

Adapting to Regulations in the Age of Innovation

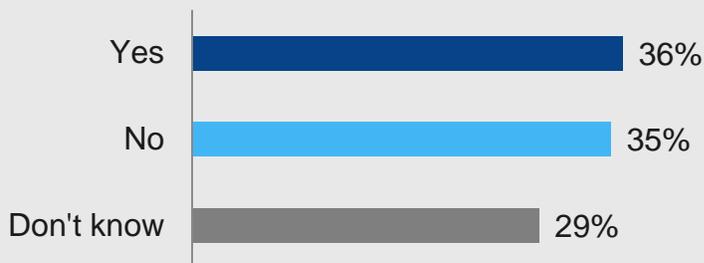
A Candid Poll on Business Licensing and Permitting in State and Local Government

Introduction

New technologies and markets are delivering both innovation and disruption to communities and states. Many agencies are still working to adapt to the new regulations stemming from these emerging industries. To find out more about how agencies are responding to evolving regulatory requirements and increased citizen demand for efficient processes, Government Business Council (GBC) polled a random sample of 187 decision makers in December 2018.

Finding 1: A majority of state and local agencies have yet to complete the journey to digital applications for licensing and permitting

Poll Question: Does your jurisdiction's business licensing and permitting system allow residents to apply and track their application status online?



Percentage of respondents, n=187
Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Key Figure: 36% of state and local government employees report that their jurisdictions allow citizens to apply and track their application online

Success story: Pittsburgh's Building Inspection Department
After introducing online applications and equipping inspectors with modern communication tools, the department went from performing a couple hundred to thousands of inspections per month.¹

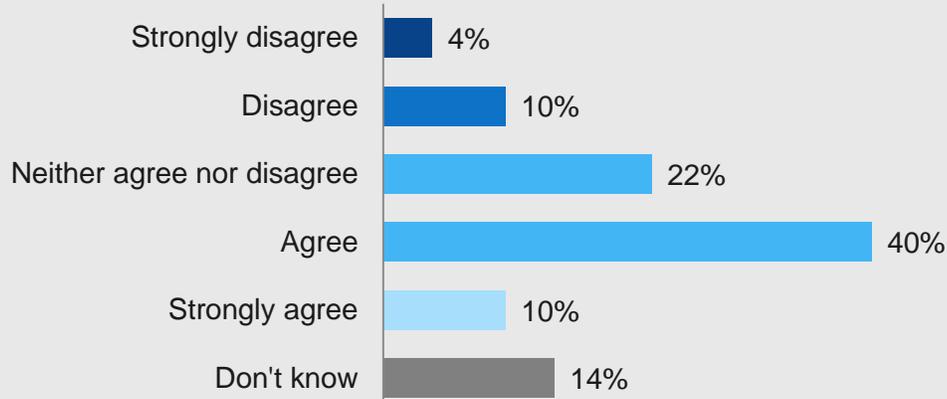
Insights from Accela

Municipalities across the United States are facing mounting pressure to modernize their civic functions and more quickly and efficiently deliver services to businesses and citizens. Many agencies continue to rely on manual, paper-based systems that waste shrinking budgets, employee expertise, and residents' time. The cloud presents state and local governments with an opportunity to cost-efficiently meet this rising demand while also saving money and improving data accuracy and workflow management.

Through automation of all aspects of the permitting and licensing process and moving them online, agencies can eliminate paper and manual permit functions, shrink permit turnaround times, move money more quickly, and empower residents to track land management updates online. By working with experienced technology partners, government can move closer to spending less on costly transformation efforts and focusing more on their missions.

Finding 2: One-half of state and local leaders feel their jurisdictions effectively meet their citizens permitting and licensing needs

Poll Question: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: “My jurisdiction is effectively meeting citizen needs when it comes to permitting and licensing”



Percentage of respondents, n=187

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Key Figure: 50% of state and local government employees agree or strongly agree that their organizations are effectively meeting citizen needs when it comes to permitting and licensing.

