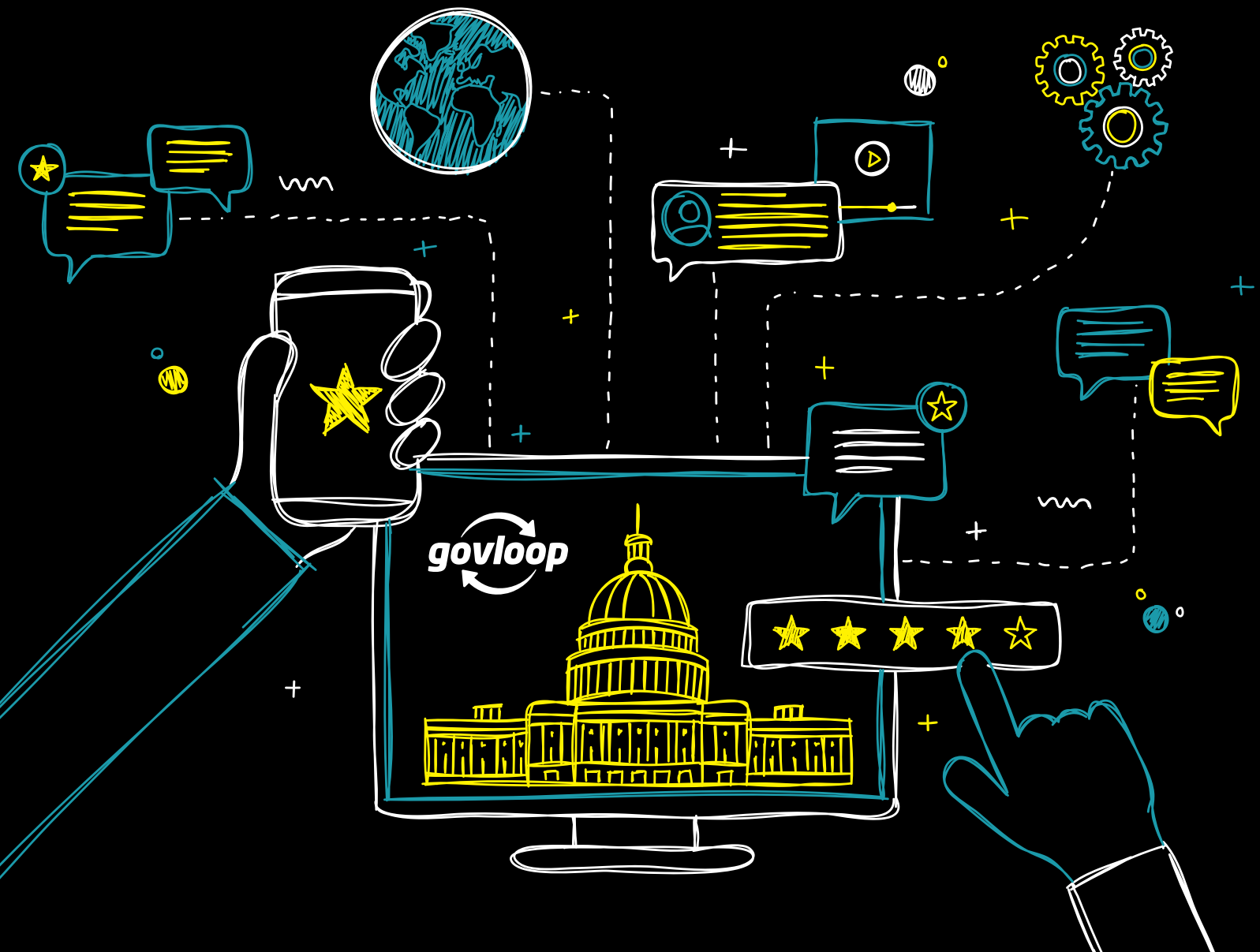


6 Customer Experience Success Stories in Government

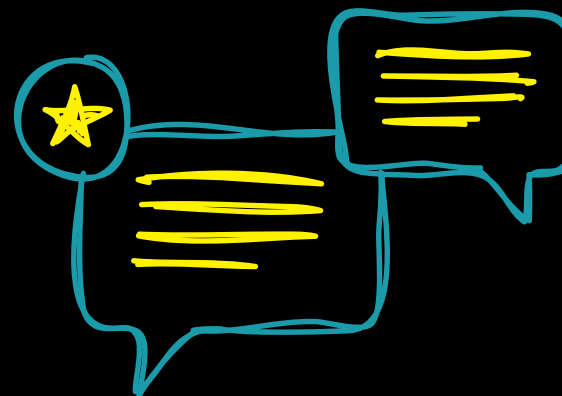


"You have to understand your demographic and what they're using as a mechanism to get in contact with you.

What are the issues that they're having? Is it something that can be resolved not only from a business perspective, but also from a customer perspective, where it's a win-win for everybody?"

TANGULER GRAY

DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES, GEORGIA



INTRODUCTION

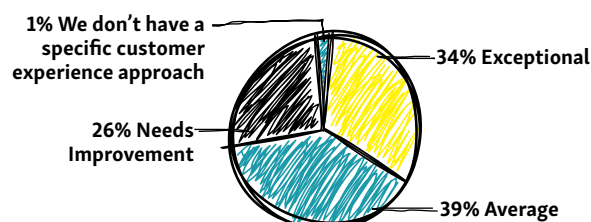
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer experience, or CX, is often discussed in the context of private companies, but government agencies play a huge role in meeting the needs of everyday citizens. Whether it's processing benefits or providing digital resources to small businesses, citizens expect government to provide services quickly, efficiently and securely.

