

Modernizing Local Government Clerks' Department 2023

Comprehensive eBook for Municipal & County Clerks
2023



The Operating System for Local Government

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Summary

| Streamlining Workflows with Digital Tools

Technology can help municipal clerks simplify and automate their day-to-day tasks. This chapter will cover topics such as electronic document management, online forms, and [workflow automation](#) tools.

| Increasing Efficiency

By using a cloud-based platform, Municipal Clerks can increase their efficiency and reduce costs. For example, they can use GovPilot's GIS mapping tools to manage and analyze property data more efficiently, or use an integrated online payment system to collect fees and fines more quickly.

| Data Management Best Practices

Municipal and county clerks have a responsibility to effectively manage and protect the sensitive data that they handle on a daily basis. In this chapter we'll cover topics such as data security, data backup and recovery, and compliance with data privacy regulations.

| Improving Citizen Engagement

Municipal and county clerks can use digital tools to better engage with residents. In this chapter learn how modern technology can enable online public meetings, communication via social media outreach, and mobile apps for civic engagement.

| Navigating Legal and Regulatory Compliance

Municipal and county Clerks must stay compliant with a range of legal and regulatory requirements, such as open records laws, code enforcement regulations, and election laws. A cloud-based platform provides the tools and resources needed to manage these requirements more easily and effectively, eliminating the need for cumbersome paper-based filing and storage.

| Onboarding Government Technology

Modern government management software has many advantages. With it your Clerks' Department can do more with less. Increase efficiency, productivity and transparency. Save hours every day while eliminating manual paper based processes. While it might seem overwhelming to adopt and onboard new technology - a cloud-based platform like GovPilot can actually be straightforward to implement.

Chapter 1: Streamlining Workflows with Digital Tools

As Municipal Clerks, you are responsible for a wide range of tasks, from managing documents and records to processing applications and licenses. These tasks can be time-consuming and prone to errors, which can lead to delays, frustration, and even legal issues. However, by using digital tools like GovPilot, you can streamline your workflows and reduce the burden of manual tasks.

Electronic Document Management

One of the primary ways that GovPilot can help Municipal Clerks streamline their workflows is through electronic document management. As the GovPilot blog notes, “electronic document management can help Municipal Clerks manage their workload, reduce the risk of lost or misplaced documents, and speed up processing times.” With GovPilot’s document management system, you can store, search, and retrieve documents more efficiently, reducing the time and effort required to manage paperwork.

Workflow Automation

Another way that GovPilot can help Municipal Clerks streamline their workflows is through workflow automation. As the GovPilot blog explains, “workflow automation can help Municipal Clerks reduce the amount of time and effort required to complete routine tasks, such as processing permit applications or managing code enforcement cases.” By automating repetitive tasks, you can free up your time to focus on more complex and high-value work.

Online Forms

GovPilot also offers a range of online forms that can help Municipal Clerks streamline their workflows. Online forms can help Municipal Clerks collect and process information more quickly and accurately, and reduce the amount of time and effort required to manage paper-based forms. By using online forms for tasks like permit applications, code enforcement complaints, or [public records requests](#), you can reduce the burden of manual data entry and processing.

Mobile Tools

Finally, GovPilot offers mobile tools that can help Municipal Clerks manage their workflows on the go. As the GovPilot blog notes, “mobile tools can help Municipal Clerks access information, update records, and communicate with constituents from anywhere, at any time.” With GovPilot’s mobile app, you can stay connected to your work even when you’re out of the office, improving your productivity and responsiveness.

Conclusion

By using digital tools like GovPilot, Municipal Clerks can streamline their workflows and reduce the time consuming burden of manual tasks. Whether you’re managing documents, automating workflows, using online forms, or accessing your work on the go, GovPilot offers a range of tools and resources that can help you work more efficiently and effectively.



