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Executive Survey Series

CIO SURVEY 2017

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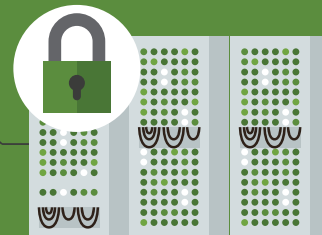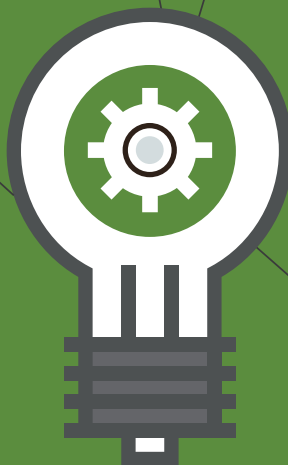
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CIOs' Confidence in Cloud, New Cyber Tools Helping IT Reforms Gain Traction

Federal News Radio's annual online survey of federal CIOs found senior IT managers are encouraged by the results so far of the Federal IT Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA)

BY JASON MILLER
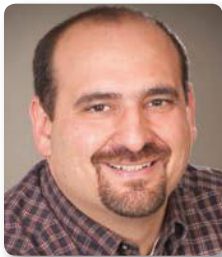
Transforming and modernizing agency networks and using the commercial cloud to do so remains a high priority for federal chief information officers. But growing confidence and expectations around the Federal IT Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA) is what will propel this effort toward success.

CIOs are more positive about the impact FITARA will have over the next few years, particularly in giving them more authorities and additional oversight over technology acquisition.

"It's beginning to get traction. More leadership involvement [is] required," wrote one CIO in Federal News Radio's exclusive 2017 Federal CIO Survey.

"Giving us greater insight into duplicative spending with opportunities to pursue greater efficiencies," wrote another CIO.

Respondents to the annual online survey of federal CIOs, deputy CIOs and other senior IT executives, however, are mixed about the impact of FITARA so far. Of all CIOs who answered, 27 percent said FITARA currently isn't having any impact at their agency, but 18 percent said the law is having a great impact.

Federal News Radio conducted its annual online survey of federal CIOs over a two-week period in August. Out of 206 CIOs, 23 responded (11 percent response rate), including 11 from cabinet level agencies, nine from small agencies and three from large agencies. Every respondent was a CIO and all were career employees. This is Federal News Radio's seventh annual survey of federal CIOs, deputy CIOs and other federal executives in the IT sector.

The mixed views about FITARA aren't surprising as agencies have had varied success in implementing the law. The *latest* FITARA scorecard from the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee showed the scores of 20 agencies either dropping or stuck in neutral.

But it's more than just a grade on the governmentwide scorecard. Forty seven percent of the CIO respondents say it doesn't accurately reflect their progress, while 30 percent say they are unsure if the scorecard is accurate for their agency.

Maybe more important than a scorecard is whether other CXOs accept the CIO's new authorities under FITARA. Of all the respondents, 38 percent rated the acceptance by other CXOs, such as the CFO or chief acquisition officer, as low or very low, while 38 percent also rated the acceptance as high or very high.

In *last year's survey*, 62 percent said their agency's CXOs understand and accept their new authorities.

Many CIO respondents still have no love for the scorecard, despite the changes made by the Government Accountability Office and the congressional committee.

"Useless when first issued, and still useless," wrote one CIO.

Another stated, the scorecard is "not based on how IT actually is operated and managed."

A third CIO said, "It actually conflicts with the law in some cases. It reflects what some wish the law said, not what it actually says."

Still another said, "It does not yet accurately reflect my agency's progress. In general, we can only get an A in risk management if I make all my programs high risk."

Despite the unhappiness with the scorecard, CIOs are excited about the potential and challenge of implementing FITARA. Respondents rated gaining new authorities over the budget and acquisition as having the most potential and being the most difficult to implement.

Among all of FITARA's requirements, developing a cadre of IT acquisition experts is having the least impact because CIOs rated it as the third most difficult aspect of the law to implement.

The oversight of FITARA and IT modernization more broadly also may be suffering from a lack of a permanent federal CIO.

More than half of all respondents (57 percent) say not having a permanent federal CIO is hampering the government's efforts to address IT challenges.

"It is frankly a shame that the administration has yet to appoint someone. IT is so intrinsic to how we enable our missions. That leadership at OMB is important to help us all move forward in the same direction," stated one CIO.

At the same time, 78 percent of the respondents say not having a federal CIO isn't effecting their ability to meet their agency's IT goals.

A little surprising is CIOs' overwhelming support for a permanent federal chief information security officer (CISO). More than two-thirds of all respondents (68 percent) said having a federal CISO is an "important and necessary" position.

Even without a permanent federal CIO, respondents said the White House's *Office of American Innovation (OAI)* hasn't stepped in to fill that role, and more than half are unsure what the office is doing to *address* federal IT challenges and issues.

A majority of respondents (63 percent) said they've had little or no interaction with OAI, while 37 percent said they've had some contact.

Respondents also are mixed about the *potential* of the Modernizing Government Technology (MGT) Act with 44 percent saying setting up working capital funds at each agency and a centralized fund at the Office of Management and Budget will have some impact, while 33 percent said it will have little impact.

"MGT only sets up a revolving fund-type authority. Small agencies have no financial flexibility in their budgets. I'm borrowing now, but won't get the savings - I don't think," said one CIO.

Another called MGT "an accounting gimmick."

Most said letting OMB and their agency control the funding in a shared approach is the best way for the fund to work.

One CIO said OMB should "put [it] in [the] passback [and direct] the amount and have CIOs report on it."

Another CIO offered this approach: "Centralize strategy (i.e. goals, standards, decision criteria); decentralized execution."

Once again, cybersecurity ranks as the CIOs' top priority. CIOs continue to feel confident that their efforts are improving their cyber posture.

Several respondents credited new tools and more people dedicated to the problem. A few said by modernizing their IT networks and systems, their agency's cyber posture improved.

Additionally, 47 percent of the respondents said senior leadership focus on cybersecurity continues to be the major lasting benefit of OMB's cyber sprint from 2015.

A strong majority of the CIOs (84 percent) say they have begun implementing the Homeland Security Department's continuous diagnostics and mitigation (CDM) program with 43 percent of them saying the tools are making a significant difference in their agency's cyber posture.

"Where we have separate networks where OCIO does not have visibility, CDM is helping force visibility into those networks," wrote one CIO.

Others are less sure about CDM, and at least one CIO said DHS keeps delaying their agency's implementation.

"We have - but are less certain there will be - benefits for our agency through the program than there were when we began," wrote one CIO.

Overall, CIO respondents had mixed comments about the overall state of federal IT.

"It seems there is way too much focus on compliance and building out new centralized providers rather than on things that can actually help agencies do better," wrote one CIO.

Another stated, "You need to look at Technology Business Management (TBM). Successful CIOs in government will be the ones who best manage the business aspects of IT."

I work at a:

- Cabinet agency (i.e., Transportation, VA, etc.) **47.83%**
- Small agency/independent agency **39.13%**
- Large agency (GSA, EPA, etc.) **13.04%**

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

I am a:

- Career employee **100.00%**
- Political appointee **0.00%**

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

I am a:

- CIO **100.00%**
- Deputy CIO **0.00%**
- Chief information security officer **0.00%**
- Deputy CISO **0.00%**
- Other senior level IT manager (CTO, etc.) **0.00%**