Part of the challenge is connecting with citizens in the way that best meets their needs and earning their trust in the process. This requires looking holistically at the way people interact with your agency.

To better understand how agencies are prioritizing CX and where things are heading, we asked the GovLoop community:

How would you describe your organization's customer experience approach?



Most government employees — 39 percent — feel their agency's approach to CX is average, compared to 34 percent who said exceptional and 26 percent who expressed a need for improvement. But as agencies mature their approach to serving citizens, they are expanding the scope beyond improving individual services to creating a stellar experience for customers that spans platforms, devices and time zones.

In this resource guide, we highlight six compelling case studies of how governments at all levels are improving CX and outline the technology they're using to do it, such as self-service options online, well-designed user experiences and innovative acquisition methods.

To start the discussion, let's explore the current state of CX in government.

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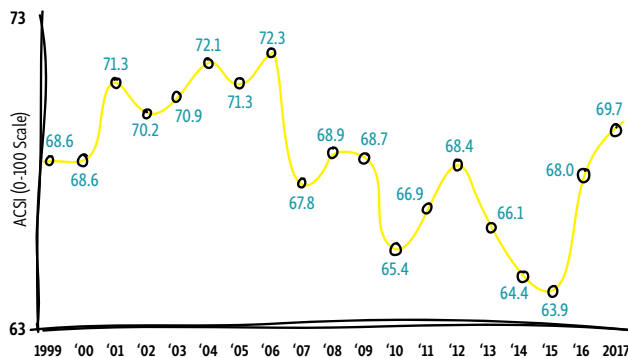
BACKGROUND

THE STATE OF CX IN GOVERNMENT

Recent years have seen a push for improved CX in government. Agencies are shifting their focus from simply improving one-off interactions with citizens, whether that's through a contact center or an email, to looking at services and interactions across multiple platforms.

This change is already paying off. Citizen satisfaction with federal services has improved from 63.9 in 2015 to 69.7 in 2017, according to the [2017 American Customer Satisfaction Index \(ACSI\) Federal Government Report](#). Both scores are based on a 100-point scale.

Citizen Satisfaction with Federal Government Services



But there is still room for improvement. A deeper dive into the numbers shows a slight dip when citizens were asked about the courtesy and professionalism of customer service personnel — one of the drivers that affects the overall satisfaction score. However, citizens' satisfaction with the timeliness and efficiency of government processes, quality of websites, and the clarity and accessibility of the information improved in 2017 compared with the previous year.

At the local level, scores jumped 8.5 points to 72.5 in 2016. But the satisfaction score dipped slightly to 71.3 in 2017.

The 2016 ACSI scores, which compare industries, show the federal government ranking last on the list. Local government was also near the bottom but ranked 4.5 points higher than the federal government and beat out the telecommunications and information industry.

To address these shortcomings, there has been a renewed focus in government to provide a modern, streamlined and responsive CX equivalent to what the private sector offers.

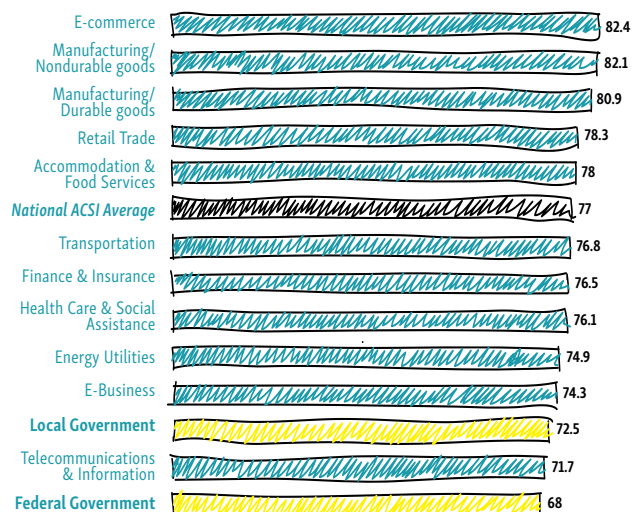
The President's Management Agenda reinforces this approach by establishing a long-term vision for modernizing the government's technology, workforce and use of data. The specifics of how the agenda will be implemented are detailed in cross-agency performance goals, one of which includes improving CX.

This goal has four key focus areas: improving digital services, modernizing customer experiences for high-impact federal programs, rewarding programs and people that demonstrate outstanding service, and creating a support and accountability network to ensure sustainable CX improvement across government.

The push is similar for state and local governments, too. They're investing in smart technologies, chatbots and intuitive digital services that citizens can access on any device at their convenience.

As users demand a higher level of service, governments at all levels are seeking ways to simplify their interactions with the public and proactively provide them with the services they want in the ways that best meet their needs.

2016 American Customer Satisfaction Index Scores



Below we've highlighted current CX trends in government, including some insights from Kathy Conrad, former Principal Deputy Associate Administrator at the General Services Administration's Office of Citizen Services and Innovative Technologies.

1. Connecting all customer experiences.

Agencies are viewing the way citizens interact with government more holistically. "While customer service addresses how well a customer is served, customer experience is more inclusive and addresses the totality of the experience that customers have when interacting with government," Conrad said.

When measuring the effectiveness of an agency's CX strategy, Conrad highlighted three common metrics: the extent to which customers can complete tasks, whether their interactions with government are intuitive and convenient, and if customers feel valued and respected. These are often intertwined.

