

2021 TYLER PUBLIC SECTOR EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS

★ Washtenaw County Clerk/Register, Michigan

County Offers Citizens Streamlined Marriage
License Process Online

Challenges

As was the case for so many organizations, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted operations for staff and access for residents of Washtenaw County, Michigan. The office managing the county's vital records needed to determine a safe and effective way to provide essential services to residents. One challenge in particular was delivering remote application services for marriages. As other vital records requests and documentation had some form of remote access, the marriage applications were still done via significant in-person interaction. Typically, citizens would apply for an application on paper, submit the information to the county office in-person and execute a marriage affidavit in the presence of a clerk, then pay an application fee to complete the process. With health and safety concerns being top priority, and having the office closed for multiple months in the spring of 2020, staff knew a more efficient, remote process would be necessary.

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Organization Profile

- **Industry:** County Government
- **Location:** Ann Arbor, Michigan
- **Number of Employees:** 21
- **Population:** 367,600
- **Tyler Client Since:** 2010
- **Tyler solutions used:** Eagle™, EnerGov™, Munis®, Odyssey®



Addressing this challenge would mean adapting an integrated workflow of processes and solutions to ensure citizens not only had access to the information required to receive a marriage license, but also that staff were able to maintain compliance with proper documentation and approvals.

Solution

To improve on its existing marriage application process, the office created a virtual workflow allowing customers to engage online and take fewer steps in acquiring a marriage license. Office staff collaborated with Tyler solutions consultants and technical support to determine how best to accomplish each step, and then implemented the most significant changes during non-working hours to avoid any impact to day-to-day business. Then, the most convenient and safe option for citizens hoping to acquire a marriage license was to use the newly-implemented Eagle Self-Service™ platform and eMarriage solution.

The new eMarriage solution leverages Eagle Self-Service and gives citizens the ability to upload necessary documentation via a secure submission site, schedule a virtual appointment with Washtenaw County staff using a calendar tool and Microsoft Teams, and ultimately pay for the online marriage application with a credit card — all from the comfort of their homes. The office also made the process easier on internal staff by adjusting documentation such that affidavits could be provided to applicants prior to their virtual appointments. The change meant the affidavits no longer needed to be prepared, emailed, and printed on the same day by applicants. As regulations require staff to witness applicants signing the document, customers simply needed to have it in time for their virtual appointments. Though it may seem like a small change, this adjustment provided a significant time savings for the office and meant resources could be devoted to other tasks in the meantime.

In Their Own Words:

“We were able to come up with a way to allow people to apply, show us documentation, and schedule a virtual appointment in one system, and Tyler allowed us to do that.”

— Elizabeth Schultz, Senior Clerk/Register Analyst

Results

“Tyler’s applications make it possible for folks to engage in public business without stepping foot in an office. That’s going to become the rule going forward. There is an expectation among the public that business be conducted remotely, or at least be an option. We’re not going to go back to a time where everything is done over the counter. Our customers expect this for their convenience and their safety.”

— Edward Golembiewski, Chief Deputy Clerk/Register.

Now, marriage license applicants can enjoy a more streamlined process for acquiring their necessary documentation, and staff are able to monitor the process with fewer touch points. Washtenaw County staff used the pandemic as an agent of transformation for operations, and their newly-revised processes will continue in the future — relieving extra effort and burden on internal staff and bringing efficiency and convenience to the public. The county hopes to continue improving upon their intuitive solutions and offering as many online services as possible to residents, especially after noticing the positive response amidst the health and safety concerns of the past year.

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