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
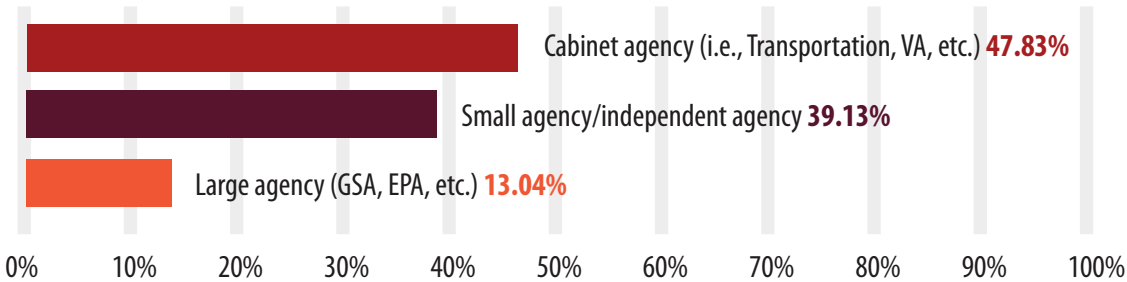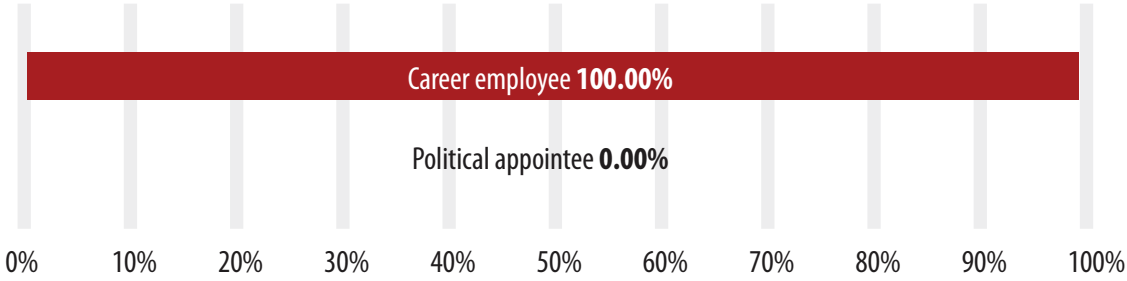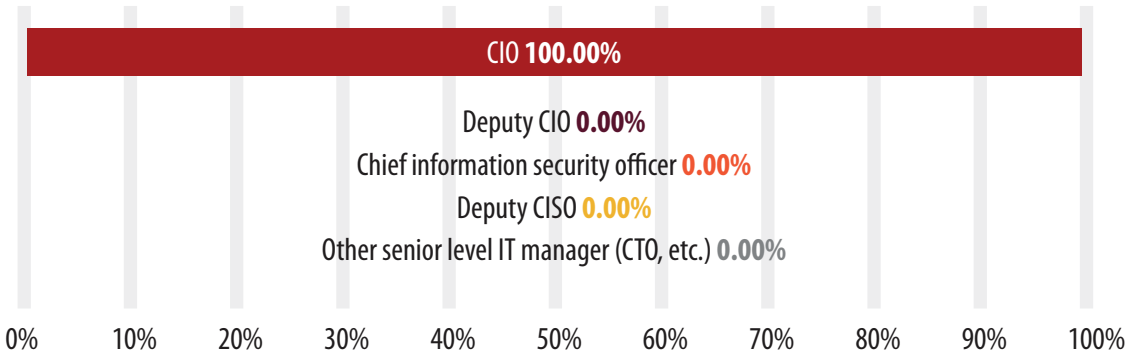
What are your top priorities for 2018

Ranked in order from most to least important

Highest Priority

Score	Priority
10.18	Securing your agency's networks, systems and data
9.95	Modernizing your agency's IT infrastructure
8.95	Reducing your agency's spend on legacy IT systems
8.76	Moving back office systems or commodity IT to the cloud
8.14	Moving mission critical systems to the cloud
7.23	Implementing the Federal IT Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA)
6.73	Workforce training
6.48	Reducing the number of data centers my agency manages
6.14	Use agile or dev/ops software development methodologies
6.00	Improving your agency's management of large IT projects
5.23	Moving to shared services for back-office services such as human resources or financial management
4.86	Implementing smartphones or tablet computers to meet mission needs
4.4	Other

Lowest Priority

Average Score: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Other priorities not listed above?

- Moving mission critical apps to cloud, reducing data centers, smartphones/tablets, to the cloud would be #1, except we already did both. Securing the network would be great, but our real goal is to get rid of our network entirely.

- Improving scientific and clinical trial process automation.

- Electronic Health Record (EHR)

On a scale of 1 to 5, how would rate the impact of FITARA so far at your agency?
(1=no impact, 5=great impact)

Rank	Percentage of Reponses
1	27.27%
2	22.73%
3	18.18%
5	18.18%
4	13.64%
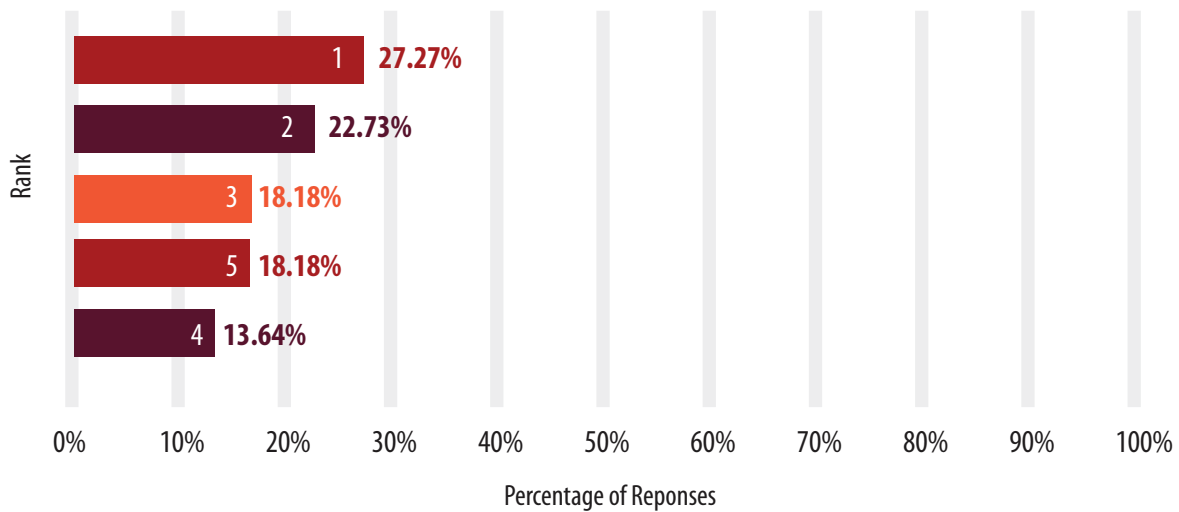
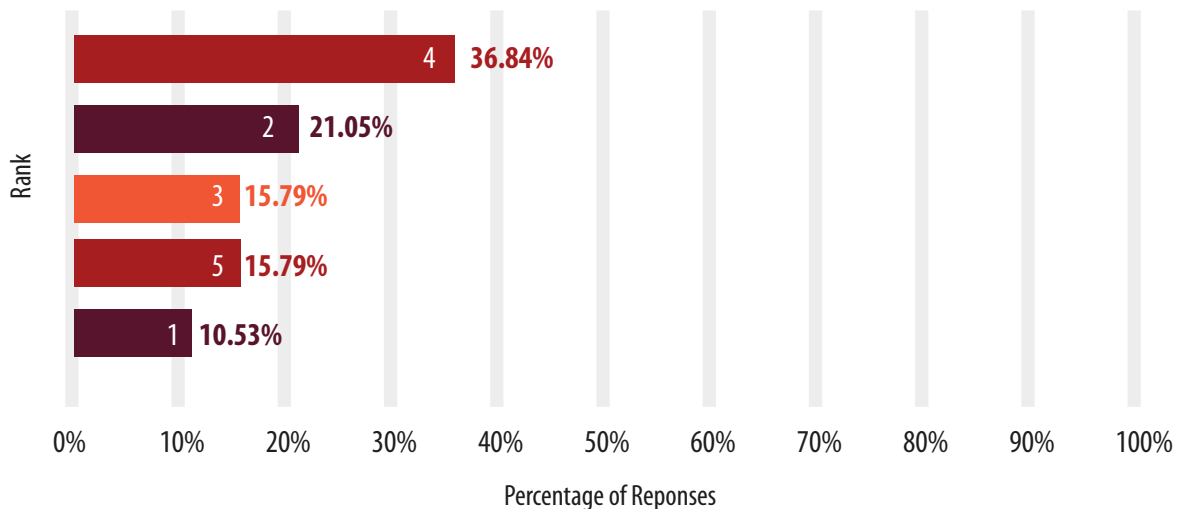### Comments

