

# De-risking Gov Tech Field Guides

May 11, 2021



## The problem

Of all government software development contracts over \$6M, **only 13% are successful** (cost, schedule, performance).

[Source](#)

## Our objective

Accelerate agencies' ability to deliver on their mission, by sharing common agile pitfalls and recommendations.

# Table stakes



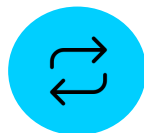
**Empowered, government product owner** to ensure you're building the right thing and making the right choices



**User-centered design** to focus on software that meets actual people's needs



**DevSecOps** practices, which improve software quality, deploy quickly, and maintain security

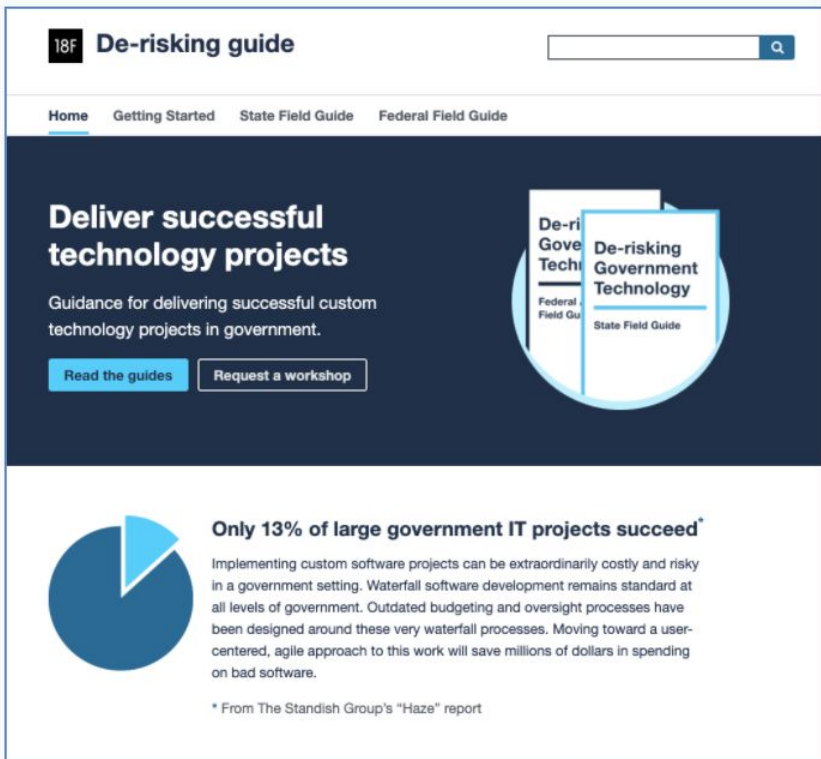


**Iterative development** to deliver value to users faster, learn from each release, and continuously improve



**Open source** development whenever feasible to prevent vendor lock-in and facilitate gov reuse.

# De-risking Gov Tech Field Guides



The screenshot shows the homepage of the 18F De-risking guide. At the top left is the 18F logo and the title "De-risking guide". To the right is a search bar. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for "Home", "Getting Started", "State Field Guide", and "Federal Field Guide". The main content area features a dark blue background with the headline "Deliver successful technology projects" and a sub-headline "Guidance for delivering successful custom technology projects in government." Below this are two buttons: "Read the guides" and "Request a workshop". To the right is a graphic showing two overlapping document icons labeled "De-risking Government Technology" and "State Field Guide".

**18F De-risking guide**

Home Getting Started State Field Guide Federal Field Guide

## Deliver successful technology projects

Guidance for delivering successful custom technology projects in government.

