



## REPORT

# Elevating service delivery with robust e-signature solutions

How FedRAMP-authorized signature management makes it easy to modernize essential services.

The demand for modern digital government is higher than ever. From online payment portals to mobile apps, the public increasingly wants the kind of seamless experience from government agencies that they've become accustomed to with private companies. And agency employees need to be productive when working remotely or offsite. Yet 88% of federal IT employees say agencies have fallen behind on modernization,<sup>1</sup> and one of the biggest roadblocks is the inability to quickly implement new initiatives.

Building better end-to-end digital services is complicated, but the truth is modernization isn't an all-or-nothing endeavor. Whether agencies are engaging in small, scalable changes or wholesale transformation projects, the key is that these initiatives must benefit the public and the government workforce alike. In fact, a recent panel of government officials responsible for bringing digital services to agencies agreed that users' pain points need to be at the center of every effort.<sup>2</sup>

## Modernizing Essential Services

With e-signatures, people can sign digital documents anywhere, at any time, on any device—increasing the speed, security, and efficiency of government services.

Modern digital workflows can increase access to government services for everyone who needs them, even if they're located far from a government office. But digital processes can still be impeded by legacy paper-based forms or manual steps. For example, a constituent who accesses a form online may still need to print it, sign it, and then either scan and email it, or physically return it to a government office via mail or in person. The agency receiving the form often needs to then capture information manually into their IT system (a slow, error-prone task), scan the document, provide proof of receipt, and archive it. Simply posting a form online doesn't modernize your workflow—that's where electronic signature (e-signature) solutions come in.

# Streamlining agency processes with fully-digital document workflows

## Digitized form, without signature solution

- 1 Constituent finds form online
- 2 Constituent prints form
- 3 Constituent fills and signs form
- 4 Constituent mails form or returns it to agency in person
- 5 Agency employee validates constituent identity, if required
- 6 Agency employee routes form to appropriate department
- 7 A different agency employee inputs form data into agency database
- 8 Agency system or employee generates paper-based proof of receipt and mails to constituent
- 9 Constituent receives paper-based proof of receipt
- 10 Agency employee processes and archives document

## Digitized form, with signature solution

- 1 Constituent finds form online, fills it out, legally signs, submits, and receives confirmation all within the browser window.
- 2 Form data is automatically stored in the agency database, and proof of signature is added to the audit trail.
- 3 Certified copies with optional audit trail are generated and electronically sent to the constituent and any other parties as required.

With e-signatures, people can sign digital documents anywhere, at any time, on any device—increasing the speed, security, and efficiency of government services. In a recent Forrester Total Economic Impact™ study, agencies implementing Adobe Acrobat Sign reported a 30% increase in transaction speeds on average, and 25% reduction in time spent on compliance and regulatory reviews.<sup>3</sup>

With an e-signature solution incorporated into a fully digital document workflow, data is automatically sent where it is needed, data entry errors are reduced, less paper is wasted, compliance is streamlined, and the experiences of agency constituents and agency employees alike are improved.<sup>3</sup>

This white paper explores how a scalable, standards-based signature solution can accelerate your agency's digital transformation. We'll look at the integration challenges with electronic signatures, the value in comprehensive FedRAMP-authorized signature solutions, and how Adobe Acrobat Sign for Government gets your all-digital workflows running faster—without burdening your agency IT teams.

# The Integration Roadblocks in Agency Transformation

More than ever, IT modernization has become a priority for meeting constituent needs as well as improving employee productivity. Agencies need to ensure that government services can meet people where they are, especially when they're needing services from a place of vulnerability. Mobile-friendly forms and government websites help make it easier for disadvantaged communities to access public services. And modern digital workflows relieve employees from tedious tasks, enabling them to spend more time on more strategic priorities.