- *Clearly establishes authority.*

- *Its beginning to get traction. More leadership involvement required.*

- *Giving us greater insight into duplicative spending with opportunities to pursue greater efficiencies.*

- *We're small enough and have enough leadership support from the top of the organization that FITARA only codifies what we were already doing.*

- *It is all subjective.*

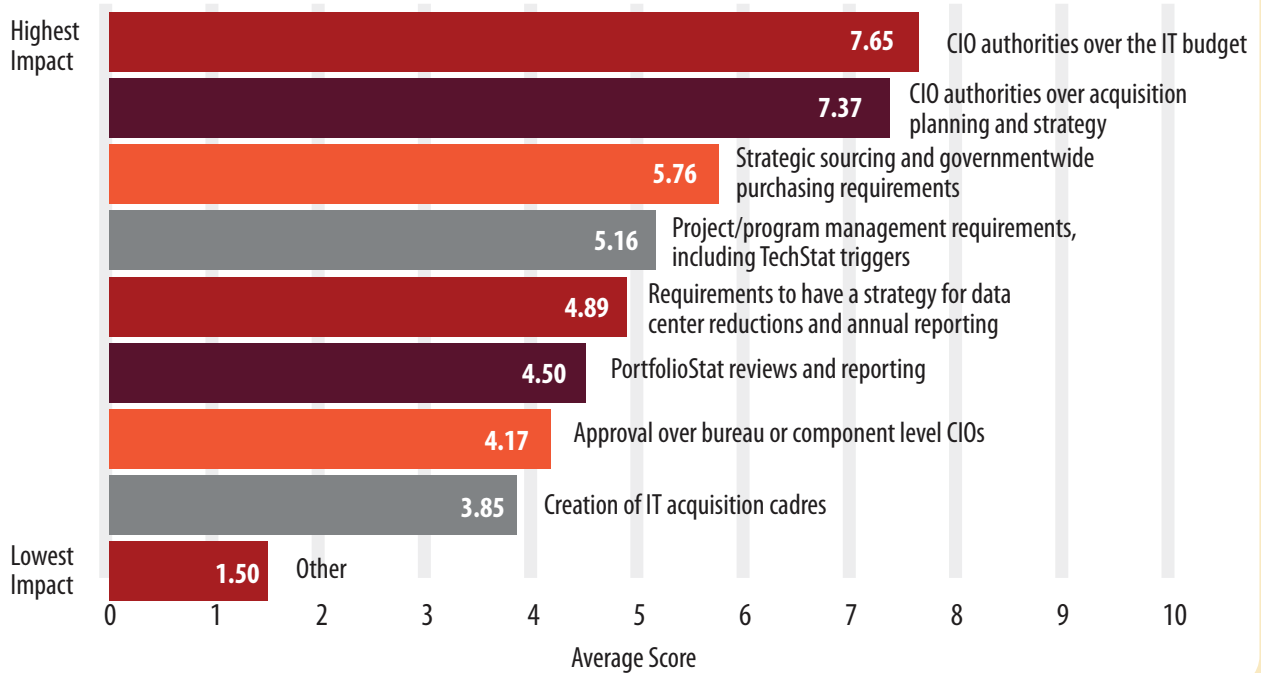## On a scale of 1 to 5, what are your expectations for FITARA?
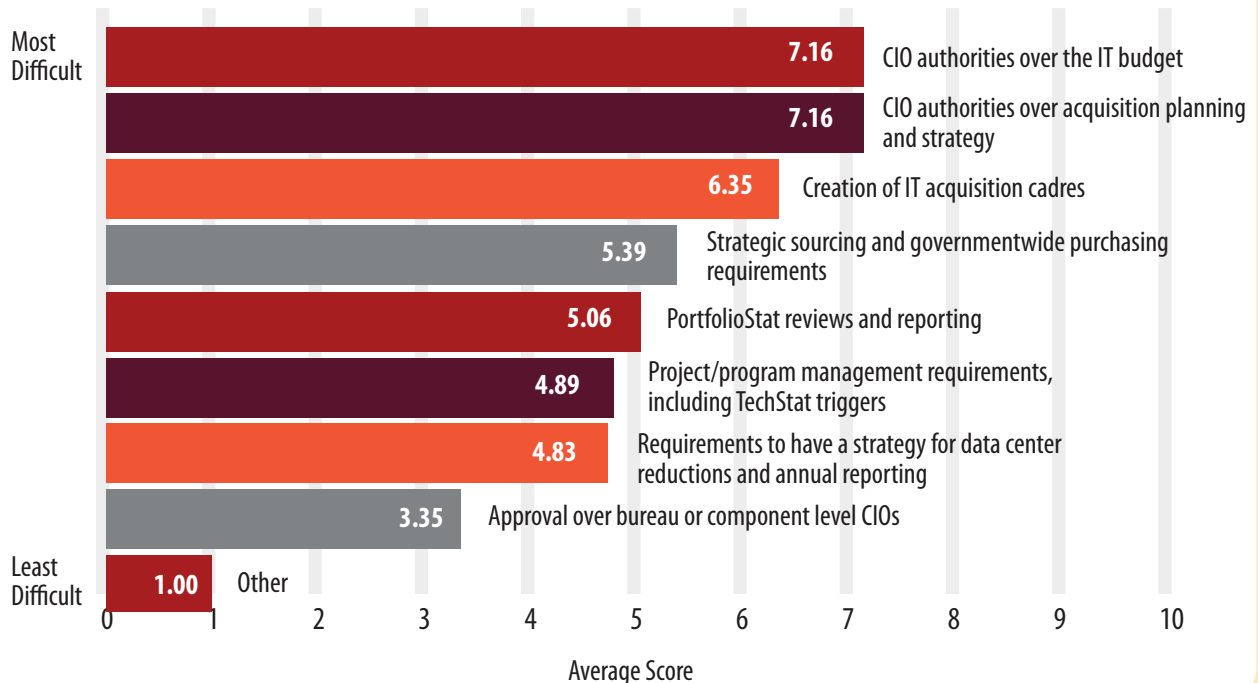*(1=no impact, 5=great impact)*

Rank	Percentage of Reponses
4	36.84%
2	21.05%
3	15.79%
5	15.79%
1	10.53%

What parts of FITARA will have the biggest impact?

Ranked in order from most to least

|	Average Score	
Highest Impact	**7.65**	CIO authorities over the IT budget
	7.37	CIO authorities over acquisition planning and strategy
	5.76	Strategic sourcing and governmentwide purchasing requirements
	5.16	Project/program management requirements, including TechStat triggers
	4.89	Requirements to have a strategy for data center reductions and annual reporting
	4.50	PortfolioStat reviews and reporting
	4.17	Approval over bureau or component level CIOs
	3.85	Creation of IT acquisition cadres
Lowest Impact	**1.50**	Other

Which of the new initiatives under FITARA have been the most difficult to implement?

Ranked in order from most to least

	Average Score	
Most Difficult	**7.16**	CIO authorities over the IT budget
	7.16	CIO authorities over acquisition planning and strategy
	6.35	Creation of IT acquisition cadres
	5.39	Strategic sourcing and governmentwide purchasing requirements
	5.06	PortfolioStat reviews and reporting
	4.89	Project/program management requirements, including TechStat triggers
	4.83	Requirements to have a strategy for data center reductions and annual reporting
	3.35	Approval over bureau or component level CIOs
Least Difficult	**1.00**	Other

Has your opinion changed about the FITARA scorecard developed by GAO and Congress and whether it accurately grades your agency's progress in meeting the mandate?

