

Federalnewsradio.com, Agencies lay out plans for Open Gov 2.0

For NASA, open government now means a new way to design and build websites.

But the space agency says in Version 2.0 of its Open Government plan, released today, it's more than just its online presence that will change.

"This effort will provide a new agencywide capability to create, maintain, and manage the Nasa.gov websites and associated services," NASA wrote in the document. "The agency will aim to leverage open source software, as well as cloud computing technologies, and take an integrated approach to search, video and social media. The goal of this effort will be to provide a consistent, capable and agile, cloud-based enterprise infrastructure that provides a platform-as-a-service (PaaS) and software-as-a-service (SaaS) supported infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS) for internal and external Web applications and a majority of the 1,590 external websites using an interoperable, standards-based and secure environment."

At the Social Security Administration, its updated plan includes four flagship initiatives: Enhanced Services for People Receiving Benefits, Health Information Technology (Health IT), Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record (VLER)/Wounded Warrior Collaboration, and eAuthorization, to obtain information in connection with filing an application for disability.

All agencies updated their open government plans and released them today as part of the Obama administration's open government and transparency initiative.

Open gov reemerging as management theme?

The White House instituted open government and transparency as a core management principle from the beginning of the administration. While it was a central theme in the early part of the administration, over the last year or more, political officials have talked little about it as a priority. Only last fall did the White House reinvigorate open government somewhat through the Open Government Partnership at the United Nations.

Cass Sunstein, administrator in the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs and Chris Vein, deputy chief technology officer in the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy wrote in a blog today that the first iteration of these plans "served as roadmaps for agencies working to expand opportunities for citizen participation, make data more available and transparent, and increase collaborative decision-making."

Sunstein and Vein said agencies now will get feedback on their updated plans and revise them as needed.

On the administration's open government scorecard, out of 290 scores across 29 agencies, departments received green grades in all but 41 areas and no agency received a red score.

The updated version of the open government plans includes a progress report and new milestones.

NASA's plan includes five objectives over the next two years, including releasing a request for proposal for IT services and two pilots using open source software to run a content management system and to consolidate multiple blogging infrastructures on that CMS.

At the SSA, Commissioner Michael Astrue said the agency updated its open government plan through input by employees and the public.

"We will continue to refine our use of innovative data sharing, collaboration and participation technologies to support our mission, and we will engage the public as we pursue the initiatives outlined in this plan," he wrote.

Among SSA's key initiatives, it will by the end of 2012 release a new and more secure username and password protocol so citizens can apply for benefits online.

By the end of 2013, SSA will add two to three medical providers and connect with the Veterans Affairs and Defense departments on the Nationwide Health Information Network (NwHIN).

And later this month, SSA will let citizens filing claims online sign and submit forms electronically under eAuthorization.

"Since Open Government plans were released two years ago, a great deal of work has been done on implementation," Sunstein and Vein wrote. "And today, agencies are releasing updates of their plans, which include timelines for completing the initiatives in their previous plans, as well as new commitments. We've continued to make agency plans a priority, stating in the U.S. Open Government National Action Plan that we would work with agencies as they implement their plans. We invite you to read each plan at [www.\[name of agency\].gov/open](http://www.[name of agency].gov/open)."