Chapter 2: Increasing Efficiency

As the responsibilities of Municipal Clerks continue to expand, the need for efficient and effective management tools becomes increasingly important. Government management software can help Municipal Clerks manage their day-to-day operations, streamline workflows, and increase efficiency. In doing so, Clerks save hours of time and replace paper processes with end-to-end digital workflows. Here are some ways that government management software can help Municipal Clerks increase efficiency:

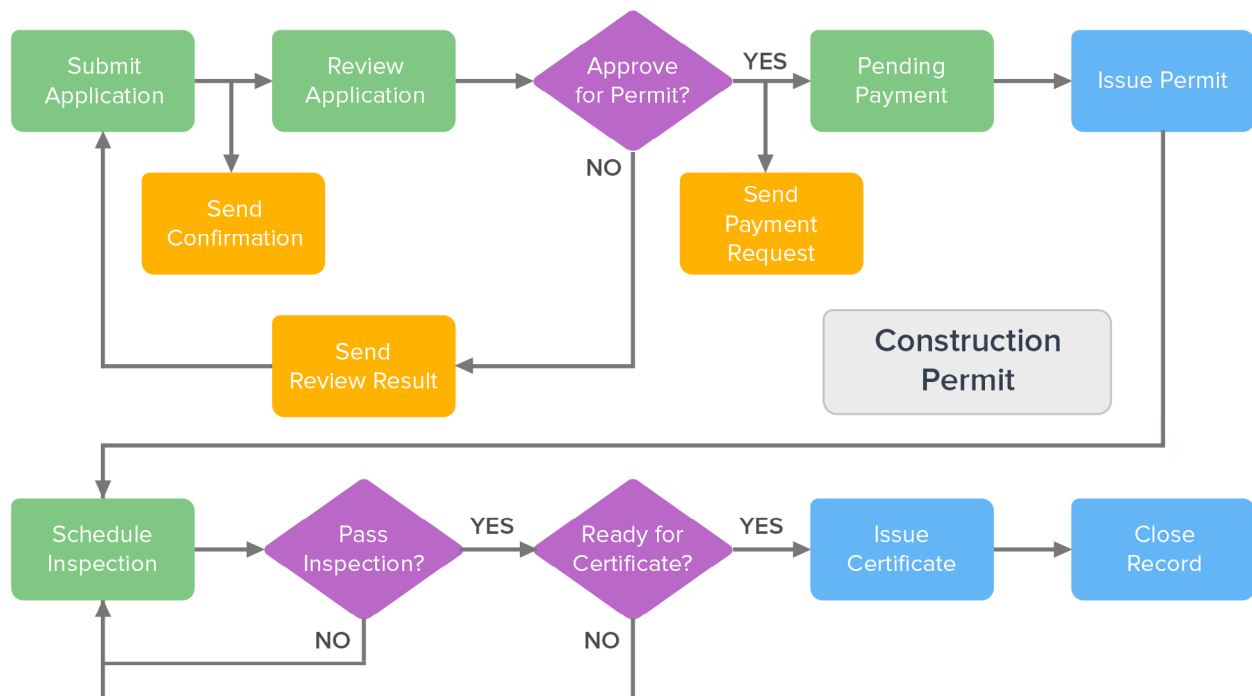
Automating Processes

One of the primary benefits of government management software is the ability to automate processes. Automating processes can reduce the amount of time and resources required to complete tasks, while also reducing errors and improving accuracy. End-to-end digital forms enable Clerks departments to eliminate PDFs and paper processes. This means you can say goodbye to incomplete form submissions, illegible handwriting, and the need to manually re-enter data into a spreadsheet or single-use software program.

With government management software, Municipal Clerks can automate processes such as permit approvals, [business registrations](#), pet licensing, [and public record requests](#), freeing up time for more important tasks and initiatives.

Centralizing Data

Modern, cloud-based government management software can help Municipal Clerks centralize and unify data, making it easier to access and manage. Centralizing data can help Municipal Clerks avoid duplication of efforts, improve com-



munication, and increase transparency. With government management software, Municipal Clerks can manage all data related to applications, permits, licenses, and more in one central location, reducing the need for manual data entry and minimizing the risk of errors.

Enhancing Communication

Effective communication is essential for Municipal Clerks, and government management software can help improve communication both internally and externally. By unifying cross-departmental data on one platform, cloud-based government management software can facilitate communication among team members, track tasks and deadlines, and improve collaboration and transparency. With government management software, Municipal Clerks can communicate more effectively with their colleagues and other departments, providing updates and responding to resident inquiries faster and more efficiently and effectively.

Improving Reporting

Government management software can also help Municipal Clerks improve reporting, providing access to real-time data and analytics. Government management software can provide data visualizations and instant, professionally formatted reports that make it easier to analyze and act on data. With government management software, Municipal Clerks can generate reports on the status of permits, licenses, code enforcement violations, and more, making it easier to track progress and identify areas for improvement.