No **47.83%**

Not sure **30.43%**

Yes **21.74%**
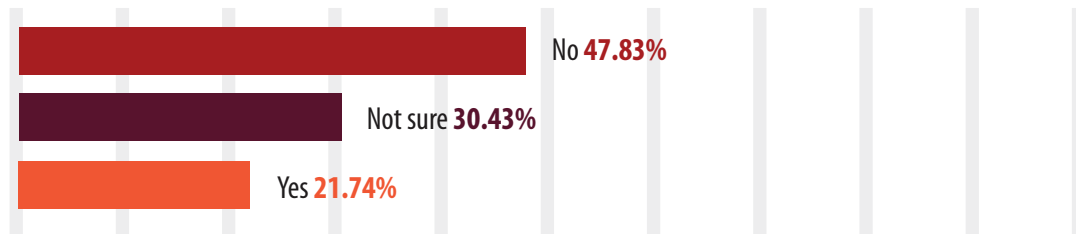
Comments

- *Report on agency risk is graded on how much yellow/red. Highest grades for reporting more red or risk not on how well risk is being managed. This approach does not allow agencies to take credit for mitigation of risk, improvements in program management.*

- *It does not yet accurately reflect my agency's progress. In general, we can only get an A in risk management if I make all my programs high risk.*

- *The scorecard does not accurately measure implementation of the law.*

If yes, has the scorecard gotten:

Worse **60.00%**
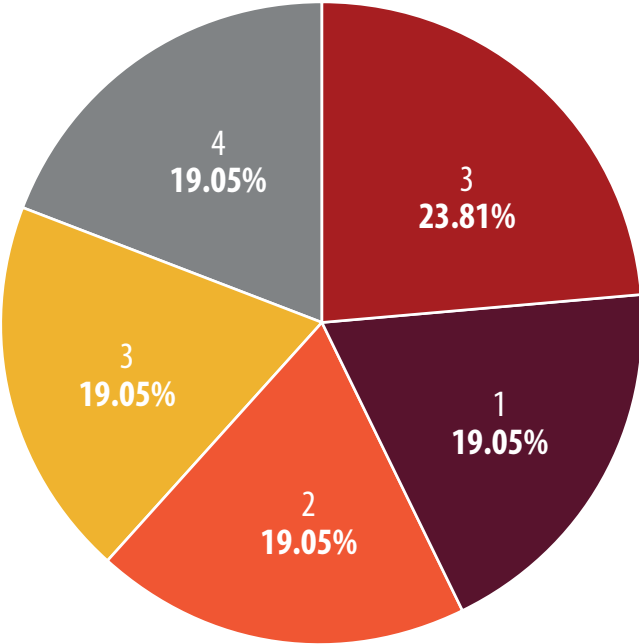
Better **40.00%**

Comments

- *Subjective.*

- *It actually conflicts with the law in some cases. It reflects what some wish the law said, not what it actually says.*

If no, why hasn't your opinion changed?

- Not based on how IT actually is operated and managed.

- Changes in a large agency take time, particularly in a year that involved change in administration.

- As a relatively new CIO, we have a handle on the math behind the scores and expect improvement with the next scorecard. My team was not accurately submitting numbers.

- Useless when first issued, and still useless.

- It still doesn't reflect FITARA goals.
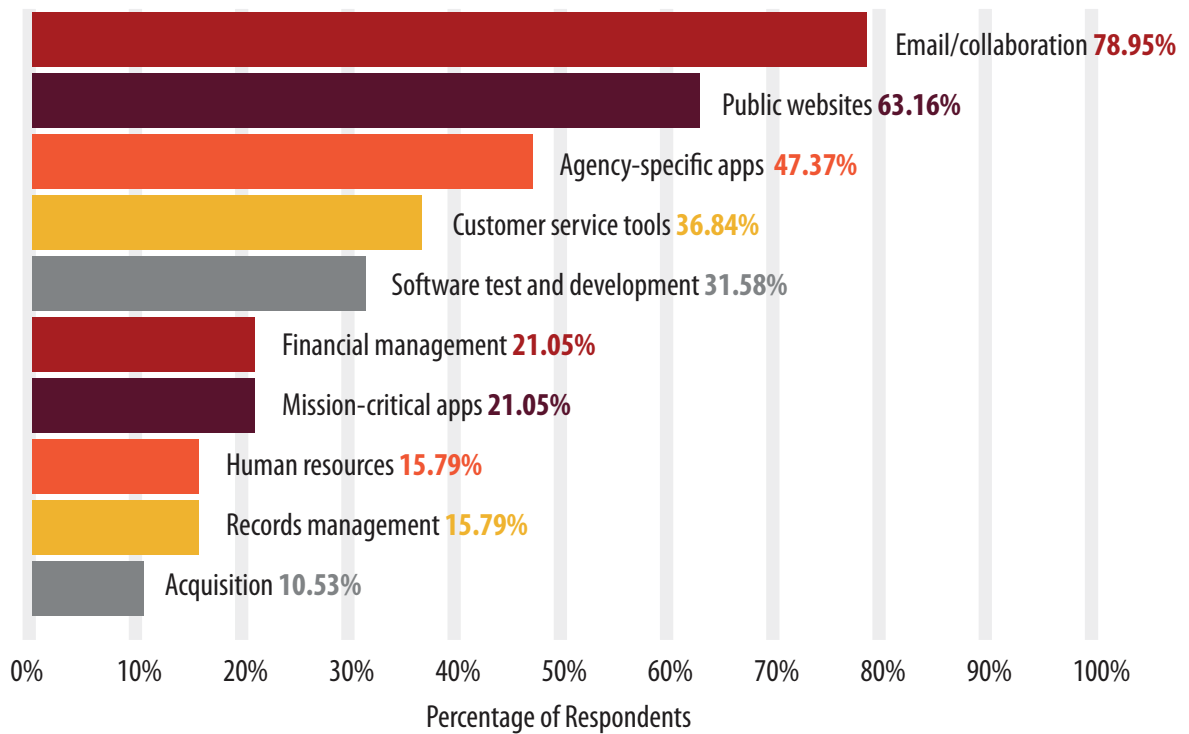
- Because it is all subjective.

How would you rate your agency's CXO's (CFO, CAO, CHCO) understanding and acceptance the CIO's new responsibilities under FITARA.

(1=no understanding/acceptance, 5=full and complete understanding/acceptance)

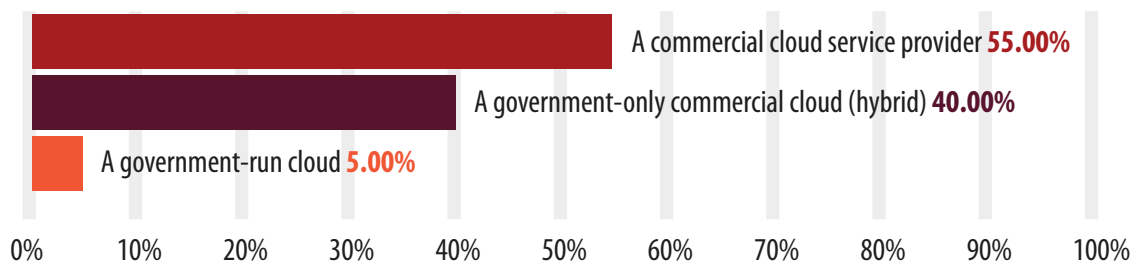## What applications have you already moved to the cloud?
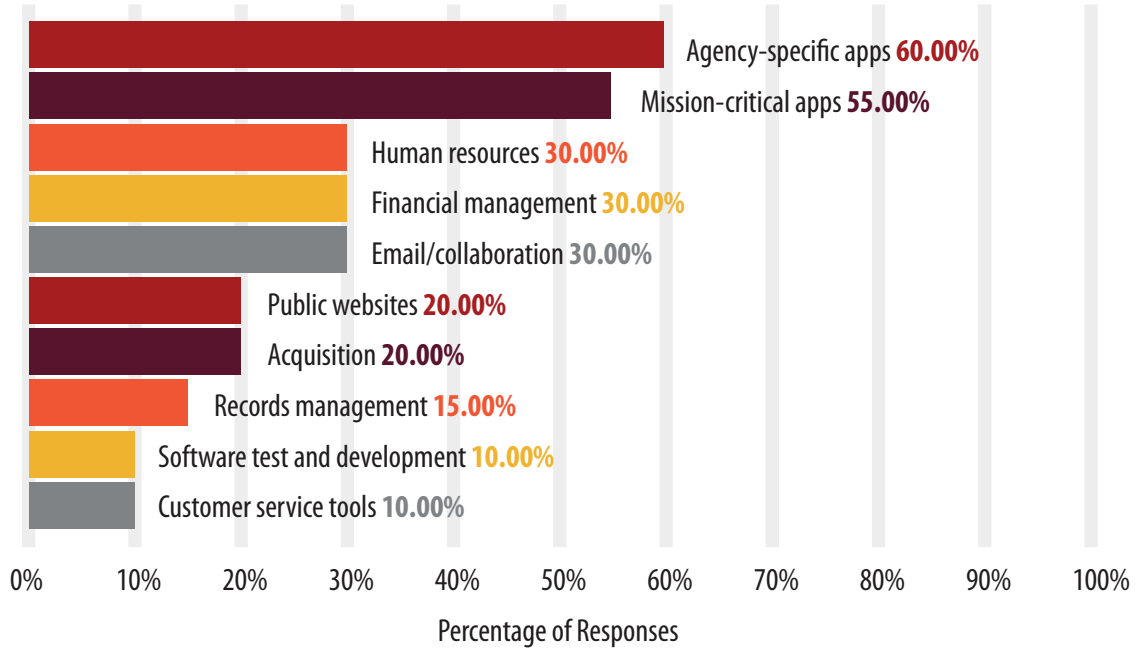
(Check all that apply.)

