

2020 NASCIO State IT Award Submission:
Data Management & Transparency

CENTRAL IT IMPROVES TENNESSEE'S OVERALL DATA TRANSPARENCY EFFORTS

Submitted on July 15th, on behalf of the State of Tennessee
by Strategic Technology Solutions, Department of Finance and Administration

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Introducing OpenMaps
Explore, interact, and download data visualizations for in-demand metrics across state government.

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Tennessee's Top Marks in Academic Standards

Education & Workforce Development

To be the fastest improving state in the country. The administration is focused on ensuring that Tennessee's K-12 education system is led by great principals and highly effective teachers.

Jobs & Rural Economic Development

To be the #1 state in the Southeast for high quality jobs. The administration is working hard to foster a business-friendly environment that will make it easier for Tennessee companies to grow and make our state a more attractive place for businesses to call home.

Transparent & Efficient Government

To be the best managed state, providing high-quality services at the lowest possible price to taxpayers. Tennessee has a proud tradition of being a fiscally conservative state, and the administration is working hard to ensure state government continues to be well managed with the lowest possible tax burden to residents.

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Tennessee's Data Transparency Story

Many governments desire to uphold transparency in all they do, but most do not have the expertise, resources, or funding required to design and develop the technology systems and infrastructure that supports the measurement of program impacts. The State of Tennessee has been blessed to have the support of its current and previous administration in these areas.

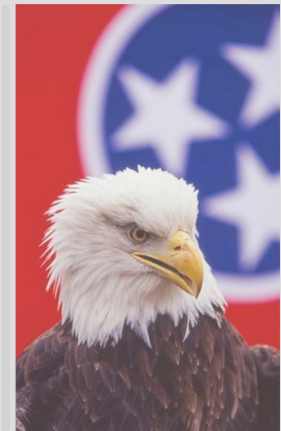
Beginning largely with the 2015 Tennessee Public Records Act (TPRA), T.C.A. §10-7-501 et seq, the State of Tennessee began to drive transparency forward within the state. The TPRA required "all state, county and municipal records shall at all times, during business hours, which for public hospitals shall be during the business hours of their administrative offices, be open for personal inspection by any citizen of Tennessee, and those in charge of such records shall not refuse such right of inspection to any citizen, unless otherwise provided by state law. The custodian of a public record or the custodian's designee shall promptly make available for inspection any public record not specifically exempt from disclosure" (T.C.A. §10-7-503(a)(2)(A-B). Inundated with open records request, there quickly became a need to create better and more automated way to access state data and records.

Transparent Tennessee became the first large step towards meeting this challenge. The concept was a website that would give citizens access to pull records/information directly from TN.gov, rather than waiting for an open records request to be fulfilled manually by a state employee and then "pushed" out to the requesting citizen. Tennessee's *Transparent Tennessee* website was launched and offered performance data on how the state was meeting its goals, and how state dollars were being spent.

Tennessee's Performance Management Process – Tennessee has implemented a performance management system aligned with statewide strategic goals, with clear and prioritized outcome-focused goals, program objectives, and measures. The teams that support this effort came from all different areas

KUDOS TN!

Experts at *Results for America* state "We believe deeply in the power of evidence and data to transform the way governments improve outcomes for children, families and communities" (2020). Over the past two years, the State of Tennessee has been recognized by *Results for America* for leading the way with our data-driven and evidence-based examples made available to the public on TN.gov. Results for America is a nonprofit organization, which is dedicated to using evidence-based practices to get results-driven solutions. Their aim has been to help decision-makers at all levels of government harness the power of evidence and data to solve our world's greatest challenges. Tennessee is proud to be considered one of the best in this area and recognizes that this success would not be possible without leveraging the benefits of information technology (IT) and the data-driven solutions administered by Strategic Technology Solutions (STS), the state's highly centralized IT organization.



of government: Governor's Office, the Office of Customer Focused Government; Strategic Technology Solutions; the Department of Finance & Administration; the Office of Evidence & Impact; the Department of Human Resources; the Comptroller of the Treasury, etc.

Beginning in April 2019, the State of Tennessee's 23 cabinet-level departments began their four-year strategic and performance planning process. Governor Lee's five priorities, Education and Workforce Development, Jobs and Rural Economic Development, Transparent and Efficient Government, Healthier Tennessee, and Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform, set the foundation for each department to create their strategic plans. Using the Governor's priorities and the information from their internal assessment (modeled after Baldrige Excellence Framework), each department developed a four-year plan with goals, objectives, and tactics for success.

The Performance Management Program for the state is based on the Tennessee Excellence, Accountability, and Management Act that provides performance standards and expected work outcomes that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time sensitive (SMART goals). The purpose of the program is to nurture a performance-based culture where the individual employee's performance is aligned with the current administration's objectives.

