

**ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE:  
THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S CAMPAIGN TO CUT WASTE AND IMPROVE RESULTS  
June 2011 – Update**

All across America, families and businesses are finding ways to live within their means, eliminating not only wasteful expenses, but even some things that are desirable, but not essential. The Federal government is doing the same thing – focusing on how we can cut waste, get the most from taxpayer dollars, and reform how the government works so the American people get the best service possible.

Instead of accepting the status quo, the President has worked from day one to change how business is done in Washington. As part of its Accountable Government Initiative, the Administration has moved to eliminate wasteful spending, streamline what works, and modernize how government operates to save money and improve performance. From scaling back on no-bid contracts to stopping improper payments, getting rid of unneeded Federal real estate, and ending out-of-control information technology (IT) projects, the Administration has worked to reform how Washington spends taxpayer dollars. That entails both cutting the wasteful and duplicative as well as improving how services are delivered to the American people. There is no reason why people should get a sub-standard level of convenience and responsiveness in their dealings with their government.

Reforming how Washington works is an ongoing effort that demands vigilance and leadership. To build on the accomplishments detailed below, the President has asked the Vice President to take the reins of the Administration's reform efforts and lead its "Campaign to Cut Waste," an initiative to hunt down misspent tax dollars throughout the government. The Vice President will bring to this task the same dedication and skill he showed in delivering an unprecedented low level of waste, fraud, and abuse to the implementation of the Recovery Act. As part of this effort, the Vice President will hold the entire Cabinet accountable for delivering cuts in waste and improvements in how their departments serve the public, and he will work to create a new accountability and transparency board that will build on the success of the Recovery Act.

**CUTTING WASTE, SAVING MONEY, AND ELIMINATING DUPLICATION**

Winning the future will take doing what we can do now to prepare America to compete in the global economy for decades to come. That means investing in and reforming education and job-training so that all Americans have the skills necessary to compete; encouraging innovation and investment in research and development in the industries of tomorrow such as clean energy; and rebuilding our nation's infrastructure so that American companies can ship their products and ideas to every corner of the country and to any spot on the globe.

In addition to investing in these drivers of economic growth and job creation, we also must restore responsibility for what we spend and accountability for how we spend it. To succeed in the world economy, we must free ourselves from the burden of growing deficits and debt, and we must also strive to get the most out of our government by ensuring that limited resources are not wasted on duplicative, outdated, or ineffective programs.

**Going Line by Line Through the Budget to Find Terminations, Reductions, and Savings.** In the 2012 Budget, the President proposed 211 terminations, reductions and savings measures which will save more than \$33 billion in 2012 and \$400 billion over the next decade. This builds on the approximately \$20 billion in terminations, reductions, and savings encompassing more than 120 programs proposed each in the 2010 and 2011 Budgets. While recent administrations have seen between 15 to 20 percent of their proposed discretionary cuts actually enacted, the Obama Administration worked with Congress to enact 60 percent of proposed discretionary cuts for FY 2010. In addition, this commitment to find areas where we can cut in order to invest our resources in areas critical to winning the future helped to produce an appropriations bill for FY 2011 that comprised, in nominal terms, the largest cuts in any year in history.

**Consolidating Duplicative or Overlapping Programs.** Recently, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a study enumerating what many in Washington have known for many years: there is too much duplication of programs. Across agencies and issue areas, there are programs that share the same mission and goal and often perform the same tasks. To reduce this duplication, the Administration has proposed a range of efforts such as eliminating 13 discretionary Department of Education programs and consolidating 38 K-12 programs into 11 new programs that emphasize using competition to allocate funds, giving communities more choices around activities, and using rigorous evidence to fund what works and merging 55 duplicative, often-earmarked highway programs into five streamlined programs.