“

Government should be the expediter-in-chief for small businesses. We have a lot of rules, which quickly get cumbersome, and that is why we need to find ways to streamline the process.”²

Dan Garodnick, New York City Council Member

Best practices for streamlining regulatory processes

Implement a “one-stop-shop” online portal



Providing citizens with on-demand, user-friendly educational materials (e.g., comprehensive checklists of requirements, key contact information, average timeline, and cost, etc.) helps them navigate the process more effectively. Chicago found that doing so reduced the number of calls and visits to city hall and enabled businesses to get launched more quickly.³

Enable online application submission



Allowing citizens to submit applications electronically eliminates the need for paper, decreases reliance on manual data entry, and significantly reduces the overall time needed for permit review. Wisconsin found that once they were no longer spending time waiting for documents to arrive, the permit review time was cut in half.⁴

Allow citizens to track permit status online



Uploading permitting and licensing data brings a greater degree of transparency to the process. In Leesburg, VA, producing downloadable monthly development activity reports and allowing residents to find up-to-date application updates online led to increased levels of public trust in the government.⁵

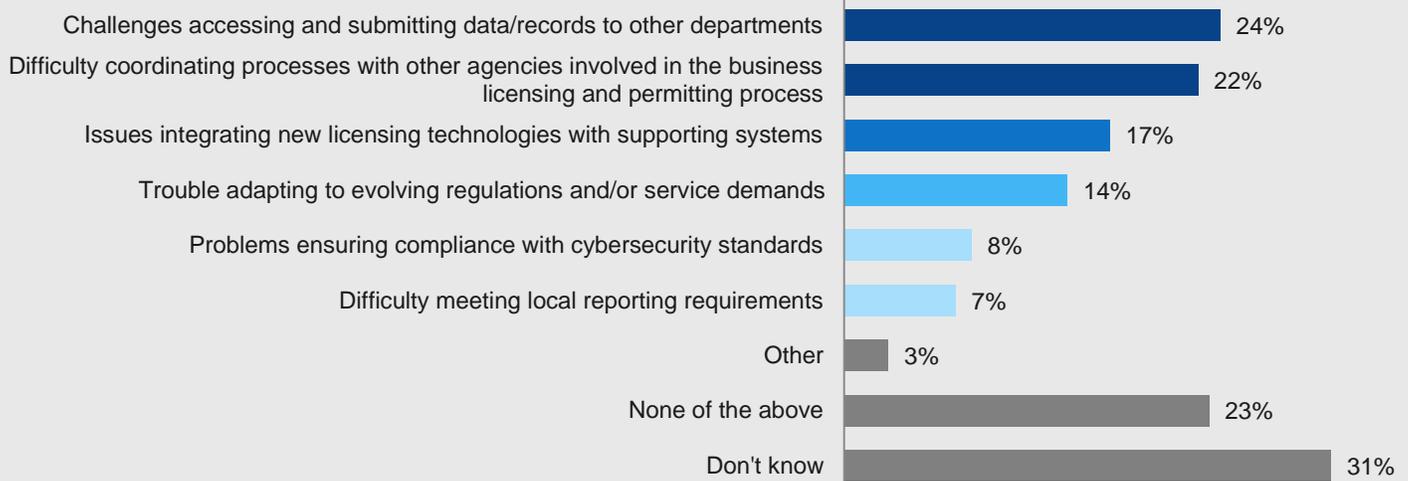
Support the use of mobile devices for inspections



Equipping field inspectors with the technology to upload inspection results and update project files to a centralized server in real-time reduces data errors, enhances data sharing, and allows employees to complete more inspections per day, thereby accelerating the planning and review process.⁶

Finding 3: Respondents identify accessing and sharing data with other departments as a common barrier to effective licensing and permitting

Poll Question: Which of the following obstacles does your organization encounter when processing and executing business licenses and permits? Please select all that apply.



Percentage of respondents, n=144

Key Figure: Nearly half (46%) of respondents feel that issues with cross-departmental coordination, communication, and data sharing hinder their ability to efficiently execute business licenses and permits.



States face the ongoing challenge of managing an industry that generates new products constantly.⁷

Sophie Quinton, Pew Charitable Trust

Methodology

GBC deployed a 3-question poll on business licensing and permitting to a random sample of 187 state and local government employees. The poll was fielded in December 2018. From the total pool of respondents, 74% identified as local government employees and 26% as state government employees.

Sources

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