Increasing Accessibility

Finally, government management software can increase accessibility, making it easier for constituents to access information and services. Government management software can provide the ability for citizens to access public information, pay fees, and submit requests. With govern-

ment management software, Municipal Clerks can provide a more user-friendly, efficient, and transparent experience for constituents while reducing the burden of manual processing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, government management software can help Municipal Clerks increase efficiency by automating processes, centralizing data, enhancing communication, improving reporting, and increasing accessibility. By using these tools, Municipal Clerks can improve their productivity, reduce errors, and provide better service to their constituents.



Chapter 3:

Data Management Best Practices for Municipal Clerks

In today's data-driven world, Municipal Clerks need to manage and maintain large amounts of records and data. To effectively manage and store this data, Municipal Clerks must follow best practices that ensure records are accurate, secure, and easily accessible. Here are some data management best practices for Municipal Clerks:

Collect and Store Data in a Centralized Location

Collecting and storing data in a cloud-based digital environment enables Clerks' departments to unify data across the entire government. This makes it possible for colleagues in other departments to access information in just a click rather than a time consuming walk down the hall or email. By unifying data local government staff are able to avoid duplication of efforts, reduce errors, and improve communication. With a cloud-based centralized database, municipal clerks can easily access and manage data, reducing the need for manual data entry and minimizing the risk of errors and incomplete information from constituents.

Maintain Data Quality

To ensure data is accurate and reliable, Municipal Clerks must maintain data quality. Data quality is essential for effective decision-making and efficient operations. Municipal Clerks should establish data quality standards, conduct regular audits, and implement processes to correct errors and inconsistencies.

Secure Data

Data security is a critical concern for Municipal Clerks. Data breaches can result in significant financial and reputational damage. Municipal Clerks must implement robust security measures to protect sensitive data from unauthorized access, theft, or loss. This includes using firewalls, encryption, access controls, and regular backups.

Similarly, paper-based records are often stored in filing cabinets and storage rooms in government buildings. Of-

ten, these documents have no copies offsite, and risk being destroyed in the event of a fire, flood, or other disaster. This of course would be a major problem for a local government. A cloud-based government management platform keeps records and data secure and easily accessible.

Benefits for Clerks' Departments Using Government Management Software

Moving to the cloud to store your local government data and documentation comes with countless benefits including the ability to vastly improve your business continuity.

1. Simplified uploading of all existing records to the government cloud

When you onboard GovPilot, onboarding specialists will assist in uploading all of your existing records that are stored in either on-site systems or filing cabinets to the cybersecure government platform powered by [Microsoft Azure](#). From then forward, all government records (both new and existing) will be accessible to government officials in a few clicks.

2. Regular data backups

Governments are increasingly at risk of losing their data with increasing [ransomware attacks](#), other types of data breaches targeting local governments, and natural disasters. Now, even if a breach, storm, or other emergency occurs, all of your government data will be secure and remain accessible to your locality.

3. Easy open record request management

Citizens can apply for [open record request](#) directly from your government website. Popular document types can be automatically emailed to citizens, and for more specific requests, government officials can find the document and submit it virtually in moments. Fees can be collected via a [credit card integration](#) for each request.

4. Cybersecurity

Local governments have become hot targets for hackers due to their antiquated technology like on-site servers and easy susceptibility to phishing scams and other hacking tactics many government officials aren't trained on. GovPilot is operating on the [Microsoft Government Cloud](#) and offers [government cybersecurity training](#) as a part of onboarding to ensure your local government is secure.

5. Business Continuity through natural disasters & emergencies

If you're still using physical servers or paper-based filing, your local government is at risk of losing thousands of critical documents to a flood, fire, tornado, landslide, or other disaster. Instead, the cloud - which backs up records every 15-minutes and has geographic redundancy - ensures that critical data won't be lost. Furthermore, a cloud-based platform enables staff to access records and work from anywhere with a WiFi connection, meaning your government will be able to operate and continue to provide services no matter the circumstances. Learn more about mitigating natural disasters:

- [Disaster Management Strategy](#)
- [Flooding Mitigation Strategy](#)
- [Wildfire Mitigation Strategy](#)
- [Landslide Mitigation Strategy](#)
- [Tornado Mitigation Strategy](#)
- [Building Disaster Resilient Infrastructure at the Local Level](#)

Regular Data Backup

With cloud-based government management software, regular data backups are a critical feature which protects against data loss. GovPilot utilizes the Microsoft Azure cloud and automatically backs up customer data every 15 minutes so you can be sure that records and data are recoverable at all times should the worst happen. Data backups help Municipal Clerks quickly recover from a data loss event, minimizing disruption to operations.