The state collects, analyzes, and uses data and evidence to improve outcomes, return on investment, and other dimensions of Tennessee's Performance Management Program. The state's dedicated data website, *Transparent Tennessee*, houses statewide performance dashboards with specific subgoals, targets, and performance data made available to the public.

Most Recent Updates and Improvements – The first iteration of *Transparent Tennessee* was launched several years ago in order to provide open information to the public. As time progressed, users' expectations rose. Many felt *Transparent Tennessee* offered limited access to individual departmental info that generally did not provide opportunities for citizens, businesses and researchers to interact with and download large amounts of data from across the enterprise of state government. In short, the *Transparent Tennessee* data "visualizations" were outdated, and considered disjointed, static, vague, unsourced, and unavailable as downloadable files.

In 2018, the project *Transparent Tennessee 2.0* was launched and expanded the site into a more interactive approach, leveraging dashboards to share internal goals, financial data, and summary statistics around the state's priorities.

What Sets Tennessee Apart? - In support of the Governor's strategic priority, Transparent and Efficient Government, the state's centralized IT organization Strategic Technology Solutions (STS) partnered closely with the division of Customer Focused Government on improving the state's main transparency platform, *Transparent Tennessee*, in 2019. Specific metrics tied to the success of each Department's priority area were publicly displayed on the state's *Transparent Tennessee* website.

Transparent Tennessee includes fiscal data related to departments' programmatic spending and other expenditures. The site also publicizes strategic goals in the areas of education and workforce development, fiscal strength and efficient government, health and welfare, jobs and economic development, and public safety.

Tennessee stands out in many ways when it comes to data transparency. Listed below (figure 1.1) are a few examples from *Results for America* that make our state unique compared to most others.

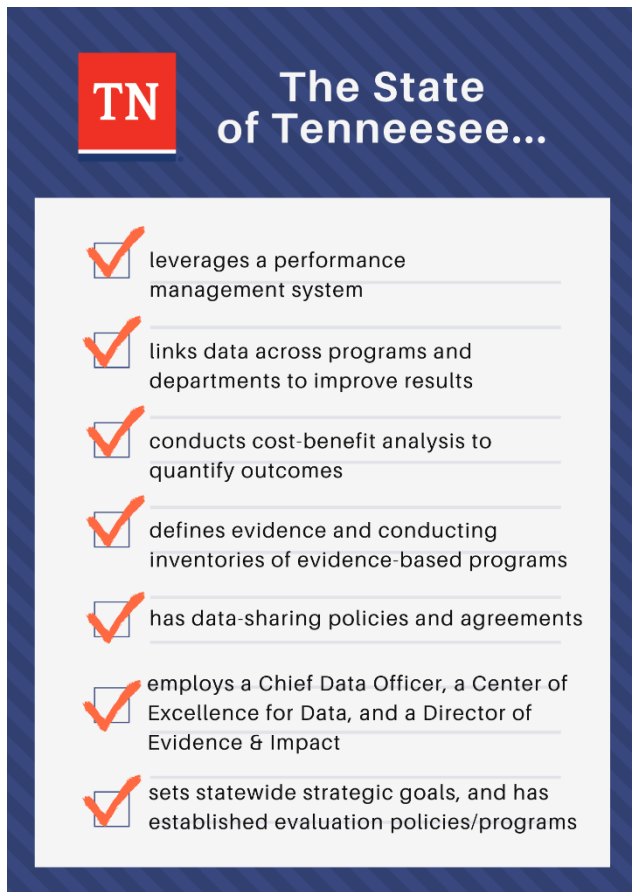


Figure 1.1

free public download. Citizens can build a comprehensive data profile for any county in the State of Tennessee. Datasets include chronological metrics such as the unemployment rate, opioid overdoses, rare species, tourism-related local tax savings, active shooter trainings, bridge condition and much more.

The first iteration of *OpenMaps* contained 78 geospatial data visualizations, representing submissions from 20 participating departments across State. *OpenMaps* datasets were identified through several rounds of interviews with department executive leadership, communication staff and IT staff. Selected datasets were identified as having high citizen-demand, relevance to key priorities, and a geospatial nature. Tableau was utilized to incorporate parameterized selectable counties, filterable time periods, bar graphs, time-series line graphs, sortable line-level data, and

Information Technology Support - Strategic Technology Solutions (STS) serves as the administrator of *Transparent Tennessee*. STS leveraged Tableau and Adobe analytics technologies to provide interactive data visualizations which showcase key, in-demand metrics from all corners of Tennessee State Government. All visualizations are built using the most recently available data, and users can download raw data for each visualization directly from the site. Examples of data sets found on the site are: state fiscal data, *OpenMaps* key metrics, and an interactive budget tool.

