



Microsoft 365 GCC Planning Worksheet

For public organizations working out whether Microsoft's Government Community Cloud is the right fit, and what moving to it would involve.

FILLABLE PDF

Type into any field, then save or print a copy.

EDITION

Version 1.1 • September 2026

QUESTIONS?

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Townships, municipalities, courts, and public safety agencies are often told at some point that they should be on a government version of Microsoft 365. Sometimes that is right. Sometimes it is an expensive answer to a question nobody has actually asked yet.

This worksheet helps you work out which situation you are in. It is written for clerks, managers, administrators, and elected officials rather than for technicians.

The most important thing on this page

Moving to a government cloud does not by itself make your organization compliant with CJIS, HIPAA, CMMC, IRS requirements, or anything else. It is one component. How your systems are configured, how people sign in, who is screened, how devices are handled, and what your agency policies say all still matter, and all still have to be dealt with separately.

The words you will hear, and what they actually mean

Tenant

Your organization's own Microsoft 365 space. The thing that would be moving, and the reason this is a project rather than a setting.

GCC (Government Community Cloud)

A separate Microsoft 365 environment for qualifying government organizations. Same broad product, different building, different rules about who holds the keys and where the filing cabinets sit.

Eligibility validation

Microsoft checks that your organization qualifies before you can buy it. You cannot simply order it.

Tenant-to-tenant migration

Moving mailboxes, files, and users from one Microsoft 365 space to another. A house move, not a change of address card.

Feature parity

Whether the government environment has the same capabilities as the ordinary one. It generally does not, or not yet, and that gap is the thing to ask about before committing.

1 What GCC Actually Is

Microsoft runs several versions of Microsoft 365. Most organizations use the ordinary commercial one. Government organizations that qualify can use a separate environment instead.

Version	Broadly who it is for	Worth knowing
Commercial	Everyone else, including many small public bodies	The version most features arrive in first. Perfectly appropriate for a great many government uses.
GCC	US federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial government organizations, and some organizations handling government-controlled information	Content held in the United States, kept logically separate from commercial customers, with access restricted to screened personnel. Eligibility has to be validated.
GCC High and DoD	Organizations with heavier requirements, typically around controlled unclassified information and defense contracting	More restrictive, more expensive, and further behind on features. Rarely the right answer for a township.

The differences that matter in practice are usually not about security features you can see. They are about where content is stored, who at Microsoft can reach it, what commitments Microsoft makes in the contract, and which third-party products will and will not work alongside it.

2 Start With the Requirement, Not the Product

Answer these before looking at any pricing. If none of them produces a clear requirement, you may not need to move at all.

- ☐ Has somebody actually told us we need this, in writing?
An auditor, a state agency, a contract, a grant condition, an insurer, or a partner agency. Write down who and what they said.
- ☐ Does criminal justice information touch our email, files, or devices?
This is the most common genuine driver for public safety agencies.
- ☐ Do we handle federal tax information, and has anyone reviewed what that requires?
- ☐ Do we handle health information under HIPAA anywhere in the organization?
- ☐ Do we hold controlled unclassified information under any federal contract or grant?
- ☐ Is the requirement really about the cloud, or about how we are configured?
Many findings that get answered with 'move to GCC' are actually about sign-in protection, encryption, screening, or training, none of which the cloud choice fixes on its own.
- ☐ Would a mixed approach work, where only the part of the organization with the requirement moves?



Who told us we need this

What exactly they said

Which information triggers the requirement

Which departments or people it touches

3 Who and What Would Move

Department or group	How many people	What they use it for	Must move?

Total users today

Users that would move

Users that would stay

Shared mailboxes and generic accounts

Elected or volunteer users, if any

4 What Would Have to Come With You

This is where most of the real work and most of the surprises live. Go through everything that currently touches your email and files.

- ☐ Existing mailboxes, and how much history has to move.
- ☐ Files, shared folders, and anything staff have saved into personal areas.
- ☐ Calendars, shared calendars, and meeting-room bookings.



- ☐ Anything that sends email automatically.
Scanners, alarm systems, agenda software, utility billing, permit systems, and the copier. These are always forgotten and always break.
- ☐ Line-of-business software that connects to Microsoft 365.
Check with each supplier specifically. Not every product supports the government environments, and some support them differently.
- ☐ Any add-in, plug-in, or integration people rely on day to day.
- ☐ Records retention or archiving arrangements.
- ☐ Phone system or voicemail integration, if it uses Microsoft 365.
- ☐ Anything a partner agency or shared service depends on.

Moving is a migration, not a switch

You generally cannot convert a commercial Microsoft 365 organization into a government one. It is a move from one to the other, with mailboxes and files migrated across, users re-set-up, and devices re-pointed. Plan it as a project with a schedule, a cutover, and a period where both exist.

5 Questions to Put to Microsoft or Your Partner

- ☐ Do we actually qualify, and what evidence is needed to validate eligibility?
- ☐ Which plan levels are available to us, and what do they include?
- ☐ What does it cost per user, and how does that compare with what we pay now?
- ☐ Which features we currently use are unavailable or delayed in this environment?
- ☐ Which of our existing suppliers and integrations are supported?
- ☐ How would the migration work, how long would it take, and what happens during cutover?
- ☐ What contractual commitments come with it, and are they the ones our auditor is asking about?
- ☐ How is support different, and who do we call?
- ☐ What would it take to move back, if we needed to?



6 Decision Record

Requirement driving this

Option chosen

Estimated cost per year

Estimated migration effort

Approved by

Date

Next review

Reasoning, in case somebody asks in two years

About this worksheet

This is general planning guidance for public organizations, not legal, procurement, or compliance advice. Microsoft's government offerings, eligibility rules, plan contents, and pricing change over time, and the current details should be confirmed against Microsoft's own published service descriptions and eligibility guidance, which are linked from the Computer Ties IT Resource Center. Use of a government cloud environment does not by itself establish compliance with CJIS, CMMC, HIPAA, IRS Publication 1075, or any other framework. Requirements applying to your agency should be confirmed with the appropriate authority.

Working out whether you need this?

Computer Ties supports Microsoft 365 for townships, municipalities, courts, and public safety agencies across southern Michigan. We can help you identify what the actual requirement is, whether a government environment is the right answer to it, and what a move would involve in practice. Sometimes the honest answer is that you do not need to move, and we will tell you that.

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