

Like all Clerk's Offices in 2020, Canton Township faced extraordinary challenges on multiple fronts. 2020 required our office to completely reinvent and innovate how the Clerk's Office interacts with the public. At Canton Township, we decided to lean into the challenge and find innovative, replicable, low-cost adjustments that helped respond to the changing environment. Beyond the pandemic, our office made it a goal to make changes that would permanently increase efficiency and created a pathway to accessibility and relevance in the future.

Canton Township accomplished those goals in the following ways:

1. Utilizing a typical, low cost, and easy to implement restaurant waitlist management software to reduce lines and increase efficiency

Understanding the limitations on capacity limits and building access due to the pandemic, Canton Township reinvented how residents gain access and receive service from the Clerk's Office. Canton implemented a standard software used by restaurants to manage the long lines we experienced leading up to the election. This software allowed individuals to check-in while waiting in line and designate why they were visiting the office. The software also documented wait times, the number of individuals waiting and allowed Canton to have individuals waiting outside the building or away from the counter. This software gave our staff the ability to text and send voice messages to those waiting in line without them even needing to be in the building. This increased social distancing while allowing more freedom for the resident - as they are not tied to waiting in a small space or a building for their turn in line. This software also allowed our staff to manage curbside service for at-risk individuals, those exposed to COVID-19, or our many Election Inspectors (curbside service to pick up and drop off election supplies). The software has currently changed to allow online appointments to continue immediate communication and access to the government for the resident. This software is a low cost, monthly fee, with no commitment, meaning it is quickly and affordably implemented by any Clerk's Office in the Country. According to Challengers present, they would often mark "no-line" when observing our office. We estimated that the average wait time (from the point of check-in) was as low as 5 minutes per resident at some points. We have been informed that the state-wide average was 30 minutes (some jurisdictions having hour-long lines. Using software like this also provide the potential for contract tracing, data analysis, and customer service review for our office.

#2 Fully Online Election Inspector Training

The Canton Clerk's Office was unable to host 300-600 Inspectors for in-person training. Our office worked hard to become one of the only, if not the only, Clerk's Office to offer fully online Election Inspector Certification. Our office developed the training through helpful videos and an online form that served as both an application and knowledge check. Manuals and guides were also converted to PDF format and uploaded to one web page. This method gave our office the ability to measure learning

comprehension and fully document those trained and Inspectors' training levels. During the November election, we saw basic Inspector questions and misunderstandings drop dramatically from prior elections. This method also allowed training materials to remain available for Inspectors to rewatch, review, and study ahead of Election Day. Any Clerk's Office can replicate this method with some hard work and free online form builders. Although many Clerk's Office will prefer in-person and hands-on training, this provides an exciting alternative to those with disabilities, those unable to attend large in-person classes, or those who may have language barriers with spoken English lecture settings. It also allowed our office to ensure that Inspectors are receiving equal training.

#3 Media Partnerships to Combat Misinformation

The Canton Clerk's Office made an effort to invite in and reach out to local media outlets to gain their assistance in sharing the correct information concerning elections. We were able to build relationships that provided video interviews showing the process of mail voting, testing, and writing editorials correcting misinformation. Working with the media, opposed to keeping the press at arm's length, was a free way for us to share information about voting and include the public in our processes - and best of all, it's simple and easy for any Clerk's Office to do. We now have a long-lasting relationship and an open-door policy for journalists to vet information about the election process before running publications that may be inaccurate.

#4 Utilizing Free FEMA Training to Better Serve Residents on Election Day

The Canton Clerk team completed free FEMA National Incident Management Systems training to learn how professionals respond to large scale incidents with maximum efficiency and communication. We implemented these classes' spirit by switching to a law enforcement dispatch style system utilizing police radios, employees that serve as field reps, and an online system reporting tool (former EAC winners inspired the last part). Combining all of these aspects and partnering with our Public Safety Department allowed us to digitally manage hundreds of election day requests and "dispatch" field agents to precinct issues. It also increased communication amongst public safety, the Clerk's Office, and our Inspectors. It was the most efficient, safest, and most communicative method of responding to election day issues we have ever attempted. Treating election day like a large-scale incident, and managing our team with inspiration from FEMA, really did increase our professionalism and response. All of this translates to safer precincts, quicker response times, and shorter lines. Best of all, any Clerk's Office can do this for free!

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