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TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

How to Set Up a .gov Domain & Leverage Microsoft 365 GCC (Government Community Cloud) and Copilot

A comprehensive guide to establishing secure government cloud infrastructure with Microsoft 365 GCC, Copilot, and protected DNS services.

What is a .gov Domain?



A .gov domain is a special top-level domain (TLD) exclusively reserved for official U.S. government organizations and eligible entities.

Key Characteristics:

- Restricted Access - Only verified U.S. government entities can register, including federal agencies, state governments, local municipalities, tribal nations, territorial governments, and eligible government contractors
- Trust & Authenticity - Citizens know .gov websites are official government sites, not imposters or scams, building public confidence
- The **Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)** oversees the **.gov** top-level domain.

CISA operates the **DotGov Program**, which handles:

- Eligibility verification
- Domain registration and renewals
- DNS security requirements
- Enforcement of federal standards for government entities
- No Commercial Use - Strictly for government use only, cannot be purchased by businesses or individuals

Why It Matters:

The .gov domain protects citizens from phishing scams and fraudulent websites pretending to be government services, maintaining trust in digital government operations.

Steps to Set Up a .gov Domain

01

Verify Eligibility

Confirm your organization qualifies through the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). Federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial government entities are eligible.
manage.get.gov

02

Submit Application

Complete the official application with required documentation proving government affiliation, authorizing official signatures, and organizational details. Can take a couple weeks or more to process

