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June 30, 2025

Mr. Eric Sidle
Chief Information Officer
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street SW
Washington, DC 20410

Chief Information Officer Open Recommendations: Department of Housing and Urban Development

Dear Mr. Sidle:

I would like to congratulate you on your recent appointment as the Chief Information Officer (CIO) for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). As an independent, non-partisan agency that works for Congress, GAO's mission is to support Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and help improve the performance and ensure the accountability of the federal government. Our work includes investigating matters related to the use of public funds, evaluating programs and activities of the U.S. Government at the request of congressional committees and subcommittees or on the initiative of the Comptroller General, and as required by public laws or committee reports. Our duties include reporting our findings and recommending ways to increase economy and efficiency in government spending. The purpose of this letter is to provide an overview of the open, publicly available GAO recommendations to HUD that call for the attention of the CIO.

We identified recommendations that relate to the CIO's roles and responsibilities in effectively managing IT. They include strategic planning, investment management, and information security. We have previously reported on the significance of the CIO's role in improving the government's performance in IT and related information management functions.¹ Your attention to these recommendations will help ensure the secure and effective use of IT at the department.

Currently, HUD has 19 open recommendations that call for the attention of the CIO. Each of these recommendations relates to a GAO High-Risk area: (1) [Ensuring the Cybersecurity of the Nation](#) or (2) [Improving IT Acquisitions and Management](#).² In addition, GAO has designated one of the 19 as a priority recommendation.³ Fully implementing these open recommendations could

¹See for example, GAO, *Federal Chief Information Officers: Critical Actions Needed to Address Shortcomings and Challenges in Implementing Responsibilities*, [GAO-18-93](#) (Washington, D.C.: Aug. 2, 2018).

²GAO, *High-Risk Series: Heightened Attention Could Save Billions More and Improve Government Efficiency and Effectiveness*, [GAO-25-107743](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 25, 2025).

³Priority recommendations are those that GAO believes warrant priority attention from heads of key departments or agencies. They are highlighted because, upon implementation, they may significantly improve government operations, for example, by realizing large dollar savings; eliminating mismanagement, fraud, and abuse; or making

significantly improve HUD's ability to deter threats and manage its critical systems, operations,

progress toward addressing a high-risk or duplication issue. Since 2015 GAO has sent letters to selected agencies to highlight the importance of implementing such recommendations.

and information. I have summarized selected recommendations here. See the enclosure for a full list, and additional details on the recommendations.

Ensuring the Cybersecurity of the Nation. HUD needs to fully implement security controls to protect the vast amount of sensitive information the department collects. Specifically, we recommended that the department implement event logging requirements per federal guidance. Implementing this recommendation will help ensure that HUD is able to effectively detect, investigate, and remediate cyber threats.

Improving IT Acquisitions and Management. HUD needs to take steps to improve management of its IT portfolio and IT modernization efforts. This includes fully implementing leading practices for managing requirements and mitigating risks, estimating cost and schedule, and conducting oversight for the department's Federal Housing Administration Catalyst program. For example, we recommended that the department fully address leading practices for planning for program oversight and assessing program performance, including for establishing processes and outlining responsibilities. Implementing this recommendation will help HUD improve the likelihood of successful program modernization through more robust oversight practices.

HUD also needs to manage its software licenses more effectively. For example, we recommended that the department develop and implement procedures for tracking license usage. Implementing this recommendation will help ensure that HUD is able to leverage opportunities to reduce costs of duplicative or unnecessary software licenses.

Copies of this letter are being sent to the appropriate congressional committees and the Federal CIO. The letter will also be available at no charge on the GAO website at <https://www.gao.gov>. In addition, we sent a separate letter, related to department-wide priority recommendations, which also discusses the importance of addressing cybersecurity risks, to the Secretary of HUD.⁴

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the recommendations outlined in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me at marinosn@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this letter. Our teams will continue to coordinate with your staff on addressing these 19 open recommendations that call for the attention of the CIO. I appreciate HUD's continued commitment and thank you for your personal attention to these important recommendations.