As an example, the public sector has a reputation for using clunky, less user-friendly websites, which means that no matter how customer-conscious that agency's representatives are on the phone or in person, many citizens will walk away frustrated. Organizations that really want to focus on CX must approach it as a top-to-bottom challenge that accounts for the people, processes and technology that can make or break the overall experience.

2. Building a 360-degree view of the customer.

On that note, many agencies are pushing for a greater understanding of their customers, so that they can cater services to them more effectively. This can manifest in several ways. For example, if an organization examines its data on online interactions and finds that many of its customers are asking questions via Facebook, it can devote more resources there.

At the same time, that data must be viewed in context. Let's say an agency notices that users are spending more time on its website than usual. That could mean one of two things: either customers are super engaged or unable to find what they need. Once agencies gain a better understanding of the data, they can use it to form comprehensive customer profiles that consider citizens' preferences and past interactions with the agency.

Another point to keep in mind is that customers' expectations transcend providers, Conrad said. This is called "liquid expectations" because those expectations flow like liquid across everything you do. "People are holding government to a very high standard of service, where they expect [it to be a] more intuitive, easy, convenient experience, delivered on whatever kind of device or channel they want to use."

3. Remove friction between existing technologies and processes.

A new problem has cropped up with the technology modernization boom of the past 15 to 20 years: How can government meld new, state-of-the-art technology with older — sometimes decades older — systems? The IRS came face to face with the issue on Tax Day 2018, when new hardware malfunctioned and shut down nearly the whole system.

Beyond ironing out the technical kinks, organizations have a responsibility to citizens to make their processes as streamlined and simple as possible.

4. Achieve personalization at scale.

To some extent, this is a combination of the above trends. Some agencies serve millions of people, and providing a personal, enjoyable experience is much easier said than done. But citizens are used to this level of personalization when they shop online or use popular ride-sharing services, such as Uber.

Personalizing CX is especially helpful for both the agency and citizens when serving those who have an established relationship with the agency. This approach can save time and money, and minimize or reduce frustrations because citizens' needs are met. We see efforts on this front in technologies such as chatbots and pre-filled online forms, rather than blank paper.

In the following sections, we highlight six CX success stories at the federal, state and local levels.

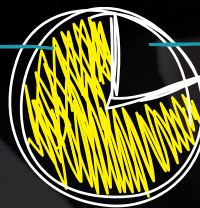
FEDERAL CASE STUDY

CENSUS BUREAU'S WEB MAPPING TOOL AIMS TO BOOST 2020 RESPONSE RATES

By 2020, the Census Bureau estimates that about **330 million** people will be living in **140 million** housing units across the United States and Puerto Rico. To ensure an accurate count, the bureau developed a web mapping tool to improve response rates in hard-to-survey areas.



79.3 percent of U.S. households that received a 2010 Census mail questionnaire completed it and mailed it back.



20.7 percent of households did not respond, and those families were geographically dispersed across the country.

CX CHALLENGE

Better engage with communities and improve census response rates in hard-to-count areas.

The bureau's mission is to count everyone once, only once and in the right place. That's no small task.

If people don't fill out the forms, Census workers must follow up with those individuals at their homes. "And that's the most costly operation associated with the decennial census," said Deirdre Bishop, Chief of the Geography Division at the Census Bureau.

Another ongoing challenge for Census is ensuring its regional directors hire people with a deep knowledge about the communities they survey.



RESPONSE

"We're doing a number of things to ensure that we make that happen," Bishop said.

For one, the bureau is encouraging self-response to the decennial census as much as possible. Also, workers will now have a tool that enables them to better understand the communities they're counting, and share more detailed and visual information with local partners, such as government officials and community leaders.

"The Census Bureau's [Response Outreach Area Mapper \(ROAM\)](#) application was developed to make it easier to identify hard-to-survey areas and to provide a socioeconomic and demographic characteristic profile of these areas," [according to the bureau](#).

In the past, employees had access to information like this in the office, and they would have to communicate those insights either verbally or by printing maps to help educate local leaders. Those leaders would in turn share those insights with their stakeholders.

"Now, we're able to have the community leaders access this application in real time and see the data for themselves," Bishop said. "They can carry around their tablet like I am today, and see where the hardest-to-count populations are living."

OUTCOME

Anyone who has an internet-connected computer, smartphone or other handheld device can use the ROAM application. Users can access the complete body of knowledge that Census built to identify hard-to-count areas nationwide.

When local community leaders are on the street talking to people about how important it is to participate in the census, this is extremely valuable information to have at their fingertips, said Suzanne McArdle, a Computer Mapping Specialist at the Geography Division.

That's because undercounted communities are at risk of losing congressional seats and billions of dollars in federal

funding — at the least. ROAM empowers government officials, faith-based organizations and others to not only tell residents about the importance of participating in the census, but to show them as well.

Using ROAM, residents can easily see their neighborhood's socioeconomic and demographic profiles, including median household income, in addition to the variables that make their communities hard to count, McArdle said. Factors that make an area hard to count include whether anyone older than 14 in those households speaks English well.

"Our field staff is going to be using this to help recruit and staff the different areas with the people that have the language skills that are necessary," she said. "We'll also be ... putting together different communication and partnership outreach campaigns, based on what ... the neighborhood characteristic of this hard-to-count area looks like."

Ultimately, ROAM is being used to facilitate discussions with local partners about the importance of improving census response rates in their communities.

GETTING STARTED

"As Chief of [the] Geography Division at the U.S. Census Bureau, I want people to understand how powerful a tool like this can be."

-DEIRDRE BISHOP, CHIEF OF GEOGRAPHY DIVISION, CENSUS BUREAU

When you take geography and merge geospatial data with statistical data, you can use that to make decisions, engage the community in certain efforts and build awareness.