But getting there isn't easy. Ask any IT expert—legacy systems can be an integration nightmare. And the reality is that modern government services typically need to interface with a mix of legacy systems, built with in-house tools, which can be difficult to scale and may require specialty support from often-overstretched IT teams. Signature solutions need to not only be open and flexible enough to support all digital documents—creating a frictionless experience that increases citizen engagement and decreases administrative burden—they also must quickly and easily integrate into existing systems and workflows.

An e-signature solution is essential for moving beyond the days of relying on paper and ink-based documents for external functions such as requests and permits, as well as internal operations such as contracts, reimbursement requests, and human resources forms. And not just any signature solution is robust enough to meet public sector requirements.

A better digital experience enables constituents and employees to access documents remotely via any device. For integration across government apps and services, e-signature solutions should:

- **Deploy easily** in an agency's existing IT environment
- **Include pre-built, plug-and-play integrations with core productivity tools**, such as Microsoft 365, PowerPoint, Outlook, and Teams
- **Offer the flexibility to extend to other agency applications** via robust, standards-based APIs and open standards
- **Ensure compliance with local and global e-signature laws**, including supporting different types of e-signatures, robust signer identification options, audit trails, archiving, reporting, and metrics

At the same time, constituents increasingly expect agencies to deliver solutions that match private sector offerings for navigability and user experience. In order to meet user expectations and increase agency reach and efficacy, solutions should:

- Make it easy to find information remotely
- Work on any device, at any time
- Guide users through information entry to avoid errors
- Utilize a standards-based approach with a professional presence

E-signature solutions need to move your agency's mission forward with web forms, automated workflows, and document templates—without requiring additional staff time or headcount. They need to be robust enough to support both e-signatures as well as digital signatures (that is, an e-signature which is backed by trusted third-party digital certificate). And they need to be able to send completed form data directly to back-end systems to speed processing, reduce errors, and eliminate redundancy. At the same time, they must be easy to find and easy to use for those accessing agency services.

## Accelerating IT Modernization with the Right FedRAMP Solutions

Document signing solutions are not always a perfect fit for government. Some vendors don't cover typical implementation activities like integrations, customer support, and training in their initial contract. As a result, agencies must then wait for another budgeting cycle to get additional support. And from an employee perspective, the learning curve or user experience can be jarring for those already hesitant about IT modernization. Strong customer support and prebuilt, plug-and-play integrations with productivity tools in use today help provide an easier ramp-up for employees, and in turn a smoother experience for constituents.

Much of the success in agency IT modernization happens behind the scenes, supported by the expert insights that make projects run more smoothly. Signature management solutions need to integrate with existing systems and underlying data structures. Otherwise, they may not scale or fit in with what's happening elsewhere in a process—or support the right compliance or risk profiles.

The Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP) provides a way for agencies to find solutions that align with specific security requirements. FedRAMP authorizes solutions at Low, Moderate, and High Impact levels, with the Moderate Impact level being designed to protect sensitive data, such as the personally identifiable information (PII) associated with electronic signatures. FedRAMP solutions are hosted on authorized cloud infrastructure, managed by U.S. personnel.

When it comes to FedRAMP-authorized solutions, agencies should also consider if the solutions are backed by a broad partner ecosystem to extend the value of the investment. For example, Adobe has strategic partnerships with Microsoft and Accenture to deliver a wide range of pre-integrated solutions, as well as any required customizations that help governments to transform digital document processes. Open innovation ensures that agencies get the best tools for the job, providing seamless e-signatures inside the applications already in use.

Enterprise-grade signature solutions also extend past signature capture to overall management of the digital document workflow—including form creation, collaboration, and a variety of document approval types. These solutions often offer APIs for customization to fit specific agency needs. This means investments can be flexibly scaled to meet changing needs over time, whether it's for constituent experiences, employee workflows, or digital collaboration across multiple agencies.