Sincerely,

//SIGNED//

Nick Marinos
Managing Director
Information Technology and Cybersecurity
Enclosure

⁴GAO, *Priority Open Recommendations: Department of Housing and Urban Development*, [GAO-25-108045](#) (Washington, D.C.: May 20, 2025).

cc: Mr. Greg Barbaccia, Federal CIO, Office of Management and Budget

Enclosure

Chief Information Officer Open Recommendations to the Department of Housing and Urban Development

This enclosure includes the open, publicly available GAO recommendations to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that call for the attention of its Chief Information Officer (CIO). We have divided these recommendations into two categories: (1) ensuring the cybersecurity of the nation and (2) improving IT acquisitions and management.

Ensuring the Cybersecurity of the Nation

Federal agencies depend on IT systems to carry out operations and process, maintain, and report essential information. The security of these systems and data is vital to protecting individual privacy and ensuring national security. Table 1 provides information on the open cybersecurity-related recommendation relevant to the HUD CIO.

Table 1: Open Chief Information Officer-related Cybersecurity Recommendation for the Department of Housing and Urban Development

GAO report number	GAO report title	Recommendation
GAO-24-105658	Cybersecurity: Federal Agencies Made Progress, but Need to Fully Implement Incident Response Requirements	The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development should ensure that the agency fully implements all event logging requirements as directed by Office of Management and Budget guidance. (Recommendation 7)

Source: GAO summary based on previously issued reports. | GAO-25-108461

Improving IT Acquisitions and Management

Federal IT investments too frequently fail to deliver capabilities in a timely, cost-effective manner. Key management challenges—such as a lack of disciplined project planning and program oversight—continue to hamper effective acquisition and management of the government's IT assets. Table 2 provides information on the open IT acquisition and management-related recommendations relevant to the HUD CIO.

Table 2: Open Chief Information Officer (CIO)-related IT Acquisitions and Management Recommendations for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

GAO report number	GAO report title	Recommendation
GAO-15-56	Information Technology: HUD Can Take Additional Actions to Improve Its Governance	To establish an enterprise-wide view of cost savings and operational efficiencies generated by investments and governance processes, the Secretary of HUD should direct the Deputy Secretary and CIO to place a higher priority on identifying governance-related cost savings and efficiencies and establish and institutionalize a process for identifying and tracking comprehensive, high-quality data on savings and efficiencies resulting from IT investments and the IT governance process.*

GAO report number	GAO report title	Recommendation
GAO-17-281	Information Technology: HUD Needs to Address Significant Weaknesses in Its Cost Estimating Practices	To increase the likelihood that its IT investments develop reliable cost estimates, the Secretary of HUD should finalize, and ensure the implementation of, guidance that incorporates the best practices called for in the GAO Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide.
GAO-21-459	IT Modernization: HUD Needs to Improve Its Estimation and Oversight Practices for Single-Family Housing	<p>The Secretary of HUD should direct the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and the Office of the CIO to clearly document agreements among the staff responsible for managing requirements to maintain alignment between requirements and FHA Catalyst modules. (Recommendation 1)</p> <p>The Secretary of HUD should direct the FHA and the Office of the CIO to ensure that FHA Catalyst is subject to independent verification and validation. (Recommendation 2)</p> <p>The Secretary of HUD should direct the FHA and the Office of the CIO to develop contingency plans for risks identified as critical (high probability, high impact) to FHA Catalyst. (Recommendation 3)</p> <p>The Secretary of HUD should direct the FHA and the Office of the CIO to ensure that cost estimation guidance that incorporates the best practices called for in the GAO Cost Estimating Guide is applied to future FHA Catalyst cost estimates. (Recommendation 4)</p> <p>The Secretary of HUD should direct the FHA and the Office of the CIO to develop, and ensure the implementation of, schedule guidance that incorporates the best practices called for in the GAO Schedule Guide. (Recommendation 5)</p> <p>The Secretary of HUD should direct the FHA and the Office of the CIO to revise the FHA Catalyst schedule estimate according to the newly developed guidance. (Recommendation 6)</p> <p>The Secretary of HUD should direct the FHA and the Office of the CIO to improve oversight practices for FHA Catalyst to ensure that they fully address leading practices for planning for program oversight and assessing program performance, including, but not limited to, those for establishing processes, outlining responsibilities, requiring metrics for Agile performance, and balancing periodic program-wide assessments with monitoring progress. (Recommendation 7)</p> <p>The Secretary of HUD should direct the FHA and the Office of the CIO to improve the alignment of FHA Catalyst oversight with leading practices for managing corrective actions including, but not limited to, defining when a corrective action is needed and how to address that action; and evaluating oversight practices by assessing conformance with established processes. (Recommendation 8)</p>