In addition to making information available to the public via its mapping tool, Census also made the underlying data in ROAM available to third-party developers. This enables them to overlay other datasets and create new applications. "Sharing is caring," McArdle said.

STATE CASE STUDY

GEORGIA USES MOBILE APP TO IMPROVE CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES



At the end of summer 2016, Georgia became the first state to implement a free, full-service app for child support services. Called “**GA DCSS**,” the app from the Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) allows state residents to monitor their cases and manage transactions.



From Sept. 1, 2016, to April 2, 2018, roughly **\$1,849,251** in payments and fees were paid out through the app.



As of April 2, the app has been downloaded **111,731 times**.



The app has **62,177 active users**.

CX CHALLENGE

Simplify the process for handling Georgia’s 400,000 child support cases.

In 2017, Georgia collected hundreds of millions of dollars in child support across more than 400,000 cases. As you can probably imagine, maintaining a system that large is no easy task.

Officials at DCSS — part of the state’s Human Services Department — sought to develop a tool that would decrease walk-in traffic to field offices and provide a simple way for residents to manage their cases. The division wanted to further its mission of “stronger families for a stronger Georgia.”

The department has about 9,000 employees at several agencies. But because of the interaction-intensive nature of child support services, DCSS sees a disproportionate number of visitors to its offices and website services.

RESPONSE

Local office staff requested additional services from the state. Based on that feedback and research from the Office of Information Technology, the state decided to increase its self-service options.

From this point, DCSS Director Tanguler Gray and company began discussing the viability of a mobile app. Eventually, the team decided it would develop it in-house to avoid paying vendor costs.

Gray's team chose a mobile app over a mobile-responsive website, because the latter would have limited possible features, she said. Next came the legal research to determine what type of information could be shared with customers on the app. "There was a lot of research on Federal Communications Commission rules and regulations to make sure we're not violating any of them," Gray said.

DCSS then conducted three focus groups — one with state employees, one with custodial parents and another with noncustodial parents.

OUTCOME

The resulting free mobile app went live on Sept. 1, 2016, and has since become a system mainstay. As of April 2, 2018, GA DCSS had been downloaded 111,731 times, and 62,177 users are classified as active. In this time frame, nearly \$2 million in child support, specialty payments and fees have been paid through the app. With it, Georgia became the first state to offer citizens the ability to monitor child support cases and make payments through an app.

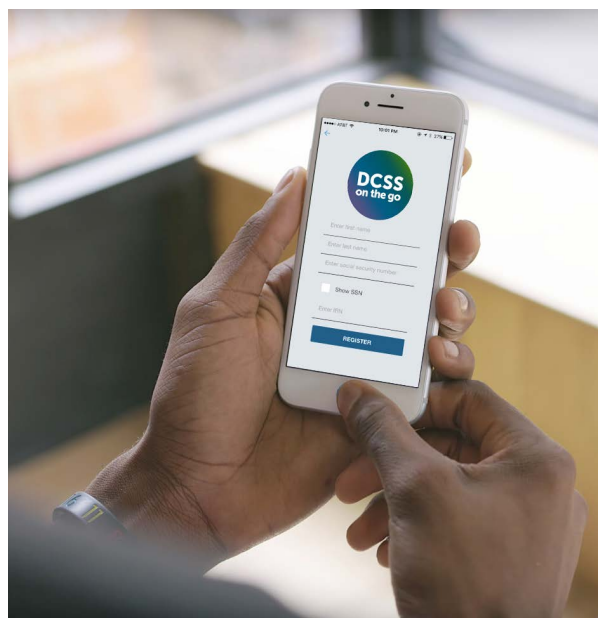
"We are very pleased with our results so far," Gray said. "And we expect to see those download numbers increase."

She explained that deployment has progressed in phases. The current phase — the third — introduces several new capabilities. For one, parents with custody can now direct deposit the child support money they receive via the app. Additionally, parents without custody can upload case documents to the app, which they couldn't do before. Phase Four, which will soon be underway, will give the app a new color scheme that aligns with the state's color palette and will change the name to "DCSS on the Go."

DCSS handles about 400,000 cases, which involve and affect some 800,000 people. As the app moves forward, Gray and her team hope it will soon reach 200,000 active

users and eventually 400,000. Shifting 50 percent of the total caseload count to the app would be a huge success, she said.

By many counts, the app has already been a success. Since deployment, it has garnered several high-profile awards, including a National Association of State CIOs IT Recognition Award in the "Digital Government: Government to Citizen" category.



GETTING STARTED

"Data is extremely important when you're making these type of decisions."

-TANGULER GRAY, DCSS DIRECTOR

Gray and her team had a lot of support from the IT office, and they explained that the DCSS website saw a lot of traffic — more than the average division.

"You have to understand your demographic and what they're using as a mechanism to get in contact with you," she said. "What are the issues that they're having? Is it something that can be resolved not only from a business perspective, but also from a customer perspective, where it's a win-win for everybody?"



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KNOWING YOUR CITIZENS' STORIES DRIVES BETTER ENGAGEMENT

An interview with Shawn Pillow, Director of Enablement Solutions, Granicus

Are you tailoring your communications to meet citizens' needs? It all starts with building a story of who they are and what makes them tick.

A citizen might be a homeowner, a veteran, a commuter — or several of these identities. Each person has unique goals they would like to achieve and therefore is receptive to different types of messaging.

