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# Taking a Journey-First Approach to Financial Management

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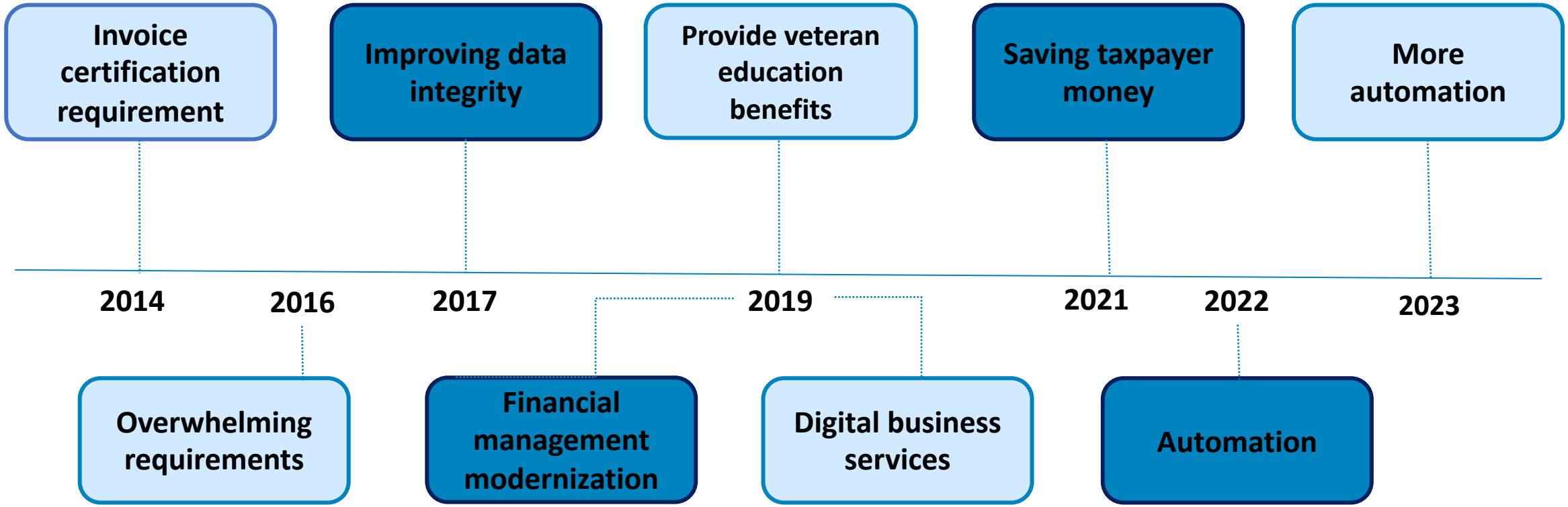
Financial Services Center


VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

# VA FSC Journey Over Time

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# What is VA FSC?

Enterprise franchise fund financial services to VA and other government agencies

- Insurance claims
- **Commercial invoice certification**
- **Benefits certification**
- Accounting and audit
- Payroll time and attendance
- Credit card and travel processing
- Document management and storage
- Customer engagement / call center

