring public servants at DPR, MPD, and education agencies including District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), DC Public Charter Schools, and the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE).
- The iTeam also developed, in partnership with Department of Employment Services (DOES) and the Department of Human Resources (DCHR), the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Apprenticeship

Program. I'm proud to say that through this program, OCTO hired two interns as Jr Cyber Security Analysts in the OCTO Security Division.

In Fiscal Year 25 you will see OCTO continue to innovate as we prioritize the DC.gov redesign, a further rollout of our resident and workforce single sign-on initiative, and our portal projects, both of which consolidate government services across agencies and clusters, ensuring a more seamless experience for residents, families, businesses and visitors.

Closing the Digital Divide

OCTO remains committed to our work on closing the digital divide through our state broadband office. In Fiscal Year 24, our State Broadband and Digital Equity Office received a federal Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) grant, which has two parts: the first provides infrastructure funding to increase capacity and increase access in areas where our residents lack reliable and equitable broadband, and the second focuses on what we call non-deployment uses like digital literacy training and workforce development.

DC will use these funds and initiatives to create an exciting, knowledgeable, and competitive future for our residents, students, and small businesses, in addition to expanding already successful agency efforts in this space.

For example, in Fiscal Year 24, OCTO held 84 tech workshops reaching almost 2400 residents across all 8 wards of Washington, DC. We provided these training workshops at DC government sites (libraries, recreation centers, senior wellness centers, and DCHA housing sites) as well as churches, and on virtual platforms.

In addition to these digital literacy workshops, OCTO has also engaged residents in workforce development to ensure they have access to jobs in tech. OCTO has partnered with the Department of Employment Services (DOES) and the Marion Barry Summer Youth Employment Program for the last 14 years. Interns train for success in IT positions through hands-on instruction, with many returning to OCTO through the program year after year. We also partnered with the DOES DC Infrastructure Academy (DCIA) and hosted nine (9) DCIA graduates in two separate apprenticeship training courses, (1) in Networking as a Cisco Certified Network Associate, and the other as Tier I Helpdesk Technician in OCTOhelps. Each DCIA graduate received a 16-week hands-on training which prepared them for an IT career after completion. I'm happy to say OCTO was able to successfully hire two interns for full-time IT positions in the OCTOhelps Division.

In Fiscal Year 25 you will see digital equity priorities furthered through the execution of competitive sub grant processes to award funds from this federal BEAD program towards eligible entities for the following initiatives:

- Connecting all unserved and underserved community anchor institutions to 1 Gigabit symmetrical upload and download speeds, that's a big deal;
- Digital literacy training and workforce development; and
- Facilitating device distribution and digital literacy training across the district.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

It wouldn't be a performance and oversight hearing of a government technology agency in 2025 if we didn't mention Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Mayor Bowser's order articulates DC's artificial intelligence values – values that Mayor Bowser and I feel should drive all technology decisions.

Those values are: 1) Defining a clear benefit to the residents of Washington, DC; 2) ensuring safety and equity of outcomes driven by AI tools; 3) being transparent about the usage of AI in the government; 4) ensuring individuals familiar with impacted services are holding our tool accountable for their actions by reviewing those outputs and outcomes; 5) ensuring adherence to sustainable plans for financial and contractual commitments as well as understanding the impacts on

energy, government services and residents and finally; 6) a core value for OCTO – documenting the privacy and security frameworks on a tool-by-tool basis, to ensure the trust that the residents, businesses and visitors put on us to keep their data safe is not violated.

We're excited for the possibilities AI brings, and look forward to rolling out AI Assistants in the coming weeks and months with tools that have been vetted by our process. You can find more information on our AI efforts at techplan.dc.gov/aivalues. There you will find values alignment for our first tool – the DC Compass beta – and in the future, you will find strategic plans from agencies ready for AI and additional values alignments for tools that are readied for use by our workforce and our community.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I want to thank you for the opportunity to highlight our accomplishments, our strategic direction, and our important partnerships. As I hope you can see, we have been busy and that's exactly how we like to be. Chairperson, at this time I am happy to answer any questions and expand upon my testimony today.