

Nine Steps to Transform Government Service Delivery

Innovation Nation: Consumer-grade Experiences for Citizens



Introduction

Every organization is on a digital transformation journey. For state and local government, that journey focuses on delivering intuitive, efficient, and secure consumer-grade services to citizens.

The goal? A seamless and delightful experience for citizens.

The solution to delivering modern services is not to hire more people to do more repetitive work. The days of being able to personally respond to every citizen inquiry are gone – we need a better way.

Effective service delivery in government connects siloed departments and enables self-service. It requires a focus on resolution, not just response, so government service delivery becomes a closed-loop process.

To enable modern citizen services, ServiceNow delivers a cloud-based customer service management solution, built on the Now® Platform, allowing government agencies to optimize services end-to-end. This approach to citizen service can help you deliver government services that reflect the innovation and seamless experiences citizens expect in the 21st century.

In this report, we'll explore the **Nine Steps** state and local IT leaders can take to organize government services for consumer-grade experiences that transform citizen service delivery.

A Letter from Tom Yeatts, Chief Strategist, State & Local Government and Education, ServiceNow

State and local governments are under pressure to make government more accessible, more personalized, and more connected. In short, they must match the simple, convenient digital experiences we all enjoy in our day-to-day lives.

The challenge is how to clone the .com experience to .gov. How do you get from the current state to one where you can provide catalogs of goods and services, easy interactions, and status updates on demand?

Within state and local governments, a maze of silos and legacy technologies hold back progress. There are departments, offices, bureaus, quasi-governmental agencies, nonprofits, and more, all delivering citizen services. There is often confusion regarding who provides what service, and how to access those services.

Based on my personal experience working as a county CIO, and ServiceNow's experience working with state and local governments across the country, we've identified nine distinct steps to transform government services. We hope these steps will help provide a roadmap for your efforts to deliver personalized, responsive, and citizen-centric experiences.



Tom Yeatts

Chief Strategist, State & Local Government and Education
ServiceNow



Step 1: Build the team

Transformation is a team sport. Identify employees who can execute the implementation, solicit feedback, rally enthusiasm, and keep the project aligned with mission priorities. Identify implementation partners and other vendors to ensure you can scale your efforts.

Assess the impact of a transformation on your organization. Ensure your team gets the training they need to succeed. Identify how you will engage and communicate with your stakeholders.

Take particular care when soliciting and selecting an executive sponsor. This individual will drive the project forward, ensure it is funded, and make it a priority. He or she does not have to be from IT. Consider which department has the most to gain from the implementation.

Pro Tip

An executive sponsor can be a part of any department, not just IT.



Step 2: Select your service delivery platform

You have a goal to deliver a seamless citizen experience, but what makes that possible? When selecting your service delivery platform, key criteria to consider include:

- Easy-to-use case management capabilities with assistive technology that make it easy for employees to respond to citizen inquiries
- Workflows to connect actions across departments and agencies
- Technology that can replace and consolidate legacy systems and is easily extensible with in-house development or third-party solutions
- Dashboards to deliver operational feedback
- Analytics to provide insights into developing issues, making proactive service possible
- Omni-channel and self-service options that address the needs of your citizens

Pro Tip

Make sure your service delivery platform can manage a citizen request end-to-end – from request through to resolution. It should also allow external parties (like other departments, programs, or agencies) to be included on a case.



Step 3: Document the services

With the team in place and an end-to-end solution identified, the next step is to create a list of all services, defining a “service” as anything the organization provides to a constituent.

This is the treasure hunt. Review your website, catalogs, and resources offered by local government organizations (informational flyers or guides for seniors, parents, etc.) Find a phone list of all departments and call each, asking what services they provide.

Build your list. You will likely uncover dozens of departments delivering hundreds of services. Vet the list with each department – adding/eliminating, naming the service correctly, and pointing residents to the right place.

In some cases, the request may be handled by an outside organization – a nonprofit, or a quasi-governmental agency (for example, the Bureau of Consumer Protection). Include these in your services list. You can add the service to your catalog, with a link to the right place.

Pro Tip

Create a “short list” of the services citizens can access today with an online request form – a PDF or a fillable PDF. These are typically “low-hanging fruit” for rapid digitization.



