

# City of Stockton, CA

New boards and commissions management saves time



The City of Stockton, Calif., like many local governments today, is always looking for new ways to serve citizens through technology. Whether it's providing access to government meetings online through web streaming or improving the agenda management process to get information to the public sooner, Stockton's staffers have prided themselves on using technology to make it easier to do the "business of government."

But in early 2014, city officials determined the way they managed appointments and recruitment for their boards and commissions didn't meet this standard.

When Granicus released its Boards and Commissions application in March 2014, the City of Stockton became one of the first to adopt the technology, with a goal of taking a labor-intensive, paper-heavy process and streamlining it.

“The amount of paper savings has been huge. We rarely print anything. We only took paper applications before, but now, we've gone almost completely digital and paperless.”

- Eliza Garza, Senior Deputy City Clerk

## Success Highlights

- Vastly reduced paper usage in the office by taking nearly the entire boards and commissions process digital
- Achieved greater visibility to citizens with automatic vacancy notifications and application deadline updates
- Reduced the amount of time needed to train new staff on boards and commissions management
- Made regulatory and state reporting easier with easily exportable and sortable data
- Increased number of citizen applications for boards and commissions openings by moving application process online

### Fast Facts

**Agency Type:** Local Government

**Population:** 298,118

**Solution:**

Boards & Commissions

**Active Since:** 2014

## The Challenge

For years, the City Clerk's office managed the City's 24 boards and commissions through several spreadsheets, for everything from tracking which citizens had applied for which boards, to upcoming expirations and filings deadlines, to scheduled ethics trainings for board and commission members.

There also was a separate database used to track applicants and post information to the City's website, which again, was a manual update process performed by City staff.

"We had a big issue with trying to keep track of folks that were interested in more than one board or commission," said Bret Hunter, Assistant City Clerk. "If that happened, there was a ton of manual work and lots of paper involved."

"We were looking to consolidate everything into one spot and only have to update things once."

## The Solution

Exhausted with trying to keep track of so much information in multiple places for so many different meeting bodies, the City of Stockton turned to Granicus' Boards and Commissions software in March 2014 to help ease the City Clerk staff's burden.

"We were looking to eliminate all of the paper copies we were making and the manual work it took to keep track of everything," said Eliza Garza, Senior Deputy City Clerk. "If a citizen applied for more than one board or commission, we were printing off multiple copies of their application and filing them in different places and trying to keep track of everything. It was not easy and very time-consuming."

"The software has allowed our process to be more automated, more consistent and more trackable."

The City of Stockton was among the first communities to implement Boards and Commissions, seeing value in core components like:

- **Public notice of vacancies**  
All vacancies are displayed online automatically as changes are made. No longer did the City need to update a separate database to make information public, and promotion was made even easier through social media buttons and links to apply online.
- **Collection of applications**  
The City could digital recreate its paper applications and applicants could apply online to multiple boards at any time. Customized email templates are also available to notify applicants of process statuses.
- **Qualifying and balancing candidates**  
While reviewing candidates, the software gave staff the ability to check off important qualifiers like residency or oath of office requirements. The ability to search across all applications, filter by boards applied to or demographics like ward, gender, ethnicity or political leanings helped create insight into the best candidates.
- **Approving and appointing**  
The software made it possible to quickly identify candidates, create packets and send them to the approving body. Once a candidate has been approved, pre-identified packets like orientation manuals or welcome letters can be automatically sent.

## The Results

The success the City of Stockton has seen since it implemented Boards and Commissions can best be described as “time-saving.”

Hunter and Garza report that by consolidating everything into one system, staff have the capability to quickly produce reports – whether internal or for mandatory reporting for California’s Maddy Act or Fair Political Practice Commission – and that the time it takes to train new staff on how to manage boards and commissions has gone down considerably.

And, by extension, Garza believes the citizen experience has improved.

“I have seen an increase in citizen participation in filling out applications,” Garza said. “We have more bodies in our database of potential board members, and I think a big part of that is because it’s easier for them to do it – they can apply at home. I’ve certainly noticed there’s been more participation.”