# The Path to Trusted, User-Friendly Digital Interactions

Adobe Acrobat Sign for Government is a security-enhanced instance of Adobe's industry-leading SaaS application that enables agencies to rapidly replace manual, paper-based approval and signature processes with automated, all-digital workflows. This FedRAMP Moderate-authorized solution is hosted on Microsoft Azure Government Cloud and designated for the sole use of U.S. federal, tribal, state, and local government organizations, as well as U.S. government contractors and partners.

One of the key advantages of Adobe Acrobat Sign for Government is that it allows stakeholders to access services via tools and documents they already know. For many government agencies, operational processes start and end with PDF documents. Adobe invented the PDF standard—now an open standard maintained by the International Organization for Standardisation—and over 250 billion PDF documents were opened in Adobe applications in the last year alone.

What's more, Adobe Acrobat Sign for Government is a FedRAMP Moderate certified solution that's designed to ensure maximum value. Adobe offers transparent, all-inclusive pricing with software, training, support, and services—all for a predictable cost. The subscription model simplifies procurement, while enabling agencies to modernize workflows at their own pace. With Adobe, implementation no longer has to be a potential stumbling block to government IT modernization.

Adobe is committed to open standards such as PDF and the Cloud Signature Consortium (CSC) technical specification that eliminate compatibility issues and deployment limitations, so agencies can create better experiences in the applications they use every day. In fact, Adobe Acrobat Sign for Government is Microsoft's only preferred e-signature solution. The result is pre-built integration with existing productivity tools, such as Microsoft 365, FedRAMP Moderate Word, PowerPoint, Outlook, and Teams. Employees can send, e-sign, and track documents without ever leaving Microsoft apps and services.

Whether agencies want to work with e-signatures, digital signatures, or a combination of the two, Adobe Acrobat Sign for Government helps you ensure compliance while delivering great end-user experiences. And the implementation services are there to add extra support, removing the need to develop in-house tools to meet rising demands for digital services, optimizing workflows for faster value, and freeing up employees to work on more strategic, mission-critical initiatives. It all adds up to smarter, faster, and more efficient services for our digital world.

## Pre-built integrations:

- Microsoft 365
- Word
- PowerPoint
- Outlook
- Teams

## The Adobe technology compliance strategy

Adobe's foundational framework of security processes and compliance controls, namely Common Controls Framework (CCF) has been the key in achieving and maintaining its FedRAMP certification. CCF by Adobe is a comprehensive set of simple control requirements, aggregated, correlated and rationalized from the vast array of industry information security and privacy standards. Adoption of the CCF has helped enable Adobe's cloud products, services, platforms and operations to achieve compliance with a host of security certifications, standards and regulations like AICPA SOC2, ISO27001, PCI DSS, FedRAMP and others.

## Learn more

To learn more about accelerating your agency's digital transformation with a trusted partner, visit us online or contact us at: [www.adobe.com/sign/contact.html](http://www.adobe.com/sign/contact.html)

For details about the integration capabilities of Adobe Acrobat Sign APIs, visit: [developer.adobe.com/adobesign-api/](http://developer.adobe.com/adobesign-api/)

<sup>1</sup> Chris Riotta, "Survey: Federal IT workers say agencies are lagging with digital transformations," FCW, October 7, 2021.

<https://fcw.com/digital-government/2021/10/survey-federal-it-workers-say-agencies-are-lagging-with-digital-transformations/259212/>

<sup>2</sup> Patience Wait, "Building Out Digital Services Requires Balance and Customer Trust, Officials Say," Nextgov, December 2, 2021.

<https://www.nextgov.com/it-modernization/2021/12/building-out-digital-services-requires-balance-and-customer-trust-officials-say/187216/>

<sup>3</sup> "Adobe Acrobat Sign Helps Government Engage with Citizens and Drive Internal Efficiencies," A Forrester Total Economic Impact Spotlight Commissioned by Adobe, January 2022. <https://total-economic-impact-acrobat-sign.digitalmedia.adobeevents.com/>