"Knowing what someone wants to accomplish matters when you think about how you're going to communicate with them," said Shawn Pillow, Director of Enablement Solutions at Granicus. Using the latest in cloud technologies, Granicus empowers modern, digital governments at all levels to better communicate, more easily manage meetings and agendas, and increase the use of digital services to boost citizen engagement.

During a recent gathering of government communicators, Pillow explained the importance of understanding what citizens need, how agencies can start addressing those needs today and what tools are available to do so.

For government to successfully serve citizens, they must first understand their users' stories: Who are they? What do they care about? A simple but powerful exercise for answering these types of questions involves using a fill-in-the-blank statement. For example, "as a [persona], I want to [do something] so that I can [realize a reward]," Pillow explained.

Here's what that statement might look like for a small business owner: As a small business owner, I would like access to affordable capital so that I can grow my business, provide for my family and help my employees do the same. But an international traveler might have completely different objectives. For example, as an international traveler I would like to stay informed about infectious diseases so that I can take precautions to protect myself and others.

The end of this statement, also known as the reward or benefit clause, is the most neglected by agencies, but it's the most important, Pillow said. He explained that the benefits clause should not be a repeat of your citizens' needs. Instead, it should be tied to a positive outcome, and it should be measurable. That's why Pillow advocates for breaking down the citizen experience into sizeable chunks.

From a citizen experience perspective, that means understanding the high-level activities that users will accomplish by using your services, adding stories that support users' activities, and sequencing work to plan what your team will deliver to users and when.

Pillow noted that understanding the benefit clause stimulates interest and discussion around solving a problem and pushes your agency to think through the details of your services. To illustrate what that looks like, consider this statement: As a parent, I want to know which childcare providers are highly ranked in my neighborhood so I can choose the right one for my child.

For a government organization, this exercise would look slightly different. Here's one example: As the department charged with ensuring our roads and bridges are compliant, I want to identify the most convenient measures for repairs so I can keep commuters' travel times low.

As governments work through these scenarios, they must also consider the digital tools that will enable them to adequately respond to citizens' needs and inform them of changes that impact them. Today, more than 4,000 public-sector agencies use the suite of communication tools and capabilities provided by Granicus.

Pillow shared several features that agencies can access using Granicus solutions, including creating topic lists for email communications, which allows citizens to subscribe for topics that interest them, such as transportation or health care.

There's also a question feature that allows agencies to collect data from subscribers when they sign up for updates, so that they can be more targeted with their messages. Questions can be used to collect data, such as location, interests and roles of those users, and whether they are a resident, visitor or city official.

The more that governments understand their citizens and regularly engage with them in thoughtful ways, the more likely they'll stay engaged for longer.

"Having a customer story allows you to start developing a better communication strategy," Pillow said. "You can understand what citizens need and map out how you will enable them to get to that final stage of the journey and realize that benefit."

LOCAL CASE STUDY

BOSTON DIGITIZES DEATH CERTIFICATES, SAVES CITIZENS TIME AND MONEY

The city of Boston has launched a web app for citizens to purchase death certificates. It's a grim topic, but the app is a more user-friendly and cheaper experience for customers.



As of April 20, 2018, Boston had fielded more than **700 death certificate orders** through the online app in its first few weeks — about **20 percent** of the overall number purchased in the period.

\$40
\$14

To obtain a death certificate online, customers used to pay **more than \$40**.

With the new web app, they now pay **\$14, plus nominal fees**.

CX CHALLENGE

Make the process for obtaining death certificates cheaper and easier.

Until recently, the only options to buy a death certificate from the city of Boston were by mail, going to City Hall in person or through a third-party service that partnered with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Those processes were neither efficient nor cheap — the online option cost customers more than \$40 per request, and even more for expedited requests.

Boston officials recognized that the period following a loved one's death is often complicated. Getting a death certificate is only a small part of the arrangements, but the city wanted to find a way to make that process easier. The Digital Team, part of Boston's Innovation and Technology Department, just needed to figure out a way to connect to an existing database and integrate with its online payment system.

RESPONSE

A previous product manager conceived of the original idea, and after linking to the Registry Department's database, the Digital Team built the app. The team then partnered with software company [Stripe](#) to integrate the app with Boston's online payment system, and consulted with the Treasury Division to ensure that payments made through the app would not endanger user information.

When setting out, the team had four goals for the web app. They wanted it to:

1. Take advantage of large development communities.

The city wanted the service to already include plenty of tutorials and places to go to get help. The Digital Team didn't want to have to build these themselves.

2. Be generally useful. The Digital Team wanted to ensure that whatever tools they chose would be adaptable for future apps.

3. Provide guardrails. They wanted tools that would catch bugs or prevent team members from writing them in the first place.

4. Allow for quick integration. Making incremental improvements should be an easy, quick-to-ship process. The Digital Team wanted to be able to implement improvements as soon as they were ready.

OUTCOME

The team used several tools for developing the app's smooth, modern user interface, including [React](#), [Next.js](#) and [Storybook](#). Developers kept a tight loop and shipped changes within minutes.

The [death certificates app](#) went live on the Boston.gov domain in late March 2018, and since then users have ordered more than 700 death certificates over 235 purchases — about 20 percent of the overall purchases in the time period. That percentage was the team's original goal from 2017.

"It's pretty cool to be tracking [our Key Performance Indicator] right off the bat," said Rachel Braun, the Digital Team's Product Manager. "Part of the other success story internally for us is just the partnership we had in tandem with the Registry and Treasury departments. They were both really excited about this opportunity, and within a few days of soft-launching and beta-testing it, Registry felt

comfortable putting out a very broad message to all area funeral homes. It was a big win for us."