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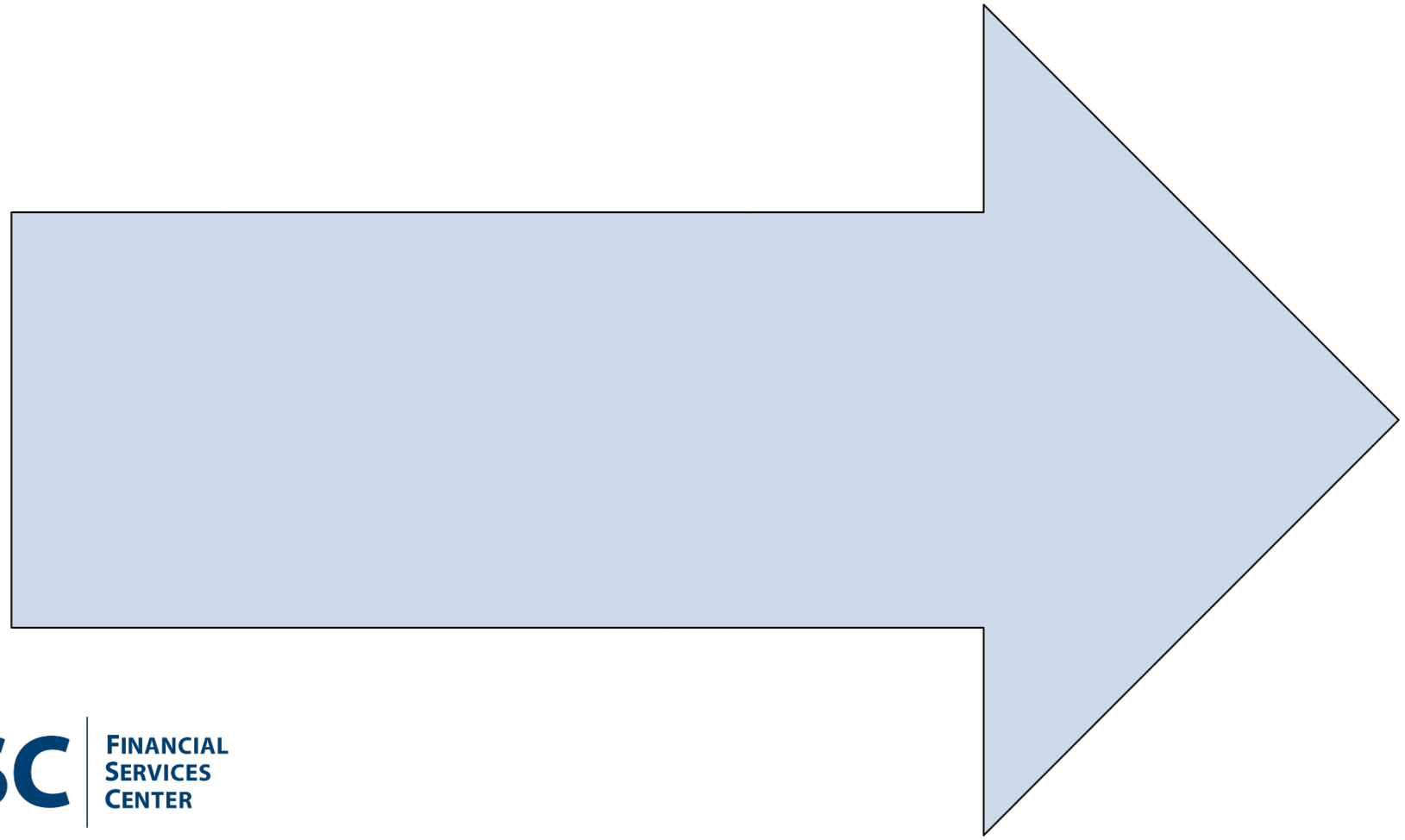
# The Beginning: VA-Wide Improvements for Veteran Services



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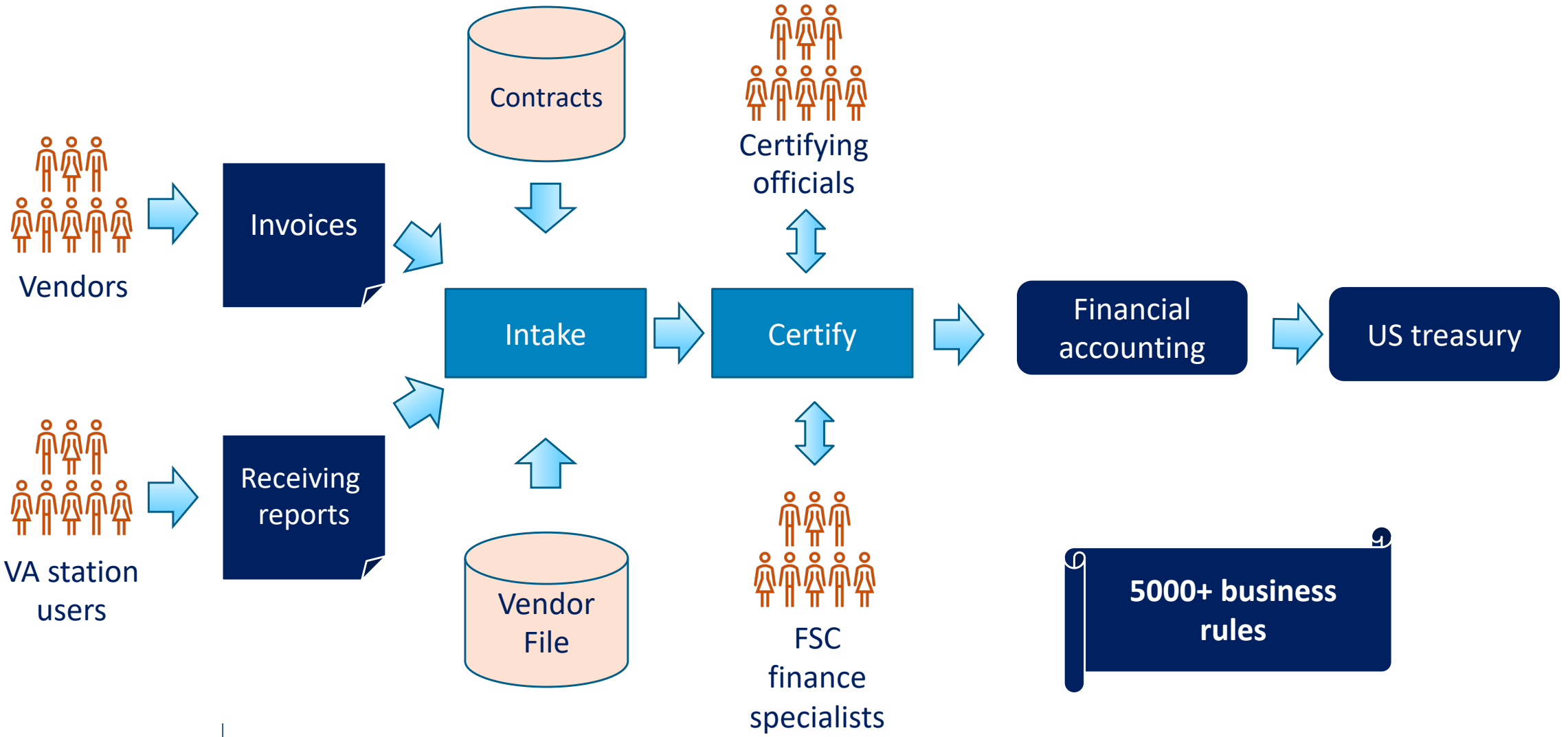
# The Beginning – Invoice Certification Solution