**Reducing Administrative Overhead by \$2 Billion.** In its very first meeting, the President asked his Cabinet to cut to their administrative budgets, and they responded by identifying 77 cost-saving measures, amounting to \$243 million in savings through 2010. To make sure that we are getting the best ideas from everywhere we can, the President launched the Securing Americans Value and Efficiency (SAVE) Award to solicit suggestions from frontline Federal workers about how to cut waste. Over the past two years, more than 56,000 cost-cutting ideas have been submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review. These suggestions help agencies identify areas for cutting and improvement, and approximately 40 of them have been included in the President's Budget. In the upcoming fiscal year, the SAVE Award will help agencies meet the President's desire to cut more than \$2 billion from administrative expenses such as travel, printing, supplies, and advisory contract services.

**Disposing of Unneeded Federal Real Estate.** The Federal government is the largest property owner and energy user in the country, but some of that property is not being used productively. Currently, Federal agencies operate and maintain more real property assets than are needed. This includes 14,000 buildings and structures currently designated as excess and 55,000 identified as under-utilized. In June 2010, the President directed agencies to achieve \$8 billion in cost savings by the end of 2012 through increased proceeds from the sale of assets, reduced operating, maintenance, and energy expenses from disposals, or other space consolidation efforts, including leases that are ended. The Administration is on-track to achieve this goal.

- For example, a large portion of the Federal Center complex in Fort Worth, Texas has been vacant since 2007 – over a million square feet of space. The government has been trying to sell it for years, but was held-up by delays in negotiations with competing stakeholders. We finally pushed this property to sale at a public auction and received a

final bid for \$6.4 million. When the deal closes, it will save the government up to \$1 million a year in avoided operating and maintenance costs.

- Another example is the 1.1 million-square-foot Federal warehouse in Brooklyn, New York that has sat vacant for the past decade. The sale was held-up by delays with competing local stakeholders and then the recession hurt prospects for a sale. We finally cut through the red tape and politics, and now that building is under contract. When the sale closes, it will save the government tens of thousands of dollars a year in avoided operating costs, return \$10 million to taxpayers for the value of the property, and help the city redevelop the industrial section of western Brooklyn.

As agencies have executed on the President's directive to cull through their real property inventories, we have identified opportunities for even greater savings. In his 2012 Budget, the President proposed creating a Civilian Property Realignment Board to cut through the red tape and political interests that block the Federal government from disposing of excess property. If approved by Congress, this initiative is projected to save taxpayers \$15 billion over the first three years of its existence.

**Reducing the Number of Federal Data Centers.** A 1998 survey of Federal agencies identified 432 agency data centers. In August 2010, agencies identified 2,094 data centers in operation, a 385 percent increase during the same period that the private sector was reducing its data center footprint. This data center proliferation represents unnecessary duplication and redundancies in technology infrastructure that waste taxpayer money and create unnecessary security risks. Last year, we instituted a net-zero-growth data center policy so that data centers are not expanded beyond current levels. And to reverse the unsustainable trend in data center growth and get rid of unnecessary duplication, we have identified 800 data centers that will be eliminated in the next four years. To start, 16 agencies will close 137 data centers by the end of 2011, and 39 of these data centers have already been shut down. For example, HHS recently shut down a 15,000-square-foot data center in Rockville, Maryland that cost \$1.2 million annually for electricity costs alone.

**Curbing Spending on Contracts.** From 2000 to 2008, total spending on contracts grew on average at the unsustainable pace of 12 percent per year. From the outset of this Administration, we have moved quickly to reform contracting – to cut wasteful contract spending, buy smarter, and improve oversight and accountability. As a result, last year, for the first time in 13 years, the Federal government decreased contract spending, spending \$80 billion less than it would have had contract spending continued to grow at the same rate as it did under the Bush Administration.

**Increasing Competition and Reducing “No-Bid” Contracts to Save Taxpayers Billions.** Last year, we reduced the use of contracts awarded with no or inadequate competition. Between FY 2009 and FY 2010, agencies decreased the share of obligations for contracts awarded after a competition that received just one bid by 11 percent and reduced noncompetitively awarded contracts by 6 percent. Moreover, last year, we cut “no-bid” contract spending by \$5 billion. We also decreased the use of time-and-materials/labor hour (T&M/LH) contracts, which have long been recognized in government-wide policy as the least favored contract type because the

financial risk for cost-overruns lies on the government. Between FY 2009 and FY 2010, agencies reduced the share of obligations awarded through these risky contracts by 19 percent.

