

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



Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Oversight Hearing

Testimony of
Stephen N. Miller
Interim Chief Technology Officer
Office of the Chief Technology Officer

Before the
Committee on Public Works and Operations
The Honorable Brianne K. Nadeau, Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia

May 2, 2024
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Good afternoon, Councilmember Nadeau, members of the Committee on Government Operations and staff – I hope you, your families, and your staff are well. I am Stephen Miller, the Interim Chief Technology Officer for DC Government, testifying today on behalf of Mayor Muriel Bowser’s proposed Fiscal Year 25 Budget: **Strategic Investments and Shared Sacrifice** for the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO).

I am joined today by the **Agency Fiscal Officer** (AFO) Phil Peng and **Chief Operating Officer** (COO) Tehsin Faruk.

I want to first thank our extraordinary OCTO family for all they do to keep DC Government moving forward every day. We have some of the best professionals who bring their talents and passion to work every single day. Thank you all.

Overview

It is an exciting time to lead the Office of the Chief Technology Officer. Our team continues to push significant modernization and innovation projects touching every corner of District Government. And this good work is reflected in Mayor Bowser’s proposed Fiscal Year 25 budget. In short, OCTO’s proposed budget for Fiscal Year 25 is **\$92.6M in Local Funds, \$12.6M in Special Purpose Funds, \$1.7M in Federal Grants and \$24.0M in Capital Funds.**

With **\$130.9M in investments**, Mayor Bowser’s Fiscal Year 25 budget makes government service faster, fairer, simpler.

I’ll touch on Artificial Intelligence or “AI”, the new DC.gov web portal, and other impactful projects, however I’m more excited to share that Mayor Bowser not only understands but strongly supports our core mission – which is to ensure our network, our systems, and devices are modern, efficient, and – most of all – secure. Our budget was prioritized within four categories: Cybersecurity and IT Operations, Digital Services, Artificial Intelligence and Data Modernization and last but not least, Digital Equity.

Cyber and IT Operations

I’ll start with Cybersecurity and Operations.

Mayor Bowser continues to make cybersecurity and IT operations a top priority with an investment of **\$21.5 million** – which includes **\$14.4 million** in new capital investments, and **\$7.1 million** in operating enhancement dollars. These investments will allow OCTO to make our network more **resilient** and **ensure valuable data can be stored, shared, analyzed and used to guide decisions more securely**. A few highlights include:

- A \$10.7 million-dollar capital investment to continue the modernization of our infrastructure by replacing end of life and

end of support hardware.

- A \$8.2 million-dollar investment to deploy new and enhanced cybersecurity technologies to defend and protect DC Government workforce, applications, systems, and data.
- A \$1.5 million-dollar investment to upgrade and implement new Distributed Antenna Systems (DAS) that improve in-building cellular and radio service within all corners of District buildings. This supports our ongoing initiative to reduce underutilized land line and cellular services which creates significant cost savings for OCTO and our partner agencies.
- and finally one-time funding of a \$1.1 million dollars, for cybersecurity enhancements to remediate known vulnerabilities. These are matching funds for the State and Local Cyber Grant Program in Fiscal Year 2025. These dollars will be used to address cyber security risks and threats to the information systems owned and operated by DC Government.

These investments further strengthen our network from the constant barrage of attacks. A not so fun fact and why these investments are critical: every week we defend nearly a billion – **billion with a B** – cybersecurity events as bad actors around the world confuse DC Government with the US federal government.

Digital Services

Let's talk about digital services.

Mayor Bowser continues to double down on investing in modern digital experiences for DC residents, businesses, and DC employees. As I highlighted in my performance testimony, these enhancements – including a new DC.gov, the 2024 StateScoop IT innovation of the year award winning business portal, and our OCTOhelps portal along with the soon to be launched HR Help Desk – are positively impacting the way people interact with DC government.

