

How FedRAMP / StateRAMP ensure cloud security for state and local agencies

How FedRAMP and StateRAMP help all governments scale with confidence

Security frameworks to accelerated cloud adoption

Much like private companies, federal agencies are discovering the budget-saving, efficiency-boosting benefits of the cloud.

But those benefits aren't without risk. In general, a hybrid infrastructure of both public and private cloud environments is less secure than an infrastructure consisting strictly of data centers owned and operated by the user—in this case the government.

Fortunately, the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP) framework offers government agencies a path toward accelerated cloud adoption without exposing their data to unnecessary risk or forcing their personnel to endure a lengthy vetting process.

The facts on FedRAMP

Launched in 2012 by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), FedRAMP provides federal agencies a standardized process for contracting with cloud service providers (CSP).

A CSP can receive FedRAMP authorization relative to the sensitivity of federal data it would be processing and managing. FedRAMP offers authorization for three security levels: low, moderate, and high impact. So, let's say a CSP receives FedRAMP authorization to handle one federal agency's moderate-impact data. That CSP's FedRAMP authorization clears it to handle the moderate-impact data of any other federal agency.

In other words, a federal agency won't have to jump through hoops and take a prolonged, in-depth assessment of a CSP that already has the appropriate FedRAMP authorization. And due to the high security standards a CSP must adhere to—not to mention a certification process that's tedious on the part of the CSP—FedRAMP has long since set the bar for cloud security across federal agencies. In fact, in a 2022 survey submitted to government agencies adhering to FedRAMP, 85% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that FedRAMP promotes the adoption of secure cloud services.¹

But what about state and local governments?

The benefits of FedRAMP on the state and local level

Though not mandated, state and local governments can choose to adopt the same level of cloud security standards for their own agencies that FedRAMP sets for federal agencies. The state-level equivalent is a set of standards put forth by the non-profit organization known as StateRAMP. And like FedRAMP, the StateRAMP framework is built on the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Special Publication 800-53 Rev. 4, which lists information security controls found suitable for protecting federal government information in the cloud. StateRAMP also uses the same FedRAMP-authorized third-party assessment organizations to determine whether a CSP meets the required security standards.

So, states that opt to adhere to StateRAMP standards are effectively adopting the same FedRAMP standards. They're also enjoying many of the same benefits:

- **Peace of mind:** FedRAMP already adheres to the highest security standards for managing data in the cloud. Also, the assessment process that a CSP must go through to receive authorization is exhaustive on the part of the vendor
- **Faster due diligence:** If a CSP can show it received the appropriate level of StateRAMP certification early in the due diligence process, the state or local agency immediately knows that the prospective vendor meets their required level of security
- **Tools and resources:** As an organization, StateRAMP provides state and local governments with additional resources such as its StateRAMP Authorized Vendor list. This list details the verified offerings of CSPs, along with a list of CSPs currently going through the authorization process
- **Future proofing:** FedRAMP may not be the mandated law of the land for every state today, but that is likely going to change. By insuring your CSP adheres to FedRAMP now, you won't have to change vendors and potentially uproot your entire cloud infrastructure later down the road

The benefits of StateRAMP

StateRAMP is a cybersecurity framework for state and local government agencies in the U.S. StateRAMP, like FedRAMP for federal agencies, provides several benefits for state and local governments:

- **Enhanced Security:** StateRAMP ensures cloud providers meet strict security standards, reducing data breach risks.
- **Efficient Cost Savings:** Standardized assessments save time and resources.
- **Seamless Interoperability:** Aligning with federal standards simplifies data sharing between agencies.
- **Streamlined Vendor Selection:** A consistent evaluation framework eases service selection.

Partner with OPEXUS for operational excellence in the cloud

OPEXUS is FedRAMP-moderate authorized and StateRAMP-moderate authorized for our SaaS and PaaS product suites. We maintain a state-of-the-art data center with 24/7 surveillance. And all OPEXUS personnel with access to the data center maintain DOD Secret Clearances. So, agencies on the state, local, and federal levels can benefit from the efficiencies made possible by cloud, without fear that their cloud security is falling short.

Learn more about OPEXUS and our cloud-based solutions [here](#).