- For example, since 2000, the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) had been buying support for its computer systems through a large "no-bid" contract where the contractor was reimbursed for the costs it incurred rather than the results it produced. Through an aggressive examination of available options, NNSA has put an end to this, and found dozens of qualified small businesses that can do the very same work at a lower fixed cost. Using the powers of competition, we now are getting the same service from two small businesses for 15 percent less than before, saving taxpayers \$22 million.

**Leveraging Purchasing Power to Save Taxpayer Dollars.** The US Government is the nation's largest purchaser of goods and services, but too often we are purchasing items as if the government were a collection of small businesses. As a result, the government does not always get the best deal for taxpayers. Now, we have started to leverage the government's scale to do the common-sense thing and pool our purchasing power and buy in bulk, just as businesses and even many families do. Achieving this in just one area – office supplies used by the Federal government – should save us up to \$200 million over the next four years. Two other examples include:

- *Saving on Cell Phone Plans by Pooling Wireless Services.* For years the Federal government has held thousands of different wireless contracts, buying like individuals when a family plan would save taxpayer dollars. We are now working to pool our wireless services needs across the Administration to get better rates. The General Services Administration recently announced an initiative to leverage the government's wireless spending so we can reduce from tens of thousands of individual contracts and agreements to a fraction of that number. This pooling could potentially save 20 percent on the government's annual spend, which is currently estimated at \$1 billion.
- *Purchasing Enterprise-wide Software Licenses.* Instead of purchasing thousands of individual licenses for software programs, the Department of Homeland Security will leverage its purchasing power to acquire software licenses for Department-wide usage. DHS expects to achieve more than \$180 million in savings over the next six years by leveraging their spending.

**Reorganizing Government to Win the Future.** In his State of the Union in January 2011, the President said that we cannot win the future with a government of the past, and announced an effort to reform our government in a way that best serves the goal of a more competitive and innovative America. The President charged Jeffrey Zients, the Federal Chief Performance Officer and the OMB Deputy Director for Management, with leading that effort, starting with the critical issue of how government helps businesses with exports and overall competitiveness. Over the past months, Zients and his team have been gathering ideas, input, and advice from as many stakeholders as possible, hearing what works and what does not, what government can do better, and where duplication and fragmentation exist, in order to develop informed recommendations for the President. Central to this effort is getting input and advice from

stakeholders like Federal workers, businesses of all sizes, current and former Cabinet Secretaries and agency heads, union leaders, good government experts and members of Congress and their staffs. We are doing so to build a government that allows us to create jobs, strengthen our economy and compete in the 21st Century.

### **CRACKING DOWN ON WASTE, FRAUD, AND ABUSE**

No one wants to lose money to a criminal intentionally trying to trick or defraud them, yet when people try to defraud the government or abuse government resources that is what they are doing to every American taxpayer. That is why the Administration has aggressively pursued waste, fraud, and abuse across government programs.

**Reducing Improper Payments by \$50 billion.** Each year, the Federal government wastes billions of American taxpayers' dollars on improper payments to individuals, organizations, and contractors. These are payments made in the wrong amount, to the wrong person, or for the wrong reason. The President has set a goal to reducing these improper payments by at least \$50 billion by the end of FY 2012, and we have made steady progress toward our goal. The Budget also reinforces this goal by identifying a suite of program integrity tools that, if enacted, will yield over \$160 billion in savings over 10 years by driving further progress in reducing and recapturing improper payments, as well as by improving collections of money owed to the Federal government.