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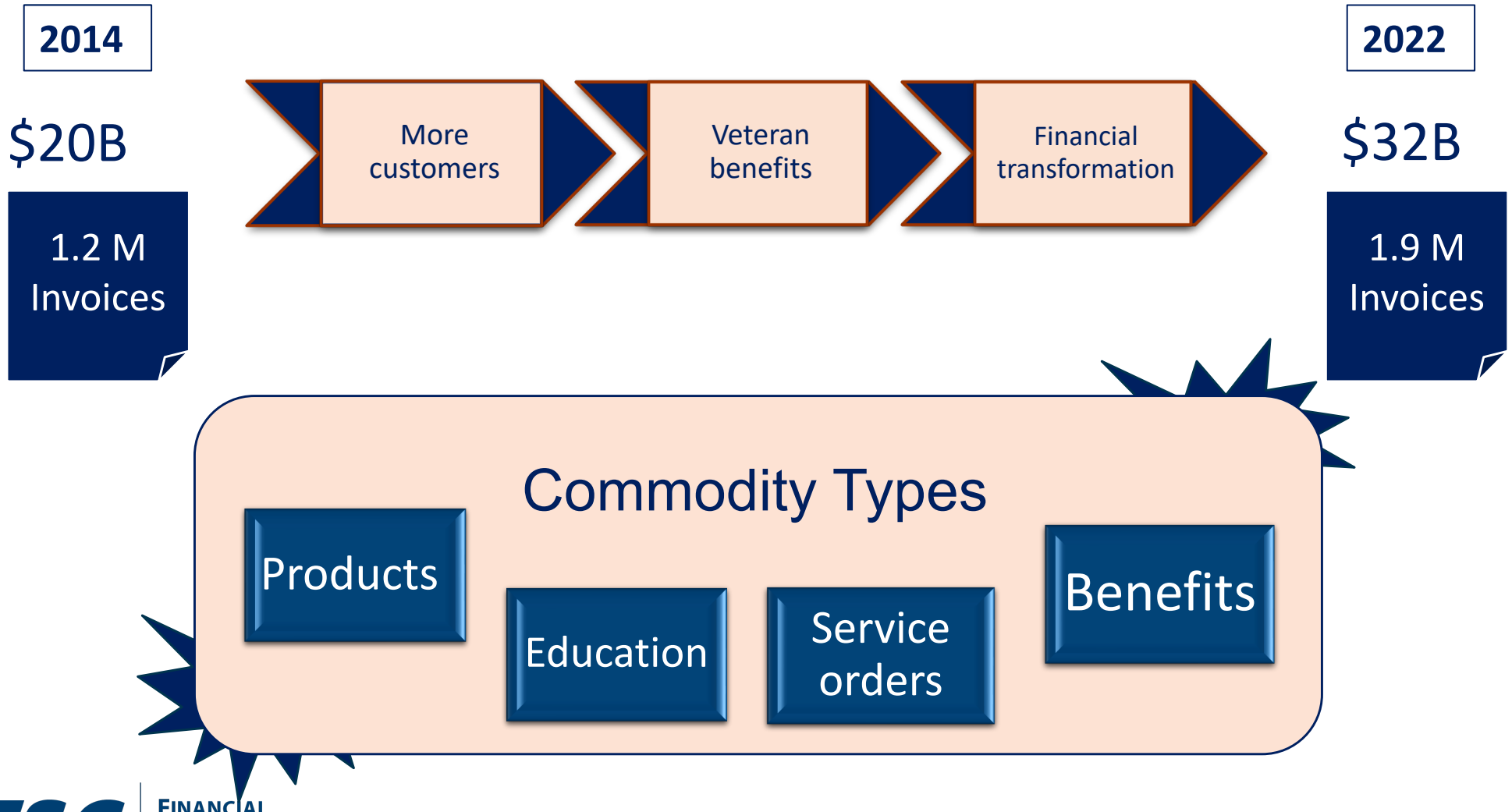
# FSC – Payment Certification Services for VA

