

Example Submission – Input on the Future of Congressional Modernization

1. Full Name *

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2. Email *

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3. Please select the option that describes you best. *

☐ Congressional staffer

☒ External stakeholder

4. Please indicate the organization or entity you represent.

ABC Inc

5. Recommendation Title *

Please list the title of the recommendation you are submitting.

Reimagining House.gov as the Digital Front Door to the People's House

6. Description *

Please explain the goals and expected benefits of the idea.

House.gov is maintained by the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) and provides a wide range of public information about the House, including public disclosures, legislative activity, guidance for doing business with the House, educational tools, and more. Millions of users from countries worldwide visit House.gov annually and they vary widely in terms of what they know about the House and what they are trying to find. My idea begins with the simple premise that all visitors, regardless of what brings them to the House.gov site, should have the same, positive user-experience (UX). And this experience should begin as soon as they land on the House.gov homepage.

While House.gov is the House's main website, there are hundreds of additional websites within the House.gov domain. Many of these sites are linked to House.gov and depending on what users are searching for, they may wind up at clerk.house.gov, Live.House.gov, majorityleader.gov, minoritywhip.house.gov, rules.house.gov, Docs.House.gov, or any number of other websites. Because some of these sites contain the same or similar information and data, figuring out which site to use can be an overwhelming and confusing experience. These UX challenges across House.gov websites are not new to the House, yet they remain largely unaddressed. The site's design has remained static, even as more and more information has been added.

7. Implementation Strategy *

Please provide an outline of how Congress could practically adopt and execute this idea.

Turning House.gov into a modern, streamlined website that can meet the needs of vastly different users will require collaboration across a number of House entities, primarily the CAO and the House Clerk. The CAO is currently responsible for maintaining the House.gov site while the House Clerk collects and manages most of the legislative information and data that populates the site.

Implementation should begin with a comprehensive UX study of House.gov and its subsites, as recommended in a comprehensive report written by the Congressional Data Task Force to fulfill a directive in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023. The report concluded that “the public face difficulties finding the information that they assume and expect to be present and easy to find” and recommended that the House examine the current experience individuals have when using House.gov websites, uncover how well different users can navigate House.gov websites and find what they need, identify designs and interfaces to improve user experience, and inform decisions around consistency in appearance, navigation, interaction, and searching of House informational websites. While House Appropriations has taken no action on the report in the three years since it was submitted, the Task Force’s recommendations remain relevant and provide a solid framework for Phase One of this project.

Once Phase One is complete, the CAO and the Clerk, working with partners including the House Digital Service, the House AI Center, and the Congressional Data Task Force, will review the study’s findings and begin Phase Two, designing and building a new House.gov website that serves as the digital entryway to the People’s House

8. Feasibility Statement *

Are there anticipated costs (high/med/low)? What resources are required? Is there a likely vehicle (law, rule, internal policy change, etc.) for implementing this recommendation, and are there any potential risks (security, privacy, etc.)?

Reimagining the House.gov website is a complex, visionary project that is entirely feasible.

This project will require an investment of approximately \$1.3 million. The Phase One UX study will require contracting with a team of UX experts/specialists to design a comprehensive study, conduct public user focus groups, identify pain points, and create a road map for transforming House.gov and its subsites. The Phase Two work of building a new website that incorporates the latest interactive technologies, visual displays, enhanced search capabilities, and more will require 2-3 full-time staff and/or contractors with expertise in UX and web design. These designers will work closely with the CAO and House Clerk to ensure that legislative data and information on the site is easily accessible, easy to understand, and accurate. Once the website is finished, the CAO will incorporate website maintenance and updates into its annual budget requests.

No legislative vehicle is required to implement this project. There is the potential for an internal policy change with regards to management and maintenance of the House.gov site.

The potential for security breaches with websites is always present, but the House’s cyber security team conducts thorough reviews of House sites, technology tools, etc. before they go live or are made available to the House community. The cyber security team also monitors House websites for security breaches and hacking attempts, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The House.gov site is public and does not contain or link to any sensitive information or data or PII.