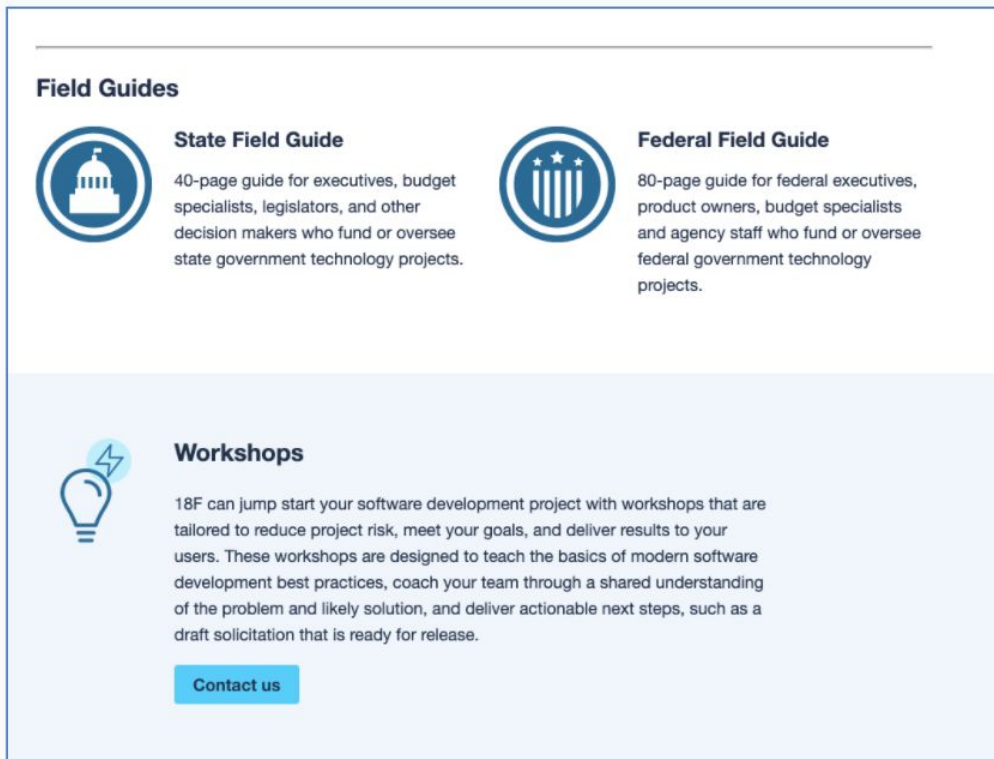
[Read the guides](#) [Request a workshop](#)

De-risking Government Technology  
Federal Field Guide  
State Field Guide

### Only 13% of large government IT projects succeed\*

Implementing custom software projects can be extraordinarily costly and risky in a government setting. Waterfall software development remains standard at all levels of government. Outdated budgeting and oversight processes have been designed around these very waterfall processes. Moving toward a user-centered, agile approach to this work will save millions of dollars in spending on bad software.

\* From The Standish Group's "Haze" report



The screenshot shows the "Field Guides" and "Workshops" sections of the website. The "Field Guides" section has two columns. The first column is for the "State Field Guide", which is a 40-page guide for executives, budget specialists, legislators, and other decision makers. The second column is for the "Federal Field Guide", which is an 80-page guide for federal executives, product owners, budget specialists, and agency staff. The "Workshops" section features a lightbulb icon and text explaining that 18F can help jumpstart software development projects with workshops designed to reduce risk and deliver results. A "Contact us" button is located at the bottom of the Workshops section.

## Field Guides

### State Field Guide

40-page guide for executives, budget specialists, legislators, and other decision makers who fund or oversee state government technology projects.

### Federal Field Guide

80-page guide for federal executives, product owners, budget specialists and agency staff who fund or oversee federal government technology projects.

## Workshops

18F can jump start your software development project with workshops that are tailored to reduce project risk, meet your goals, and deliver results to your users. These workshops are designed to teach the basics of modern software development best practices, coach your team through a shared understanding of the problem and likely solution, and deliver actionable next steps, such as a draft solicitation that is ready for release.

[Contact us](#)

<https://derisking-guide.18f.gov/>

## **Assign dedicated and empowered product owners to lead development efforts**

Expecting someone to lead a product development team with only a fraction of their time is setting them — and the product — up for failure.

# Use the “Agile Contract Format”

- Statement of Objectives
- Time & materials (T&M)
- Short PoP (3 years or less)
- Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP)
- Open Source

## Consider tradeoffs in build vs. buy decisions

Are you buying COTS, or are you buying “unrecognizably modified off-the-shelf software” (UMOTS)?



# Observed impact

- Reduced procurement timelines (2+ years to 4 months)
- Over \$1B in cost avoidance
- Structuring contracts to allow agencies to pair with the private sector effectively

# Need help?

## Workshop

- Teach basics of modern software development practices
- Develop draft product vision, problem statement, roadmap, and user stories
- Align cross-functional teams on everyone's roles and what needs to happen
- Draft solicitation and IGCE
- Highlight risks

## Post-workshop support

- Refine solicitation
- Conduct Q&A with industry
- Serve as advisors to the evaluation panel
- (Optional) prototype to inform procurement action

[inquiries18F@gsa.gov](mailto:inquiries18F@gsa.gov)



Our  
STORY ▼

Our  
PROCESS

Our  
PROJECTS

Our  
CHALLENGE TO YOU

SUBMIT AN IDEA

# What if your idea could change how the government uses technology? |

## Turning good-for-government ideas into good-for-people solutions

10x crowdsources ideas from federal employees and turns them into real products that improve the public's experience with the federal government.

We start small, validating the idea and increasing the investment as we go, to ensure we're funding the ideas that deliver the most impact. We believe that the most creative, game-changing ideas come from those who work most closely to the problem—people like you.

<https://10x.gsa.gov/>

# Thank you

[victoria.mcfadden@gsa.gov](mailto:victoria.mcfadden@gsa.gov)

[randy.hart@gsa.gov](mailto:randy.hart@gsa.gov)