Monitor Data Usage

Municipal Clerks should monitor data usage to ensure that data is being used appropriately and in compliance with data privacy regulations. This includes monitoring access logs, conducting regular audits, and implementing access controls to restrict access to sensitive data.

Provide Training to Staff

Finally, Municipal Clerks should provide training to staff on data management and cybersecurity best practices. Staff training can help ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities and is aware of the importance of data quality, security, and privacy. This includes providing training on data entry, data quality, security protocols, and privacy regulations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, data management is an essential function for Municipal Clerks, and following best practices is critical to ensuring data accuracy, security, and accessibility. By following these best practices, Municipal Clerks can maintain the quality of their data and protect sensitive information, while also providing better service to their constituents.

Chapter 4:

Using Digital Tools to Better Engage with Constituents

Municipal Clerks play a critical role in engaging with their constituents, but traditional methods of engagement, such as in-person meetings and phone calls, can be time-consuming and challenging to manage. Fortunately, digital tools offer new opportunities to engage with constituents in more efficient and effective ways. Here are some ways that Municipal Clerks can use digital tools to better engage with their constituents and make their work easier in the process.

[What Can Your Local Government Learn From Private-Sector Partners? Read on to find out](#)

Streamlining Citizen Services in the Clerks' Department

Every clerks' department has direct communication with citizens every day, especially when it comes to accepting various applications or document requests. Yet, far too many local governments have slow-moving, inefficient constituent services that negatively impact citizen-government communications, decrease the number of submitted applications for licenses, permits, business registration, etc., and cost your locality far too much in time and money.

Streamlining your citizen services with government technology is a win-win for everyone involved. Constituents accustomed to the convenience of Uber and DoorDash can skip the drive to the clerk's office and finally file their forms online. Your locality will automate tasks that previously consumed man hours and save time and money while doing so.

Online Forms Service Requests

Online Service Requests provide constituents with a convenient and easy-to-use platform for submitting requests and inquiries. For a Clerks' office this might include business registration applications, [construction permit applications](#), [pet licenses](#), or general inquiries about a resident's voting district. By providing an online service request system, [Municipal Clerks Department software](#) can allow con-

stituents submit service requests digitally and track the status of their requests in real-time, increasing transparency and improving communication.

Making constituents pack up relevant documentation, drive to the relevant government department, and fill out forms in-person is antiquated. Allow them to file paperwork directly from your government website to:

- **Allow constituents to file 24/7, 365**
Instead of just during office hours.
- **Increase form completions**
Governments consistently report increased completion rates when applications are moved online.
- **Automated back-up of applications**
Paperwork is stored in the cloud in real time, preventing any chance of a lost submission.
- **Time savings for government workers**
No longer will man hours be spent assisting constituents with their applications and filing the paperwork. Filing online is simple and the documents are automatically stored and accessible to relevant government officials.
- **Online approval / denial**
If a constituent's application is approved or denied by a government official, they'll be sent an online notification on the status of their document. If denied, they'll be informed on why and able to resubmit their application online.

24/7 Filing From Anywhere

If you're still using paper forms for permit applications, constituents have no choice but to gather relevant files and drive to the relevant department during office hours. With permitting software, they'll be able to file permit applications from anywhere at any time via a phone or laptop, making the process more efficient and increasing application completion rates as a whole.

Completed Applications

With digital forms, you can make specific - or all - data fields required. This means that you will be sure that forms that are submitted will contain all of the information or data necessary for your staff to process the submission. No more illegible handwriting, or having to call or email an applicant to ask about missing information.

Online Forms enable Clerks Departments to drastically reduce the number of emails, phone calls, and walk-ins they receive from constituents which are time consuming and extremely inefficient to process and track. In short, digital forms save Clerks hours of work every day and provide the digital convenience that constituents have come to expect in our modern online world.

Streamline Payments & Generate Revenue

The easiest way to streamline this essential constituent service is to allow constituents to make payments from your government website. With GovPilot, you'll have the option to choose from an array of available credit card processing integrations, from organizations like authorize.net, CardX, Elavon, and 9 other top options that allow citizens to pay application fees in seconds.

Learn more about fee and fine collection best practices in our guide, [How to Collect Fees and Fines Online as a Local Government](#).