03

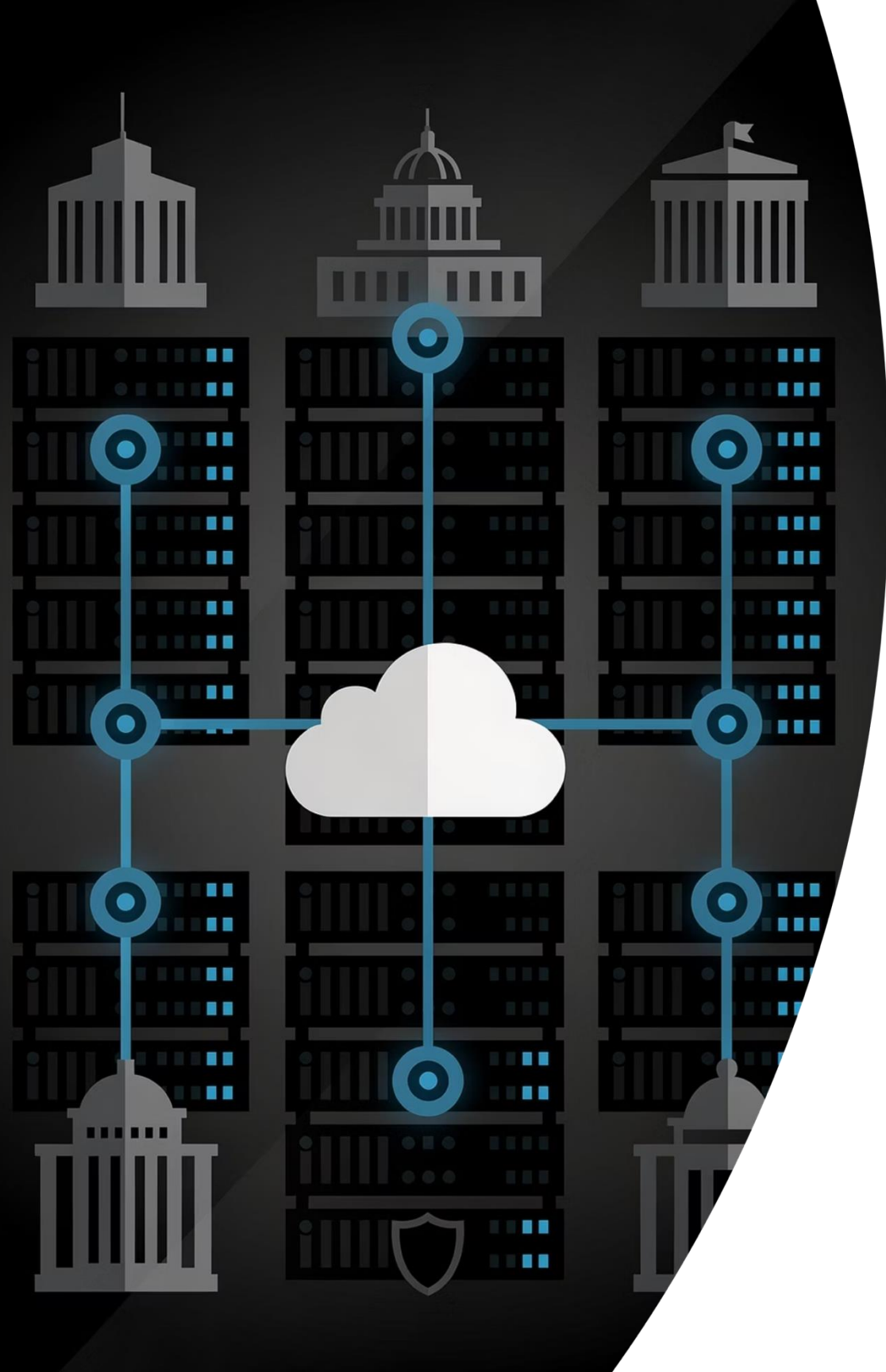
Configure DNS Records

Set up DNS records carefully to meet security and operational requirements, including A-records, MX records, and use a secure dns solution. We recommend Cloudflare.

04

Integrate Microsoft 365

Connect your .gov domain with Microsoft 365 Government Cloud for secure productivity tools, email hosting, and compliance-ready collaboration.



Microsoft 365 Government Community Cloud (GCC)



Purpose-Built Security

Designed specifically for federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial government workloads with enhanced security controls.



Full Compliance

FedRAMP High, DFARS, CJIS, and ITAR compliant for handling sensitive and controlled unclassified information.



U.S. Data Residency

Customer content stored physically within the United States, meeting strict data sovereignty requirements.



Restricted Access

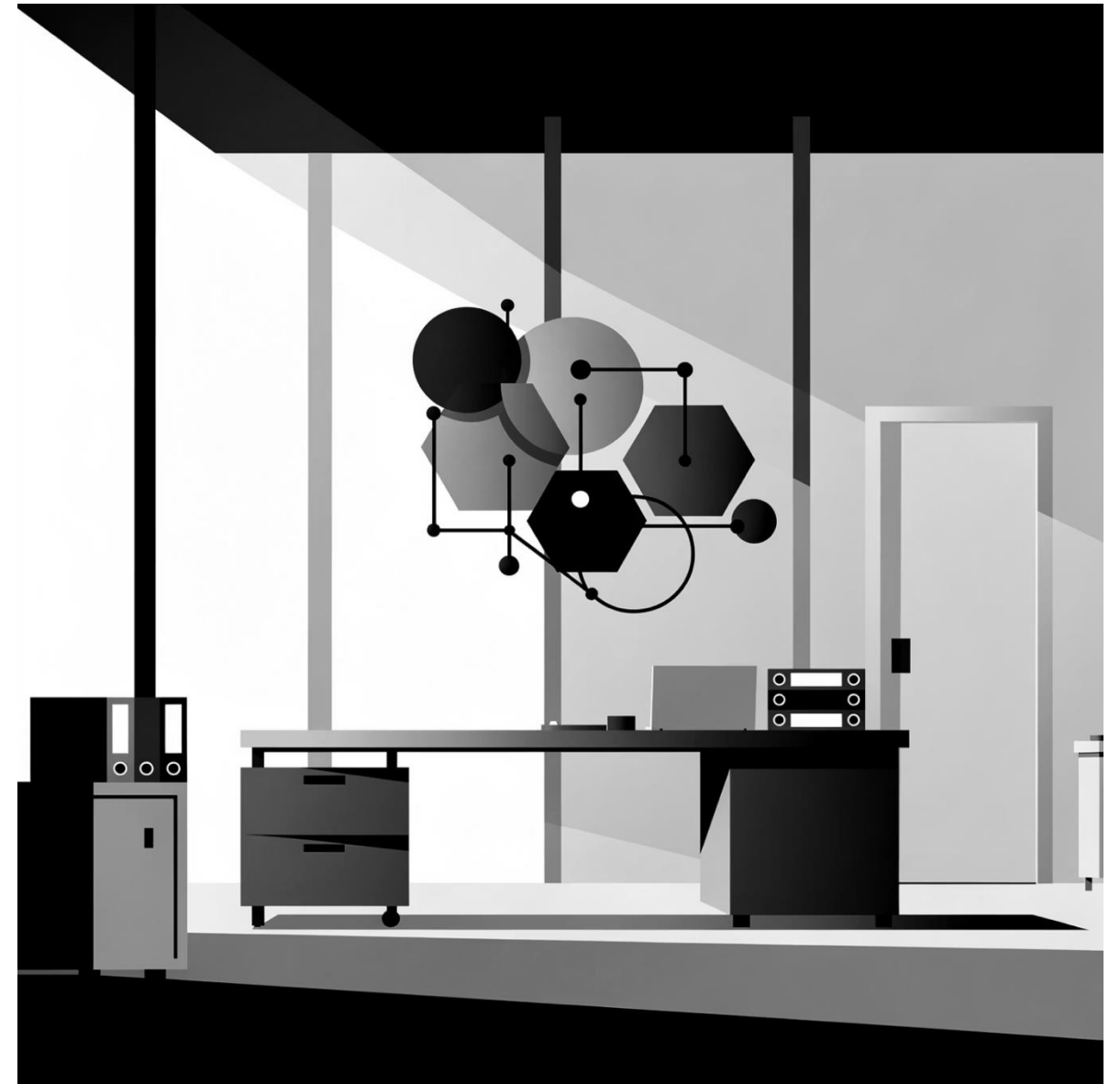
System access limited exclusively to screened Microsoft personnel who are U.S. citizens, ensuring data protection.