- Email/collaboration **78.95%**
- Public websites **63.16%**
- Agency-specific apps **47.37%**
- Customer service tools **36.84%**
- Software test and development **31.58%**
- Financial management **21.05%**
- Mission-critical apps **21.05%**
- Human resources **15.79%**
- Records management **15.79%**
- Acquisition **10.53%**

Percentage of Respondents

Comments

• *We have our own private cloud.*

For the most part, your apps in the cloud reside in:

- A commercial cloud service provider **55.00%**
- A government-only commercial cloud (hybrid) **40.00%**
- A government-run cloud **5.00%**

What applications are at the top of your priority list for moving to the cloud?
(Check all that apply.)

Agency-specific apps **60.00%**

Mission-critical apps **55.00%**

Human resources **30.00%**

Financial management **30.00%**

Email/collaboration **30.00%**

Public websites **20.00%**

Acquisition **20.00%**

Records management **15.00%**

Software test and development **10.00%**

Customer service tools **10.00%**

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Percentage of Responses

When do you expect to move these systems to the cloud?

In 4-6 months **10.00%**

In 3 months or sooner **15.00%**

In 7-12 months **50.00%**
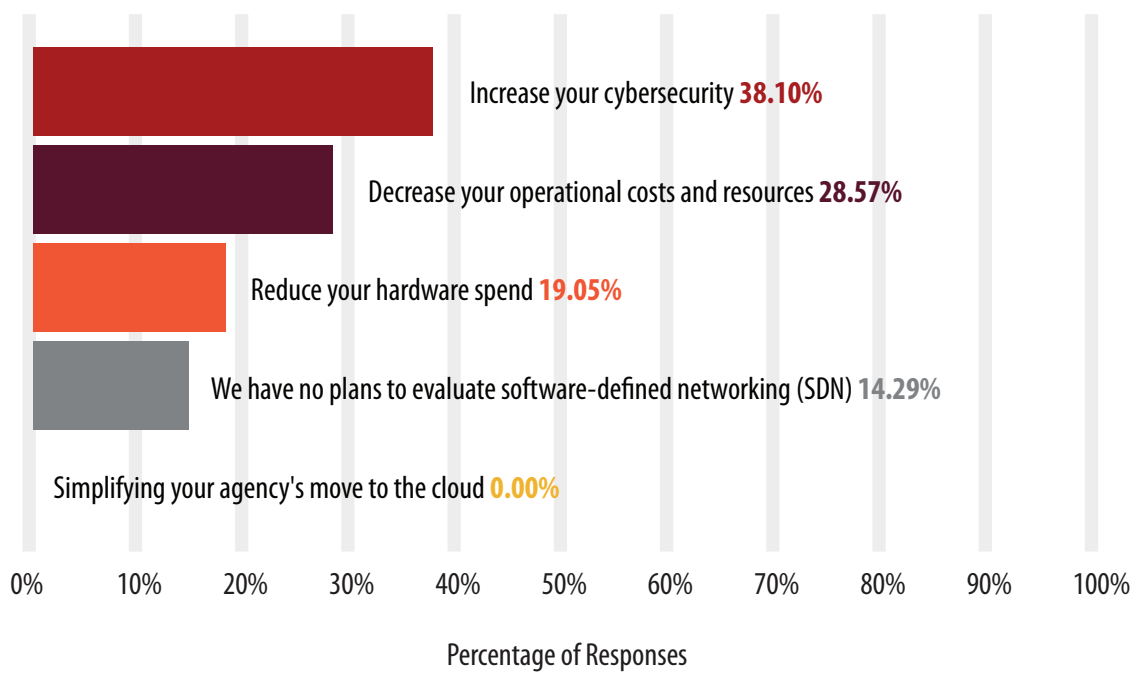
In more than 12 months **25.00%**
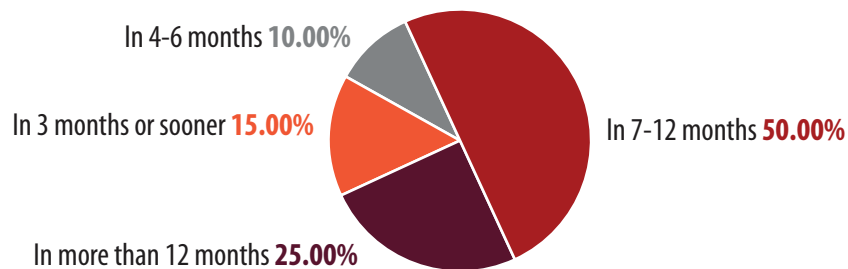
Comments
- *We have already moved the majority of our mission critical/major systems. We are now trying to fund moving some back-end systems.*
- *Never.*

For the most part, do you anticipate using:
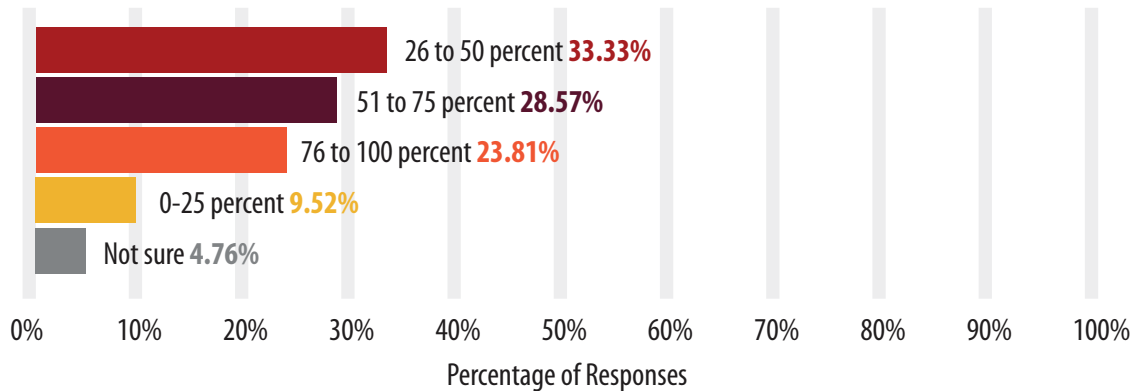*(Rank in order of preference. 1 = high priority, 3 = low priority)*

A government-only commercial cloud (hybrid) **2.50**

A commercial cloud service provider **2.19**

A government-run cloud **1.41**

0% 1% 2% 3% 4% 5% 6% 7% 8% 9% 10%

Average Score
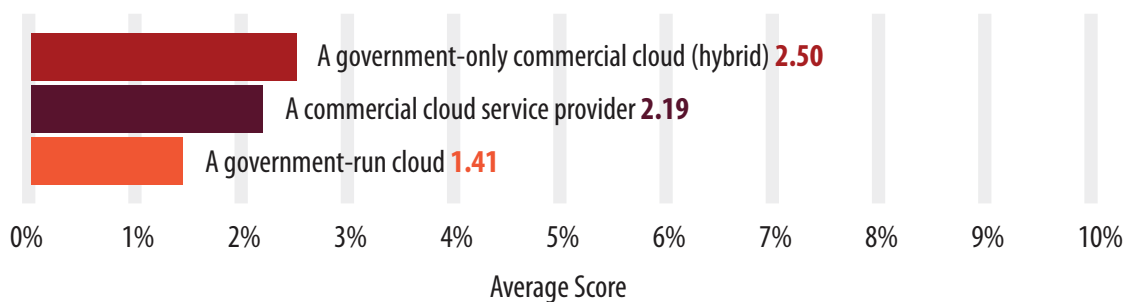
When evaluating Software-Defined Networking solutions what primary benefits are you seeking?

