



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20503

October 6, 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICERS OF EXECUTIVE  
DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: Steven VanRoekel *SVR*  
Federal Chief Information Officer

SUBJECT: Requirements for Accepting Externally-Issued Identity Credentials

As we work to achieve a more responsive and cost-effective government, it is essential that we identify opportunities to both improve services that deliver results for the American people, ensure their information is private and secure online and eliminate duplication. One such opportunity is in the area of identity management. Currently, members of the public and business partners maintain dozens of identity credentials to interact with the government online, and agencies maintain duplicative backend systems. To decrease the burden on users of our systems, and reduce costs associated with managing credentials, agencies are to begin leveraging externally-issued<sup>1</sup> credentials, in addition to continuing to offer federally-issued credentials.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Institutes of Health (NIH) has successfully demonstrated the value of leveraging externally-issued credentials across its web sites, such as PubMed<sup>2</sup>. Since the initiative launch in June 2010, the number of users leveraging externally-issued credentials to access NIH sites has grown to more than 72 thousand. NIH estimates that its identity management initiative will result in cost avoidance of more than \$2.98 million for fiscal years 2011 through 2015. These savings will result from not having to manage user IDs and passwords for external users across approximately 50 systems.

Effective 90 days following final approval of at least one Trust Framework Provider<sup>3</sup> (identified in Attachment A), agencies are to begin implementing the new requirement that will result in full implementation over the next three years by taking the following actions<sup>4</sup>:

- All new development of assurance Level 1<sup>5</sup> web sites that allow members of the public and business partners to register or log on must be enabled to accept externally-issued credentials in accordance with government-wide requirements.

<sup>1</sup> Externally-issued credentials are those that have been issued by an entity other than the federal government.

<sup>2</sup> "PubMed" is an NIH-managed website that comprises more than 20 million citations for biomedical literature from MEDLINE, life science journals, and online books.

<sup>3</sup> The General Services Administration, in collaboration with the Federal Chief Information Officers Council, approves the Trust Framework Providers and will publish the approval dates on <http://www.idmanagement.gov>.

<sup>4</sup> These requirements apply to E-authentication systems as defined in OMB Memorandum 10-15, "FY 2010 Reporting Instructions for the Federal Information Security Management Act and Agency Privacy Management."

<sup>5</sup> Identity Assurance Levels are described in OMB Memorandum 04-04, *E-authentication Guidance for Federal Agencies*, and NIST Special Publication 800-63, *Electronic Authentication Guidance*. For additional information refer to [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda\\_2004](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda_2004) and <http://csrc.nist.gov/publications/PubsSPs.html>.

- Existing assurance Level 1 web sites that allow members of the public and business partners to register or log on must include the requirement to accept externally-issued credentials in accordance with government-wide requirements when those sites are enhanced or upgraded.

Additionally, where appropriate and as resources permit, Levels 2, 3 and 4 websites that allow members of the public and business partners to register or log on should be enabled to accept externally-issued credentials at higher levels of identity assurance in accordance with government-wide requirements.<sup>6</sup>

To ensure federal privacy and security requirements are addressed, agencies are required to follow Office of Management and Budget (OMB) policy and may only accept externally-issued credentials that are issued in accordance with National Institute of Standards and Technology guidelines and Federal Chief Information Officers Council processes.<sup>7</sup> Refer to Attachment A for the current list of approved providers. For existing web sites accepting non-approved externally-issued credentials, the agency must have an OMB/agency agreed-upon plan for complying with the requirement to use approved providers and schemes. Plans must be submitted to the Federal Chief Information Officer. Additionally, OMB and the General Services Administration (GSA) will meet with agencies to provide additional information regarding this memorandum and to share best practices. Attachment B includes the schedule of initial meetings.

I appreciate your leadership and commitment as we work to reduce costs in the area of Information Technology, while improving services. If you have questions, please contact Carol Bales at 202-395-9915 or [eauth@omb.eop.gov](mailto:eauth@omb.eop.gov), or Deborah Gallagher at 202-219-1627 or [ICAM@gsa.gov](mailto:ICAM@gsa.gov).

Attachments

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<sup>6</sup> In accordance with HSPD-12 policy, federal employees and contractors accessing federal systems for work purposes are expected to use Personal Identity Verification Credentials where assurance of identity is required.

