Executive Order
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Governor's Office

Executive Order 2023-08 – Bolstering Service Delivery through a Digital Experience Strategy

Date: April 25, 2023

By Direction of:

Josh Shapiro, Governor

WHEREAS,   there should be no wrong door through which a Pennsylvanian can access or communicate with their government and get answers; and

WHEREAS,   every interaction between state government and the public should be simple, seamless, and secure to build Pennsylvanians' trust and confidence in their government regardless of their understanding of or familiarity with government; and

WHEREAS,   Pennsylvanians are increasingly accessing government services predominately or entirely online; and

WHEREAS,   Commonwealth services should not be overly burdensome or have significant administrative hurdles; but rather, should allow users to navigate the systems with ease and minimal use of their time; and

WHEREAS,   Commonwealth delivery of services should be as effective and efficient as possible with the goal of saving taxpayer money; and

WHEREAS,   the Commonwealth desires to deliver modern, accessible, transparent, and effective digital services equitably and effectively, including to those who have been historically underserved.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Josh Shapiro, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and other laws, do hereby order and direct the following:

1. **Definitions.**

    a. **CIO** refers to the Commonwealth's Chief Information Officer.

b. **Digital Equity** is a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy.

c. **Digital Services** refers to government services delivered to users through websites, emails, and mobile applications; the software used by users to access services and staff to administer them; and any and all current and future digital technology.

d. **Discovery Sprints** refers to a methodology to quickly build a common understanding of the status and problem facing a complex organization, system, or service. Discovery sprints are used to identify possible solutions, which may be considered by the people at the organization who will carry that work forward.

e. **Human-Centered Design** means an interdisciplinary methodology of putting people, including those who will use or be impacted by what one creates, at the center of any process, product, service, and experience to solve challenging problems.

f. **OA** refers to the Commonwealth's Office of Administration.

g. **Service Delivery** refers to actions by the Commonwealth to provide a benefit or service to a user of the Commonwealth's services or programs. Such actions pertain to all points of the Commonwealth-to-user delivery process, including when a user applies for a benefit, seeks information, files taxes, or complies with a regulation or law, and uses resources such as a state park.

h. **Technical Debt** refers to the accumulation of internal work built up from implementing potentially short-sighted solutions that do not effectively serve users.

i. **User** refers to Pennsylvanians, businesses, and visitors who access the Commonwealth's online presence and services.

j. **User Experience** refers to the users' perceptions and overall satisfaction of the interactions they have with a Commonwealth agency, product, or service.

2. Purpose.

The Commonwealth Office of Digital Experience (CODE PA) is created to improve, streamline, and continuously adapt the Commonwealth's digital services so that interactions between users and Commonwealth entities are simple, seamless, and secure.

3. Responsibilities.

CODE PA shall:

a. Prioritize digital services that create or unlock economic opportunities for Pennsylvanians, including pathways to family-sustaining careers; upskilling and training opportunities; access to vital government resources or licenses, occupations, and certifications; and opportunities to improve outcomes and advance equity for users.

b. Be empowered to generate qualitative and quantitative research and insights about users to drive the redesign of the user experience in accordance with

Commonwealth data privacy policy; iterate on new designs to transform the user experience with scalable low- to extensive code solutions in accordance with Commonwealth best practices; and holistically approach these efforts with curiosity, empathy, and integrity.

c. Collaborate with Pennsylvania's Office of Information Technology (OIT) to review and assess all requests from Commonwealth agencies for new or redesigned applications to evaluate the most optimal design and development approach including those that encourages in-house development.

d. Collaborate and coordinate with the Department of General Services (DGS) and the OIT leadership team to study innovative procurement practices to the acquisition of digital products by and for Commonwealth agencies, to facilitate the rapid provision of high-quality digital services that are based on users' needs and comply with Commonwealth best practices regarding data privacy, security, and accessibility.

e. Enable an online service delivery system that would provide a universal entry way to all Commonwealth programs, services, and resources organized by users' needs and life experiences rather than agency program areas by:

(1) Delivering a consistent and friendly user experience across all Commonwealth agencies informed by human-centered design principles and user research.

(2) Incorporating user feedback continuously into digital applications to ensure users' expectations and needs are better met.

(3) Partnering with OA's Chief Data Officer and Office of General Counsel to promote where possible the sharing and integration of data across agencies to glean users' insights and measure experience, including satisfaction and trust across Commonwealth services.

(4) Supporting the CIO's efforts to consolidate or eliminate outdated technologies and systems that are costly or challenging to maintain, insecure, or no longer impactful with the goal of minimizing or preventing the Commonwealth from incurring technical debt.

(5) Designing digital services that incorporate best practices regarding data privacy, security, and accessibility associated with Commonwealth data, devices, and materials to provide comprehensive protections and manage risk.

(6) Following Commonwealth data source standards to facilitate better connections and access of user data.

f. Undertake periodic discovery sprints identifying needs and opportunities, to further execute and complete the Commonwealth's digital services modernization efforts, including but not limited to:

(1) A concise, user-friendly directory of all services administered by the Commonwealth that are available online.

(2) Digitize Commonwealth services so that they are available to be included in a digital ID wallet.

(3) A secure, quick, and efficient manner of responding to questions asked at any phase of the user experience.

(4) A consistent, secure ID authentication and verification login to streamline the user experience and eliminate multiple log-in credentials.

g. Promote and achieve true digital equity in the Commonwealth by:

(1) Adopting a human-centered design approach in which services are designed to be equitable by striving to provide accessible options to users irrespective of connectivity available to them.

(2) Undertaking a review of all paper-based processes and, wherever statutorily possible, consider transitioning to a digital environment.

(3) Identifying processes where in-person or paper-based service delivery would better improve accessibility for those residing in "broadband deserts," or otherwise unable to attain services online.

(4) Utilizing digital accessibility standards throughout the user experience, including ensuring government services are written in concise and plain language.

(5) Offering translation in multiple languages wherever possible.

4. Composition of CODE PA.

a. CODE PA shall be housed within OA and be led by an Executive Director, who will be an employee of OA with a dual report to the Commonwealth's CIO and the Governor's Director of Digital Strategy.

b. The Executive Director shall be a member of the CIO's and the OA Secretary's senior executive team.

c. The Executive Director shall recruit top technical talent into the Commonwealth and oversee an interdisciplinary staff which might include, by way of example, product managers; front- and backend software developers; UX researchers and designers; service designers; content strategists; community engagement specialists; strategic procurement analysts; data scientists; and contracting specialists.

5. Implementation.

This Executive Order shall be implemented consistent with applicable law. This Executive Order is not intended to, and does not create, any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the Commonwealth, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other persons.

All Commonwealth agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction shall take all steps necessary to implement this Executive Order, including coordinating across agency organizational lines and responsibilities to create a unified user and digital experience for Pennsylvanians and Pennsylvanian visitors. Independent agencies are also strongly encouraged to participate.

6.   Termination Date.

This Executive Order shall take effect immediately and shall remain in effect until amended or rescinded by the Governor.

7.   Rescission.

Effective immediately, *Executive Order 2019-04, dated July 24, 2019*, is hereby rescinded.