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VA Developer Starter Guide

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Platforms initiative overview



Introduction

The software development platforms initiative was created to improve your team's software development experience at OIT across four key dimensions:

1. **Security:** Comprehensive and automated security checks are included in each approved software development platform. Platforms also enable your team to easily attain / maintain an Authority To Operate, and comply with VA security standards.
2. **Quality:** Software development platforms improve quality of custom development for developers and end-users by improving the accessibility of

modern tools and cloud hosting environments. Platforms also automate quality testing (e.g., code smells, unit testing libraries) and accessibility testing to ensure production code is of the highest quality, with little input from your team.

3. **Maintenance:** Platforms provide access to modern observability, logging, and dashboarding tools, enabling your team to track application performance without any additional setup. Platforms also guarantee uptime and provide dedicated incident response resources.
4. **Velocity:** By automating a substantial portion of the software development process, platforms enable your teams to quickly develop high-quality, compliant, and modern custom applications, without the need to manually set up environments, quality checks, and processes.

At an OIT-wide level, platforms will also help drive greater levels of standardization by encouraging developers to use the most modern technologies and frameworks available. Eventually, this will enable greater degrees of collaboration between teams and reusability of previous development efforts.

For detailed information on basic platform capabilities, please read the [platform capabilities section](#).

Current Certified platforms

Four platforms have been certified for use at OIT; click on the getting started links below to learn more about supported languages, onboarding processes, relevant points of contact, and detailed documentation for each.

Platform	Description	Get started
Benefits Integration Platform (BIP)	Limited to products in the Benefits and Memorials (BAM) portfolio; supports all languages and frameworks; provides several BAM-specific features	Get started with BIP
Lighthouse Delivery	Supports all languages and	Get started

Platform	Description	Get started
Infrastructure (LHDI)	frameworks; targeted towards API development	with LHDI
VA.gov	Supports front-end development only; targeted towards teams developing Veteran-Facing Services (VFS)	Get started with VA.gov
VA Platform One (VAPO)	Supports all languages and frameworks	Get started with VAPO

Platform capabilities

At a minimum, each certified software development platform provides (or plans to provide) support for the following features and services.

Features

An overview of required features for platform certification is listed below.

Category	Description (non-comprehensive)
Quality	Automated code quality scans; automated unit / integration / regression / end-to-end testing; shared testing libraries; automated performance and chaos testing; accessibility scanning
Security	Encryption services (at rest and in transit); access determination; immutable deployments; automated secrets scanning; compliant tools for secrets storage, transmission, and usage;

Category	Description (non-comprehensive)
	automated software bill of materials; static and dynamic application security testing
Monitoring	Comprehensive observability tools across security, monitoring, and logging; incident response protocols and tools

Services

At a minimum, platforms provide dedicated personnel and self-service documentation to provision and setup resources for your team. A majority of platforms also provide an additional live support for major incident response, platform team office hours, and informal internal developer communities for collaboration.