Increase your cybersecurity **38.10%**

Decrease your operational costs and resources **28.57%**

Reduce your hardware spend **19.05%**

We have no plans to evaluate software-defined networking (SDN) **14.29%**

Simplifying your agency's move to the cloud **0.00%**

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Percentage of Responses

Comments

- *I would really say both increasing cybersecurity and reducing O&M costs.*

- *This question doesn't make sense. SDN is how we manage networking in the cloud; it's not really an option.*

What percentage of your IT budget does your agency spend on legacy IT systems?

26 to 50 percent **33.33%**
51 to 75 percent **28.57%**
76 to 100 percent **23.81%**
0-25 percent **9.52%**
Not sure **4.76%**

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Percentage of Responses

My agency struggles to get out of the operations and maintenance (O&M) cycle to spend money on new IT systems.

Not sure **4.76%**
Disagree **28.57%**
Agree **66.67%**
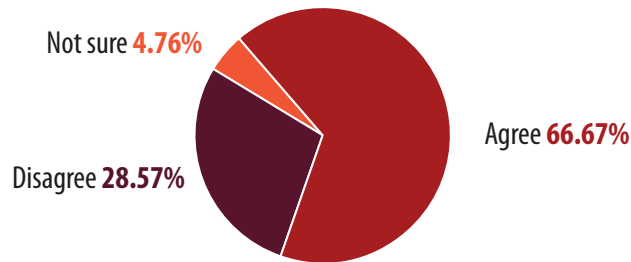
Comments

- *Many of our systems are mixed lifecycle with incremental improvement and ongoing planned modernization activities.*

- *O&M are barely funded adequately, so DME funding will always take a hit.*

If you agreed with the statement above, why?

- Customers demand new functionality and features over legacy modernization and technical debt.
- Moving to the cloud requires changes in business processes, and how funding is directed. Changing or shifting the funding model takes times in the government budget cycles.
- Culture of organizations and staff resistance to change.
- Everyone focuses on the 50 meter target of keeping IT running.
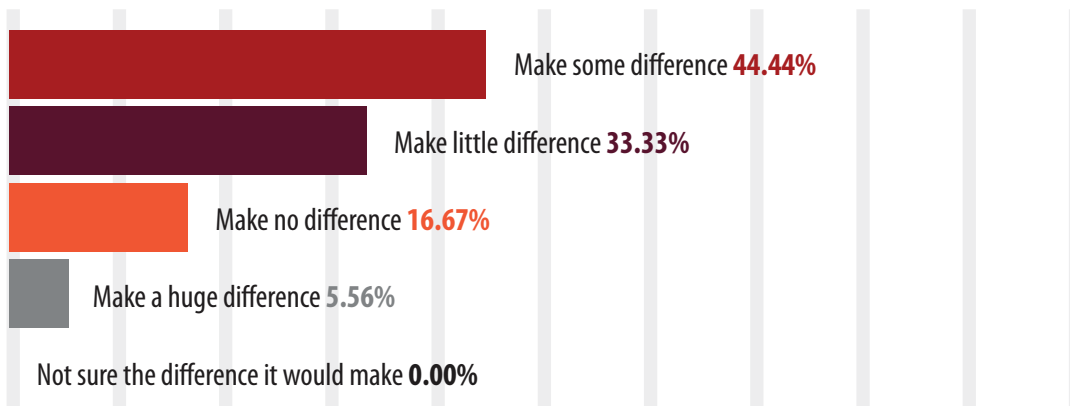- Our legacy systems are greater than 10 years old and not meeting the needs of our agency.

If you disagreed with the statement above, tell us how you are changing your spending patterns?

- None.
- Rethought definitions of O&M and DME, and got buy in from senior business leadership. This is enabling us to change the discussion about what we should spend $ on.

I am familiar with the Modernizing Government Technology Act, which will set up working capital funds in every agency.
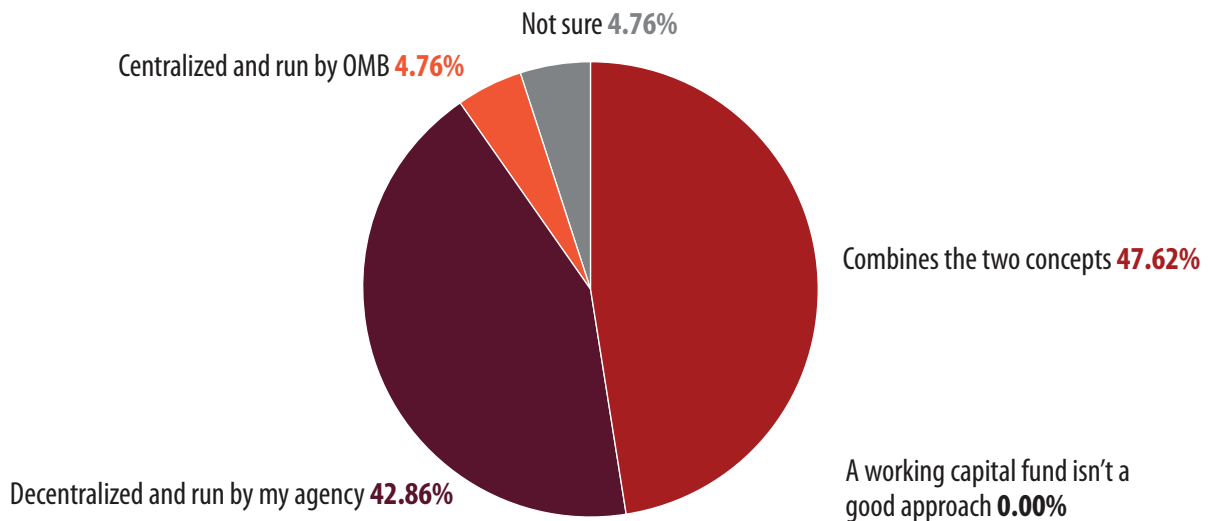
Not sure **4.76%**

Disagree **9.52%**

Agree **85.71%**
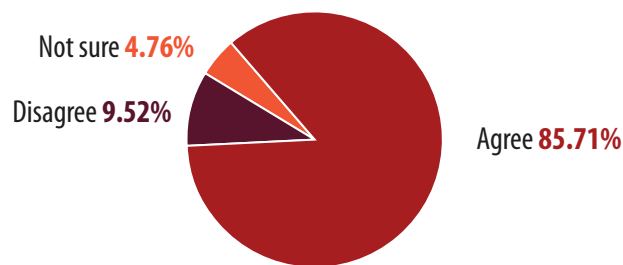
If you are familiar with MGT, what impact would these working capital funds have on the modernization of your agency's legacy IT?