Social Media

Social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, offer Municipal Clerks an opportunity to engage with their constituents on a more personal level. Social media allows Municipal Clerks to share important updates, answer questions, and engage with constituents in real-time. By leveraging social media, Municipal Clerks can quickly respond to constituents' inquiries and provide timely updates on community events and services.

Whether you like it or not, your constituents are active on social media and have grown accustomed to following public officials and departments for regular updates (see: [@POTUS](#) and [@NJGov](#) on Twitter.) Getting elected officials and the government departments active on social media is a great way to boost your reputation, promote positive things happening in your community, and inform constituents of important news like an emergency situation.

For more insight into running local government social media accounts on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and NextDoor, read on in the [Local Government Social Media Strategy](#) guide.



Email Newsletters

Email newsletters are an effective way to keep constituents informed about important news and events. Email newsletters are an easy and cost-effective way to reach a large audience. By regularly sending out email newsletters, Municipal Clerks can keep constituents informed about upcoming events, changes in services, and other important updates.

Mobile Apps

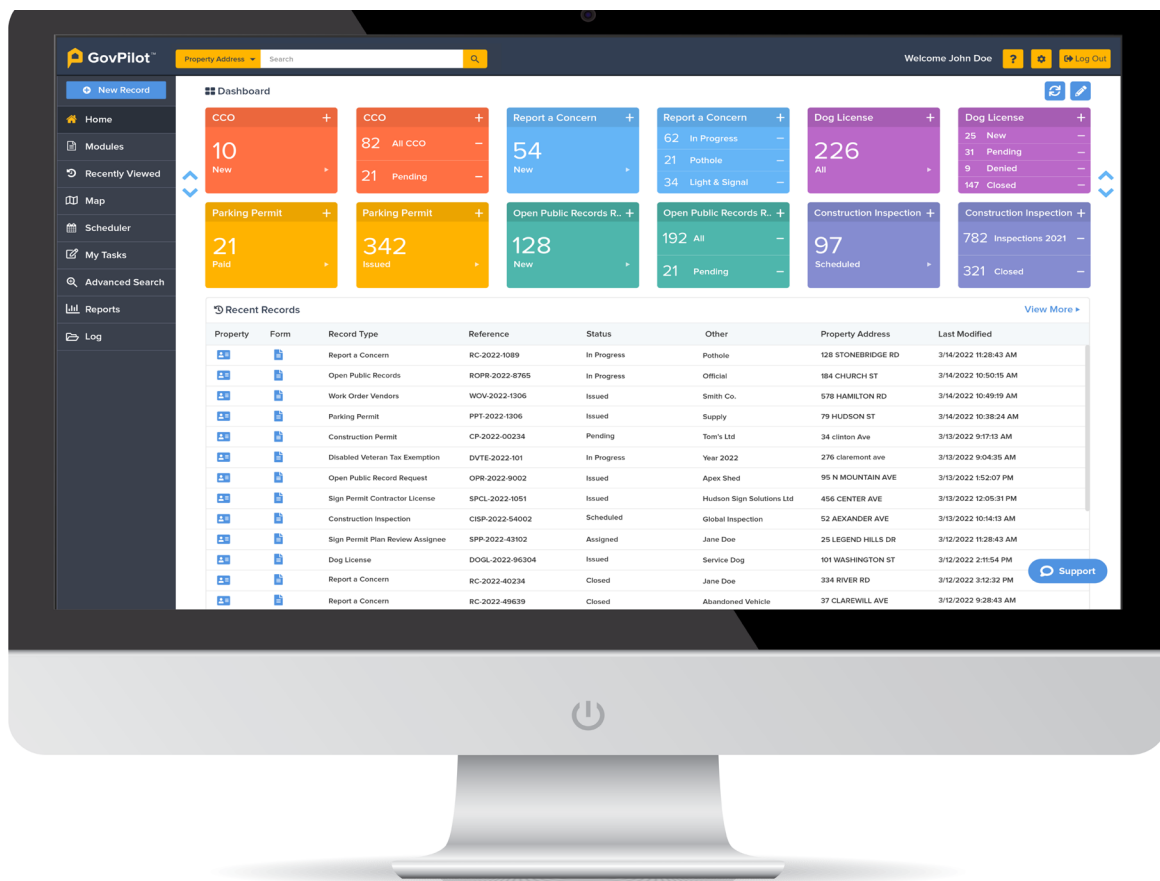
Mobile apps offer Municipal Clerks an opportunity to engage with constituents on the go. Mobile apps such as [GovPilot's GovAlert app](#) allow constituents to access important information and services from their smartphones and tablets. By providing a mobile app local governments can allow constituents to report non-emergency concerns and access information about community services, and other important information from anywhere, at any time.

