




COUNTY OF SAN BENITO

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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DIGITAL INTERACTIVE BUDGET, DELIVERING ACCESSIBILITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND INNOVATED

Executive Summary

San Benito County, the first California County to publish a fully digital budget, using OpenGov interactive budget platform to publish a web-based budget book for Fiscal year of 2020/21. This monumental achievement is part of County's Strategic Plan, a commitment to being a leader in innovation, transparency, and accountability by maximizing the effective and efficient use of technology to deliver contemporary public services. Opengov budgeting software will empower community members on how they can access the County budget through a user-friendly online format, where they can view the budget broken down by funds and departments, and even change views using different report and chart styles.

Overview

The first California County to fully implemented a fully digital, interactive budget that delivers accessibility, transparency, and visually appealing data to our community.

Challenge

Having a budget book that was difficult for our community members to access, navigate, and understand was a significant challenge that we overcame by revamping our entire budget to become more user friendly. Prior year's budget was available electronically as a PDF where tables and information available to interpret and find the data were a challenge for many. The County had a heavy reliance on tables to depict and communicate budgetary information to the community. San Benito County is a small and rural county with limited resources and is committed to becoming fully transparent and enhancing the budget and process's customer experience. The public needs to know how funding is spent and access to the budgeted process while implementing social distancing measures. With the COVID-19 health pandemic, a crucial need to transition to an electronic process quickly and effectively provides access to information. Becoming more transparent is a move for greater accountability, building greater trust in an open and equitable budget.

Solution

The Board of Supervisors identified "Technology" as a main focus for the County's Strategic Plan, including a commitment to being a leader in innovation, transparency, and accountability by maximizing the effective and efficient use of technology to deliver contemporary public services. Providing an innovated, modern budget that is interactive, streamlined, where complex information can be filtered and viewed in a visually appealing manner transforming how information is delivered. The public can now access our budget and can look at introduction and overview, budget details, and schedules and additional information. Where when they are looking at information they can choose how to visualize review data they can choose pie charts, bar

graphs, line graphs, stackable graphs, and percentage graphs. They can also filter information and pull up historical data. The OpenGov platform has provided an end to end budget development solution that has drastically modernize and streamline the County's budget process. OpenGov's budgeting and planning tools will allow the County to reduce manual and clerical efforts, provide a central collaborative location to develop budget numbers and evaluate scenarios, project workforce, and personnel costs, as well as ultimately provide the publication of the budget document.

Innovation

Transitioning to a new budget platform started as an idea that shifted to successfully launching a new program. San Benito County was able to implement a new budget book, which changes the process of working on the budget and delivering an enhanced service to public members. The County improved efficiency, effectiveness, and had many advantages to our community. According to Opengov, San Benito County is the first County in California to implement a fully digital and interactive budget. The County and the public can filter data and look at trends and visually see models on data. All can pivot data into tables, graphs, and charts. The County has streamlined and unified the end-to-end budgeting process, tying budget dollars to vital organizational initiatives. Reporting and Transparency, add context to your results, and share internally and externally for better collaboration. OpenGove delivers a powerful analytical capability that allows the County to be forward thinking into our future strategy.

Results

It is transforming from a manually driven budget into a streamlined process synchronized to the County's internal system, becoming more efficient and effective in delivering accurate information. Internally, it has fostered a more collaborative platform that quickly and effectively allows multiple departments access to their departmental information. Moving forward, it enhanced the way we communicate and share information with the public members. The new budget was automated and made more data readily available to the public. We are fostering greater transparency and trust within the public.

The online Budget enables the County to track its Strategic Plan internally in easy to use dashboards, while providing administration and department heads the ability to see executive views of County performance. OpenGov uniquely ties together financial and non-financial data from across the County's current systems. It has provided internal efficiencies and streamline information sharing tied to our new Strategic Plan, which will increase data-driven decision making.

Replicability

Online budget can be promoted as best practice. Other Counties can move towards a fully digital and interactive budget to become more transparent and allow individuals to filter information in a manner that they need. OpenGov has the experience of working with many municipalities through the United States and has the ability to work with Counties in California.

Project or Program Contact

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Optional Submission

The link to San Benito County Fully interactive Budget is listed below:

<https://stories.opengov.com/sanbenitocountyca/published/ATlhpnptL>