Make some difference **44.44%**

Make little difference **33.33%**

Make no difference **16.67%**

Make a huge difference **5.56%**

Not sure the difference it would make **0.00%**

From my perspective, the best approach to create a working capital fund to modernize federal IT is:

Not sure **4.76%**

Centralized and run by OMB **4.76%**

Combines the two concepts **47.62%**

A working capital fund isn't a good approach **0.00%**
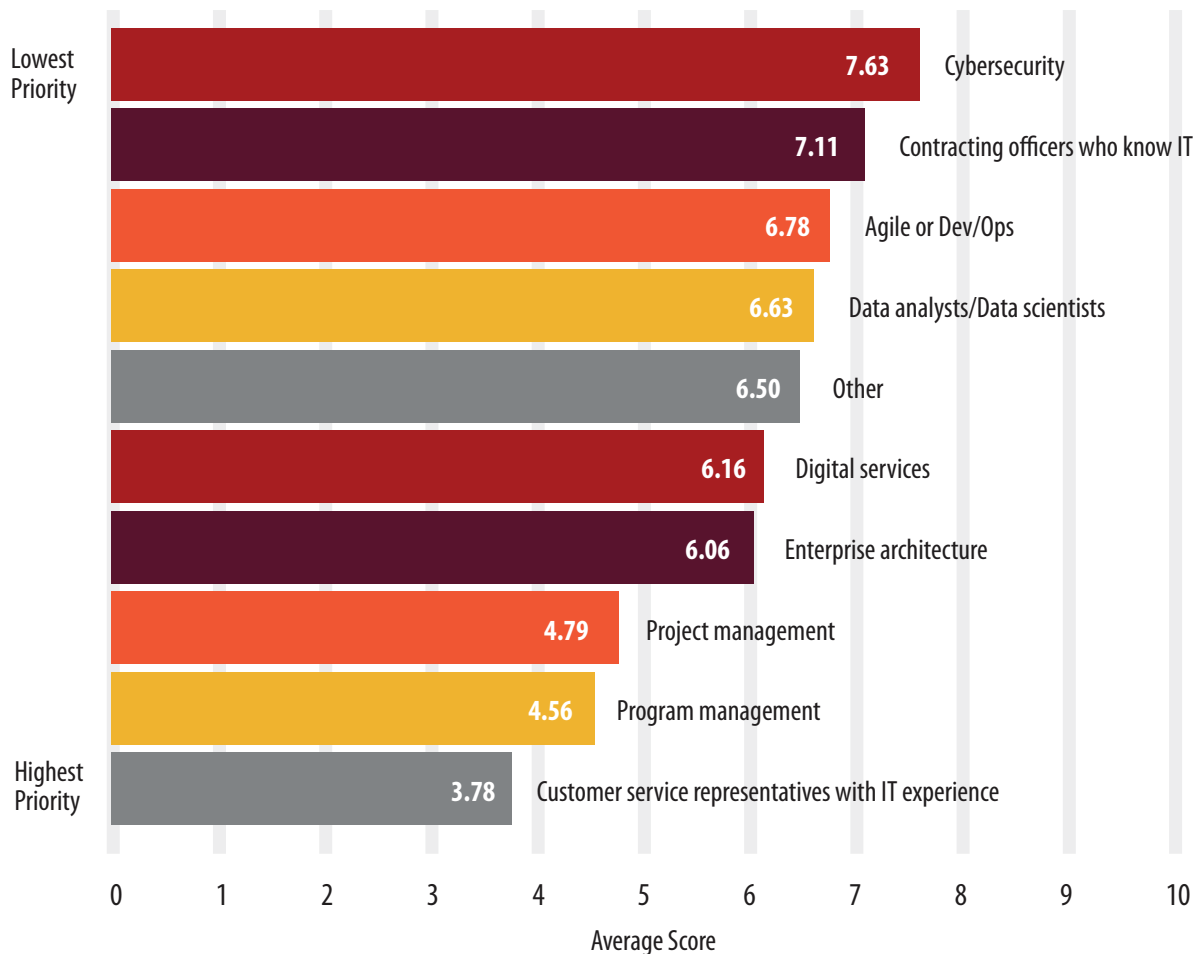
Decentralized and run by my agency **42.86%**

If you said one that combines the centralized and decentralized approaches, tell us how would it work.

• Put in passback directly the amount and have CIOs report on it.

• Use Agency funds , but be able to apply for OMB controlled funds.

• Maybe with matching funds.

• Need more space. Centralize srategy (i.e. goals, standards, decision criteria); de-centralize execution.

What IT skills do you find most difficult to obtain?

Ranked in order from highest to lowest priority

Priority	Skill	Average Score
Lowest Priority	Cybersecurity	7.63
	Contracting officers who know IT	7.11
	Agile or Dev/Ops	6.78
	Data analysts/Data scientists	6.63
	Other	6.50
	Digital services	6.16
	Enterprise architecture	6.06
	Project management	4.79
	Program management	4.56
Highest Priority	Customer service representatives with IT experience	3.78

Average Score

If you said other, please describe

- Difficulty competing with private sector salaries, even if the candidate is interested, or very interested in the mission.

- Software Engineers.

Do you believe your agency's ability to secure your networks and data is better today than it was a year ago?
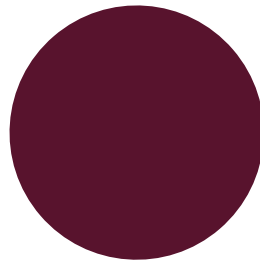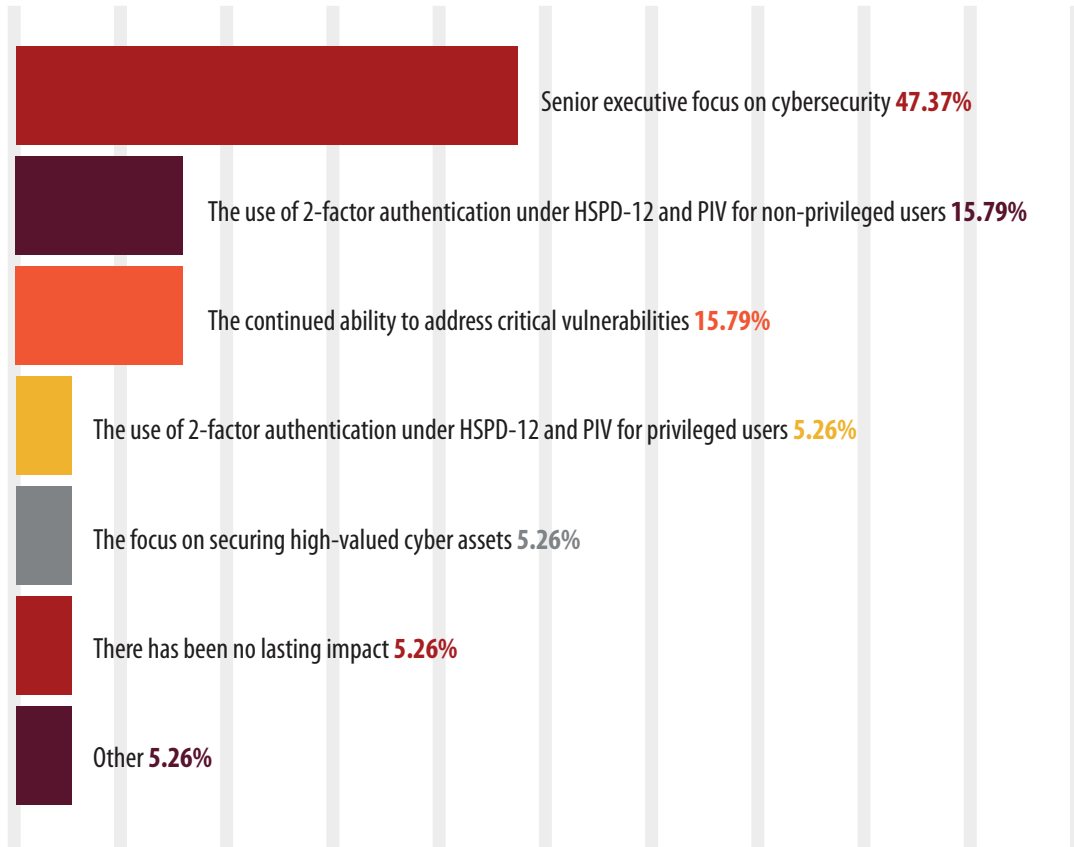
Yes **100.00%**

If yes, can you tell us how?

- Hired Sr. Security Engineer.

- Attention and resources.

- We have implemented new tools and engaged with DHS on several reveiws that have verified our improved footprint.

- People, tools, techniques.

- Greater focus on security organization wide.

- Making it my #1 priority.

- We have done a lot of work to stabilize and modernize over the last year.

- Continued investment in staffing and tools.

- Better focus on the what, why, and how.

- We have modernized our entire network and implemented Einstein 3A and CDM Phase 2.

In the two years since the Cyber Sprint, what has the lasting impact been at your agency?

Senior executive focus on cybersecurity **47.37%**

The use of 2-factor authentication under HSPD-12 and PIV for non-privileged users **15.79%**

The continued ability to address critical vulnerabilities **15.79%**

The use of 2-factor authentication under HSPD-12 and PIV for privileged users **5.26%**

The focus on securing high-valued cyber assets **5.26%**

There has been no lasting impact **5.26%**

Other **5.26%**

If you said other, please describe.

