

**.gov Reform Initiative**

**Department of Labor Web Improvement Plan**

Working Draft as of 10/11/2011

## Background

In the [August 12, 2011 Agency Instructions for Completing Web Inventories and Web Improvement Plans](#), Agency CIOs were asked to work with their Agency Web Manager and Office of Public Affairs to submit an Interim Progress Report on their efforts to streamline Agency-managed .gov domains (due September 6, 2011) and to begin development of an Agency-wide Web Improvement Plan.

“By October 11, Agencies shall develop a Web Improvement Plan that communicates their **strategy for managing web resources more efficiently, improving online content, and enhancing the customer experience of Agency websites.**” This comprehensive plan will “address the broader objectives of **streamlining content, infrastructure, and ultimately improving customer service.**”

The purpose of this Web Improvement Plan is to identify the strategy, actions, measurements, and timelines that the Agency is using to streamline website infrastructure, improve web content, and enhance the customer experience with Executive Branch websites.

Agencies are being asked to create a Web Improvement Plan that will be developed iteratively over the next few months. In this plan, Agencies will describe Agency-wide efforts to effectively manage publicly accessible websites in the .gov domain. Only agencies in the Executive Branch are required to submit a Web Improvement Plan. The initial plan for the Department of Labor, due to OMB by October 11, 2011, is in the following section.

## **Step 1: Current State of Agency-wide Web Improvement Efforts**

Over the past few months, Agencies have been reviewing their .gov domains, web operations, and other web-related efforts in response to OMB .gov Reform data collection efforts (individual domain inventories, web governance survey, interim progress reports, etc.). The following describes the state of current web improvement efforts at the Department of Labor.

### **1) Does your Agency currently have an Agency-wide web strategy?**

No.

### **2) How does your agency currently ensure that Agency-wide web resources are managed efficiently (e.g. governance, technology/infrastructure, hosting, staffing, operations, etc.)?**

Department of Labor (DOL) website policies and management are governed by the Enterprise Communications Management Group (ECMG) that was created by Secretary's Order 02-2005. The group is managed by the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) and is comprised of representatives from all DOL agencies and designated policy-level representatives from several DOL management agencies, including the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), the Solicitor of Labor (SOL) and others.

The ECMG operates in three tiers to promote conversations and communication appropriate to the agency representatives:

- Tier I – Policy: Senior level representatives make decisions on policy and implementation based on recommendations from other ECMG tiers and set direction.
- Tier II – Projects: Agency Web content managers evaluate proposals, raise issues related to the Web, and formulate recommendations for enterprise projects or policies to Tier I. Tier II also implements changes as approved by Tier I.
- Tier III – Technical: Agency technical representatives determine technical standards, raise issues related to the Web, and formulate recommendations for enterprise projects or policies to Tiers II or III. Tier III also implements changes as approved by Tier I.

All three tiers are chaired by representatives of OPA's Division of Enterprise Communications.

The exchange of information fostered by the ECMG is one way of ensuring that Web-related projects are not duplicated. Additionally, OPA established a procurement approval process in 2007 that requires all Web services procurements to be reviewed by OPA and approved or rejected based on a determination of whether services are being duplicated. In November 2011, the Information Technology Acquisitions Review Board (ITARB) will begin operating with the goal of reviewing mid to large sized information technology procurements for possible consolidation as part of the strategic sourcing initiative.

All DOL agency websites share a common look and feel and operate under the same group of policies, but five agency websites are managed and hosted separately from the 23 agencies and offices hosted on DOL.gov. These include agency websites for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Mine Safety and Health Administration, the Office of Administrative Law Judges, the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Office of Inspector General.

### **3) How does your Agency currently ensure that website content is readily accessible, updated, accurate, and routinely improved?**

Each Department of Labor (DOL) agency is responsible for the quality of their website content, but several enterprise solutions have been implemented to improve accessibility, accuracy and ongoing improvements.

Although the department has always been committed to meeting the requirements of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, in 2011 we made a commitment to move beyond those basic requirements and implement websites with enhanced accessibility. To that end, the department filled the vacant position of Section 508 Coordinator and the Office of Public Affairs added a position for an accessibility specialist. Working in concert with DOL agencies, they are building the framework for a solid accessibility program, including a stringent policy that will apply to all DOL websites. In addition, DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy procured automated content compliance software that will be used to assist agencies in identifying and remediating accessibility issues.

As a manually maintained website, one of the challenges for DOL.gov is it to find and correct broken links caused by content changes on DOL and other websites to which we link. The 23 agencies and offices hosted on DOL.gov receive daily link checking reports that provide a quick check of newly broken links to be corrected as soon as possible.

In the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2012, the department will add a "Was this page helpful?" feature to DOL.gov that will allow users to tell us whether a specific page is helpful and then provide any comments they wish to submit. This simple feature will make it easier to locate potential trouble spots within the website and take quick action to correct them, as necessary.

### **4) How does your Agency currently ensure that websites are meeting user expectations and needs and that the customer experience with websites is continually enhanced?**

The Department of Labor (DOL) has taken several steps to ensure that user expectations are being met:

- Integrating Usability Concepts – The DOL.gov website was tested during a First Fridays Usability Testing session sponsored by the General Services Administration. The feedback gathered from three test subjects and the observers of the four hour session was very valuable and will be included in new version of the DOL.gov home page that emphasizes topics of importance to

users. The revised home page is set to launch in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2012. The department has also added two usability certified staff members into the Web management team.

- Communicating with the Public – DOL is active in several of the most visited social media channels, but the department wants to move past the point of one-way communication into community building and two-way conversations. To that end, the department has hosted multiple web chat question and answer sessions with our stakeholders, the most popular of which was the a chat about Fiscal Year 2012 budget priorities with the Secretary of Labor that had more than 2, 500 participants during the live session. These sessions are an inexpensive way to interact with the public and get direct feedback about on a specific issue.
- Making Data Widely Available – The department has been very proactive in making data available in usable ways. In Fiscal Year 2011, the department created an Application Programming Interface (API) that allows anyone to easily connect to DOL data. In addition to the API, the department also released Software Development Kits (SDKs) for seven platforms: BlackBerry, Android, iOS, DotNet, DotNet Windows Phone 7, Ruby and PHP. We believe we were the first department in the federal government to make software development kits available.
- Developing Mobile Applications – DOL has released three mobile applications – two of which are available in both English and Spanish – to meet a range of needs. The Labor Statistics app provides up-to-the-minute information about key labor statistics; the OSHA Heat Index app provides workers with information about outdoor working conditions and how to be safe in them; and the DOL Timesheet app assists users in tracking their hours for one employer or across multiple employers and determining when overtime is due. The department also sponsored two application development contests that challenged the public to use our data in useful ways.
- Improving Search Functionality – DOL is actively exploring the use of the USA Search functionality. If DOL’s testing is successfully completed, the implementation of USA Search will provide better search results at a lower cost to the public.
- Improving Feedback Mechanisms –In the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2012, the department will add a “Was this page helpful?” feature that allows users to rate individual pages. In addition, DOL will explore the improvement of the existing customer satisfaction survey to ensure that it is useful for making website improvements.
- Coordinating Communication Channels – DOL’s Office of Public Affairs manages both Web management services and DOL’s National Contact Center. By sharing information about information frequently requested via phone calls and email, the website can be revised to meet those needs.