Rescue Plan Can Support COVID-19 Tech Challenges and Future Needs

Revenue loss and the rapid transition to remote operations have been among top governmental challenges during the COVID-19 crisis. In response to these ongoing issues, the $1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 includes $350 billion to offset decreased revenue for state, local, territorial, and tribal governments.

These federal funds can help local governments invest in technology that has allowed them to comply with public health measures and to help them meet community needs in the future. In fact, investment in infrastructure may be a "well-suited use" of ARPA funds, according to the Government Finance Officers Association.[1] During the COVID-19 pandemic government has used technology to:

- Enable remote work
- Keep operations running
- Engage community members
- Build operational efficiencies

Local governments are increasingly recognizing the importance of remote capabilities and digital workflows beyond the pandemic. They are including citizen engagement, process automation, and infrastructure modernization among top 2021 priorities, according to e.Republic.[2] Whether it's enabling a hybrid work model, eliminating paper workflows, or creating remote community and employee digital access, modern software has proven its value.

Below, we will explore how technology has kept communities connected during the pandemic and how technology will continue to meet future needs.
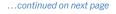
Connecting Communities During COVID-19 and Beyond

Tyler's Civic software solutions are integrated with Tyler's comprehensive software ecosystem that connects operations and processes for employees, constituents, and communities.

ARPA's Support for Local Government

The ARPA follows the 2020 CARES Act, which tied support directly to pandemic mitigation efforts. In comparison to CARES Act spending rules, the ARPA gives local governments more flexibility because federal rules simply tie funding to replacement of revenue lost due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Plan highlights:

- $130 billion for local government (cities and counties)
- Funds are available until Dec. 31, 2024
- Funds must be used to replace revenue lost because of COVID-19

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[1] GFOA. American Rescue Plan Spending: Recommended Guiding Principles. March 2021.
www.gfoa.org/american-rescue-plan-spending-guiding-principles

[2] e.Republic. First Look: 2021 Local Government Tech Priorities & Budget Outlook. December 2020.
webinars.govtech.com/First-Look-2021-Local-Government-Tech-Priorities-Budget-Outlook-133041.html

CI-EPL-FLY-18925-22238-BE-0222

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"In the last year, we've rolled to a 100% online submission for all permitting inspections. We've adopted a virtual line software that allows us to maintain services; although we were closed to the public, we were never closed for business."

— **Director of IT & Support Services, Michael Heslin, city of Temecula, California**

How Tyler Has Helped Increase Community Access and Operational Efficiency

During the pandemic, Tyler Technologies has worked hand in hand with local governments throughout the United States to keep city halls' virtual doors open. With a wide range of proven solutions that allow remote operations, Tyler has helped the public sector adapt to the crisis and prepare for future challenges. Tyler's integrated civic services solutions have helped communities with two critical aspects of the response to COVID-19: social distancing and remote work.

Tyler's cloud-based civic services solutions have been beneficial for organizations that have needed to transition their workforces rapidly to remote work. Because of inherent scalability, the cloud is well poised to help in times of crisis, whether enabling remote work or scaling up to meet the community's evolving engagement needs. Cloud-based solutions take the pressure off IT departments to manage servers and make it easier to connect securely with remote workers.

Tyler's ability to deploy software remotely has made it possible to add needed solutions despite social distancing constraints. Tyler has helped clients with self-service portal solutions, implementing remote payroll changes, launching mobile applications, COVID-19-specific financial reporting, and much more during the pandemic.

Finally, Tyler's cybersecurity services have helped IT departments protect networks against cyberattacks while assisting with managing an evolving network footprint, keeping a community focused on critical needs.

Now and for the Future: Enabling Remote Work

Employees' ability to work remotely is at the heart of government response to COVID-19. While the transition has been challenging, local governments have managed to transform familiar in-person workflows to new digital solutions such as:

- **Electronic reviews and approvals:** Allows the permit approval, plan submittal, and review process to be executed in a paperless, browser-based environment with no need for face-to-face review meetings.

- **Civic access portals:** Lets users pay invoices and fees, perform permitting and licensing tasks, inspections, and more 24/7/365.

Investing in the Future: With many local governments anticipating hybrid staffing scenarios going forward, remote work capabilities will remain important.

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"We're looking at reopening our doors at the end of the month. We're not expecting a bunch of people to come flooding back in. This is a convenience and a more efficient way of doing business. it's not going to go away -- the majority of our stuff is now done online."

— **Director of IT & Support Services, Michael Heslin, city of Temecula, California**

Now and for the Future:
Keeping Government Running

Despite social distancing guidelines, government operations have continued to function thanks to technology that has bypassed the need for in-person meetings and paper-based workflows. Software has helped with:

- **Permitting and licensing:** From applications to fee payments and more, community members can complete vital tasks remotely, avoiding prolonged waits because of office closures.

- **Informed executive insights:** Allows comprehensive community development, permitting, business licensing, and code enforcement data to be extended within a powerful cloud-based data and analytics platform to enable the government agency's most critical decision making executives and processes, anytime/anywhere.

- **Business management operations:** Allows regulatory business management and licensing processes to operate in the cloud where business and compliance workflows can be transformed into more efficient management processing, enabling a modern and remote capable government workforce.

- **Community development:** Allows community development, permitting, inspections and code enforcement processes to operate in the cloud where regulatory workflows can be transformed into more efficient business processing, enabling a modern and remote capable government workforce.

Investing in the future: The convenience of remote task completion has sped up community adoption of remote options.

Now and for the Future:
Supporting Civic Engagement

Software has made it possible for a community to engage with its government despite curtailment of in-person engagement. Using home computers and mobile devices, community members have continued to access services and keep informed through:

- **Incident reporting software** that allows users to make non-emergency inquiries and complaints, then follow progress on their requests.

- **Civic access portals** that let users pay bills, perform permitting and licensing tasks, and more 24/7/365.

- **Asset management software** that intuitively tracks assets from procurement to retirement, plus all maintenance in between, and offers insight to all stakeholders in both your organization and community.

- **Mobile city applications** that increase civic engagement and help streamline workflows remotely.

- **Electronic review and approval software** that allow the plan review and submittal process to be made within a paperless, browser-based environment.

Investing in the future: Governments have implemented successful solutions for connecting with the communities they serve. In times of crisis, these connections are invaluable, as proven during COVID-19.

For more information, email **info@tylertech.com**.

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