Worksheet: Implementing an Identity Management System

An effective IAM program requires thoughtful planning, collaboration and execution. The following worksheet was adapted from the federal government's Login.gov website, and it outlines key questions to ask before implementing an identity management system.

Ask yourself, what are you protecting?

(Not all information requires an identity system to manage access. You can protect the privacy of users and reduce the security risk to your systems by avoiding any unnecessary collection of PII.)

You might not need to implement an identity system if (check all that apply):

- ☐ You do not need to have an ongoing relationship with users.
- ☐ Transactions don't depend on personal information being accurate.
- ☐ You can rely on other forms of security.

If you still think an identity system is needed, consider the following questions:

What transactions will users need?

Will the transactions be ongoing, as when users bookmark benefits or grant applications to fill out later, then return repeatedly to check the application status? Or will they be a one-time or infrequent transaction, as when people download medical or financial records?

What kind of information do you need to protect your customers?

Do you need full name and other personal information so that users can access private information? Or do you only need to verify that a user fits in certain categories, such as the veterans category or the senior citizens category?

What sort of crime might access to this information make possible?

Information that seems innocent on its own might still be valuable to fraudsters and other criminals in combination with other easily accessed information.

What other means of security are available?

Postal tracking numbers, for example, are not secrets because the package will be delivered only to a specific address. The safety of the delivery rests on the security of the building and the conduct of the delivery person, not on the secrecy of the number itself.

What kinds of resources do you already have to identify customers?

Your agency may already have mission-specific information and resources that can be used to identify customers. By integrating resources you know and trust, you can increase the reliability of identification.

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