- For example, by increasing the number of Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income program reviews performed by the Social Security Administration, which will help ensure that recipients continue to meet eligibility standards, we anticipate saving more than \$56 billion over 10 years. Also, by deploying state-of-the-art predictive modeling tools, focusing on reducing the Medicare improper payment rate, and expanding program integrity activities as part of a multi-year investment in program integrity funding, we anticipate that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) can save over \$10 billion over 10 years by preventing and recovering wasteful, abusive, and fraudulent payments.
- In addition, agencies have effectively leveraged technology and devised smart ways to curb improper payments. For example, The Department of Defense (DOD) has successfully leveraged cutting-edge technology to identify and prevent improper payments. Specifically, DOD has prevented more than \$3 billion in improper payments to vendors in little more than two-and-a-half years through the deployment of their Business Activity Monitoring (BAM) tool. BAM is an analytical tool that assists DOD in flagging potential improper payment transactions before they are completed and the money is spent. For example, BAM identified a payment of \$51 million that was improperly paid to a major weapons contractor due to a miscalculation.

**Establishing a “Do Not Pay” List.** There are many reasons why someone would be ineligible to receive a government contract, grant, or benefit. The problem is often that information is known by one agency, but not another. In response, the Administration is creating a one-stop “do not pay” portal called [VerifyPayment.gov](http://VerifyPayment.gov) that will pull together disparate data sources to provide

agencies with an easy-to-use, one-stop source for determining whether or not the recipient of a payment is known to be ineligible for government contracts and other payments. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has piloted the idea successfully, and we will be rolling out VerifyPayment.gov to additional agencies in the months ahead.

**Cracking Down on Tax Delinquent Contractors.** In accordance with the President's January 2010 Memorandum on Tax Delinquency, we are taking actions to limit contractors with serious tax delinquencies from receiving government contracts. Prospective contractors must disclose any tax delinquencies, and the Administration is now holding back or levying government payments when companies that hold government contracts are identified as delinquent. The President's Budget includes a provision to allow the Internal Revenue Service to levy up to 100 percent of Federal payments made to a Federal vendor for goods and services sold to the Government if the vendor owes delinquent taxes. Last year, we collected more than \$110 million from tax delinquents, an unprecedented level of contractor tax bills through this program. In addition, the Administration also has developed a system to give contracting officers and grants officials greater access to information about civil, criminal, and administrative judgments against potential contractors and grantees and provides easier access to past performance information, significantly improves information sharing in the government. This information is also now being made available to the public so that citizens can help ensure that taxpayer dollars are going to responsible parties.

**Pursuing Those Who Cheat Medicare and Our Seniors.** In May 2009, the Departments of Justice (DOJ) and Health and Human Services (HHS) announced the creation of the Health Care Fraud Prevention and Enforcement Action Team (HEAT), making the fight against Medicare fraud a Cabinet-level priority. On just one day in February 2011, the Medicare Fraud Strike Force (which is a part of HEAT) charged 111 individuals in nine cities -- including doctors, nurses, health care company owners and executives, and others -- for their alleged participation in Medicare fraud schemes involving more than \$225 million in false billing. In fact, under the Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control (HCFAC) program -- DOJ and HHS, acting through the HHS Inspector General -- recovered more than \$4 billion in fraudulent and misspent funds in FY 2010 and has returned more than \$18 billion to the Medicare Trust Fund since the program's creation in 1997.

**Partnering with States to Tackle Waste, Fraud, and Abuse.** The Partnership Fund for Program Integrity Innovation helps States and localities find and test ways to save taxpayer dollars and more efficiently deliver services. Working with Federal agencies and a Collaborative Forum (a group of more than 200 state and local administrators and other stakeholders), the Partnership identifies and funds innovative pilot projects to reduce errors, fraud, and waste. The Partnership recently funded the first five pilot projects. These include an effort to reduce duplicate participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and potentially other programs through real-time or near real-time sharing of state enrollment data and an initiative to reduce overpayments in the unemployment insurance (UI) program through monitoring of financial institution transaction data to detect payroll direct deposits.