Step 4: Catalog the services

Build out your catalog, listing and grouping the services. Consider organizing by service type, typical audience, and/or department. Consider how the citizen will think about the service – and then test, and retest. Can a citizen find the service in the catalog easily? The same service may appear in many different views (e.g., a “by department” view, or a “life event” view). As an example, for a county government service catalog, services can be grouped based on the action the citizen wants to take:

1. **Report** – issues, complaints, concerns, information
2. **Apply** – jobs, permits, licenses
3. **Pay** – bills, taxes, fees, citations
4. **Find** – information, meeting dates, schedules, events
5. **Contact** – government employees, departments
6. **Connect** – social media information sources
7. **Request** – assistance, services, help, information
8. **Donate** – funds, materials
9. **Locate** – buildings, parks, libraries, map locations
10. **Subscribe** – email groups, mailing lists, groups

Initially, all services and resources will point to a URL outside of the new service catalog. The project team should prioritize the services list, and then create digital forms within the catalog to replace the external URLs. The user will then simply submit the digital form, without the requirement to click through to a secondary website or resource, enabling automated workflows across agencies and departments, better tracking, and a better citizen experience.

Pro Tip

Show the same service in multiple views/places in your catalog – think of what a resident would be interested in, or a visitor, or a property owner, or a parent, or a business owner.



Step 5: Document the processes

The next step is to document the business processes required to fulfill the service. Select one service to start with and demonstrate ROI quickly. This success will help build momentum and enthusiasm.

Documenting a service usually requires a series of interviews.

- Where does the request go?
- Who must approve?
- How is the request fulfilled?
- What information is needed to fulfill?
- What are the current frustrations?
- How long does it take to fulfill the request today?

Often, there are no written procedures to fulfill requests, so this can be a time-consuming step. You can document the processes in parallel to the portal build.

Pro Tip

This exercise is a valuable opportunity to capture organizational knowledge and improve inefficient processes.



Step 6: Build the workflows

With documented processes in hand, create the digital workflows in the platform. Involve your stakeholders – the team members in the department, the managers, those who support the services. Show what you're doing, explain why, and enlist support to test and confirm the digital workflows.

With no-code and low-code options, you don't have to rely on the IT department to build out the workflows. Try having the stakeholders themselves build out a few of the workflows. Many of our customers use no-code and low-code development to rapidly build case management, operations management, and enterprise service management solutions, including incident tracking, preventive maintenance status reporting, and service request forms.

Your stakeholders will appreciate the experience, and can work hand-in-hand with IT to build, vet, test, and deliver digital experiences for their business areas. And, you can build workflows in parallel, so your catalog of services will be multi-departmental at launch.

Pro Tip

The earlier you involve the team members who will use the system as trusted advisors, the smoother the implementation, and the more raving fans you will have!



Step 7: Rally your platform champions

With the platform live and your first services fully digitized, now is the time to spread the love (and enthusiasm) throughout the organization. The team members you enlisted to define the processes become the platform champions who convince their colleagues and teams of the value of this new way to work.

There will be resistance, and it will take time. Regularly meet with your platform champions to understand what is working well and what adjustments are needed during the “soft launch.”

Keep in mind this is not a one-and-done effort. As you show the benefits of the process (reduced drive-bys, lower e-mail volume, the ability to take a vacation without creating bottlenecks, better reporting, expressions of thanks by citizens, etc.), you will generate excitement and interest in digitizing additional services. User groups and online forums are a great source of ideas.

Pro Tip

Develop a communications plan to showcase the benefits internally – signage, presentations, newsletters to drive adoption, support, and enthusiasm.



Step 8: Provide citizen feedback

With your internal team on board and extensive cross-department testing during the “soft launch” completed, make sure the portal provides citizens with feedback. Citizens should be able to log in and get updates on cases and requests at any time, intuitively, without an inbound call.

This said, carefully consider what you want to disclose and ensure you set the views appropriately. For example, you may want to show a simple status that shares the stage in the process (initiated, approved for review, etc.) versus telling citizens exactly whose desk their case is on.

You can also ask citizens for their input directly from the catalog. Add “Don’t see what you’re looking for?” as a link to get suggestions for how to improve the navigation, usability, and items in your service catalog.

Pro Tip

Make sure to have the right level of transparency from the start.



Step 9: Launch the portal

Last, but definitely not least, it is time for the full public launch.

Many organizations plan a marketing campaign with executive sponsorship. Consider press releases, signage, and social media promotion. Focus on value to the citizen.

Now is the time to reach out to the departments, agencies, quasi-governmental agencies, affiliated nonprofits, and other partner organizations to get the word out. What is the value to the citizen? Be very explicit about the benefits of using your new Citizen Service Portal. Consider recognizing and publishing the best feedback you receive from citizens.

Remember, the process is a digital evolution. You'll want to remind your citizens to check back frequently, and you can use the addition of catalog items to shine more light on your one-stop-shop portal.

Pro Tip

Create a repeatable communications plan to promote new, digitized services as they come online, focusing on the value to the citizen.

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