<sup>7</sup> It is expected that agencies will continue to offer federally-issued credentials to accommodate members of the public and business partners without externally-issued credentials.

## Attachment A: Approved Providers and Schemes

It is essential that credentialing processes and schemes are reliable, sustainable, and interoperable; therefore, the federal government requires a mechanism to evaluate the identity management processes and schemes against applicable federal requirements, policies, and laws. The *Trust Framework Provider Adoption Process* and *Scheme Adoption Process*<sup>8</sup> outline the process to evaluate organizations that assess external (i.e. non-federal) identity providers. To date, three trust framework providers are provisionally approved and three identity schemes (listed below) have been approved. The current listing of approved identity providers, for Levels 1, 2, and non-Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) 3, is listed below.<sup>9</sup>

### Trust Framework Providers:

InCommon Federation – Level of Assurance 1 (*provisionally approved*)

Kantara Initiative – Level of Assurance 1, 2, and non-PKI 3 (*provisionally approved*)

Open Identity Exchange – Level of Assurance 1 (*provisionally approved*)

### Identity Schemes (Levels 1, 2 and non-PKI 3):

Identity Metasystem Interoperability (IMI) 1.0 Profile

OpenID 2.0 Profile

Security Assertion Markup Language 2.0 Web Browser Single Sign-On Profile

### Identity Providers (Levels 1, 2, and non-PKI 3):

Equifax - IMI 1.0 Profile, Level of Assurance 1 [<http://equifax.com>]

Google - OpenID 2.0 Profile, Level of Assurance 1 [<http://google.com>]

PayPal - OpenID 2.0 Profile, Level of Assurance 1 [<http://paypal.com>]

PayPal - IMI 1.0 Profile, Level of Assurance 1 [<http://paypal.com>]

VeriSign - OpenID 2.0 Profile, Level of Assurance 1 [<http://pip.verisignlabs.com>]

Wave Systems - OpenID 2.0 Profile, Level of Assurance 1 [<http://wave.com>]

In accordance with OMB M-04-04, “*E-authentication Guidance for Federal Agencies*” and NIST Special Publication 800-63, “*Electronic Authentication Guidance*”, identity assurance levels are as follows:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<p>Little or no confidence in asserted identity</p> <p style="text-align: center;">◆</p> <p>No identity proofing required, and some confidence the same claimant is accessing the protected transaction or data</p>	<p>Some confidence in asserted identity</p> <p style="text-align: center;">◆</p> <p>Provides single factor remote authentication using a wide range of available authentication technologies</p>	<p>High confidence in asserted identity</p> <p style="text-align: center;">◆</p> <p>Provides multi-factor remote authentication using “soft” cryptographic tokens, “hard” cryptographic tokens, and one-time password tokens</p>	<p>Very high confidence in asserted identity</p> <p style="text-align: center;">◆</p> <p>Provides multi-factor remote authentication using “hard” cryptographic tokens</p>

For additional information, including a current list of approved identity providers and schemes, visit Open Identity Solutions for Open Government<sup>10</sup> at <http://www.idmanagement.gov>.

<sup>8</sup> The *Trust Framework Providers Adoption Process* and *Scheme Adoption Process* focuses on Levels 1, 2, and non-PKI 3.

<sup>9</sup> When accepting Level 3 cryptographic and Level 4 credentials, agencies must follow Federal Public Key Infrastructure requirements. For additional information, refer to “The Federal Public Key Infrastructure” at <http://www.idmanagement.gov>.

<sup>10</sup> A how-to guide for accepting Levels 1, 2 and non-PKI 3 credentials from certified identity providers will be available on <http://www.idmanagement.gov> in November 2011.

## **Attachment B: Meeting Schedule**

**October 24-28:** Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Department of Defense, and Department of Education

**October 31-November 4:** Department of Energy, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Homeland Security, and Department of Housing and Urban Development

**November 14-18:** Department of Interior, Department of Justice, Department of Labor, and Department of State

**November 28-December 2:** Department of the Treasury, Department of Transportation, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Environmental Protection Agency

**December 5-9:** General Services Administration, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Archives and Records Administration, and National Science Foundation

**December 12-16:** Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Office of Personnel Management, and Small Business Administration

**December 19-23:** Social Security Administration and United States Agency for International Development