**Bolstering Oversight of Contractors by Strengthening the Acquisition Workforce.** While spending on Federal contracts doubled between 2001 and 2008, the Federal acquisition

workforce – those who negotiate and manage these contracts -- remained relatively flat. In too many cases, this led to inadequate government oversight of contractors after contracts were awarded. This often resulted in contractors failing to meet their commitments as to price, schedule, and quality. To reverse this trend, we are strengthening the oversight of contractors by improving training and development of “contracting officer’s representatives,” the Federal officials responsible for managing contractor performance. We will soon implement a more rigorous, risk-based, three-tiered certification program to ensure that agencies have people with the training and experience needed to manage their contractors. With a better trained and developed acquisition workforce, the Administration is able to provide effective oversight, drive hard bargains and save taxpayer dollars. Noteworthy examples include:

- The Agency for International Development, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Transportation, and other agencies are dedicating greater staff resources, strengthening policies, and providing training to support their debarment and suspension programs.
- The Small Business Administration (SBA) has ramped up efforts to remove bad actors from its small business programs and ensure benefits of small business contracting programs go to the intended communities. The agency now employs full-time personnel to work suspension and debarment issues exclusively. Pending full investigation by the Agency’s Office of Inspector General, SBA suspended a major government contractor and two small businesses based on evidence that they had knowingly violated small business contracting laws.

## **LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY TO SAVE MONEY AND DELIVER RESULTS**

Information technology (IT) advancements have been at the center of a transformation in how the private sector operates—and revolutionized the efficiency, convenience, and effectiveness with which it serves its customers. The Federal government largely has missed out on that transformation because of poor management of technology investments, with IT projects too often running over budget and behind schedule and failing to deliver promised functionality. We are working to close the resulting gap between the best performing private sector organizations and the Federal government. To that end, we are executing on a “25-Point Implementation Plan to Reform Federal IT Management” that we released in December 2010. This approach addresses the root causes of problems plaguing Federal IT projects and focuses on proven best practices from inside and outside the Federal government.

**Reviewing IT Projects at Highest Risk for Failure.** To end the historic practice of run-away government IT projects that go far over budget, behind schedule and fail to deliver, the Federal Chief Information Officer Vivek Kundra and his team have conducted detailed reviews of the largest and highest risk IT projects across the Federal government. This “TechStat” model brings the proper focus on resolving problems before it is too late, and reduces the structural barriers to bring innovative and effective technologies into government. Over 60 TechStat sessions, led by OMB, have been conducted, and the results are significant – projects have been re-scoped to eliminate costly bells and whistles, revamped to accelerate the delivery of meaningful functionality, or terminated entirely because they were judged unlikely to succeed. In all, we

have reduced costs by more than \$3 billion and on average, have accelerated deliverables from over 24 months to 8 months.

- Despite spending billions of dollars to modernize the Department of Interior’s (DOI) information technology infrastructure, significant inefficiencies still exist. As a result of detailed TechStat sessions, the lifecycle budget was reduced by \$500 million through 2020 and an effort was kick-started to consolidate DOI’s datacenters from 210 to 115.
- The Department of Commerce’s investment to modernize U.S. patent examination tools failed to meet customer needs and was halted for two years. A detailed review resulted in a \$99.5 million budget reduction and a product that will help decrease the time it take to issue patent decisions.
- The Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) MedWatch Plus investment tracks adverse events in order to protect and promote public health. The investment experienced repeated delays, with only a non-operational prototype to show for the more than \$39 million spent on the project since 2006. To resolve these issues, the FDA has accelerated the delivery of customer-facing functionality to six-month delivery cycles and lowered costs by 50 percent by migrating to the cloud.
- As a category, financial system modernizations projects have a track record of being too large and complex and prone to cost overruns and failures. By setting the scope of projects too broadly rather than focusing on essential business needs, Federal agencies have incurred substantial cost overruns and lengthy delays in planned deployments. Compounding this problem, projects persistently fall short of planned results once deployed. In June 2010, the Administration put a halt on all new financial system modernization projects until OMB could review and approve more streamlined project plans. Thus far, OMB has completed initial system reviews for 20 of the 24 agencies. As a result, agencies have identified approximately \$1.6 billion in potential cost reductions. For example, VA canceled its Financial and Logistic Integrated Technology Enterprise (FLITE) modernization project, which was estimated to cost between \$400 and \$500 million.