At the moment, the Digital Team is building out the app to accommodate birth and marriage certificates.

"While they represent very different life events and different needs, there's also a great deal of functionality overlap," Braun said.

So far, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and members of the Digital Team hope that will translate to increased awareness of digital services that the city offers, said Jeanethe Falvey, Boston's Chief Digital Officer.

GETTING STARTED

"Pay attention to what your laws are, and don't make things any harder for people than they need to be."

-FIN HOPKINS, SOFTWARE ENGINEER, STATE OF MA

The Digital Team recommended that if state agencies planned to work in close collaboration with other departments, they should consider what those departments need. Projects that benefit multiple bodies in a government are bonus wins.

Additionally, when dealing with matters of public record and citizen information, spend plenty of time researching what your state or municipal laws entail. There's little point in working on a project that violates the law.



FEDERAL CASE STUDY

SBA REDESIGNS FLAGSHIP WEBSITE TO BETTER SERVE SMALL BUSINESSES

The Small Business Administration (SBA) is charged with helping Americans start, build and grow businesses. It does that by providing online and in-person tools and resources critical to the success of America's **28 million small businesses**.

To help fulfill that mission, the agency revamped its flagship gateway digital platform, SBA.gov, using human-centered design and Agile practices.

SBA serves upward of **15 million people** annually through the agency's main website and about **1 million people** in person.

Part of the challenge for SBA is providing website users with relevant and easy-to-understand content. Most of its website pages had a **60 to 80 percent bounce rate**.



CX CHALLENGE

Optimizing SBA.gov to meet the needs of small-business owners.

For any small business owner who has looked online for relevant resources, there's a good chance that SBA.gov ranked high in their search engine results.

"The problem is most of the [website] pages had a 60 to 80 percent bounce rate," said Ryan Hillard, a Digital Service Specialist, who reports under SBA's Office of Chief Information Officer-Business Technology Solutions (BiTS) division. "So we were really well optimized for search results, ... but we were really bad at giving you actually what you were looking for once you got to us."

Direct feedback from website users backed up the data. In response to a user survey, people expressed frustration with the website, saying it was confusing and difficult to find what they needed, said Emily Meeks, quality lead for the OCIO-BiTS-Digital Service team. Plus, the site was designed to fit SBA employees' 17-inch computer monitors, rather than being optimized for actual small business users.

RESPONSE

Improving the SBA's web presence was about more than technology and design changes; it marked the need for a complete culture shift.

For starters, the OCIO-BiTS-Digital Service team encouraged employees to start seeing the website as their biggest field office, or their greatest opportunity to offer services to small-business owners, Hillard said. "That was the impetus for redoing SBA.gov and redoing it in a way where it offered functional tools and actually helped small-business owners get what they needed done or completed."

Meeks shared that one of the most challenging parts of the project has been convincing people to embrace human-centered design, where they put citizens at the center of design processes — not themselves.

The fact is that SBA.gov is not for the agency, Hillard said. It's for small businesses. Planning for the website redesign began around April 2016 and at first was little more than a grand idea on a Post-it. The effort has since evolved into a multi-faceted project that is expected to be completed in September 2018 — although no website is ever truly final. There will be future tweaks and updates.

To ensure success of the project, the team used Agile for project management and software development. This stipulation was also written into contracts, and it required vendors to deliver functionality every two weeks. The team also worked closely with subject-matter experts, contractors and users to ensure information was accurate and accessible in a way that met users' needs. DevOps also played a big role in the team's success.

"For us, DevOps really meant trying to get us to a point where our developers had as much control over their destiny and over the operational status of the system," Hillard said.

OUTCOME

The new SBA.gov is in plain language and it's accessible, mobile-friendly and 508-compliant, Meeks said. There's also a feedback mechanism for customers that's built into the website.

To track how website visitors interact with the content, what they click on and where they drop off, the team uses event-driven analytics.

Before the redesign — which is still in progress — the SBA website had several articles related to small-business size standards. "The Small Business Administration has very few things that it's actually the source of truth for in the world," Hillard said. "This is one of them. So this is really important that we get this right because we determine if you're a small business or not."

But the old website made it tough for small businesses to easily confirm if in fact they were a small business. To simplify the process, the OCIO-BiTS-Digital Service team bundled the various sources of information into an online size standards tool. Businesses can now use the interactive tool to see if they meet SBA's size standards without having to leave the website. Previously, users would have to visit another website to find their NAICS code — a standard used by federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments.

Overall, the tool is more user-friendly. "As the site matures, that's the kind of experience that you're going to see," said John Foster with Fearless Solutions, who serves as engagement lead on the project. There's a general flow to business, Foster noted. Information on SBA.gov should align with that flow and make it easy for businesses to navigate the site, find what they need and take action. That's a critical part of the online experience.

GETTING STARTED

"[Agencies] need to put together a versatile team that represents three primary skillsets."

—RYAN HILLARD, DIGITAL SERVICE SPECIALIST, SBA

Those skills include design resources, someone who is a product owner or has a product management background and experience, and someone who is technically savvy and can call out bad practices that could jeopardize the success of the project.

Foster added that acquisition doesn't have to be a barrier when implementing digital services. If you need help getting started, check out the [TechFAR](#), which highlights flexibilities in the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) that can help agencies implement "plays" outlined in the [Digital Services Playbook](#), he said.

STATE CASE STUDY

WEST VIRGINIA CUTS DMV WAIT TIMES, COSTS WITH DIGITAL SERVICES



In the past 10.5 years, West Virginia has created or put in place **369 interactive services** and websites for **more than 100 government entities** in the state (as of April 2018).