Introducing Microsoft 365 Copilot GCC

AI-Powered Government Productivity

Microsoft 365 Copilot for GCC brings artificial intelligence capabilities to government workloads while maintaining the highest security and compliance standards.

- Leverages large language models combined with your organization's secure, isolated data
- Available across GCC, GCC High, and DoD environments
- Requires appropriate licenses such as Microsoft 365 F1, F3, or G3
- Enhances document creation, data analysis, meeting summaries, and communication efficiency
- Maintains full compliance with government security requirements



Microsoft 365 GCC Licensing & Pricing

Build your government cloud stack with the right licenses for your team's needs.



Microsoft 365 GCC G3

\$35 / user / month

- Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, OneNote
- Microsoft Teams (chat, meetings, calling)
- Exchange Online (email & calendar)
- SharePoint Online & OneDrive (1 TB storage)
- Microsoft Forms, Planner, Stream
- Compliance tools: eDiscovery, audit logs, retention policies
- FedRAMP High, CJIS, ITAR compliant
- U.S.-only data residency



Microsoft Defender Suite (Add-on)

\$13 / user / month

- Microsoft Defender for Endpoint (P2)
- Microsoft Defender for Office 365 (P2)
- Microsoft Defender for Identity
- Microsoft Defender for Cloud Apps
- Advanced threat protection & hunting
- Automated investigation & response (AIR)
- Attack surface reduction policies
- Vulnerability management



Microsoft 365 Copilot GCC (Add-on)

\$32 / user / month

- Copilot in Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Teams
- Microsoft 365 Chat (natural language search across all data)
- Meeting summaries & action items in Teams
- AI-assisted document drafting & data analysis
- Secure, isolated to your organization's GCC data
- FedRAMP-compliant AI processing
- Requires M365 G3 base license



Full Stack Total: ~\$80 / user / month — G3 + Defender + Copilot. Volume discounts available through Microsoft-certified Cloud Solution Providers (CSPs). Email only licenses available for \$19

Microsoft 365 Copilot GCC: Key Features in Action

Copilot GCC integrates AI assistance directly into the Microsoft 365 apps your team already uses — all within a FedRAMP-compliant, U.S.-only environment.



Reply to Emails

Drafts context-aware email replies in Outlook, summarizing threads and suggesting professional responses — saving time on high-volume inboxes.



Create Documents

Generates first drafts of reports, memos, and policy documents in Word based on a simple prompt, pulling from your organization's secure data.



Analyze Data

In Excel, Copilot identifies trends, generates formulas, and creates charts from raw data — turning complex datasets into actionable insights.



Build Presentations

Transforms a Word document or prompt into a full PowerPoint presentation with structured slides, speaker notes, and visuals.



Summarize Meetings

In Teams, Copilot captures meeting transcripts, highlights key decisions, and generates action items — so no detail is missed.