STS partnered closely with Customer Focused Government (CFG), the state's internal consulting team on a new concept for *Transparent Tennessee*, now called *OpenMaps*. The *OpenMaps* platform provides dozens of the state's most in-demand datasets, and visualizes them at a county-level, and offers the data for

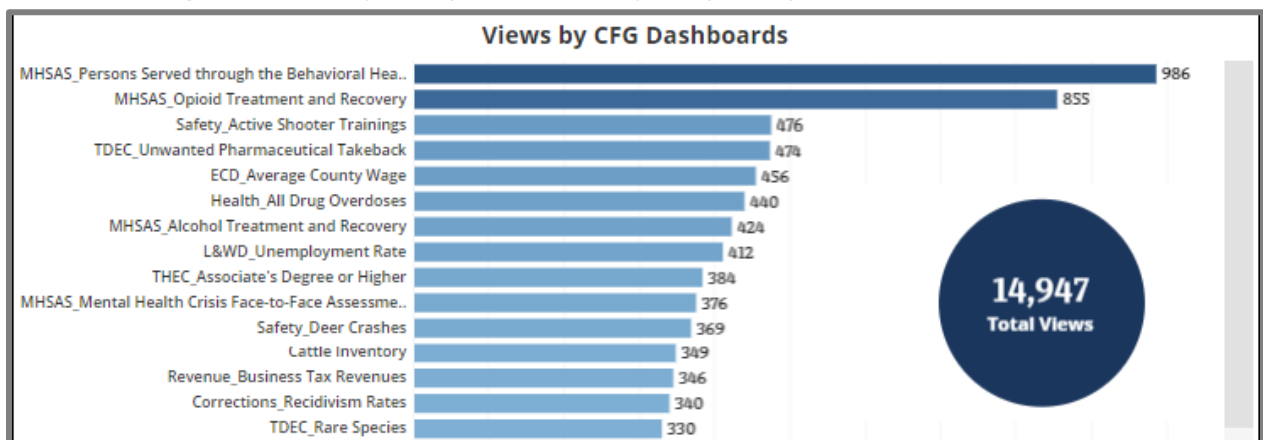
tool tips providing sub-variables: Increased granularity; Richer contextual information; Fresh, nearly real-time data publication, supported by automated data intake from departments ; Connectivity with the Tennessee Open Data Portal, allowing citizens and researchers to download, query and write APIs to each dataset available on *OpenMaps*; and a suggestion feature, allowing citizens to request the development of new data visualizations.

Project Milestones/Timeline

Development of graphical user interface (GUI) app	Spring 2018
Integration with CKAN Open Data Portal	Spring 2018
Launch of OpenMaps website/application	Winter 2018
Completion of Phase 1 Visualizations	Fall 2019
Development of Email Reminder System	Fall 2019
Completion of Phase 2 Visualizations	Spring 2020

Outcomes/Impact – Thanks to STS and CFG’s collaborative efforts on *Transparent Tennessee 2.0/OpenMaps*, the site can now truly help citizens make better-informed decisions in their daily lives. The site is now more interactive, and uses data visualizations to tell the state’s full story. Metrics indicate that users are regularly accessing the information that has been made available to them (Figure 1.2). Throughout the year 2019, the *Transparent Tennessee* site had 48,451 unique visitors and 130,921 total hits. The outcomes of this initiative also offered Tennesseans an unprecedented level of access to key public data, and quickly pushed *Transparent Tennessee* ahead of peer states in terms of site usability, technological sophistication, and data richness. This type of information is not typically available within other states, and Tennessee is leading the way with *Transparent Tennessee*, and its statewide performance dashboards that include fiscal information related to departmental programmatic spending and other expenditures.

Figure 1.2 : Hits of the top 15 and total of all OpenMaps Dashboards combined



Next Steps - The current administration continues to work to have a customer-focused, efficient and effective state government -- from decreasing wait times at Driver Service Centers to processing online tax returns, we are working to provide the best possible customer service at the lowest possible cost. Transparency and accountability are key aspects of those efforts. *Transparent Tennessee*, will continue to provide a “one-stop shop” online for Tennessee taxpayers to learn more about the administration's vision and future goals for the state, how the departments of state government are doing in terms of achieving those goals, how Tennessee compares to other states, and where state tax dollars are being spent. The State of Tennessee hopes citizens continue to leverage *Transparent Tennessee* as a helpful resource to learn about their state’s government.

Reference URLs

- <https://medium.com/@Results4America/a-north-star-for-state-policymakers-f53fd8a4babd>
- <https://www.Tennessee.gov/transparentTennessee.html>
- <https://www.Tennessee.gov/rural.html>
- <https://www.Tennessee.gov/transparentTennessee/governors-priorities/fiscal-strength-efficient-government.html>
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