# SLG at Your Service:
# Accelerating Digital Delivery

**Underwritten by:**

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# Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fragility of critical government service delivery systems and the aging technology behind them.

After years of discussion around **smarter government service delivery**, how can state and local government leaders use this moment to make concrete progress toward more effective and efficient citizen-centric experiences?

MeriTalk surveyed **200 state and local government (SLG) IT** and **program managers familiar with digital service delivery** to understand:

- Where digitization can have the greatest impacts
- Investment priorities for back-office processes and front-facing interfaces
- Cloud's role in modern service delivery
- Emerging technologies propelling the next wave of innovation
- Effects on customer satisfaction, costs, and citizen trust

# Executive Summary

## The COVID-19 pandemic emphasized the importance of digitizing citizen services:

**76%** of SLG leaders say the pandemic exposed the fragility of critical government service delivery systems and the aging technology behind them

**82%** agree public services need to become intrinsically digital

## While organizations are making progress, challenges remain:

The majority say the pandemic accelerated digital government in state and local organizations by **three years or more**

Still, just **24%** feel their senior leadership sees digital government as critical and are fully engaged with it as part of a key organizational strategy

## To move forward, SLG leaders must use this moment as a springboard for digital action:

Areas most in need of digitization?  **Public records** and **healthcare systems**

**93%** of IT managers and **82%** of program managers say they have or plan to invest in cloud computing in direct support of digital service delivery

Leading organizations also recommend revising **digital government strategies** on an ongoing basis, **consulting with citizens**, and **investing in self-service** options

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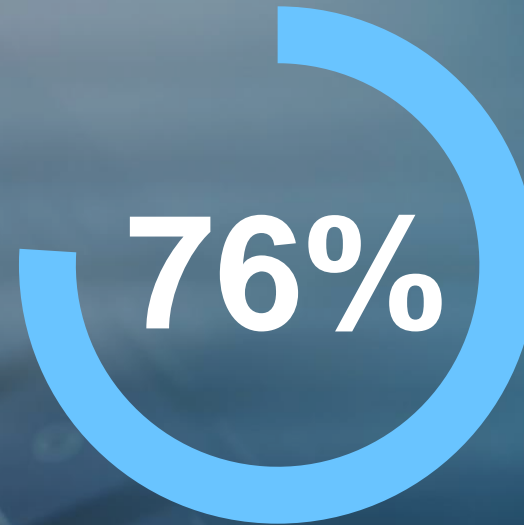
**76%** of SLG leaders say COVID-19 **exposed the fragility of critical government service delivery** systems and the aging technology behind them

Just **44%** of IT managers and **24%** of program managers were "**very satisfied**" with their organization's **ability to meet citizens' digital service needs**

# Organizational and Technical Barriers

What **held SLG organizations back** from delivering 5-star digital services?*

- Lack of funding **(34%)**

- Security or data privacy concerns **(30%)**

- Governance challenges **(30%)**

*Respondents asked to select all that apply

Additionally, just **31%** give their organization an **"A"** for its ability to **rapidly deploy and scale technology** to support citizen needs during the pandemic

**T A K E A W A Y:**
Gaps in Funding and Tech Hamper Progress

# Cultural Disconnect

**82%**

While **82%** agree public services need to become **intrinsically digital**

**77%**

And, **77%** say citizens would rather be **online than in-line**

**24%**

**Just 24%** feel their **senior leadership** sees digital government as critical and are **fully engaged** with it as part of a key organizational strategy

# Opportunity Knocks

## What systems would **benefit most** from digitization?*

**According to:**
IT Managers

**According to:**
Program Managers

**#1** *Healthcare*

**#1** *Public Records*

**#2** *License Applications*

**#2** *Social Benefits Administration*

**#3** *Contract Management*

**#3** *Healthcare*

*Respondents asked to select all that apply

# Progress by Necessity

**69%** say their organization's **ability to deliver digital services has improved** since the beginning of the pandemic

**82%** say the pandemic proved their organization can move critical services online **faster than they ever thought possible**

**3 YEARS** The majority say the pandemic has **accelerated digital government** by three years or more

**TAKEAWAY:**
Capitalize on Momentum

# Foundational Tech

What **prior technology investments** have proven to be the most instrumental in your organization's ability to deliver digital services?