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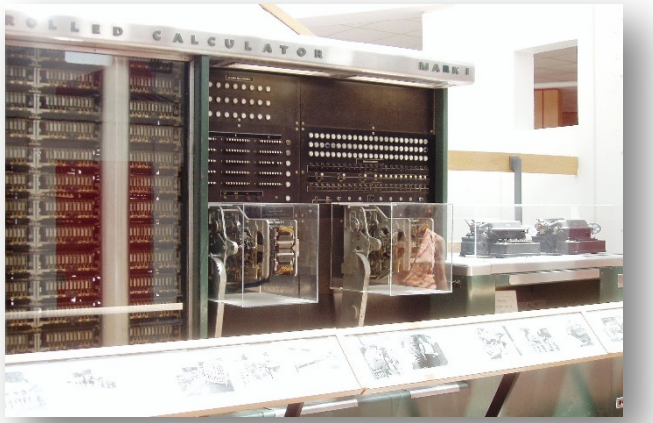
# Challenge – Overwhelming Requirements, IT Constraints

2016

Business Ops

IT Ops




Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 Release

# Transform FSC – SAFe/Agile/Scrum

- Establish product scrum team
- Create prioritized backlog
- Program increment planning
- Focus on business value
- Predictable delivery
- Iterate faster

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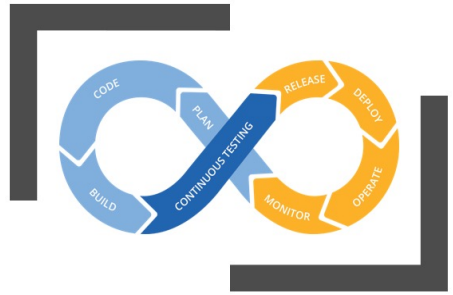
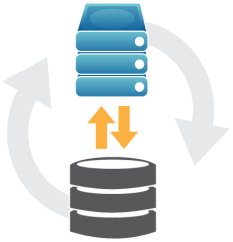
# Transform FSC – DevOps Delivery




- **Pega deployment manager** platform + jenkins suite and nexus repository for automated deployments
- Automated release notes & CM team approvals with a click
- Release anytime and any day in the week
- Smoke, regression & performance test automations
- Automated DB backups  and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# Release Time Reduced:

| Release Pipeline | Manual | DDSO |
|---|---|---|
| Lead Time to Deployment | 1-3 days | <60 minutes |
| Deployment Time | 60-120 minutes | 2 -3 minutes |
| Smoke-Test | 30 minutes | 2 minutes |
| Regression Test | 2 hours | 10-12 minutes |

# Automated Release Cadence:

| Year | Automated Deployments | Manual Deployments | Total | % Automated |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2021 | 146 | 172 | 318 | 46% |
| 2022 | 325 | 162 | 487 | 67% |
| Through April 2023 | 111 | 22 | 133 | 83% |

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# Improve Payment Integrity

2017

Invalid Invoice

Do Not Pay

**3M + Vendors**

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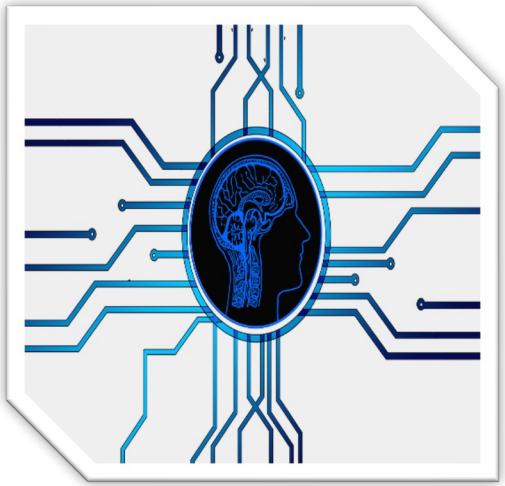
# Improve Payment Integrity

## Purchase Order Flip



## Incorporate AI

IPPS

↓

**Integrity: AI Integration (BAM)**

↓

**Payment?**

**Average Savings $80M / YR**

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# VA Financial Management Modernization

2019

**FMBT - financial management business transformation**

**iFAMS – integrated financial acquisition management system**

"Procure to pay"