• Not connected to cyber sprint but our agency has seen sustained improvement across many areas as well as senior leadership commitment to cybersecurity.

My agency has begun implementing DHS's Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation (CDM) program

Disagree **15.79%**

Agree **84.21%**
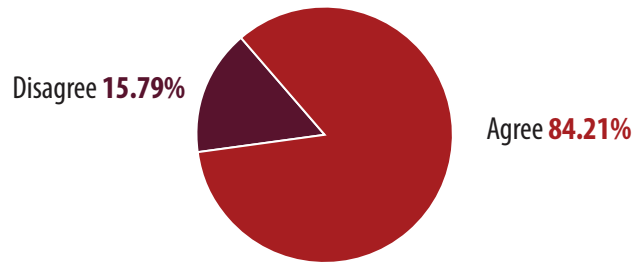
Comments

- *We have but are less certain there will be benefits for our agency through the program than we were when we began.*

- *We are part of Task Order 2 Task F and are still waiting on DHS to implement.*

## If your agency has begun implementing the CDM program, what impact has it had on your agency's ability to secure your networks and data?

It is making a significant difference in how we protect our networks and data **43.75%**

It is a nice addition to our existing tools and techniques **25.00%**

It is making a minimal difference in my agency's cyber posture **18.75%**

It is not making any difference in my agency's cyber posture **12.50%**
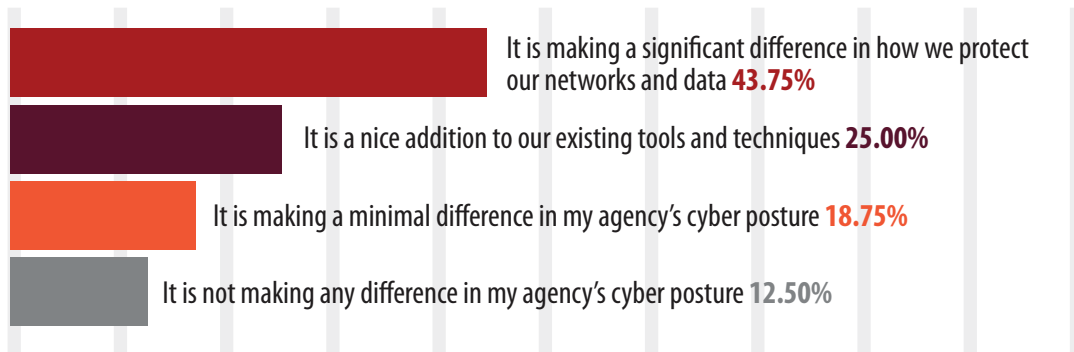
Comments

- *Where we have separate networks where OCIO does not have visibility, CDM is helping force visibility into those networks.*

If your agency hasn't been implementing the CDM Program yet, why not? Are you concerned?

- We're in DHS CDM TO2F.

- Scheduled to implement in coming months.

- Yes, I'm concerned - DHS has continued to slip the delivery of Task Order 2 Subgroup F.

The Trump administration hasn't yet named a permanent federal CIO. Do you think the lack of a federal CIO is impacting how your AGENCY meets its mission?

Yes **21.05%**

No **78.95%**
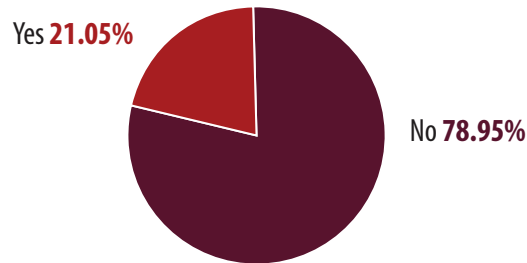
Do you think that lack of a federal CIO is impacting how THE GOVERNMENT is addressing IT challenges?

Yes **57.89%**

No **42.11%**
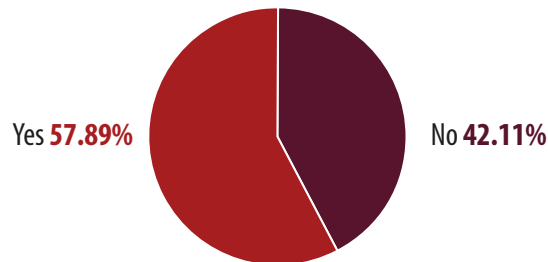
Do you think a permanent federal chief information security officer (CISO) is an important and necessary position?

Yes **68.42%**

No **31.58%**
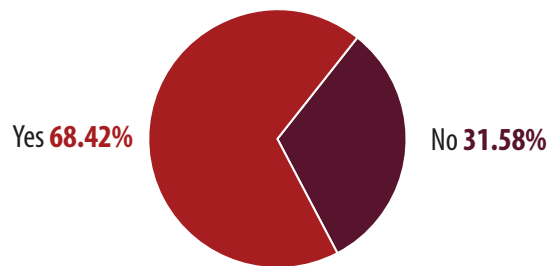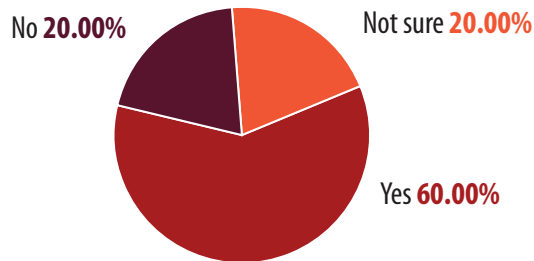
How much interaction have you had with the White House's Office of American Innovation (OAI)?

None **42.11%**

Some **36.84%**

Little **21.05%**

A lot **00.00%**
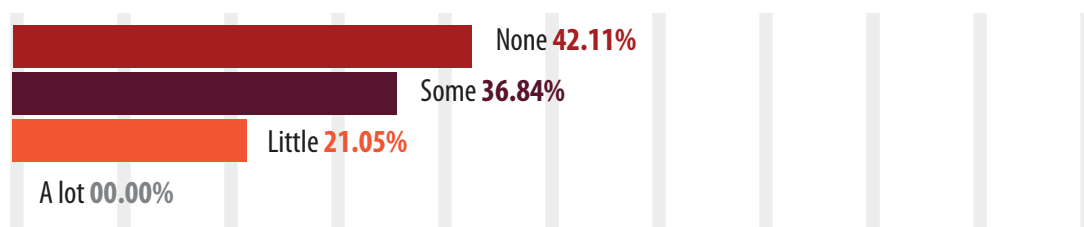
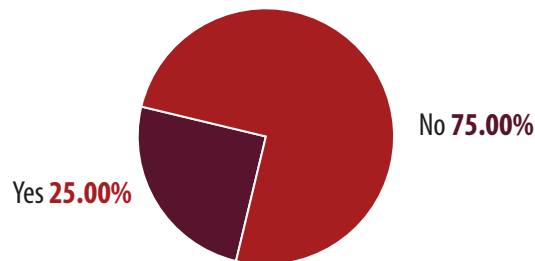## Do you think OAI is taking the lead on issues and challenges typically overseen by OMB and the federal CIO?

Yes **26.32%**

No **21.05%**

Not sure **52.63%**
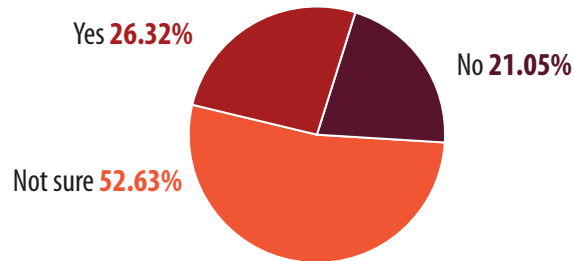
If you answered yes, is that a good thing?

No **20.00%**

Not sure **20.00%**

Yes **60.00%**

If you answered no, should OAI get more involved in federal IT issues?

No **75.00%**

Yes **25.00%**

Any other comments about the state of federal IT?

- It seems there is way too much focus on compiance and building out new centralized providers rather than on things that can actually help agencies do better.

- Hire a Federal CIO ASAP.

- You need to look at TBM. Successful CIOs in government will be the ones who best manage the business aspects of IT.

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