Modernizing our IT infrastructure with cloud computing

**43%**

Centralizing IT solutions

**33%**

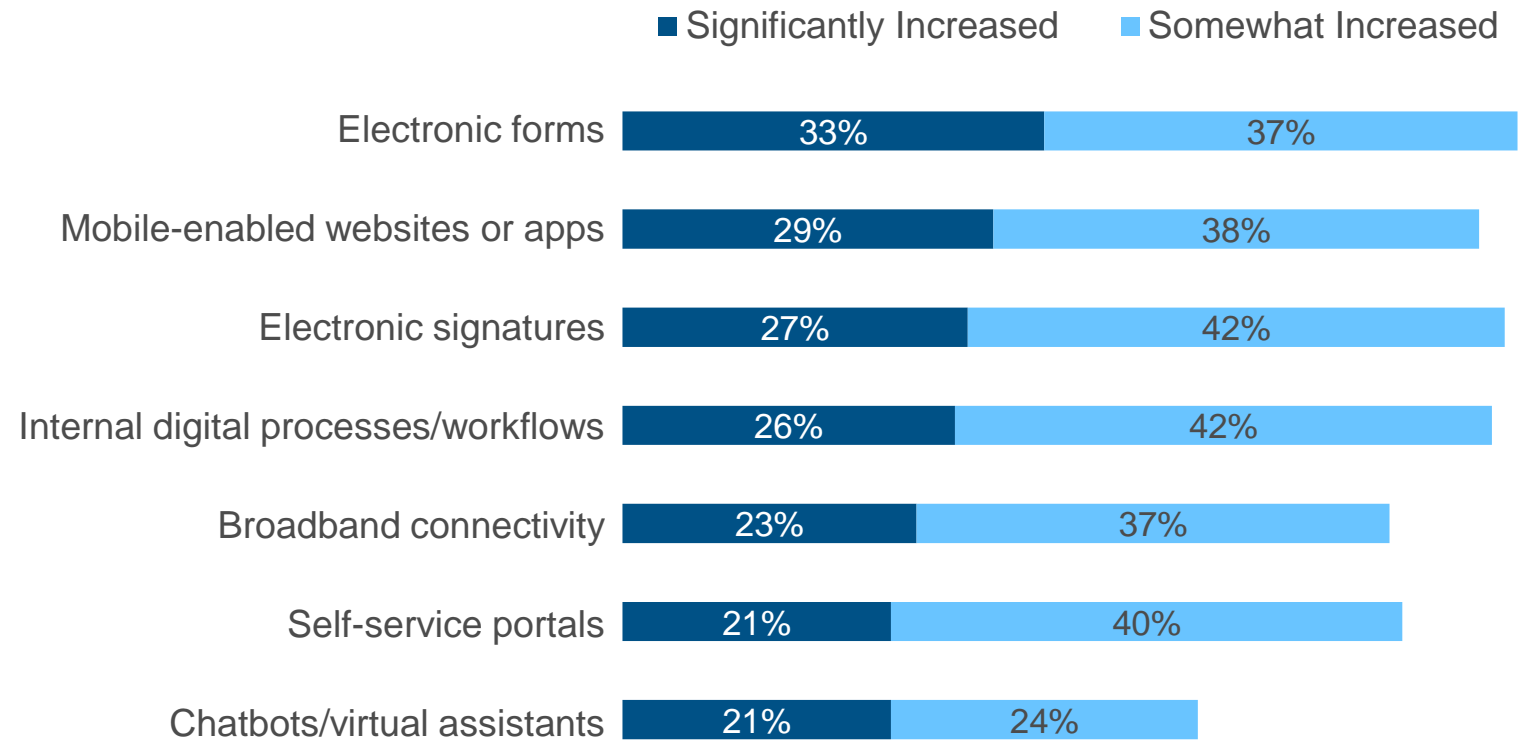Investing in remote workforce equipment

**31%**

Improving data storage, management, and production

**30%**

*IT managers asked to select all that apply
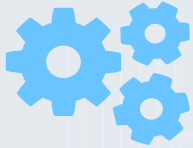
**TAKEAWAY:**
Cloud Comes in Clutch

# Prioritization in a Pandemic

How has the Covid-19 pandemic and shift to telework impacted your organization's focus on the following **digital delivery goals**?*

■ Significantly Increased    ■ Somewhat Increased

| | Significantly Increased | Somewhat Increased |
|---|---|---|
| Electronic forms | 33% | 37% |
| Mobile-enabled websites or apps | 29% | 38% |
| Electronic signatures | 27% | 42% |
| Internal digital processes/workflows | 26% | 42% |
| Broadband connectivity | 23% | 37% |
| Self-service portals | 21% | 40% |
| Chatbots/virtual assistants | 21% | 24% |

*The remaining selected "Somewhat decreased" or "Significantly decreased"

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# Moving Digital Delivery Forward

**93%** of IT managers and **82%** of program managers have invested or plan to invest in **cloud computing** to support digital service delivery