Virtual Meetings

Virtual meetings offer Municipal Clerks an opportunity to engage with constituents remotely. Virtual meetings can save time and reduce costs associated with in-person meetings. By leveraging video conferencing tools, Municipal Clerks can conduct meetings with constituents from anywhere, reducing the need for travel and providing greater flexibility for participants.

Conclusion

In conclusion, digital tools offer new opportunities for Municipal Clerks to engage with their constituents in more efficient and effective ways. By leveraging online service requests, social media, email newsletters, mobile apps, and virtual meetings, Municipal Clerks can improve communication and transparency, save hours of work every week, provide better service to constituents, and build stronger relationships with their communities.



Chapter 5:

Navigating Legal and Regulatory Compliance with GovPilot

As a municipal clerk, you are responsible for ensuring that your municipality complies with all legal and regulatory requirements. This can be a daunting task, especially with the ever-changing landscape of laws and regulations. However, with GovPilot, navigating legal and regulatory compliance has never been easier.

In this chapter, we will discuss how GovPilot can help you navigate legal and regulatory compliance and ensure that your municipality is always up-to-date with the latest laws and regulations.

Streamlined Permitting Process

One of the most significant challenges of regulatory compliance is navigating the permitting process. With GovPilot, you can streamline the permitting process by automating many of the steps involved in the process. This includes the creation and submission of applications, the review and approval process, and the issuance of permits.

GovPilot's permit management system allows you to track the progress of applications, set reminders for deadlines, and generate reports to keep you informed about the status of permits in your municipality.

Comprehensive Code Enforcement

Another area where GovPilot can help you navigate legal and regulatory compliance is with code enforcement. GovPilot's code enforcement module allows you to manage and enforce your municipality's building, zoning, and health codes. The system enables you to track complaints, schedule inspections, and assign tasks to inspectors. You can also generate reports to monitor the progress of code enforcement efforts and ensure that your municipality is in compliance with all applicable codes and regulations.

Real-Time Data and Analytics

One of the most valuable features of GovPilot is its ability to provide real-time data and analytics. The system allows you to collect data from various sources, including online forms,

GovPilot's analytics capabilities allow you to generate reports and visualizations that help you identify trends, monitor performance, and make informed decisions. This data can also help you identify areas of your municipality that may be out of compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

Compliance Audits

Finally, GovPilot can help you prepare for compliance audits by providing you with the tools you need to manage documentation and evidence. The system allows you to store documents, track deadlines, and generate reports to demonstrate compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. By using GovPilot, you can reduce the time and resources required to prepare for compliance audits, as well as improve your municipality's compliance posture.

Conclusion

Navigating legal and regulatory compliance can be a complex and time-consuming process for municipal clerks. However, with GovPilot, you can streamline the process and ensure that your municipality is always in compliance with the latest laws and regulations.

GovPilot's permit management system, code enforcement module, real-time data and analytics, and compliance audit tools are just a few of the features that make it an essential tool for municipal clerks. By using GovPilot, you can improve efficiency, reduce costs, and ensure that your municipality is always in compliance.

Chapter 6: Onboarding Government Technology

How to Onboard Government Tech in the Clerks' Department

At this point, the idea of bringing digital transformation to your clerk's department sounds exciting. In addition to saving your local government and citizens time to manage workflows, you'll save countless hours previously spent on time-consuming manual tasks. Yet, despite all of these proven benefits, there's a fear in the back of your mind about changing the status quo in your county or municipality and making the transition to government software.

What will happen to our thousands (if not hundreds of thousands) of paper records? What will the local government staff that's accustomed to the old fashioned way think? These are completely reasonable questions most government leadership consider when deciding whether or not to go digital.

Luckily, making the transition to government software in the clerks' department isn't as challenging as it might seem, and the benefits far outweigh the upfront challenges in making the switch to the cloud. With GovPilot, Onboarding Project Managers will be there to help you every step of the way. Here is how the process works.

Why is Onboarding Government Software Worth It?

If you've made it this far, you're probably seriously considering onboarding [government software](#) into one or more of your local government departments. Good thinking! There are countless benefits that will positively impact your staff and citizens by embracing modern technology.