\$13
MILLION

Through a partnership with industry, the state has **avoided \$13 million in costs** through the delivery of those services, including some offered by the Department of Motor Vehicles.



More than **50 percent** of the development of all services was done using a fee or transaction model, meaning the state did not pay for the creation and implementation of its digital services.

CX CHALLENGE

Increase the number of digital services for residents.

For every interactive government service that has shifted online in recent years, there's likely a heavily manual and paper-based process that preceded it.

In West Virginia, the processes for driver's license and registration renewals are only a couple of examples. Before December 2016, residents had no alternative to going to their local DMV office and waiting in line to request these services. "Depending on the demand and peak times, you could have anything from a 30-minute to a three-hour wait at a window," said John Dunlap, the state's Chief Technology Officer.

As the state explored online options, one concern was whether residents had affordable and reliable high-speed internet access. "We are a rural state, and there's still multiple areas in our state that people ... struggle to get high-speed broadband," Dunlap said.

RESPONSE

The state partnered with an e-government solutions provider to roll out digital services using a transaction-based, self-funded approach. Under this model, the vendor covers the cost of building and implementing the service and recoups those costs through nominal transaction fees that residents pay.

In 2017, the state's interactive services processed more than 728,000 transactions totaling \$146 million, Dunlap said.

The e-government firm has a statewide contract with West Virginia's Office of Technology. The agreement did not require a request for proposals or big process, just a statement of work. Among the projects that came out of this partnership was the rollout of various online DMV services, such as license and registration renewal and the ability to pay driver's license reinstatement fees.

The state is using a combination of mobile apps and kiosks to make DMV services accessible via cellular networks and more convenient, especially to residents in rural parts of the state.

"We support 80 [percent] to 85 percent of all the executive branch of government in West Virginia," Dunlap said of his office. His team meets regularly with state program offices to understand their users' needs and any trends that can help prioritize the rollout of online services.

OUTCOME

The public/private partnership with industry has been a win-win for everyone, Dunlap said. "We were able to push out new online services. We were able to deliver faster to our citizens — which they desperately needed — at truly no upfront cost or capital expenditure. We've moved that portion from a CAPEX [capital expenditure] to an OPEX [operational expenditure spending model], which is beneficial to everybody."

Dunlap notes that people were used to standing in line and now the state is putting them online. But in-person services are still available for residents who want to visit a DMV.

Dunlap said it takes less than 10 minutes to complete transactions online. Since 2016, more than 32,000 driver's license renewals have been processed online (as of April 2018). That has resulted in huge time savings for employees. The agency estimated that it has saved 15 minutes per renewal, or 5,900 hours of work.



"We're all trying to do more with less," Dunlap said. Automation frees employees to focus on more critical citizen services or issues that require human intervention. Based on the number of online transactions the DMV has processed, going digital has spared West Virginians from waiting in line for an estimated 17,700 hours collectively.

GETTING STARTED

"The more buy-in you can get from all entities within ... state government, you can do more from an enterprise perspective."

-JOHN DUNLAP, CTO, STATE OF WV

For example, the state could benefit from creating an online portal to accommodate various license requests for cosmetology, farming, nursing and other areas. "A state that hasn't [gone] down this path yet can actually roll more services out by doing it together," he said.

To prioritize the rollout of digital services across state government, West Virginia created an E-Portal Board that Dunlap chairs. "We've been able to develop a good communication portal, so to speak, especially when it comes to digital services."

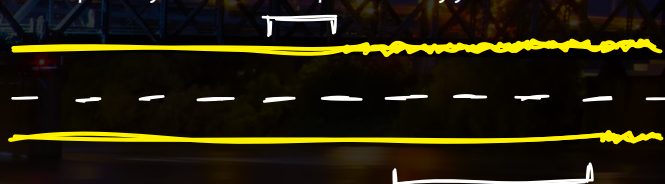
LOCAL CASE STUDY

KANSAS CITY MAKES CAR RIDES SMOOTHER

Officials in Kansas City, Missouri, have developed a comprehensive system for predicting potholes and are now testing it on several main streets in the city. They're hoping to improve the current process, in which citizens report potholes after they've formed.

In all, Kansas City maintains some **6,400 miles** of streets across **318 square miles** on an annual budget of about **\$8 million**.

*Before the pothole predictor, Public Works managed to repair or resurface only **20 to 25 miles** of streets every year.*



*With the new system, Public Works can repair or resurface between **35 and 45 miles**.*

CX CHALLENGE

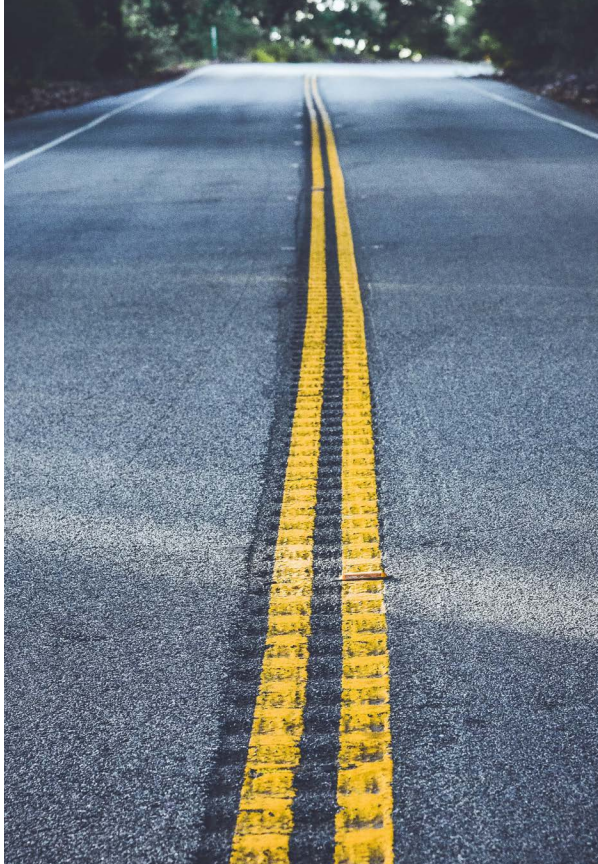
Increase the city's capacity for preventative maintenance on its roads.