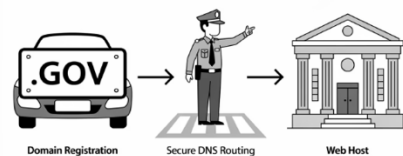
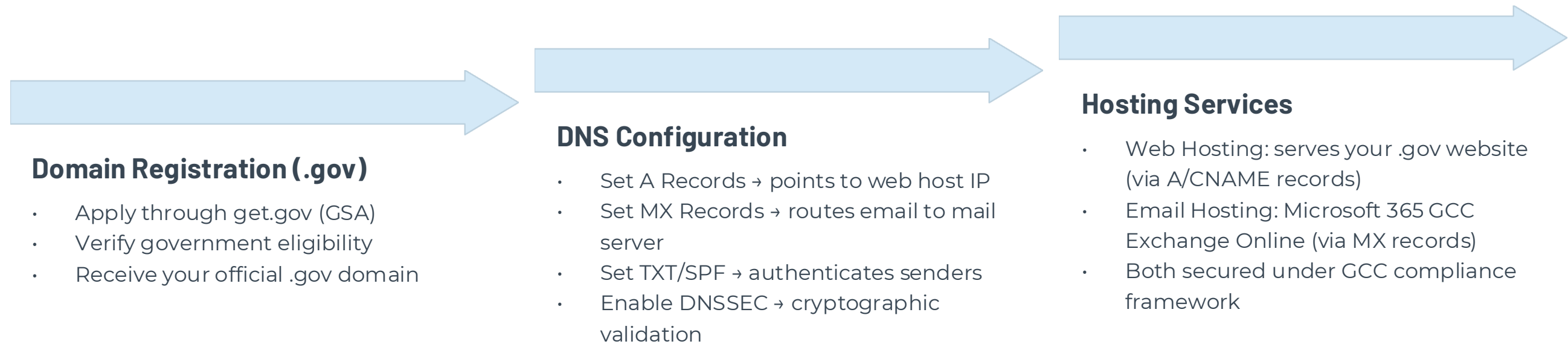


Answer Questions

Microsoft 365 Chat lets staff ask natural language questions across emails, files, and meetings to instantly surface relevant information.



How It All Connects: Registration, DNS & Hosting



Think of Registration as your license plate, Secure **DNS** as traffic cop, and **Hosting** as the actual building that holds your website or email — all three must work together.

Visualizing the Setup: DNS Records for .gov

Proper DNS configuration is the foundation of your .gov domain's security and functionality. Understanding each record type ensures reliable service delivery.



A Records

Point your domain name to your web host's IP address, directing visitors to your government website's physical server location.



MX Records

Direct incoming email traffic to your email host's mail servers, ensuring messages reach the correct destination for processing.



TXT Records (SPF)

Verify authorized email senders to prevent domain spoofing, listing approved IP addresses and mail servers that can send on your behalf.



DNSSEC

Cryptographically sign DNS records to prevent tampering and ensure authenticity, protecting against DNS cache poisoning attacks.



Critical: Incorrect DNS configuration can result in website downtime, lost emails, or security vulnerabilities. Always verify changes in a test environment first.



Importance of a Secure DNS Service for .gov Domains

The Domain Name System (DNS) serves as the internet's directory, translating human-readable domain names into IP addresses. For government entities, DNS security is mission-critical.

Prevents Spoofing & Phishing

Secure DNS prevents malicious actors from redirecting users to fraudulent sites impersonating government services, protecting citizens from scams.

Blocks Man-in-the-Middle Attacks

DNSSEC (DNS Security Extensions) validates DNS responses, ensuring users reach authentic government websites and preventing traffic interception.

Email Authentication

SPF (Sender Policy Framework) and DMARC records validate authorized email senders, preventing spoofed emails that appear to come from your .gov domain.

Email Hosting vs. Web Hosting: What's the Difference?

Email Hosting

Manages the sending, receiving, and storage of email messages for your organization.

- Example: Microsoft Exchange Online in Microsoft 365
- Handles mailbox storage and message routing
- Provides spam filtering and security
- Configured via MX and TXT DNS records

Web Hosting

Stores and serves your website's files, making your .gov site accessible to visitors.

- Hosts HTML, images, and application files
- Delivers content when users visit your domain
- Handles web traffic and page requests
- Configured via A and CNAME DNS records

Both services require proper DNS configuration but serve completely distinct functions. Your .gov website lives on a web server, while your official email operates on a separate email hosting infrastructure.



Real-World Impact: Secure & Compliant Government Cloud

99.9%

Uptime SLA

Microsoft 365 GCC guarantees availability for critical government services

24/7

Security Monitoring

Continuous threat detection and compliance updates protect your data

40%

Productivity Gain

Copilot accelerates government workflows while maintaining security

Agencies using Microsoft 365 GCC benefit from automated compliance updates, advanced threat protection, and seamless productivity tools. Copilot GCC enables AI-assisted document creation and data analysis without compromising sensitive information. Secure DNS implementation prevents costly security breaches and maintains the public's trust in government digital services.

Arkansas Cyber Response Board Standards

The Arkansas Cyber Response Board (ACRB), established under Act 846, sets minimum cybersecurity standards to protect state and local government agencies from evolving cyber threats.



Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)

Enforce MFA across all employees with access to vital systems and services.