At a high-level, the largest benefits are **thousands of hours and dollars saved every year via the automation of administrative tasks.**

How to Prepare for Onboarding Government Software?

Making the transition to government software is straightforward, especially if you take the proper steps in advance of your onboarding process.

Here are key actions government leadership can take to prepare for onboarding:

1. Communicate With Your Government Staff

You may fear that there will be backlash from your administrative staff for switching up workflows that have been standard for decades. Yet, even the more hesitant government officials have come to love the benefits of government software when they realize that it handles the most tedious components of their job.

Give your team a heads up well in advance of your onboarding start date, and be sure to address their questions and reiterate the many benefits to making a digital transformation.

Pro Tip

Communicate with potential new hires about the advantages of your government technology. The best candidates will want to spend their time thinking big and solving problems, so letting them know the most mundane, manual tasks will be automated can be a major plus. Learn more about [Public Sector Recruitment](#) and [Key Benefits to Offer Government Workers](#).

2. Get Paper Records Organized

If your clerks' department is still using paper-based filing, you've likely got thousands of documents filed in various cabinets. If you are looking to adopt GovPilot our team is capable of easily importing data from previous digital systems or excel spreadsheets. If paper records are critical to carry over to GovPilot they can be attached to digital records once they have been scanned by our new customer or brought over from Laserfiche.

3. Inform the Public

Businesses and citizens alike are accustomed to the status quo for filing applications in-person. Notify them of the upcoming change and timeframe via your [government social media](#), website, and notification channels so that they're fully aware when they will be able to start submitting paperwork and make payments online.



How Does the Onboarding Process Work?

Once you make the decision to embrace government software, there's a standard procedure for getting your local government fully digitized.

Here are the usual steps to move you away from paper filing or on site computer systems into the government cloud:

1. Decide which technology you want to adopt in your clerks' department

GovPilot offers 125+ modules for every government department to take advantage of. Choosing an Unlimited plan will allow you to take advantage of [government software in every department](#) for document storage, application submissions, inspections, and other common government workflows.

If you're not ready to make the switch to full digital governance, government leadership will need to decide which government tasks to digitize. You can start with the Essentials (5 modules), Professional (10 modules), or Enterprise (20 modules) plan to see the power of government automation in key clerks' department workflows. Keep in mind, you can always scale up once you see the benefits in a few departments!

2. Get existing resources uploaded to the cloud

An Onboarding Project Manager will assist in getting all of your existing physical and digital records uploaded to the cloud for easy access.

3. Train your staff

From day one, your Onboarding Project Managers will work with the government staff to get acclimated to the platform and reap the full benefits of the technology. Government officials have reported feeling comfortable

with the technology in just one day, and are typically fully onboarded within 6 weeks or less.

Your government staff will be educated on the cybersecurity best practices to keep your data safe and secure. Learn more about how we [Train Local Government Workers on Cybersecurity](#).

4. Create dashboards and Generate reports

In addition to training your staff, Onboarding Project Managers will work with government leadership to recognize the key KPIs for your department, as well as metrics to track. Staff can set up tiles in their dashboard to personalize the way records and their status are displayed.

Use sorting functions to organize data sets quickly and easily in order to generate professionally formatted reports in mere seconds. Bring these reports into your next meeting to discuss data, results, and progress.

5. Live support

Once onboarding is complete, [award-winning](#) GovPilot Live Support Team and dedicated Account Managers will be on call to assist with whatever questions or needs arise via live chat, email, or phone.

Make Your Government Digital Transformation

With the ability to integrate local government software to your county or municipal clerks' department in just several weeks, the pros far outweigh the cons of embracing government technology. Take the proper steps to educate your staff and citizens, give consideration to the departments you want to move to the cloud, and work with your Onboarding Project Managers to make a smooth transition to automation of your most tedious, time consuming responsibilities.

For more details about how GovPilot can transform your government, [book a free demo](#).



Chapter 7: Successful Clerks' Department Digital Transformation: OPRA / FOIA

Explore this helpful case study for insight into how North Bergen, NJ digitized their Open Records Request process.

Challenge

As a large town, North Bergen receives 60 - 120+ Open Records Requests per month. The Clerk's Department faced difficulty ensuring that OPRA requests were processed in a timely manner. Prior to GovPilot, North Bergen relied on a manual process including paper forms, hand written transposing of information, and follow up phone calls. This often left the Clerk's Office overwhelmed by paperwork and struggling to process requests within the state mandated seven business day time period.