**Deadline to Meet:**
**Go Live – Nov 2020**

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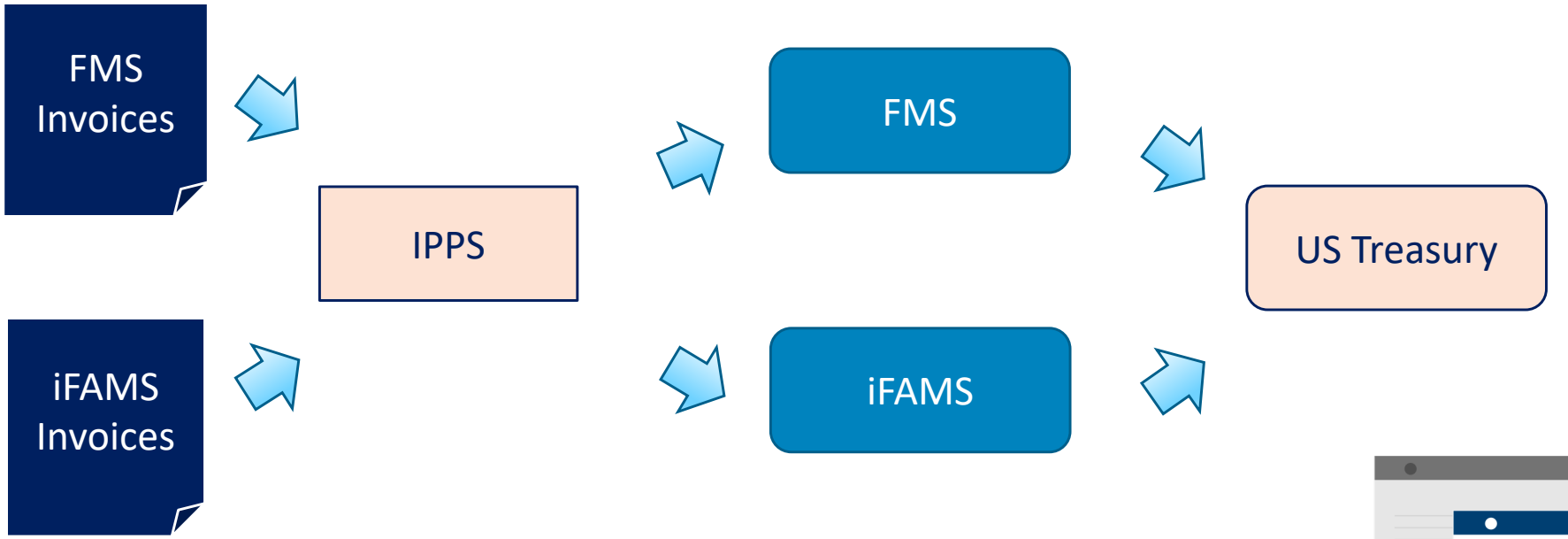
# Dual Payment Processing




Core Process Modification

Vendor → Obligation → Payment

IPPS – Invoice Payment Processing System
FMS – Financial Management System
iFAMS – Integrated Financial Accounting Management System

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# Veteran Education Benefits – A New Journey

2019

Veteran readiness and employment

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# Veteran Education Benefits IPPS Authorize and Pay

Counselors

Authorization

Veterans, schools & bookstores

Stipend

Tuition

Books

IPPS

$ 735M / YR

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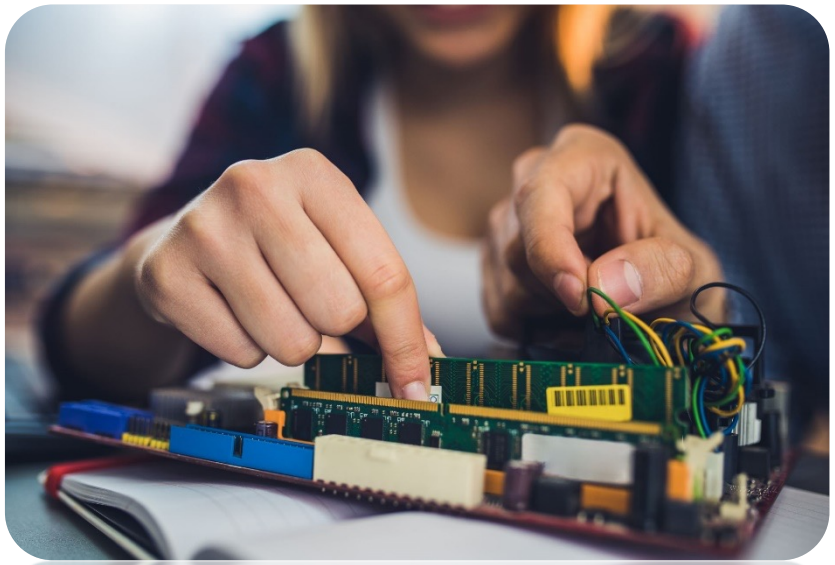
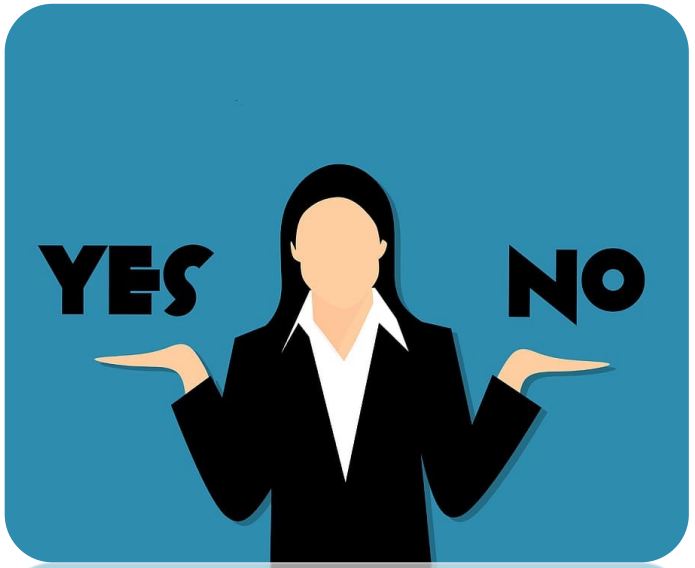
# Unauthorized Commitments Another Journey?

