

A Federal Agency's COVID-19 Contact Tracing and Tracking (CTT) Application

Executive Summary

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, this federal agency needed a way to create an application for COVID-19 contact tracing to help control the spread of the coronavirus. With MindPoint Group's security and cloud modernization expertise, the application received an ATO in record time. The implementation of this tool enabled this agency to track and notify employees of exposure to COVID-19. Contacts at risk of exposure are informed of what symptoms to look for while advising them to isolate and seek medical attention as needed if they start to experience symptoms. This system security provides this federal agency with the ability to increase employee safety and implement the necessary protocols to manage the return to work for its 60,000+ employees.

Challenges and Solutions

The Office of the CFO at this agency was initially looking for a way to modernize some of their existing internal processes that were running on-premise. They aimed to move those functionalities to the cloud but needed to make sure they could do that in an effective yet secure way. It had been determined that Salesforce was one technology component that needed to be onboard to help with these internal processes. Given the sensitivity of that data that needed to migrate to Salesforce, this agency decided to call on MindPoint Group because of their cybersecurity transformation expertise and their understanding of configuration management.

Fast forward just a few weeks from the start of the project, and the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Priorities and resources quickly shifted for the agency, and MindPoint Group was ready and willing to help. Because IT plays such a critical role in federal missions, MindPoint Group shifted gears to support this agency's OCIO, an office they have previously supported. This agency employs thousands of people, many of whom have critical roles within the agency that can't be done remotely.

Customer

A Federal Agency

Industry

Public Sector

List of services, products, and solutions provided

- | Cybersecurity Transformation
- | Cloud Modernization
- | Incident Response
- | Configuration Management

To help control the spread of the virus, they needed to create an application that helped to keep employees safe during these unprecedented times. They wanted to create a COVID-19 contact tracing application that monitored each employee's potential exposure to the virus and could allow those potentially exposed to be easily contacted. Due to the scope of work and the robust capabilities it offers, it was decided that Salesforce was also the best platform to effectively manage employee data for the application.

Before any software can be deployed within a federal agency, it must first go through the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) Risk Management Framework (RMF). This approval process is known as the Authority to Operate (ATO) process and has a reputation as being a painful and lengthy process for all parties involved. Typically, this process is not optional, and obtaining an ATO is a hard requirement for numerous government agencies.

MindPoint Group worked closely with the Salesforce onboarding consulting agency to securely onboard the tools and process to create this new application. Their familiarity with this agency's specific security needs, compliance standards, and security engineering expertise provided valuable insights and actions throughout the entire system build process.

As a part of this process, MindPoint Group helped them and the Salesforce onboarding consultants:

- | Conduct privacy assessments for the agency Privacy Manager
- | Log auditable events and provide extensive documentation for the System of Records Notice (SORN).
- | Decide what data should and should not reside in the system.
- | Integrate the system with the cloud access security broker.
- | Engineer an integration with their existing Splunk instance.
- | Implement security controls.
- | Prepare for Incident Response protocols.

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During the pandemic, the demands and expectations placed on (the agency's) IT infrastructure have been incredibly high, and the threats from external actors remain an ongoing concern. However, with hard work, dedication, and innovation, (the agency's) CIO team has risen to the challenge of keeping our missions moving forward.”

– Agency CIO

Results

The time it takes to get an Authority to Operate (ATO) on a new system for any federal agency has historically taken 3-6 months. Because of MindPoint Group's security-first approach to creating and onboarding this new application, this agency was able to get an ATO in just three weeks.

Because of the quick turnaround time, this agency was able to help control the spread of COVID within their agency, implement more robust safety protocols, and allow employees greater peace of mind when returning to the office. With workforce safety as a top priority, they were even able to onboard new employees seamlessly and securely. This federal agency has also been able to study the data from this application and hope to use it to inform future decisions on the coronavirus.

Because of the successful Salesforce onboarding and creation of the application, MindPoint Group was then able to continue the initial project with the Office of the CFO to help move many of their systems and processes securely to the cloud.

About MindPoint Group

MindPoint Group is a cybersecurity consulting company with proven cybersecurity services for public sector and commercial organizations. MindPoint Group's award-winning services and solutions include penetration testing, security architecture and engineering, incident response, SOC, and security automation. These solutions help customers identify and defend against threats, close security gaps, and manage risk.



We are honored to be chosen to partner with this agency on such a critical project. We were able to provide them with security, privacy, and engineering expertise which informed the system's pragmatic security approach. MindPoint Group continues our eight-year partnership in supporting this agency's missions, providing the agency with security service support on and making the management of lives and the wellbeing of employees during an unprecedented and difficult time."

– Safi Mojidi, Manager at MindPoint Group