STREAMLINING TOOLS - TOOLS TO MAKE GOVERNMENT MORE EFFECTIVE and EFFICIENT

ONLINE PERMIT APPLICATION, PROCESSING AND TRACKING

ABOUT THIS TOOL

The application of information technology (IT) to the filing for, processing and tracking of building permits is the most widely automated of any of the building codes administration and enforcement processes. Applications range from online permit application, processing and tracking that can be accessed 24/7/365 by clients with a computer to offline automated systems that are used only by the building code staff.

BENEFITS

Electronic permitting reduces traditional permit application and processing times by 40 to 50 percent by making services available 24/7/365. Where the permitting database is connected to other jurisdiction databases such as zoning, licensing and tax department records, there are improvements in the overall efficiency of government staff and effectiveness of building codes administration.

SAVINGS TO GOVERNMENT

- Reduced staff time accepting and processing permits by 50 percent enabling jurisdictions to shift staff resources to other areas in need of attention.
- Improved accuracy of permit data and reduced number of applications filed by non-licensed contractors.
- Enhanced collection of revenues owed to the jurisdiction.

SAVINGS TO PUBLIC AND TO PRIVATE SECTOR

- Increased customer satisfaction with jurisdiction's services by saving costs associated with repeated trips to one or more jurisdiction office and the convenience of being able to access the online permit application and tracking system 24/7/365.
- Typical time savings reported were reductions from two days to four hours of total time for application for commercial permits.

BACKGROUND

Basic permitting software records and stores information in a database that can be used and updated by multiple building department personnel. These systems generally calculate the permit fee, provide a tracking number for the permit application and may also be linked to other databases within the jurisdiction that either perform some related aspect of the permit review (fire, zoning) or to ascertain whether or not the applicant has a valid contractors license, has any outstanding debts to the building department or other agencies, etc.

These systems can be accessed by telephone or online. Applications for permits may be submitted by fax or online. Online applications give jurisdictions the ability to collect fees via credit card or a prepaid funded account.

Some vendor systems are easy to modify to fit a jurisdiction's existing permitting process and others are relatively inflexible and may require the jurisdiction to modify its permitting process. In general, jurisdictions are urged prior to incorporating IT into their programs to first review the effectiveness and efficiency of their existing building codes administration processes and where problems are identified streamline those processes first.

Depending on the size of a jurisdiction, stand alone software packages just for permit application, process and tracking can range in cost from $10,000 to $100,000. Component and integrated systems software packages can range from $100,000 to several million dollars in acquisition and installation cost.

EXAMPLES OF APPLICATION AND JURISDICTION CONTACTS

City of Los Angeles, California – Online permit system reduced staff time to process permits from 1 hour to 5 minutes and customer wait time from 2 hours to 10 minutes. Contact: Steve Ikkanda, LADBS; Phone: 213-482-6715; email: sikkanda@ladbs.lacity.org

Louisville/Jefferson County, KY – Online permit system reduced staff time from 2 hours to less than 30 minutes and customer wait time from 4 hours to 30 minutes. Contact: Paul Nicholson, LOUMetro; Phone: 502-574-2986; email: Paul.nicholson@louisvilleky.gov

Cobleskill, NY – Online permit system reduced staff time for residential permits from 1 hour to 15 minutes and customers wait time from 3 hours to less than 1 hour. Contact: Michael Piccolo, Phone: 518-234-4661; email: Pecceo@midtel.net

SUMMARY

The most common application of IT to building departments work is in the area of filing for, and processing and tracking building permits. Depending on the size of the jurisdiction and its desire to apply IT to other processes, electronic permit processes can range in cost from less than $10,000 to several million dollars. Over 40 national vendors provide such services, most specializing in some market niche largely based upon the size of the jurisdiction and whether or not other building department IT applications are requested by the jurisdiction.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: VISIT THE ALLIANCE'S WEBSITE AT: www.natlpartnerstreamline.org and click on "TOOLKIT." On the TOOLKIT page, click on: ONLINE PERMIT APPLICATION, PROCESSING AND TRACKING for further details and list of jurisdictions and permitting vendors.