2019

**Pay vendor?**

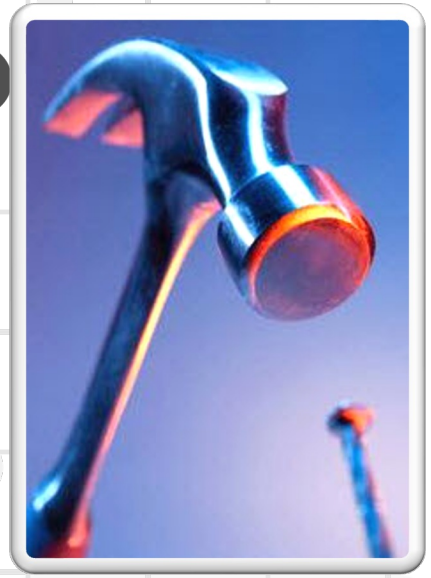




# Leverage IPPS Knowledge

2019

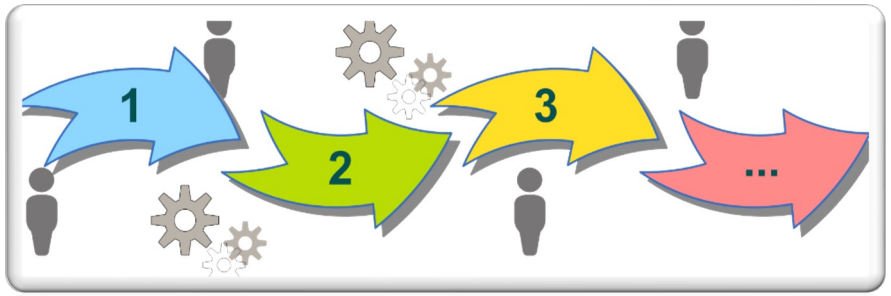
IPPS?



# Digital Business Services

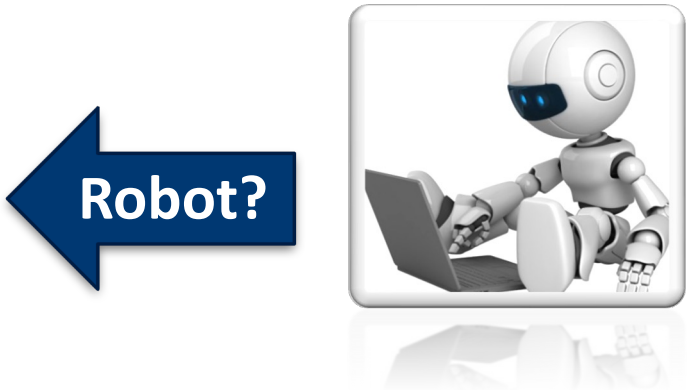
2019

## Workflow Solutions




**Ratification Tracking System (RTS):**
New Pega application replaced manual email process

## Automation Solutions



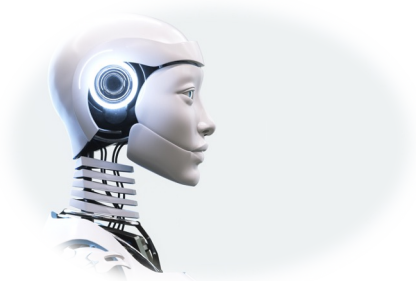

**Robotic Process Automation:**
Web-form created to automate onboarding of new Vendors to FMS

# FSC Robots

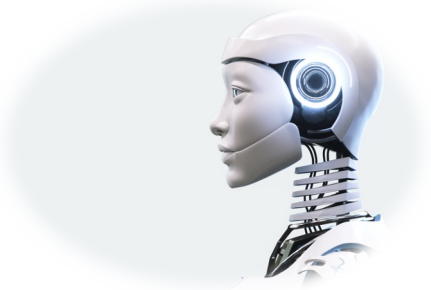
2022

**Working smarter:** These robots support legacy FMS transactions, the modern iFAMS will solve these challenges via an API

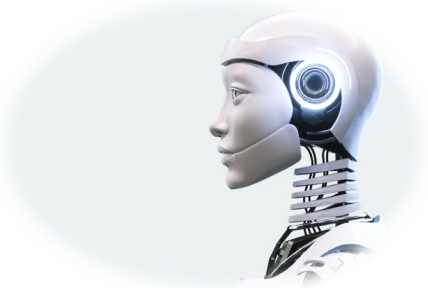
Vendor Form Robot



New EFT Rejects Robot



New Separated Employee Robot?



