

## Licking 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](http://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.

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, Licking County had a population of 156,985 in 2007. 51.9% of the population are families with no children, 48% are families with children. 26% of the population is under the age 18, and 35.8% is over the age of 45. 43.9% of the population has attended some college or higher. The median household income is \$44,124. Municipalities in Licking County include the following:

#### Licking County Government

- Licking County Government, [www.lcounty.com](http://www.lcounty.com)
- State of Ohio, [www.ohio.gov](http://www.ohio.gov)
- Ohio General Assembly, [www.legislature.state.oh.us](http://www.legislature.state.oh.us)
- Geographic Information, [www.puco.ohio.gov/PUCO/GIS/?navitem=leftsidebar](http://www.puco.ohio.gov/PUCO/GIS/?navitem=leftsidebar)
- Public Utilities, [www.PUCO.ohio.gov](http://www.PUCO.ohio.gov)
- State Senate Districts, [www.puc.state.oh.us/pucogis/NewDistricts/Senate\\_links.pdf](http://www.puc.state.oh.us/pucogis/NewDistricts/Senate_links.pdf)
- State House Districts, [www.puc.state.oh.us/pucogis/NewDistricts/House\\_links2.pdf](http://www.puc.state.oh.us/pucogis/NewDistricts/House_links2.pdf)
- Job & Family Services, [www.msmissp.com/lcdjfs](http://www.msmissp.com/lcdjfs)

- County Seat, Newark City - population 47,176
- Pataskala City - population 12,649
- Heath City - population 8,888

### Where Are We Today?

Licking County residents utilize the Internet to conduct business through a variety of methods at a rate slightly higher than the state average with the exception of online banking and searching for jobs online.

Uses of the Internet by Licking County residents are as follows:

- 87% of residents research products online (77% statewide)
- 78% of residents purchase products online (70% statewide)
- 52% of residents use online banking (55% statewide)
- 46% of residents search for jobs online (50% statewide)
- 44% 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](http://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.

The leadership team stated that, to date, they have not deployed web cams. The county is using VoIP where they have installed about 800 phones. The county has its own fiber in place between main buildings (approximately 10). They also have our own website which includes GIS and offers a good deal of public documents and information online.

The City of Newark has a mix of T1 and Wireless, but they are limited by funds to build a backbone/infrastructure.

All government staff uses email, Internet, and basic MS Office. The Job and Family Services office has a computer lab for customers with Internet access. They have also installed video conferencing equipment.

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

The Licking 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, Licking 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, Licking County is currently at stage 2 on a 0 to 5 scale. Public agencies do not have a strategy for how best to use eGovernment. Minimal telecommunications planning has occurred. Elected officials are not involved in telecommunications issues.

## Where Do We Need To Be?

The Licking County eCommunity Leadership Team has developed goals to provide a framework for robust e-government functions within the next two years, bringing all three categories to stage 4 on the 0 to 5 scale. The team’s vision includes:

- 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.
- Some agencies have a formal policy that allows some employees to work from home at least one day a week. Rights-of-way and tower sitting policies are in place. Elected officials understand the importance of the network for economic development and quality of life.

## How Do We Get There?

### Project Ideas

- Expand the deployment of the mesh WiFi network so that it will serve both first responders and residents.
- Connect all government facilities with fiber and ethernet - create a ring topology so the network is self-healing.
- Upgrade the website to add eCommerce capabilities

### Other Potential Projects

- Develop more thorough employee technology training programs.
- Allow for donation of appropriate surplus computers to non-governmental organizations and individuals.
- Allow for closest-unit dispatching resulting in more lives saved.
- 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:

Bob Diebold, City of Newark

Rich Tuttle, Licking County

Deb Cole, Licking County

In working toward the implementation of the sector-specific goals, Connect Ohio recommends that additional participants be brought into the process, who 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.

Brad McMillen, Northwest 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.