Data Backup

Maintain and test offline data backups at least once yearly for critical systems and data storage.



Cybersecurity Awareness Training

Provide regular security training to educate employees on threats and best practices.



Password Standards & Patch Management

Adhere to ACRB password standards and ensure timely system updates and patches.

Summary & Next Steps

Key Takeaways

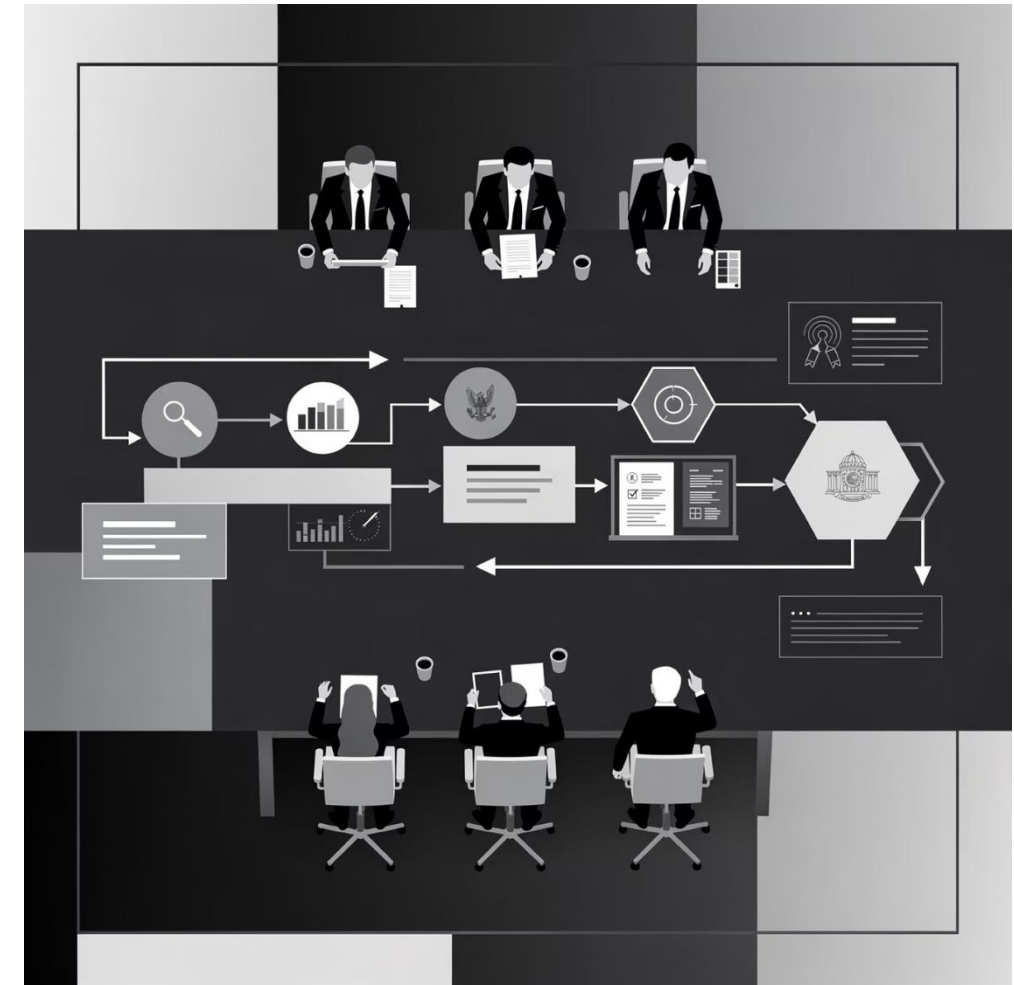
- 1 Establish Your .gov Domain**

Verify eligibility through GSA and complete the application process with proper documentation and authorization.
- 2 Implement Secure Infrastructure**

Configure DNS with DNSSEC, SPF records, and proper A/MX records to protect both web and email services.
- 3 Leverage GCC & Copilot**

Deploy Microsoft 365 GCC for compliant cloud productivity and enable Copilot for AI-powered efficiency.
- 4 Partner with Experts**

Work with certified Cloud Solution Providers for smooth onboarding and ongoing compliance management.



Ready to modernize your government IT?

Start with eligibility verification at get.gov and connect with Microsoft-certified partners for implementation support.

Q&A Time

 DISCUSSION

Thank You

We appreciate your time and interest in securing your .gov domain and leveraging Microsoft 365 GCC and Copilot for enhanced security and productivity. We look forward to partnering with you on your digital transformation journey.

For further inquiries or to schedule a consultation, please contact our team.

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