

Jefferson County Government Sector

Why Is This Important?

Government serves citizens in numerous ways, from offering services like vehicle registration to providing information such as election results. While it is common for people to feel disengaged from the everyday actions of state and local government, technology has allowed governments to begin closing that gap. On the state level, Ohio has developed www.ohio.gov, a comprehensive website that provides government services and information to all citizens. On this site, residents can purchase and update hunting licenses, car dealers can access title searches on cars and citizens can monitor the progress of legislation when the General Assembly is in session. By bringing the services of the state government to the convenience of residents' homes, the ohio.gov site provides participants a greater sense of relevance in the actions of state government.

Jefferson County Government

- State of Ohio, www.ohio.gov
- Ohio General Assembly, www.legislature.state.oh.us
- Geographic Information, www.puco.ohio.gov/PUCO/GIS/?navitem=leftsidebar
- Public Utilities, www.PUCO.ohio.gov
- State Senate Districts, www.puc.state.oh.us/pucogis/NewDistricts/Senate_links.pdf
- State House Districts, www.puc.state.oh.us/pucogis/NewDistricts/House_links2.pdf

Local governments have also seen the importance of an online presence. They provide communities with many services that offer a great deal of local information and encourage public involvement and awareness. With a web presence, local governments can distribute information to more citizens, provide increased opportunities for interaction with the agencies that affect them and make transactions that previously required a drive to the courthouse accessible online.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Jefferson County had a population of 68,730 in 2007. 60.3% of the population are families with no children, 39.7% are families with children. 21.5% of the population is under the age 18, and 44.4% is over the age of 45. 35.2% of the population has attended some college or higher. The median household income is \$30,853.

Municipalities in Jefferson County include the following:

- County Seat, Steubenville City - population 18,864
- Island Creek Township - population 6,052
- Cross Creek Township - population 5,341
- City of Toronto – population 5,221

Where Are We Today?

Jefferson County residents utilize the Internet to conduct business through a variety of methods at a rate slightly lower than the state average. Uses of the Internet by Jefferson County residents are as follows:

- 73% of residents research products online (77% statewide)
- 64% of residents purchase products online (70% statewide)
- 37% of residents use online banking (55% statewide)
- 44% of residents search for jobs online (50% statewide)
- 28% of residents conduct online government transactions (35% statewide)

The State of Ohio has taken a leadership role in the development of online government services through its portal at www.ohio.gov. Many of the services available are targeted at local residents. Visiting Ohio's website allows users to access state laws and regulations, renew driver's licenses, locate local colleges and public schools, apply for unemployment services and hundreds of other services. Information about business, education, travel, employment and government is also available to residents.

All entities within the government sector understand that technology is important to conduct the government's business more effectively. Broadband is viewed as a way to better communicate with the residents of the cities and county. With the use of Broadband, the government sector wants to utilize applications that take advantage of that infrastructure.

There is a wide disparity in broadband connectivity, infrastructure, hardware and software capabilities at the various government entities in Jefferson County. The county and the city of Steubenville have greater resources vs. smaller municipalities and townships in the county. Many remote areas have limited or no broadband service.

Government Sector Assessment Overview			
Category	Current Assessment	Future Vision	Additional Comments
Networked Places	3	4	
Applications & Services	2	4	
Leadership	1	3	

The Jefferson County eCommunity Leadership Team found that the government sector is just beginning to use technology to its advantage and believes the Internet to be essential to business operations.

- **Networked Places** – In the category of networked places, Jefferson County’s government sector is currently at stage 3 on a 0 to 5 scale. Many employees have email accounts. Some field workers are collecting data on laptop computers or palmtops. Webcams are starting to be deployed.
- **Applications & Services** – In the category of technology applications & services, the government sector is currently at stage 2 on a 0 to 5 scale. Most public agency websites offer informational features such as a community calendar, staff directory, and downloadable forms. Customers rely mostly on postal mail and telephone to conduct business.
- **Leadership** – In terms of technology leadership within the government community, Jefferson County is currently at stage 1 on a 0 to 5 scale. The Internet is seen as a possible way to enhance daily communications.

Where Do We Need To Be?

The Jefferson County eCommunity Leadership Team has developed goals to provide a framework for robust e-government functions within the next two years. The team has set goals to move Networked Places from stage 3 to stage 4, Applications & Services from stage 2 to stage 4, and Leadership from stage 1 to stage 3, all on a 0 to 5 scale.

- Government facilities throughout the county are connected via a fiber optic network.
- Affordable broadband service is available throughout the county.
- All government entities have websites offering a full array of e-government services and constituents are using the services extensively, resulting in cost reductions and improved customer service.
- Some field workers use wireless networks to upload and download data in the field. Some employees

use desktop videoconferencing. Sensors and webcams monitor locations, such as rivers that are important to public safety.

- Customers can make routine payments, such as parking fines, online using credit cards or electronic fund transfer. Parks and recreation classes have online registration. Employees can enter building inspections and violations from the field.
- Government staff is actively involved in framing technology and telecommunications issues. Processes are underway for enhancing connectivity, rights-of-way management and information technology innovation. Employees are trained and knowledgeable about basic applications.
- Leaders are adopting broadband strategies
- All government sector employee are education & training

How Do We Get There?

Project Ideas

- Explore options for developing fiber optic connectivity with all government entities throughout the county.
- Secure providers to extend service to all unserved and under served areas of the county.
- Secure funding to enable government entities to create full featured websites.
- Develop GIS mapping of water and sewer utilities within the county.

Other Potential Projects

- Establish a Formal Multi-Jurisdiction Technology Group.
- Develop more thorough employee technology training programs.
- Upgrade email connections using fiber optic connections for large file transfers.
- Improve the ability to conduct business with government over the Internet, e.g. permitting, purchasing and payments, by developing more egovernment applications that provide value to the consumer.
- Seek grant funding to improve the technology infrastructure and information technology support functions.
- Encourage inter-governmental sharing of software, information and ecommerce concepts.
- Ensure that government is utilizing “best practices” in data storage and security.

The eCommunity Leaders within the Government sector include:

Joe Boni, Jefferson County

Chris Mader, Jefferson County

Rob Smedley, Jefferson County

Tom Gentile, Jefferson County Commissioner

Patrick J. Marshall, Jefferson County Auditor

Domenick Mucci, Jefferson Regional Planning Commission

Walt Ziemba, Village of Wintersville

In working toward the implementation of the sector-specific goals, Connect Ohio recommends that additional participants be brought into the process, which may include technology providers, subject matter experts, other community organizations, funding sources, and the resources of agencies and commercial providers of products and services to the government sector.

Don Shirley, Southeast State Operations Manager for Connect Ohio will continue to work with the sector leaders to advance selected projects toward their completion. By leveraging Connect Ohio's project management process, its research information, and its partners, projects will be defined, developed, and reviewed to help assure that the local teams are equipped to execute them. Connect Ohio will assist in the identification of funding sources, introducing technical resources, and helping to define the measurable goals and timelines that will ensure that the projects are actionable, measurable, and valuable.