Reuse EFT Robot

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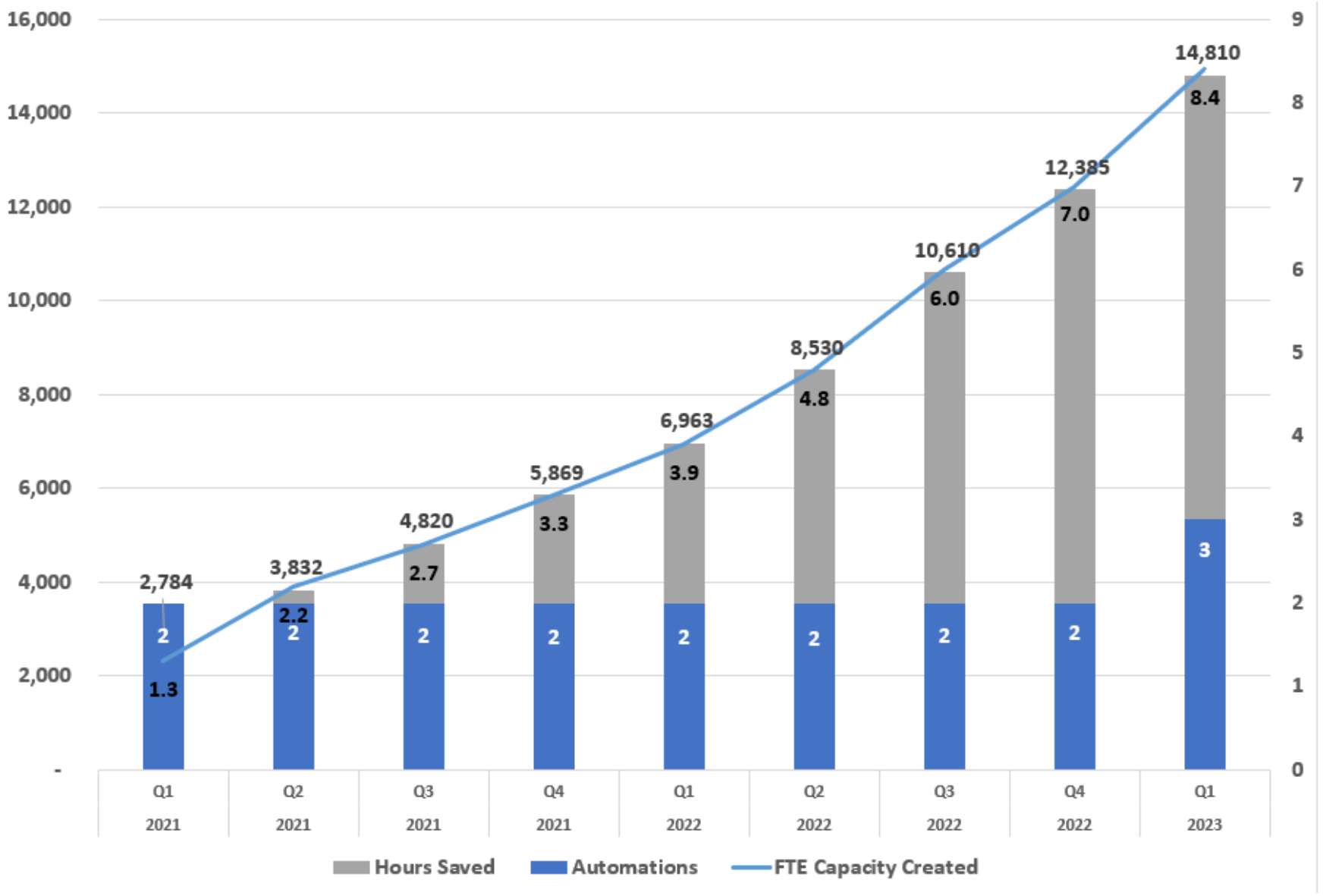
# Robotics Savings (Through March 2023)