"It was all a lot of paper. Before GovPilot it was a paper trail." Said Head Clerk, Erin Barillas. OPRA requests were often received via email or fax, which then had to be printed out, and transposed by hand into the Clerk's Department paper log book. The request was then faxed, or scanned and emailed to the relevant department. That department would then fax or email the response to the Clerk's Department, which in turn had the requestor come to the office to pick it up, or faxed or emailed the response on to the requestor.

This led to a backlog in the processing of OPRA requests, which often meant a difficulty in the department to fulfill requests within the state-mandated seven business day requirement.

Solution

The North Bergen Clerk Department adopted GovPilot to digitize their OPRA request, processing, delivery, and filing processes. With GovPilot, the paper processes and manual tasks which once made the OPRA process cumbersome and time consuming, have been digitized and streamlined.

The staff now saves hours per day and no longer operates with a backlog of OPRA's to process. Records are stored digitally and are easily searchable in a matter of clicks, rather than filed away in the basement.

Requests are fulfilled quickly via email, unless an in office pick up is arranged.

Results

No Backlog

Eliminated, and now operates without a backlog of pending OPRA requests despite receiving 60 - 120 per month.

72% Reduction

Reduced completion time on complex OPRA requests from average of seven business days to two.

4 Steps in 1

Replaced four time-consuming manual tasks (print, transpose, deliver to relevant department, file) with GovPilot's digital processes.

80% Decrease

Using a manual, paper process it took staff more than half a day to process and assign incoming OPRA requests. With GovPilot it takes just one hour.

“ Thank God for GovPilot because if we didn't have it while we were home [during COVID] we wouldn't have been able to process OPRAs at all. We were able to access the system remotely so everything was being done as if we were here in the office. ”

Erin Barillas, Head Clerk
North Bergen, NJ

Chapter 8: Successful Clerks' Department Digital Transformation: Business Registration

Explore this helpful case study for insight into how Watauga, TX digitized their Business Registration process.

Challenge

For years Watauga relied on an ad-hoc process combining paper records and Excel spreadsheets to manually record, process, and track the city's new business registration applications and permits. As Watauga has grown and economic activity has increased, this manual method of business registrations became extremely time consuming and unsustainable.

"Excel is great in accounting but not for economic development or customer service in government", said Andrea Gardner, Watauga's City Manager. Gardner was frustrated by an inability to quickly create professionally formatted reports, make notes, or attach documents to records.

An additional issue came in the form of illegible handwritten forms submitted by new business applicants. According to Gardner, more than half of applications were ineligible, requiring staff to get in touch with the applicant to clarify, and then re-enter data, often adding days to the process.

Economic development in the city has accelerated. Watauga now sees on average 10 new business applications per month vs 2-3 per month pre-pandemic, many of which are new home-based businesses. As the workload increased for her staff, Gardner became extremely frustrated with the Excel-based process and knew the time had come for a change.

Solution

Recognizing the need to switch over from Excel, officials from Watauga engaged GovPilot to provide an end-to-end cloud-based digital business registration process. The results were immediate. According to Gardner, work that took days with Excel, now takes only minutes - or just a couple of clicks with GovPilot.

The staff report being happy that they are now able to enter notes directly in the system and track all contacts. In fact, that is where GovPilot demonstrated its strength immediately. In February 2021, during the Texas winter storm event many local businesses were impacted. The Watauga staff were able to quickly and easily look up contact information of local business owners and reach out with resources.

New business registrations in Watauga have since doubled, and the staff are able to keep up, fully processing registrations in a matter of hours rather than days. Furthermore the staff are now able to generate detailed, well formatted reports in a matter of clicks which the board of directors (council) have been very pleased with.

Results

97% Time Savings

Employees now take less than two minutes to enter information and instantly update the system rather than manually entering handwriting notes into Excel.

Automatic Reporting

Formatted reports to the council are generated in a matter of clicks rather than hours and displays more accurate information.

Three Clicks

The business registration team are able to generate comprehensive, well-formatted reports in just three clicks.

100% Accurate Forms

With GovPilot's digital forms, illegible handwritten information is a thing of the past, helping to speed the process.

“ The beauty of GovPilot is that it eliminates the complexity of our old manual process and puts everything at our fingertips. Work that used to take days, now takes minutes. ”

Andrea Gardner, City Manager
Watauga, TX



The Operating System for Local Government

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