GAO report number	GAO report title	Recommendation
GAO-24-105717	Federal Software Licenses: Agencies Need to Take Action to Achieve Additional Savings	<p>The Secretary of HUD should ensure that the agency tracks software licenses that are currently in use for its widely used licenses by, at a minimum, developing and implementing procedures for tracking license usage. (Recommendation 5)</p> <p>The Secretary of HUD should ensure that the agency compares the inventories of software licenses that are currently in use with information on purchased licenses to identify opportunities to reduce costs and better inform investment decision-making for its widely used licenses on a regular basis. At a minimum, it should develop and implement procedures for comparing the inventories of licenses in use to purchase records. (Recommendation 6)</p>
GAO-24-106137	Cloud Computing: Agencies Need to Address Key OMB Procurement Requirements	<p>The Secretary of HUD should ensure that the CIO of HUD develops guidance to put a service level agreement (SLA) in place with every vendor when a cloud solution is deployed. The guidance should include language that addresses the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) four required elements for SLAs, including: continuous awareness of the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of its assets; a detailed description of roles and responsibilities; clear performance metrics; and remediation plans for non-compliance. (Recommendation 14)</p> <p>The Secretary of HUD should ensure that the CIO of HUD develops guidance regarding standardizing cloud SLAs. (Recommendation 15)</p> <p>The Secretary of HUD should ensure that the CIO of HUD develops guidance to require that contracts affecting the agency's high value assets that are managed and operated in the cloud include language that provides the agency with continuous visibility of the asset. (Recommendation 16)</p> <p>The Secretary of HUD should ensure that the CIO of HUD updates its existing contracts for high value assets that are managed and operated in the cloud to meet OMB's requirement once guidance from the CIO Council is available on language that provides the agency with continuous visibility of the asset. If modifying the existing contract is not practical, the agency should incorporate language into the contract that will meet OMB's requirement upon option exercise or issuance of a new award. (Recommendation 17)</p>

GAO report number	GAO report title	Recommendation
GAO-25-107041	IT Portfolio Management: OMB and Agencies Are Not Fully Addressing Selected Statutory Requirements	<p>The Secretary of HUD should direct the department CIO to work with OMB to ensure that annual reviews of their IT portfolio are conducted in conjunction with the Federal CIO and the Chief Operating Officer or Deputy Secretary (or equivalent), as prescribed by the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (Recommendation 21)</p> <p>The Secretary of HUD should direct the department CIO to ensure they conduct a review in conjunction with the investment's program manager and in consultation with the Federal CIO, for major IT investments that have been designated as high risk for four consecutive quarters, as prescribed by the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act, including identifying (1) the root causes of the high level of risk of the investment; (2) the extent to which these causes can be addressed (e.g., action items and due dates); and (3) the probability of future success (e.g., outcomes). (Recommendation 22)</p>

Source: GAO summary based on previously issued reports. | GAO-25-108461

*Indicates a priority recommendation.