

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued memorandum M-21-7 to provide further guidance for federal agencies to transition their information systems to IPv6.

The new guidance requires agencies to state their IPv6 policy within 180 days of the issuance of the M-21-7 memorandum. It is recommended that this policy information is published and made available on the agency's publicly accessible website. The policy should outline the agency's enablement of IPv6 on all new-networked Federal information systems by fiscal Year (FY) 2023. In addition, the strategic intent to phase out the use of IPv4 for all systems should also be included.

The Social Security Administration has transitioned its external facing network to support IPv6 since 2012. The agency's main customer facing web site, ssa.gov supports network reachability via IPv4 and IPv6 protocol. As part of the move toward broader adoption, SSA has implemented policies that ensure all IT acquisitions are IPv6 capable. Each IT acquisition requires the vendor to ensure their products provide full feature functionality in both dual stack (IPv4 and IPv6), as well as IPv6-only environments. The products should comply with National Institute of Standards and Technology United States Government version 6 Testing Program (Special Publication 500-267, A Profile for IPv6 in the U.S. Government – Version 1.0).

SSA is continuing its effort to implement IPv4/IPv6 dual stack capabilities of its internal networks. This action is largely based on business and/or technical needs. Factors that drive this effort includes overall project planning, network address allocations, security considerations, engineering and support staff training, network routing design, and as indicated previously, ensuring all IT acquisitions are IPv6 capable.

Beyond the ability to route IPv6 network traffic, the agency will also have to ensure new business and legacy applications are capable of using the new protocol. Furthermore, as the agency moves towards the use of public clouds, integration with those diverse environments to support IPv6 is also required. It should also be noted that IPv6 deployment will be done at a pace that ensure the integrity of the network is maintained to serve the American public without disruptions.