

# MUNICIPALITIES & GOVERNMENTS:

## A Case Study on How ABS Serves This Sector

### OVERVIEW:

Advanced Business Solutions has a history serving local municipalities and governments. From fiscal courts to 911 call centers and police and fire departments, we have the expertise and resources to support and manage all of their IT needs.

Every IT environment is unique between different municipal and government organizations. Nevertheless, some common needs are consistent throughout. As organizations that operate and manage elaborate and high-risk systems, from court systems to emergency response, uninterrupted Internet access and network security are always top priorities.

Serving municipalities and governments requires both day-to-day support while also providing a long-term IT strategy. We serve a variety of municipal and government entities in this way; in fact, one of our Technical Account Managers is dedicated to these organizations.



### CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES:

Change within municipal or government organizations takes time. Even with planned or necessary IT updates, it can be difficult for the individual or team responsible for the organization's IT to get timely approval. This makes it difficult to respond to unplanned IT changes.

All organizations desire stability, consistency, and reliability when it comes to their IT, but municipal and government organizations, especially, are limited in their ability to respond to sudden changes, outages, or IT emergencies due to the organization structure and operation.

Additionally, municipal and government organizations have minimal leniency in their budget. Fiscal budgets are set each year and must be strictly adhered to. Unlike typical businesses, these organizations have fewer means for supplementary income or money borrowing options in the case of an emergency. Thus, it is a priority for these organizations to take a proactive approach and diligently plan for the year ahead.

Finally, employee education and training remain a high priority for municipal and government organizations. Competency in core areas of IT, including device usage and security, is crucial to organizational efficiency.

**"The biggest challenge is always the cost. Unlike for-profit organizations that might have dollars available to invest in technology, we have a balanced budget every year and there are only so many tax dollars coming in - and technology doesn't always get the top vote."**

*-Melissa Horn, Oldham County Fiscal Courts*

### SOLUTIONS:

We employ a variety of solutions to address the challenges municipalities and governments experience and to help them reach their objectives of security, stability, and efficiency.

Office 365 is one of the foundational solutions we provide for many organizations. Our team provides Office 365 end-user support, customization support, and integration support. We've built a team of experts who are equipped to handle Office 365 support for the large number of users that are common in municipalities and governments. As an example, we recently helped Oldham County Fiscal Courts migrate their email from an internal system to the cloud using Office 365.

LabTech and Webroot are two other solutions that we provide to every organization we serve. These solutions help ensure the security of their network and data. Webroot is our antivirus solution that protects endpoints and provides a secure connection. LabTech is our

remote monitoring service that monitors for malware and hacking attempts and it surveys for ransomware.

In addition to software solutions, we also provide service support. Service support for any organization can include onboarding a new user or responding to a help desk call, but for municipalities and governments, their service needs can be much greater. One local county's 911 center, for instance, has software that they need running 24/7, so we established a special service agreement for after-hours service support.

Beyond providing software solutions and service support, we also come alongside these organizations to provide IT strategy. We understand the importance of having an IT roadmap and budget for municipal and government organizations who don't have the ability to make IT changes on a dime.

For example, through our partnership with Oldham County Fiscal Courts, we participate in their yearly IT budget meetings and create an IT roadmap that looks ahead at the year, and even the next few years, to plan for major changes that might affect their organization. This includes planning for workstations or devices that will need to be upgraded based on a strategic life cycle timeline.

Furthermore, we support municipal and government organizations through mergers, acquisitions, and expansions. When Middletown Fire acquired Anchorage Fire we helped coordinate the integration of their two IT systems, including connecting internet providers and unifying email addresses. We also assisted a local Kentucky county's government in the expansion

of their police department, which included submitting a proposal for the project scope and budget and working with vendors to execute the project.

Finally, we provide training for the employees of municipalities and governments. These organizations manage and store sensitive data that can be detrimental to the community if it is mishandled. We educate employees on the best security practices and what activities to avoid.

One training tool we use simulates phishing emails to employees to see who clicks on links and those that may even respond with sensitive information. This helps us pinpoint weak spots within an organization and allows us to proactively manage IT risks.

### **OVERCOMING OBSTACLES:**

No matter the organization, there are always obstacles to overcome. With municipalities and governments specifically, the multi-level decision making process and hesitation to adopt new technologies can hinder progress.

When we work with someone who is not the direct decision maker, it is our responsibility to support that individual with as much information and data possible to help them inform their superiors on the situation. It is also our responsibility to help relieve concerns regarding security risks, access control, and

end-user adoption. We've seen these kinds of concerns arise when new workflow software or cloud integration become available for these organizations.

