iCompass helps the City of Shawnee maintain its title as one of America's top Digital Cities

THE ORGANIZATION:
City of Shawnee
Shawnee, Kansas

FOUNDED:
1857

CITY POPULATION:
67,000

GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS:
9

WHY iCOMPASS?

▶ Improved local government governance management

▶ Augmented the organization's goal of digital transformation

▶ Removed existing solution that lacked features

▶ Saved, on average, 2+ hours of labor creating each agenda

▶ Created easy and unified way to search for historical documents

▶ Streamlined process for building and distributing agenda packets

▶ Increased digital adoption among City Council members

▶ Experienced stellar iCompass customer service

The City of Shawnee is located in Johnson County, Kansas. Founded in 1857, the city has a total area of 42 square miles. The Mayor and councilmembers are elected to four-year terms. Each ward has two representatives whose terms are staggered by two years.

In 2019, Government Technology *announced that the City of Shawnee had been named to the Top Ten "Digital Cities Survey from the Center for Digital Government." The City of Shawnee has made this prestigious listing six out of the past seven years. In addition to that recognition, the City of Shawnee was listed in 2019 and 2010 by* Money Magazine *in its annual "Best Places to Live" survey, placing 17th in the United States ranking.*

THE CHALLENGE

The City of Shawnee was not always known as a "digital city." Before partnering with iCompass, a Diligent brand, the city relied on paper-based agenda packets and other inefficient methods to prepare for City Council meetings.

In its initial attempt to overcome these challenges, the City of Shawnee embarked on a free trial period with an agenda management software vendor.

"The previous vendor we tried before iCompass did not meet our needs," recounts Stephen Powell, Deputy City Manager, City of Shawnee. "It was difficult to search for items and just didn't seem robust or intuitive."

Powell explains that compiling agendas with the old system was labor-intensive and time-consuming.

"All items had to be saved in PDF format and manually uploaded to the system. When it was time to compile [the packet], it would take up to an hour and a half for the system to create the agenda and packet." he says. "A large agenda packet could crash the server, leaving you back at square one."

The Deputy City Manager knew that the City of Shawnee needed to find a robust agenda and meeting management software that could truly solve their challenges.

THE SOLUTION

Fortunately, iCompass was the next choice for the City of Shawnee. The city had selected the previous vendor upon early recommendations from other cities — coincidentally, many of which have now partnered with iCompass. Powell became familiar with iCompass through his participation with the International Institute of Municipal Clerks while attending an annual conference.

"We worked with Fran, an iCompass Implementation Specialist, and she was terrific," says Powell on the deployment. "She was able to match our existing templates, offered great recommendations that led to enhancements in the agenda process, held several web training sessions, and provided examples of how-to guides from other clients for onboarding and training new staff members."

Along with the seamless deployment and excellent iCompass customer service, Powell recounts how "intuitive the system was" and how it was "very easy to learn."

"It was the exact fit we needed," adds Powell.

THE RESULTS

Since deploying iCompass, the City of Shawnee has experienced many benefits.

"Whereas it used to take at least an hour and a half to build, iCompass helps us create an agenda packet in less than a minute," says Powell. "Also, the adoption by staff has been great; in fact, the folks we thought might be slow to adopt have become power users."

iCompass has solved the previous challenges of searching for specific archived documents, streamlining processes and centralizing mission-critical information.

"iCompass gives us the ability to use a robust search feature the other systems didn't have," he says. "Before, we often had to search through several different databases to find documents and information. Now, we can search for everything in one place and filter results to find exactly what we're looking for. We are also importing historical minutes and agendas into the Document Center, which OCRs these documents and makes them fully searchable. iCompass's tools have unified and simplified the searching and collaboration process."

Powell and his staff are glad to have an innovative and efficient governance management system built for local governments in place now.

"iCompass allows us to easily publish meeting summaries the next day when it previously took several days," he says. "Everything is connected, which has allowed the Clerk's office to work smarter. Before, we were printing 15 agenda packets, but today, we don't print any. It's all available on the users' iPads and laptops."

The City of Shawnee has also experienced a surprise benefit since deploying iCompass.

"The system allows the public to submit records requests online. It provides them with a tracking number so they can see the status of the request. We have also been able to track all our contracts and agreements, which has saved us a lot of time," says Powell.

Powell also says that he and his team are considering using the digital voting and speaker request features in iCompass and have plans to try it very soon.

With iCompass in place, the City of Shawnee looks forward to its continuing partnership with Diligent and to trying out other Diligent solutions and products; for example, Powell says his organization is excited to try Community by Diligent, a "mobile-first" digital solution that enables boards and councils to achieve higher levels of modern governance.

When asked how he would recommend iCompass to an industry colleague, Powell admits, "I have told many of my colleagues about iCompass and several have already made the switch. It's easy to show other clerks the product on my laptop, iPad or smartphone, and I'm always willing to have them visit us on agenda day to see firsthand how we use it."

"It's an approachable company with a great product and support team, and we're very pleased with our partnership with iCompass," adds Powell.

Diligent has worked with iCompass to build the next generation of meeting management software designed exclusively to meet the needs of local governments. Community by Diligent enables local government leaders and clerks to achieve excellence in modern governance. It supports responsiveness to their constituencies through an integrated set of technologies, insights, and processes that leverage Diligent's deep experience in offering digital governance solutions to public and private organizations of all sizes.

Get started and see iCompass and Community by Diligent in action:

Email: community@diligent.com

Visit: diligent.com/community