A few highlights include:

- A **\$0.5 million** dollar investment to complete the next phase of the new DC.gov web portal. Our long-time DC-based, CBE partner is finalizing the design as we speak and can't wait to share it with you and the residents and businesses that demand a modernized, accessible and highly useable web site. Implementation is expected to begin early this summer with a beta site launch - late **FY24 / early FY25**.
- A **\$6.0 million dollar** investment to continue to build out and expand services on our growing portal network – which began with the launch of business.dc.gov our one-stop portal for business licensing which just celebrated its one-year anniversary in February. The investment will allow us to continue to create simpler, fairer and faster experiences.

- A **\$3.1 million dollar** investment to continue to streamline how Internal Service agencies support DC Government employees and agencies through a centralized and personalized portal to request IT, HR, and building services, access self-help knowledge articles, and more. While the portal helps employees access services or get help faster, the backend is tracking all assets, costs, and service demands to better determine the true cost of service delivery and find efficiencies and opportunities of economies of scale across DC Government. Finding these efficiencies and savings is critical as costs continue to rise.

AI Governance and Data Modernization

Let's talk about AI Governance and Data Modernization

As I mentioned in our performance oversight hearing, Artificial intelligence (AI) is poised to dramatically transform the landscape of every industry. OCTO and our partner agencies are finding safe ways to harness the power of AI in government services and how DC Government – and the people we serve – can benefit from this new technology.

In February, we were proud to join Mayor Bowser for the signing of a Mayor's Order aligning DC's Artificial Intelligence strategic plan with DC's values to make sure we are at the forefront of using AI to deliver secure and equitable city services that benefit the residents of DC. You can see the order, strategy and values at techplan.dc.gov/aivalues.

In support of this work, Mayor Bowser has proposed **\$3.5 million** dollars in transformative investments supporting the development of the AI governance model and data democratization across the District and establish data as a strategic asset to drive key insights.

A few highlights include:

- A \$1.7 million investment to further develop and implement the AI strategy for the District.

- A \$1.8 million capital investment to continue development of the Cloud Data Exchange Platform that will allow agencies to ingest, share, and analyze government data faster, more easily, and more securely.

DC's AI Taskforce is currently working to deliver a privacy and cybersecurity framework to support the development of Agency's AI Strategic Plans - DC's AI Taskforce is selecting **members of the public** and a **select group of DC government agencies** to advise Mayor Bowser on those strategic plans - Finally they're **facilitating public listening sessions** to ensure that our implementation and operation of AI tools aligns with our DC values.

To prepare for the implementation of AI, we are working with agencies to identify, classify, and catalog thousands of datasets. The investment in our Cloud Data Exchange will help us **securely move the right data - to the right agencies - at the right time.**

Digital Equity

Finally, let's talk about Digital Equity

Our **Office of State Broadband and Digital Equity (OSBDE)** has been working hard to meet the federal requirements needed to receive **over \$107 million** in grants from the **Federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law**. I am happy to report we

have completed 90% of the requirements regarding these grants, and are working to close this out in this fiscal year allowing us to begin the process of funding our initiatives.

OCTO aims to utilize these funds for groundbreaking investments in broadband and digital equity initiatives. These endeavors will ensure that impacted residents have access to top-tier, affordable broadband services, along with the necessary devices and digital proficiency to use them. Our goal is to empower individuals to leverage the potential of technology for personal advancement and the betterment of the District as a whole.

In preparation for full approval, we have procured a grants management portal to coordinate the use of these significant funds, and we are evaluating platforms for a challenge portal where DC Government agencies, internet service providers (ISPs), and community anchor institutions (CAIs) —**such as Public Safety, Education, Public-Housing, Healthcare locations - just to name a few** – can compete to receive portions of the grant fundings to contribute to this important work.

I strongly encourage everyone to visit **techttogether.dc.gov** to follow our progress, receive announcements for funding opportunities, and learn about events and trainings we do on a regular basis.

CONCLUSION

We appreciate the opportunity to share Mayor Bowser's proposed Fiscal Year25 budget for continuous improvement and look forward to continuing to work with the Committee. This concludes my testimony. I'm happy to address your questions at this time.