### **COST EFFECTIVENESS:**

Our main goals at ABS are to support an organization's day-to-day IT operations as well as their long-term technology strategy. Instead of putting a bandaid on IT issues and fixing a problem short-term, we seek to uncover the root cause of the problem and provide comprehensive and lasting solutions. This means that the municipalities and governments we serve will save money in the long-run.

Our approach is to begin by diagnosing IT problems across the board and then propose a solution to address the issues comprehensively. This means that in the upfront agreement, companies agree to pay a set amount for ABS to efficiently update and manage their IT infrastructure.

Through this approach, we remove the variables of patchwork IT and decrease the likelihood of emergency IT needs. Ultimately, municipalities and governments benefit from an increased ability to stay within their planned budget for the fiscal year.

Additionally, by creating a strategic IT plan we are able to help organizations more accurately

**"When ABS first became our IT partner, we were not doing daily backups or any kind of backups, we were doing no spam filtering, and we were only using anti-virus software here and there but not everywhere. Thankfully, ABS understood that we have a restricted budget and put together a plan for how to make us safe and secure in increments of cost."**

*-Melissa Horn, Oldham County Fiscal Courts*

budget for their IT needs. In one instance, we were able to help Oldham County Fiscal Courts come far enough under budget that they were able to complete an unexpected \$15,000 IT project.

### RESULTS:

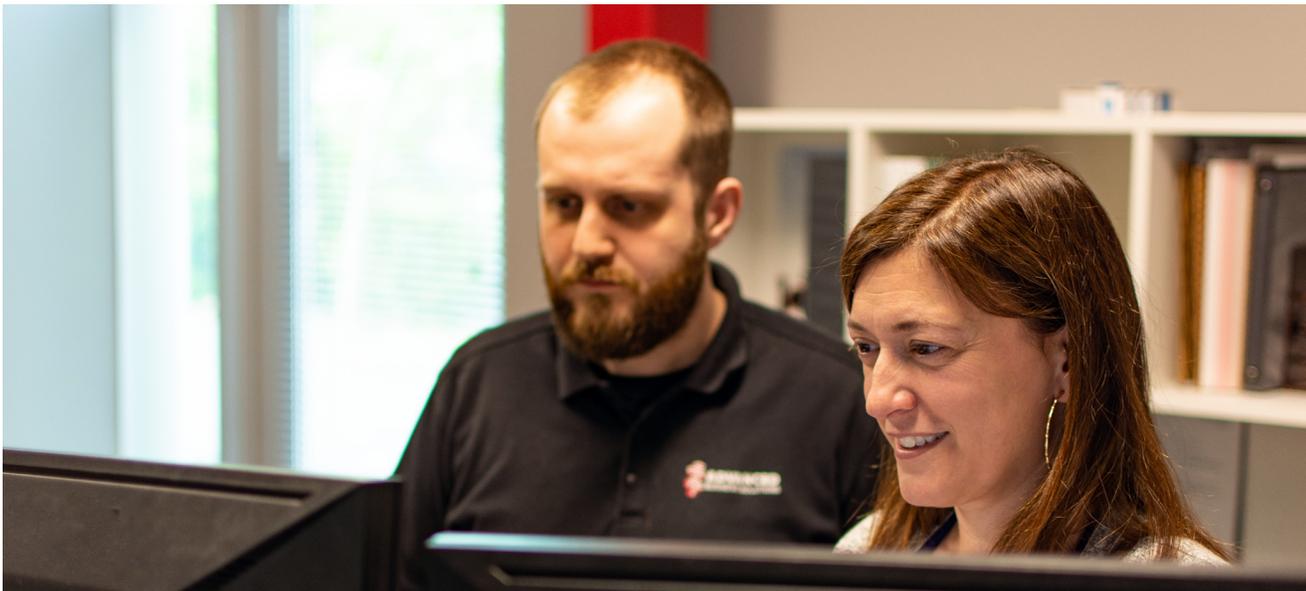
When we partner with municipalities and governments, we want to ensure that their IT systems are protected and operating.

Through this partnership, these organizations increase the security of their data and ensured that their networks are constantly being monitored for malicious activity. The stability of their IT has also increased as we help them take a proactive approach to IT upgrades and project planning. By helping them create a strategic IT roadmap, these organizations achieve a more accurate IT budget and adhere to it closely throughout the year.

Finally, these organizations experience more efficiency with the peace of mind that their IT environments are supported and taken care of. We ensure that their workstations and devices are supported by our service experts and that their employees are adequately trained to use their tools and to protect their IT environment. Whether a workstation is needed for a new employee or the entire organization is merging or moving, we are here to support their day-to-day IT needs as well as organization-wide transitions and their long-term goals.

**“ABS’s Technical Account Managers know what’s coming in the future and they have a very good understanding of our infrastructure and inventory. They’re very good at thinking about everything that will happen or could happen to our organization.”**

*-Melissa Horn, Oldham County Fiscal Courts*



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