In probably every major U.S. city, more funding for public works would be welcomed with open arms. When that doesn't happen, however, cities must get creative.

Kansas City is responsible for more than 6,000 miles of streets on an annual public works budget of about \$8 million. According to city CIO Bob Bennett, that means the city could repair or resurface about 20 to 25 miles of streets per year.

That is, until he and his data scientist were tasked by the Public Works department's director to devise a method of predicting where potholes would most likely develop. Traditionally, citizens report potholes to 311 after they've formed, which kicks off a longer process that eventually ends with the hole being filled.

"We kind of looked at each other and said, 'Well, if that's what you want, that's what we'll give you,'" Bennett said.



RESPONSE

It took about three weeks to develop a pothole predictor that allows the department to perform preventative maintenance on the roads, Bennett said. In that time, he and his team developed a system based on 18 variables grouped into three categories:

- 1. Current condition of the road.** Public Works conducts an analysis of the more than 6,000 miles of road about every three years, Bennett said. Workers characterize the roads based on segments, which can be as short as about 300 meters or as long as a half-mile.
- 2. Who built the road.** The city takes into account expected road lifespans and problems associated with various contractors' work. "We know what the strengths and weaknesses are of the different entities," Bennett said.
- 3. Weather data.** There are two major pieces here: the type and amount of precipitation per day, and how many freeze/thaw cycles a segment of roadway experiences. Bennett explained a freeze/thaw cycle as a 24-hour period in which the temperature changes more than 15 degrees Fahrenheit from below freezing.

OUTCOME

The program, which was initially implemented in a test phase in 2017, should improve Public Works' capacity for preventative maintenance in the coming years, which means more risk segments will be repaired before potholes form. The city has expanded testing to 10 arterial roads now, and in several months, officials should know if potholes are indeed forming where they're expected to.

In addition to the factors outlined in the section above, the system uses existing traffic cameras to provide data related to traffic volume and anomalies such as traffic accidents. The city's Main Street alone has 178 sensors. Because the project relies on software upgrades rather than the installation of new equipment, Kansas City is saving money.

Recent years have seen a spike in city modernization efforts, including a Main Street corridor development plan that features a new streetcar line and public Wi-Fi. These projects are designed to make life easier for Kansas City residents.

"I have a very progressive individual in both [the city manager and mayor] seats, who are always looking for ways to use technology to digitize the wisdom of the incredibly talented workforce that we already have," Bennett said. "For them, modernization is a priority, and therefore I'm able to gain access to collective wisdom in the departments without a whole lot of drama."

It's yet to be seen if the algorithm is as precise as Bennett hopes, or if it needs some adjusting. But he estimates it will enable Public Works to repair or resurface 35 to 45 miles of streets every year, compared to the 20 to 25 miles it handles yearly now. That means smoother rides for Kansas City drivers.

GETTING STARTED

"Until you accept the idea that you're just part of the solution, that you're willing to bring other people into the tent, this doesn't work."

-BOB BENNETT, CIO, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

Bennett believes that government is not actually in charge of anything — it's a part of the solution, but not the whole thing. He recommended that other government workers looking to make a difference accept that their primary function is to enable others.

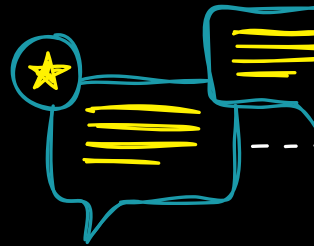
CONCLUSION

Citizens are demanding more streamlined, timely and user-friendly experiences with government agencies. They want experiences that meet — if not exceed — the types of interactions they have with large online retailers, ride-sharing companies and other private entities.

The key to meeting these rising expectations includes creating a CX culture at your agency in which employees understand the role they play in serving citizens. When it comes to implementing specific CX improvements, such as digitizing a service, agencies must ensure they've assembled the right team of problem solvers and that they include users in the overall process.

With the rise of more advanced technologies, you can expect to see an increase in self-service options and chatbots that allow users to complete more tasks on their own or quickly get their questions answered. But this does not mean an end to in-person services or call centers.

A stellar customer experience is one that is inclusive and accounts for users' varying needs. Agencies that prioritize CX will find that citizens aren't the only ones who benefit. They too will reap lasting benefits of time and cost savings and improved employee morale.



ABOUT

GovLoop's mission is to inspire public sector professionals by serving as the knowledge network for government. GovLoop connects more than 270,000 members, fostering cross-government collaboration, solving common problems and advancing government careers. GovLoop is headquartered in Washington, D.C., with a team of dedicated professionals who share a commitment to the public sector.

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THANK YOU

Thank you to Granicus for their support of this valuable resource for public-sector professionals.

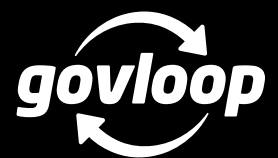
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