We have scaled this accountability model by extending it to the agency-level. Already, 129 agency employees have been trained and 23 agencies have implemented the TechStat model; to date, more than 80 agency-led TechStats have taken place.

**Saving Money and Improving Results by Moving IT Applications to the Cloud.** The biggest change happening in IT right now is the movement of applications and data to servers accessible by many devices in any location, commonly known as the “cloud.” Through a “Cloud First” policy, we are moving strategies from asset ownership to a utility-based model, in which agencies pay for only the resources and services they consume. By leveraging shared infrastructure and economies of scale and using “light technology” or cloud computing services, agencies are able to measure and pay for only the IT resources they actually use, and can deploy innovative technological capabilities faster and at lower costs, ultimately saving money and



increasing the government's ability to use IT in a more effective. Already, agencies have begun to make this change. For example:

- The Department of Agriculture (USDA) is migrating 120,000 users across 5,000 locations to the cloud, reducing costs by \$27 million over a five-year period, while the General Services Administration (GSA) is shifting 17,000 users to the cloud, reducing costs by \$15 million over the next five years.
- Agencies are pursuing cloud-based opportunities in a number of areas such as collaboration, infrastructure, cybersecurity, business intelligence, and workflow. For example, 15 agencies – including the Social Security Administration, VA, and Department of Labor -- have identified approximately 100 email and collaboration systems serving 950,000 users that will move to the cloud.

### **MAKING GOVERNMENT MORE OPEN AND RESPONSIVE**

The Internet and mobile devices help us do everything from buying groceries to booking an airline ticket, but few government services offer the same convenience as we have become accustomed to in our everyday lives. This not only leads to frustration and poor customer service, but represents the waste of taxpayer money as the government has failed to adopt more technologically-advanced processes. In addition, too often, many government resources are hard to navigate and inaccessible. This keeps useful information closed up within government and inaccessible to the public. The Obama Administration has been working to make government more open and responsive, providing more information to taxpayers about how their funds are being used as well as delivering government services in a way that is convenient and responsive.

**Making Government Information Available on Data.gov.** Created as part of the President's commitment to open government and democratizing information, Data.gov opens up the workings of government by making economic, healthcare, environmental, and other government data available on a single website, allowing the public to access raw data and use it in innovative ways. In less than two years, Data.gov has grown from 47 datasets to more than 300,000. It also has spawned scores of innovative applications that turns this raw data into services that help the American people. For instance, FlyOnTime.us takes data from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics combines them with weather information and user-generated content about airline security lines — such as tweets from people waiting in those lines — to give travelers an accurate look at expected wait times and travel conditions.

**Bringing Transparency to IT Spending.** To provide the American people with unfiltered access to Federal technology spending information, the Administration launched the IT Dashboard – a graphically-rich, user-friendly website that enables anyone to track spending on and progress of IT projects across the Federal government. With new tracking tools and open communication channels, the dashboard gives people the chance to see which IT projects are working and on-schedule (and which are not), offer alternative approaches, and provide direct feedback to the chief information officers at Federal agencies. In effect, it enables them to keep tabs on the people who are responsible for spending taxpayers' dollars for technology. The site

tracks more than 6,700 investments and nearly \$80 billion in annual Federal technology spending.

**Expanding USASpending.gov to Provide More Information to the Public.** Consistent with the President's belief that transparency leads to more oversight, less waste, more accountability, and a more effective government, the Administration has improved the type of data available on USASpending.gov. Beginning in October 2010, taxpayers have been able not only to track obligations by Federal agencies but also can track obligations made by those recipients to other entities (for example, tracking payments from a prime contractor to a sub-contractor). Leveraging the lessons learned from previous transparency efforts, such as those associated with the Recovery Act, we have worked hard with stakeholders to reduce the burden of reporting, leveraging existing systems to reduce duplication and costs, while ensuring that the information provided to the public is useful. As of May 2011, USASpending.gov displays -- for awards made beginning in 2000 -- over \$25.4 trillion in prime awards, based on over 47,000 individual prime awards, and more than \$3.9 trillion total in sub-awards.

