



CASE STUDY

Calvert County goes digital within four weeks to distribute CARES Act grants

Calvert County is a suburb of Washington, DC. It is the smallest county in the State of Maryland with about 92,000 residents. One-thousand employees work at the county and the Economic Development Department employs eight people to serve the 5,000 businesses based in Calvert County, helping them get loans, grow, and expand.

In May 2020, emergency funding through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was provided by the federal government, distributed by the state, to all counties in Maryland. It was intended to support businesses and nonprofits in navigating the pandemic.

Calvert County needed a process that was public-facing and easy to navigate—facilitating a solid audit trail, funds attribution, and ready within 11 days in order to complete allocations to businesses in need.



Headquarters

Prince Frederick, MD

Number of residents

92,000

Number of businesses

5,000

Industry

Public Sector

Infor products

Infor® Public Sector

Infor Rhythm® for Civics

Infor Field Inspector

Website

calvertcountymd.gov

The right approach

Calvert County had no online presence for processing business grants at the beginning of 2020, but with the permit office being shut down and unable to perform normal business functions, an urgent solution to collect applicants' forms was needed.

Danita Boonchaisri, Deputy Director of Economic Development at Calvert County explains, "It was important for us to process this as economically as possible, we couldn't afford to invest \$150,000 in a temporary portal like some other counties did. Plus, the implementation time was critical. We had no idea what the volume was going to be and wanted to avoid scenarios like we heard from state and federal programs that had gone live and had systems crashed."

"We didn't know where to start," says Danita, "We're frontline dealing with business owners whose entire lives are wrapped up in this crisis, trying to counsel our business community, trying to help them as best we can through a situation that none of us had a playbook for. When we received the funds allocation, we wanted to distribute it as fast as possible to people in need. At the beginning we had no idea how to do this. We also couldn't get our heads wrapped around how we were going to make this program work efficiently with our small staff."

The County had been using Infor Public Sector software for 13 years to manage licensing, permit requests, onsite inspections, and different back-office functions. An upgrade program was underway with Infor Services when this urgent project emerged. The Infor and Calvert teams immediately switched priorities to get the program up and running to promptly assist the businesses of Calvert County.

“ We have entered the 21st Century in Calvert County with this CARES Act grant funding program. We wouldn't have been successful without technology and the great support from the Infor Services team. They were our rock in this emergency.”

DANITA BOONCHAISRI

Deputy Director of Economic Development at Calvert County

Business challenges

- Allocating funds despite social distancing, remote work, and office lockdowns
- Lack of an expedient system to process funding requests
- Strong time constraint
- No online public-facing tool available
- Limited budget

An IT and human team effort

The collaboration between Calvert County's IT team and Infor had been critical to developing the right solution in the fastest timeframe possible. Eleven days after the first meeting with Infor, Calvert County was able to launch its first round of grant funding and collect applications. With no time to spare, the Infor team created a new configuration in the county's as-yet-undeployed Infor Rhythm for Civics online portal to serve as the online application form for businesses to submit grant funding requests. After the second round, which completed at the end of August, Calvert County managed 573 grant funding applicants, including nonprofits.

Danita points out, "Besides the technology gap we were facing in which Infor guided us through, there was the human side for us. The Infor Services team was patient, especially Dan Grendon, Solution Architect, and Don Goggans, Project Manager. They took every call we asked for and agreed to be on standby when the portal was going to open because we had no idea how we were going to be affected. They truly did take us into uncharted territory that we had no way of navigating. They held our hands and helped us get through it with a calm, clear presence of mind that we really needed. They were our rock."

The average time it took from intake to people getting their electronic transfer of money was 23 days. Which was “awesome” according to Danita since only four employees were working in the background, checking on documentation received, and launching the process of funding for eligible applicants.

Dan Grendon was in daily contact with the IT team at Calvert County to overcome challenges to building an efficient solution. “It is one of the most rewarding projects I've worked on, even if it wasn't a long project. We got a lot of benefit and a lot of reward just by helping for a good and important cause. It was a great opportunity to work with a county and help citizens. It was a very smooth project, and the success we delivered in such a short amount of time was very exciting.”

Helping businesses navigate through the pandemic

“As an economic development professional for over 25 years, I have never been in a position where I had free money to give away. I can't imagine in my lifetime ever being in a situation like this again. We didn't have weeks or months to fine tune this process and we had to do things right,” says Danita. She continues, “We couldn't have done it without software, or we'd still be processing paper as we speak. We weren't just processing paperwork and moving data through a tunnel or through a system. We were helping actual people. If you're a for-profit business, you have to pay bills, and you have to apply for a loan and pay it back. So, the fact that we had this money, we were going to be able to put real cash into people's hands. It was important that we get it out as quickly as possible, because people were hurting, bills were coming due, workers were losing their jobs, and to actually give people money and have them say, ‘Thank you so much, this has been a help,’ was really rewarding.”

“ The Infor Services team truly did take us into uncharted territory that we had no way of navigating. They helped us get through it with a calm, clear presence of mind that we really needed. They were our rock.”

DANITA BOONCHAISRI

Deputy Director of Economic Development at Calvert County

Business results

- Getting the solution up and running within 11 days
- Distributing \$1.37 million to support businesses and nonprofits in a timely manner
- Providing transparency to track funds allocation and an audit trail
- Implementing a cost-effective solution
- Accelerating digital transformation for Calvert County

For instance, the Calvert County Family Day Care Association was able to run its virtual conference and provide protective equipment for some of their day care providers. Small businesses were able to keep going while their doors were closed and invest in equipment to reopen safely for their employees and customers when the governor allowed service industries to open again.

Entering the digital age

Calvert County closed its CARES Act funds program with \$380,000 remaining and will reallocate that money to rental assistance for county citizens.

“Having gone through this process of passing \$1.75 million in a very short period of time proves to us that we can certainly update and streamline other processes such as our loan application process to make it easier for us and easier for our community to access loan fund program money going forward, and we're now looking to do that,” says Danita.

“Of course, the pandemic has been horrible, tragic, a catastrophe, a disaster. But the one good thing that's come out of this is overnight—we have entered the 21st Century in Calvert County. Danita adds, “We're all working seamlessly from our homes via telework. We're accelerating our Infor products so that people can submit applications online. This is forcing us to accelerate our digital transformation to be able to serve our community and ensure business continuity.”

The future

Parallel to this project, the Infor team recognized that the Infor Field Inspector application at Calvert County was not in use by inspectors, limiting the capabilities in the field and slowing down the process for Calvert's customers. The team worked through Memorial Day weekend to get their inspectors functional in the field and help ensure their business could resume operations promptly, even during the pandemic lockdown.

Don Goggans comments, "Working from home is here to stay and technology can really make a difference in ensuring continuity. It also requires business changes and we will continue to work closely with Calvert County IT department and its users community to support their digital transformation and get them ready for automatic documentation management, online secured credit card payment, and a successful implementation of Infor Rhythm for Civics to facilitate their permitting and licensing activities to resume online in a near future."

[LEARN MORE](#) 



Infor builds business software for specific industries in the cloud. With 17,000 employees and over 67,000 customers in more than 170 countries, Infor software is designed for progress. To learn more, please visit www.infor.com.

Follow us:     

Copyright© 2021 Infor. All rights reserved. The word and design marks set forth herein are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Infor and/or related affiliates and subsidiaries. All other trademarks listed herein are the property of their respective owners. www.infor.com.

641 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10011

INF-2417395-en-US-0121-1