**14,810 Hours Saved**

**8.4 FTEs Capacity Created**

**3 Automations**

**Annual Savings (not cumulative)**

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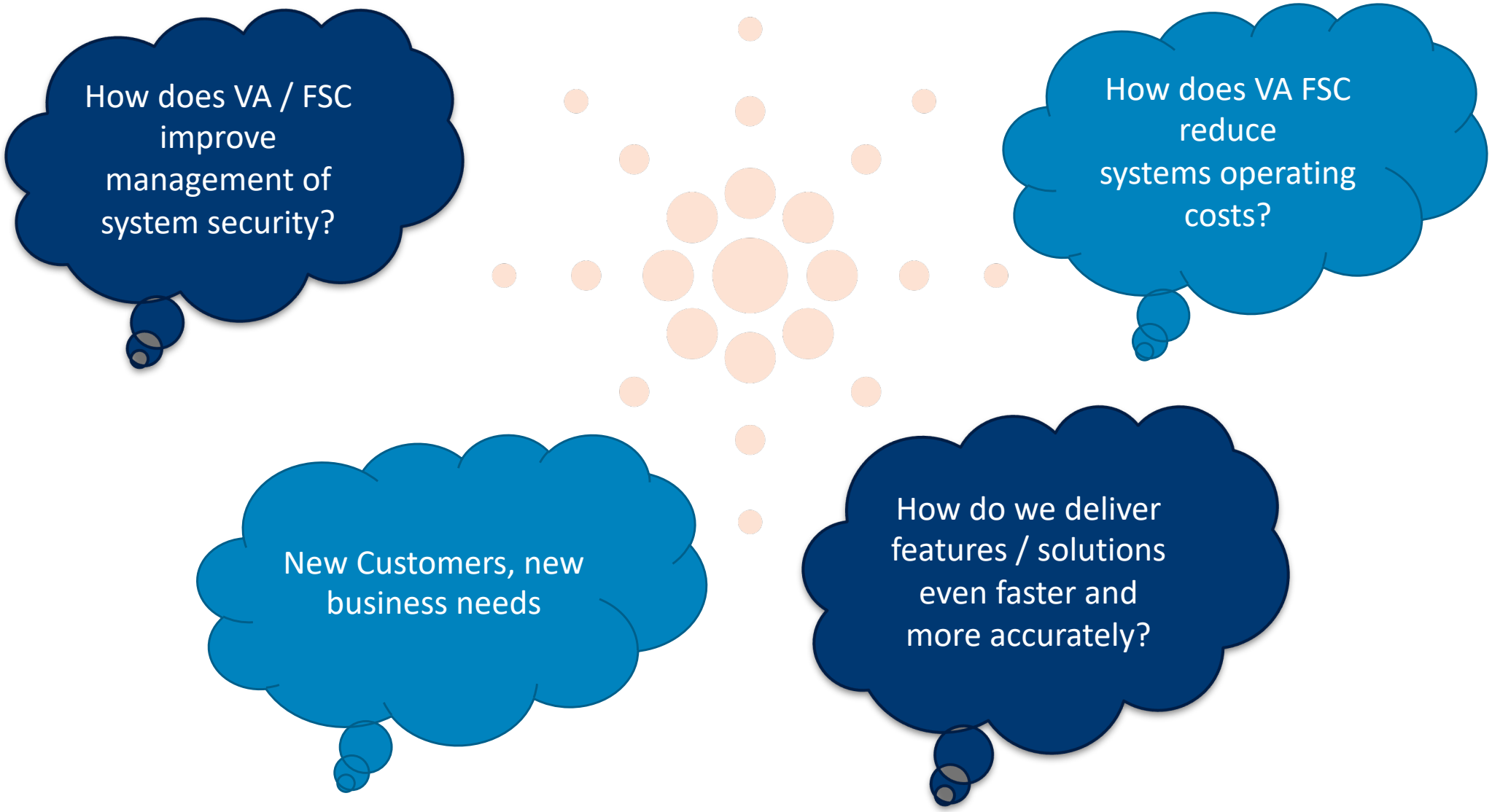
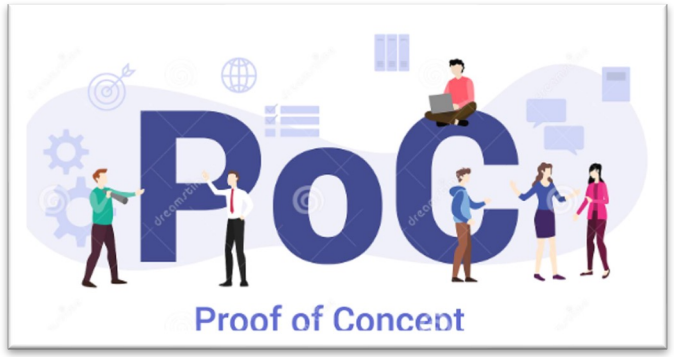
# What Challenges are Next?



# Pega Cloud for Government

- FedRAMP Moderate / High
- 

FSC performed a POC in 2021
- FSC has more than 10 Pega products to consider for migration

- FSC provides Pega technology services to other VA agencies & gov't entities, either by building a solution and maintaining it or supporting it as needed

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# APPENDIX

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# Journey Learnings

| We Used to Think | Now We Think |
| --- | --- |
| Robots are cool | APIs are better |
| More Robots are smart | Fewer Robots are smarter |
| Robots should only go one route | Robots should go multiple routes |
| Figure out value later | Figure out value before we begin |

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