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Federal CIOs Report Progress on Agile, Cloud Computing Despite IT Budget and Cybersecurity Challenges

Arlington, V.A. (Sept. 25, 2017) – The Professional Services Council (PSC) and Grant Thornton today released the findings of their 2017 Federal Chief Information Officer (CIO) survey, [Transitions: Managing Federal IT in a Dynamic Environment](#).

Based on extensive in-person interviews and online surveys of CIOs, Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs), and other IT professionals across 29 agencies, the survey reveals new excitement about innovation and change related to the adoption of Agile practices and DevOps processes, structure and culture, as well as continued progress moving relevant systems and services to cloud computing platforms. Yet budget constraints, cybersecurity challenges and senior IT leadership vacancies during an unusual presidential transition period impede progress toward modernizing and securing federal IT systems.

The installation of new agency leadership, including many CIO positions, has been slower than usual under President Trump. Thirteen of 27 CIO positions at the largest federal agencies remain open, and nominees have yet to be named for the CIO and newly-created CISO position at the Office of Management and Budget. This reality leaves agencies without guidance from politically-appointed leaders on many existing IT initiatives and hampers efforts to advance new projects and investments. The government also continues to struggle to hire top cybersecurity talent in the face of strong demand and higher salaries in the private sector.

“The results of this year’s CIO survey underscore longstanding roadblocks to matching the pace of innovation with funding for IT investments. But interestingly, our analysis also reveals a disconnect between senior IT leadership and those working on the ground in government technology, which makes the achievement of ambitious IT modernization goals more difficult,” said Kevin Cummins, PSC’s Vice President, Technology. “In this environment, contractors should strive to communicate more with their federal partners to better understand how IT modernization can enable process innovation to deliver better mission results.”

“At a time of transition, budgetary uncertainty and competition for IT talent, federal CIOs continue to push forward and attempt to do more with less,” said George DelPrete, principal with Grant Thornton Public Sector. “CIOs must continually find creative ways to innovate and bring new ideas to their organizations while addressing enduring challenges like battling increasing cyber threats and maintaining mission-critical legacy systems.”

Federal IT leaders surveyed cite **cybersecurity, IT modernization, people and culture, cloud computing, and lack of resources** as both top priorities and challenges. More than 70 percent of respondents noted that over half of their applications are legacy systems, reflecting the huge scope of the federal government's IT modernization challenge. Agencies are increasingly using dynamic workforce training tools to combat phishing attacks and improve overall cybersecurity posture.

A majority of senior IT leaders report increased cloud adoption across government despite earlier resistance and federal security requirements. Compared with last year, more CIOs believe their agencies' cloud capabilities have reached a "mature" state – yet agency leaders still hesitate to migrate some applications, databases and infrastructure to the cloud because of a perceived lack of security.

PSC and Grant Thornton will host a press call on Tuesday, Sept. 26 at 2:00 p.m. EST to review the report's finding and answer questions from members of the media. To join the call, **please RSVP** to PSC Media Relations Director Ashlei Stevens at 703.875.8974 or stevens@pscouncil.org.

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