**Launching PaymentAccuracy.gov to Track Improper Payments.** Last summer, the Administration launched PaymentAccuracy.gov to give taxpayers a way to help identify and report on suspected incidents of fraud, waste, and abuse. On this site, users can see the rates and amounts of improper payments for each agency, the targets each agency has set for reducing and recovering improper payments, and the names of the designated accountable official at each agency responsible for meeting those targets. This list is just one of many steps the Administration has taken to fulfill its commitment to reduce improper payments through increased transparency, enhanced agency accountability, and new incentives for state and local governments. In addition, PaymentAccuracy.gov showcases how agencies are using new technologies and developing innovative solutions to reduce waste.

**Moving Government Services Online.** To make it easier for the public to access government services anytime, anywhere, we have launched a series of mobile apps, from an app that gives consumers instant information on safety recalls of products, such as toys and food, to an app that provides travelers with real-time information on wait times at airport security lines across the country.

- To help our veterans and Medicare beneficiaries, we created the "Blue Button" Personal Health Record. This new feature on the MyHealthVet and Mymedicare.gov websites ensures users can easily and securely access and download their personal health records anytime, anywhere. Having control of this information enables users to share this data with health care providers, caregivers, and other people they trust.
- To improve access to education for students, we modernized and streamlined the Federal student aid application and eligibility determination process, eliminating over 70 questions.
- To demystify the citizenship application process for potential citizens, we put a case tracking system online that provides prospective citizens a way to track the

status of their immigration case just by entering a number, as they would a FedEx shipment, rather than waiting in line or holding on the phone.

- The Department of the Treasury has made significant progress to increase the use of paperless transactions. These include: requiring most businesses to pay taxes electronically, rather than by paper coupon; discontinuing the sale of paper savings bonds sold through payroll and encouraging the sale of electronic bonds; and requiring all new Federal benefit recipients to receive payments electronically as of May 2011 and all existing beneficiaries to convert from paper to electronic payment by March 2013. Treasury's move to electronic processing will save over \$500 million and eliminate millions paper-based transactions in the first five years.

## **MANAGING GOVERNMENT TO DELIVER BETTER RESULTS**

Too often in government, senior leaders focus primarily on policy development and crisis management while their organizations produce reams of performance plans, reports, and data that few use. This Administration is breaking this paradigm and adopting a data-driven discipline to achieve key priorities. We expect agency leaders to drive progress against clearly identified goals using data and evaluation to achieve better outcomes in the areas that matter most to the American people while constantly working to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations.

**Driving Progress on Agency's Priority Goals.** Last year, 24 of the largest agencies in the Federal government identified High Priority Performance Goals that could be accomplished within two years without additional resources or legislative action. Agency leaders were tasked to run regular goal-focused, data-driven constructive performance reviews to drive progress on these mission-advancing priorities. This approach has gained great momentum over the last year. Senior agency leaders at HUD and Treasury are running quarterly reviews on agency and bureau top priorities. Change is happening at the sub-Cabinet level, as well. FDA leaders run regular FDA-TRACK meetings with each organizational unit. All 24 agencies with Priority Goals will begin quarterly performance reviews by the end of June, and numerous other agencies and sub-Cabinet-level organizations have begun adopting this best management practice.

**Reforming the Hiring Process.** The Administration continues to make significant progress revamping the hiring process so agencies can efficiently hire the workers we need to tackle the most critical challenges facing our nation. In December 2009, the estimated average number of days to hire government-wide was over 130 days. This not only was a waste of current workers' time, but it also meant that often the best candidates were not available once an offer was made. After one year, the estimated government-wide hiring time had dropped by 25 days, to 105 days.

**Establishing the President's Management Advisory Board.** Leading private sector executives have developed successful practices and approaches for overcoming many of the challenges facing government leaders. Bringing private sector expertise and innovations into the government is a hallmark of this Administration's management approach, and to ensure that government continues to seek out and adopt private sector management expertise, the President

has created the President's Management Advisory Board, a group of private sector CEOs who are providing counsel on performance improvement, execution, and change management.