



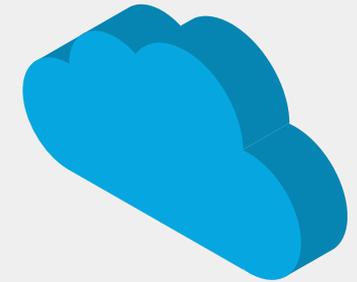
# **GOVERNING FROM THE CLOUD**

**A READINESS GUIDE FOR HIGHER ENGAGEMENT, PERFORMANCE AND SATISFACTION**



# LIFE IN THE CLOUD

## THE NEW NORMAL FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICE DELIVERY



Cloud computing is fast becoming the standard of operations for government agencies. Over 70% of government IT organizations view software as a service (SaaS) as an important strategy for reducing cost and increasing speed of delivery; and 41% of government IT leaders say they are making headway in migrating to the cloud. By all measures, the trend will continue, with Bain research predicting 78% of government entities to be predominantly implementing SaaS by 2022.

The factors driving this dramatic movement of government service delivery resources are clear. They include the greater agility, flexibility, scalability, and security of the cloud, as well as the cost savings of operational solutions like SaaS over capital expenses for purchasing more computer capacity.

What is less clear is how to overcome the barriers that still stand in the way of making the transition to improve services, engagement and efficiency.

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Government agencies are looking for strategies to counter barriers including:

**Lack of trust in—or familiarity with—digital transformation and SaaS.** With four times as many government IT specialists aged 60 and over as there are under 30, there is a learning curve to this relatively new technology.

**Difficulty of finding providers and technology partners** who understand the unique challenges of government. Government IT systems are a unique area of expertise and have their own requirements.

**Budgetary and time limitations** on implementing new systems while running legacy processes for government licensing, permitting, service requests and inspection. Federal agencies spend about 70% of their IT budgets supporting legacy systems; state and local governments carry a similar burden.

**Growing security concerns.** With so many high-profile data breaches and malicious attacks in the news, governments must maintain a level of data security that fosters public trust with standards such as NIST 800–53 and FISMA.

**Ever-changing regulations.** Laws level governing the use of data are constantly changing. Local and state governments must be aware of the changes and in compliance at all times.

**Inability to scale** and take advantage of the flexibility of modern data platforms. Limited to datacenters, some governments are hamstrung by the capital expense of scaling or adding capacity.

**Concerns about cost compared to ROI.** As technology continues to advance, legacy infrastructure will become more and more costly to maintain, making the choice clearer, but the budget will be harder to come by.

**In this e-book, we'll show you the advice and strategies Accela recommends to help government agencies overcome these concerns and move forward to better serve their populations with cloud-based solutions.**

# WHAT'S DRIVING GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS TO THE CLOUD?



To start, let's take a look at the reasons governments need to move to the cloud now. As time passes, digital transformation is fast becoming less of a "nice to have" and more of a necessity of good government.

## **Citizen expectations**

Citizens see seamless and intuitive digital retail and service experiences—such as Amazon and Uber—as the standard, and they expect the same 24/7 presence and convenience from their government. Beyond the public convenience and perception issues, real government effectiveness is at stake. In the next few years, citizen access and participation in government will become dependent on the ready availability of information and engagement tools through digital platforms. Paper systems will become too costly to maintain with the growing needs of government recordkeeping.

## **Government employee productivity and engagement**

Recently, Gallup found that only 29% of 61,000 state and local government employees were actively engaged at work. This is low by any standard, but digital transformation can be part of the solution. By automating manual processes and eliminating paper-based workflows, SaaS takes much of the tedious and repetitive labor off their hands. This can free government workers to focus on more engaging tasks, while boosting productivity and innovation.

The more securely accessible and centralized nature of cloud platforms also enables collaboration across agencies for greater efficiency. These improvements ultimately impact job satisfaction, which helps state and local agencies attract and retain employees. To realize these benefits, more and more government agencies are letting partners help them with the potential complications associated with implementing SaaS and cloud solutions. Engaging with a trusted partner also reduces the cost and time of setting up the solution.

## Emerging markets

With changing technologies, higher constituent demands and the immediacy of social media's impact, government leaders must move faster to build increasingly meaningful relationships with their constituents and deliver services more effectively.

New thinking is required to effectively regulate and encourage growth and innovation around new types of businesses, such as:

- Short-term rentals
- Legalized cannabis
- Ride-sharing
- And more

To keep up with licensing, permitting, and regulating these emerging businesses, agencies need automated, digital services.

## Speed of business and time-to-value

Cloud transformation and SaaS provide governments with a four-pronged advantage:

### 1. Speed to market

Consumers get the information and resources they need faster.



### 2. Scale

SaaS allows for scale to meet time-limited needs without the unnecessary cost of maintaining the excess infrastructure for the rest of the year.



### 3. Economics

With SaaS, you pay only for what you use. That spare capacity goes away when you no longer use it. And it can happen at the virtual flip of a switch.



### 4. Trust

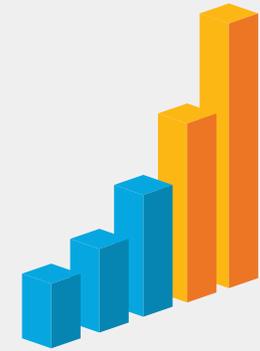
By partnering with a world SaaS platform like Accela, built on Microsoft Azure, agencies can leverage a system that is already trusted by users and the public for its security and compliance.



SaaS enables all this with 24/7 digital services that use automated workflows for specific needs to streamline application and permitting processes and shorten turnaround times.

These are just a few of the ways SaaS will drive the future of government services. Next, let's talk about the new tools governments will need.

# RISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF THE DIGITAL FUTURE



As governments or agencies begin their digital transformation—whether local, regional, county, or state—here are the essential elements for quality cloud-based government services.

## Improved agility and innovation with a cloud solution

The speed and agility of cloud operations far outstrips traditional computing models. A SaaS platform built on Microsoft Azure removes the need for on-premises infrastructure, opening the doors to shorter time-to-value and faster ROI.

When combined with Accela’s Civic Applications, SaaS deployment has shown the ability to improve time-to-value by 30% to 50% faster than on-premises models. That enables faster, easier upgrades when regulations or needs change. It also frees up time and resources for IT departments, streamlines operations, and improves delivery of services.

When it’s all tallied up, SaaS lowers total cost of ownership.

## A comprehensive solution developed specifically for government

Government agency data systems require unique capabilities, and it’s important that the solutions and partners they work with have a proven track record in the government sector with established government best-practices from end to end. That includes an out-of-the-box ability to work with the many languages used by different agencies.

Versatility goes well beyond languages. Your government cloud solution should include a wide range of pre-built application packages for specific processes like those found in Accela Civic Applications, such as:

- Regulatory processes including licenses, permits, cases, complaints, violations, renewals
- Predefined workflows including business logic and rules
- Inspections and checklists
- Fees and payments
- Reports and notification templates
- Contract and licensed professional types
- Role-specific functions
- Predefined models for extending civic applications

## The security and scalability of Microsoft Azure with the domain expertise of Accela

Citizens across cities, town and states operate under the belief that governments must be secure and must never fail. Accela has chosen the world-class infrastructure and security that Azure provides, ensuring that our customers never have to worry whether they are getting the highest level of performance and reliability. Our customers can have confidence that their data is secure, highly available, and quickly recovered in case of emergency.

Azure meets worldwide security industry standards, including NIST 800–53 and FISMA, with 99.99% uptime. It ensures business continuity while mitigating risk through its world-class platform with 42 global regions to choose from for disaster recovery.

From a security standpoint, the Azure cloud identifies threats and protects data with detection and authentication tools, securing your cloud app environment with deeper visibility and controls.

## Time and resource savings

Your cloud partner should be far more than a software vendor.

They should support your mission with real-time monitoring and dedicated cloud staff such as that offered by Accela, with continual updates and upgrades to keep you up to date with access to latest technology enhancements.

They should help you accelerate time-to-value with APIs and pre-built connectors to enable implementation of new systems while maintaining



connectivity to existing ERP, work management, and other applications, including familiar tools such as Microsoft Office 365, Power BI, machine learning and others.

And, it should all come together on a platform that offers tight integration with your legacy and on-premises systems during implementation of SaaS systems.

# PERMITS IN MINUTES

## MICHIGAN STATE DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING



### Agency: Supporting the state of business

Michigan is the ninth most populous state in the US. It has long been known as the epicenter of the automotive industry, as well as manufacturing services and high tech. The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) in the Bureau of Construction Codes (BCC) is responsible for issuing tens of thousands of permits for contractors across the state.

### Challenge: Drowning in manual applications

The process of applying for and receiving a permit was very cumbersome for Michigan contractors, often taking 15 or more working days. Applications were mailed to the State and then had to be processed manually by staff. If contractors didn't mail the forms, they often had to drive between their office, job site, and the BCC office to get an application processed.

This primitive process cost valuable time away from the job site. Handling all this paperwork was the responsibility of the BCC staff, who quickly found themselves buried in a never-ending stream of applications.

### Solution: The faster route to permitting

The BCC chose to deploy the Accela solution to provide contractors with 24/7 access to services to apply for, receive, and check the status of permits. Through the new system, licensed contractors apply for permits in a matter of minutes. The system automatically detects errors and accepts payments online. This enables permits to be processed more quickly and reduces the overall building time for projects.

For example, inspectors in Michigan can't go onsite until a permit number is issued, which used to take a full week when processed manually. Now, a permit number can be issued in a matter of minutes, and an inspection can be scheduled immediately — instantly eliminating a week or more of waiting time.

# PERMITS IN MINUTES

## MICHIGAN STATE DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING



### **Result: Less time to permit. More ways to succeed.**

In just the first 180 days, the Bureau continually increased the number of permits processed online, each month processing twice as many permits as the previous month.

**Today, the State is averaging over 75,000 permits and renewals annually.**

The end-to-end Accela solution allows the BCC, contractors, and citizens with construction projects to save time and money. Processing permits online enables the Bureau to provide better, faster service to its citizens while alleviating the endless trail of permitting tasks for staff.

When Governor Rick Snyder took the reins in 2011, he brought with him a strong belief that technology will empower the State to do more with less. Under the Governor's Cloud First and Mobile First strategies, LARA and the Department of Technology, Management, and Budget are leading the initiative to move the State's services to the cloud and bring on technologies that will provide a greater level of service to customers while streamlining workflow and enhancing productivity.

The BCC initiative was so successful that Accela solutions are being applied in multiple other LARA bureaus, including:

- The Bureau of Health Care Services/Health Facilities Division
- The Bureau of Fire Services
- The Michigan Public Service Commission's Motor Carrier Division

# GET READY **FOR** MOBILE GOVERNMENT

Citizen expectations keep raising the bar for government services. It's not enough to be online; users now need to have anywhere, anytime mobile access to everything they need to engage. Keeping up in the mobile age requires modern, powerful solutions hosted in a cloud environment. That's what Accela provides in partnership with Microsoft Azure.

**Together, Accela and Microsoft empower governments to be fast and flexible, save money, and dedicate more time to strategic initiatives and innovation.**

[Find out more](#)