

Citizen Expectations Are Changing, ARPA Funding Can Help State & Local Governments Keep Up

When it comes to modernizing constituent services, government entities everywhere are dealing with limited resources and growing demand.

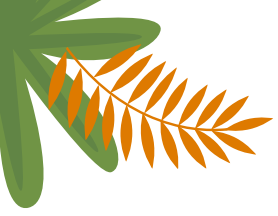
Nadia Hansen, digital transformation executive for global public sector at Salesforce, is passionate about guiding public servants through these and other challenges she understands firsthand. A former chief information officer for Clark County, Nevada, Hansen is working with state, territorial, local and tribal governments to access [American Rescue Plan Act](#) funds set aside for modernizing and digitizing constituent services such as 311 contact centers, licensing and permitting, vaccine management and more.

Constituents are accustomed to having the world at their fingertips: Googling answers to their questions, scheduling appointments online, paying friends through Venmo, booking accommodations through Airbnb and the like. They expect self-service options like mobile apps, website experiences that anticipate their needs, and 24/7 access to information in their own languages.

“These trends toward consumer-focused, self-service digital experiences are driving new expectations into the public sector,” Hansen says. “We live in an Amazon-Google-Airbnb world. Why should government be any different?”

What government entities sometimes lack is a clear pathway to modernization – and the funds to make it happen. That’s where Salesforce comes in with tailored consulting services provided by people like Hansen who have been in their shoes and can leverage the company’s widely recognized commercial successes to offer guidance.

The great news is: With ARPA, there’s now funding to make those changes happen.



The American Rescue Plan Act

ARPA provides \$65.1 billion in direct flexible aid to counties across the U.S. in what Hansen describes as a once-in-a-lifetime funding stream for upgrades normally absorbed at the state or local level. More governments are using [ARPA dollars](#) to bolster local health programs, strengthen infrastructure, and ensure crucial human services are available to residents.

ARPA allows for funding to be allocated for government services such as “modernization of cybersecurity, including hardware, software and protection of critical infrastructure; health services; environmental remediation; school or educational services; and the provision of police, fire and other

public safety services.” Counties are also investing in housing, broadband, and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

Hansen says Salesforce’s [Public Sector Solutions](#) are unique in that the same platform can be used repeatedly and tailored to nearly any situation, whether it’s crisis management, licensing and permitting, or vaccine outcomes.

“There’s a lot of solutions on the market that are what we call point solutions,” she says. “They fix a certain problem, but they are unable to scale for other problems. Where Salesforce is different is we’re a platform company that leverages drag-and-drop, low code/no code features that you don’t need an IT department to create. Then you can scale and grow.”

Salesforce [found](#) that 51% of Americans believe making agency websites and apps easier to use is among the most critical improvements the government can make to its service delivery.

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NADIA HANSEN | Digital Transformation Executive, Global Public Sector, Salesforce



Rebuilding and Improving Efficiency

The full impact of the pandemic is expected to heavily affect city and county operating budgets in 2022, 2023 and beyond, Hansen says. As governments grapple with reducing their workforces and losing institutional knowledge, creating efficiency in other ways becomes even more critical.



Customer service agents can be more efficient and responsive when they have a single view of all constituent interactions in a modernized system,

and they can drastically slice the cost and time required to respond to complaints. For example, the city of Chicago, after [partnering with Salesforce](#), saw work orders for graffiti cleanup drop from an average 45 to 60 minutes to schedule to just 5 to 10. Closure rates for the work orders rose from 82% to 94%.

Across the nation, as many communities face business closures, high unemployment and disruption in tourism, restaurants, hospitality and performing arts, ARPA funding comes at an important time. When zoning and permitting processes are efficient, businesses can become licensed, construction jobs function smoothly, and local income isn't hampered by government red tape.

"The question is, are people fully utilizing that funding?" Hansen says. "Now is the time to move away from legacy platforms and really be able to give that Amazon experience that people are looking for."

[Learn more about how Salesforce can help your state or local government modernize effectively.](#)