

A woman with long dark hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a light blue blazer over a white top, is looking down at a black tablet she is holding with both hands. The background is a blurred office environment with blue lighting. The text "Digitally enhancing government service, efficiency and security" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**Digitally enhancing
government service,
efficiency and security**

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Not long ago, Americans had no choice but to visit government agency offices to receive services. The coronavirus pandemic accelerated the demand for digital self-service and the need for better interactions between agencies and the people they serve.

Pandemic-era requirements have stirred many agencies to action, resulting in unprecedented modernizations to transform constituent interaction, workforce flexibility and back-office operations.

“COVID really accelerated digital transformation 10 years ahead,” said Ray Bauer, director of the Public Sector Domain Specialist Group at Verizon Business, which worked with governments in the spring of 2020 to rapidly roll out vital digital tools.

And changes enacted in a crisis may well lead to further digital improvements in government.

“Not only did COVID put a big spotlight on the need for improving government interactions with constituents, but it also gave us a view of what is possible,” Bauer said.

As the frequency of climate emergencies increases and the number of cyberthreats accelerates, further transformation will be required to securely provide services. Governments must ensure uninterrupted and sometimes scaled services — especially in emergency situations.

Constituent engagement

The first challenge is effectively communicating with constituents.

As 2020 lockdowns led to job losses, many state labor departments lacked scalable infrastructure to handle the surge in unemployment insurance filings. One state’s department of labor saw unemployment among its constituents rise from 4% to almost 30% in a matter of a few weeks. The department had to act quickly as it was working with an archaic back-office IT system, a web presence not built to scale and contact centers designed for static demand.

“We reviewed voice traffic patterns right away to ensure the network design would support call characteristics and volumes,” said Bauer, whose team designed a new call center workflow that relied on artificial intelligence and machine learning to optimize service.

Verizon already provided the agency’s data and voice network services, so the technical team was able to quickly analyze traffic and determine network architecture augmentation. Call characteristics were documented and routed to specific paths that minimized strain on live agents and reduced hold times for callers. Fraudulent calls were identified and blocked automatically.

The agency’s revised system was then able to either provide a message directing first-time callers to the website or conduct processing via an IP-based Interactive Voice Response system.

“We didn’t just provide a generic technical solution. Instead, we leveraged Verizon’s deep operational expertise and advanced communications professional services staff to look at call center traffic and redesigned the way calls were handled. We also provided multichannel options for improving constituent experience,” said Bauer, who held standing calls every evening with the team to implement options and troubleshoot any issues that arose.

The government agency’s leadership quickly realized a need to invest in a strategic roadmap for digital evolution. The next urgent challenge involved setting up hotlines for vaccinations. As the agency implemented successful new solutions, officials began imagining new possibilities for delivering other constituent services, such as digitizing aspects of drivers’ tests.

Now, officials see what is possible, and we have ongoing engagements to continue modernization of government operations and constituent services.

Remote workforce

Modernization will continue to provide government employees flexibility as to when and how they work. This not only ensures continuity of operations in emergencies, but it makes attracting top talent easier for government agencies.

The sensitive nature of government work, which can include handling private information and sensitive documents, makes launching a remote workforce more complicated. Government employees need more infrastructural support than the average worker, as well as additional communication capabilities in crisis situations when traditional systems are down.

Verizon works with government clients to enable networks that prioritize connectivity.

“Digital transformation starts with secure networks, IOT, connected devices, the wireless plans, and it extends to advanced communications,” Bauer said. “We’re tailoring specific use cases for public safety, transportation, healthcare and education. We’re enabling the modern workplace.”

In defense scenarios, network integrity is mission-critical, he said, adding that, for the modern connected warfighter, “a much more robust, highly secure and compliant solution needs to be put in place.”

Back-office operations

Regardless of the agency, government now requires more modern back-office infrastructure. In many cases, IT systems have not been updated in more than a decade. Those departments miss out on cloud-enabled efficiency and modern security infrastructure.

Verizon has been working with a large state government to modernize its network across multiple agencies, so employees and constituents can digitally connect with government services. Besides the upgraded network, Verizon provided a communications platform — its cloud-based unified communications and collaboration as a service (UCaaS) — which includes videoconference tools, as well as support for commonly used services such as Microsoft Teams, BlueJeans, Jabber and Webex.

The platform has become valuable during the pandemic, as employees can remotely take a call and leverage communication features as if they were in the office.

“We were done with the network modernization project, and then COVID hit. We rapidly enabled people to work from home,”


Bauer said. Because of the network’s capabilities, Verizon’s client was able to transform citizen engagement and enable work from home in a matter of days. It also solved organizational challenges that had previously prevented the client from embracing digital solutions.

“Managing the agency’s network was a big drain on limited IT resources, and costs continued to outpace the budget. The agency had a hard time recruiting and retaining the right talent on board to do mission-critical work,” Bauer explained. With Verizon’s help, it was able to “enjoy a secure, adaptable, within-budget network managed by Verizon.”

Future-proofing digitalization

Governments are seeing returns on their digital transformation investments. Automation is freeing staff for more important tasks and digitization is making citizen engagement more efficient and effective. These and other benefits of digital transformation are best achieved by selecting a technology partner with government expertise, strong operational competency and network ownership.

Partnering with a provider such as Verizon that owns and operates network assets is key to achieving mission-critical outcomes. Implementing a secure, flexible network architecture is essential for enabling the benefits of digital evolution.



Verizon understands government agencies have missions that matter. Our customers continue to rely on our decades of experience in delivering the networks and the technology that make government work.

Learn how Verizon can digitally transform government services.