## What are the most important technologies propelling the next wave of service delivery innovation?*

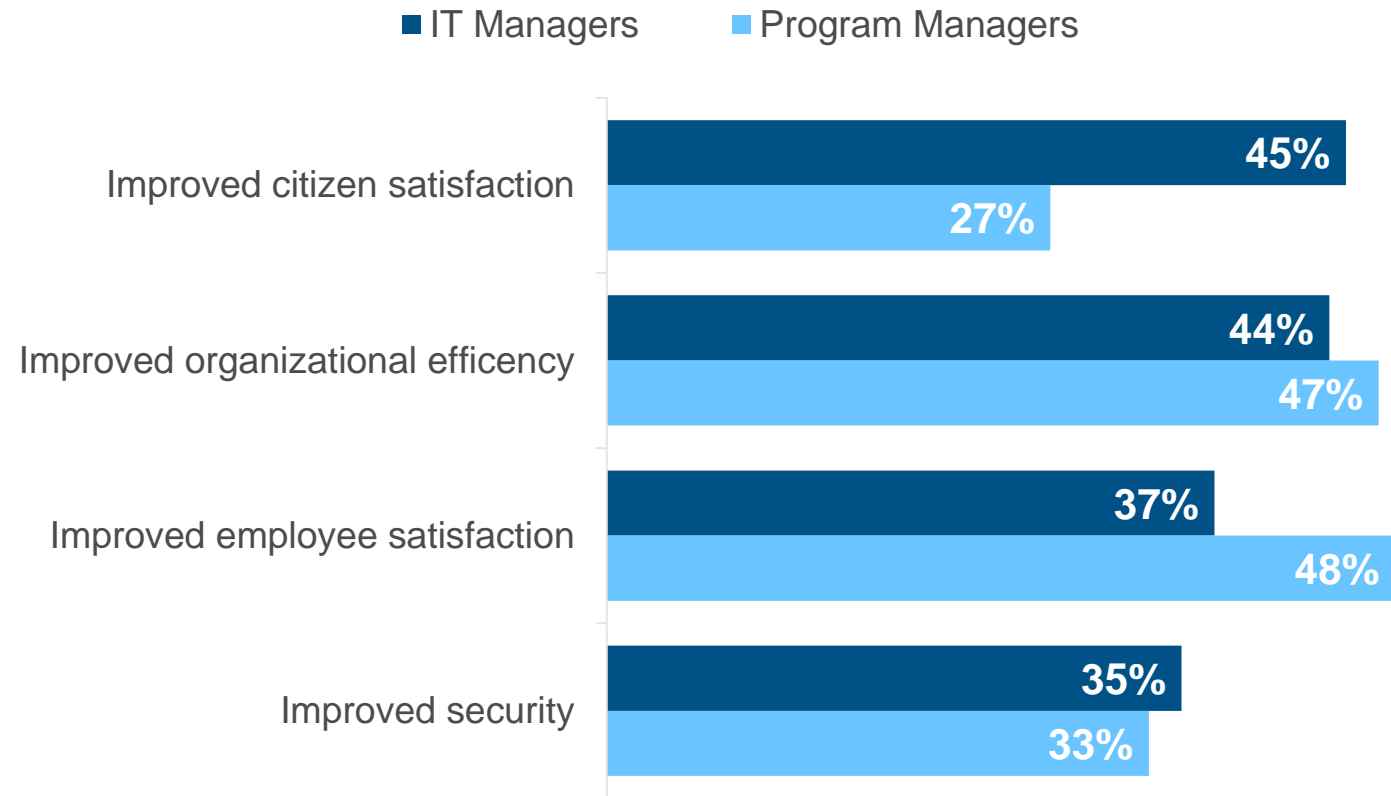Cloud computing **(74%)**

Broadband connectivity **(73%)**

Advanced analytics **(67%)**

**TAKEAWAY:** All About Access and Analytics

*Percentage who said each was "very important" or "extremely important"

# Innovation Through Digitization

## What **benefits** are organizations experiencing from digital service?*

■ IT Managers  ■ Program Managers

| Benefit | IT Managers | Program Managers |
|---|---|---|
| Improved citizen satisfaction | 45% | 27% |
| Improved organizational efficency | 44% | 47% |
| Improved employee satisfaction | 37% | 48% |
| Improved security | 35% | 33% |

*Respondents asked to select all that apply

# Serving the Community Across All Platforms

**Thinking ahead to the next three years, where will your organization prioritize digital delivery investments?***

**Front-facing interfaces:**

**55%** Offering more services online

**49%** Simplifying forms

**37%** Automating case handling and other processes

**Back-office processes:**

**36%** Digitizing shared-services

**34%** Simplifying integration with middle and front-end systems

**32%** Implementing risk-based controls

*Respondents asked to select all that apply

# Fostering Trust

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**84%** say citizens who are **satisfied** with their public service delivery are more likely to **trust the government**

# Learning from the Leaders

Organizations offering **5-star digital service** throughout the pandemic are significantly more likely to*:

Say their organization did an outstanding job rapidly **deploying and scaling technology** (63% to 14%)

**Consult citizens** in the design of their organization's digital services (47% to 18%)

Invest in **cloud computing** in direct support of digital service delivery (79% to 63%)

Say senior leadership operates under a **"digital government is critical"** mindset (44% to 14%)

Review, update, and implement their **digital government strategy** on an ongoing basis (51% to 32%)

Say prior investments in **self-service options** proved instrumental (31% to 12%)

**TAKEAWAY:**
Elevate Tech, Strategy, & Citizens

© 2021 MeriTalk. *Compared to those rated below 5-stars

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# Making Concrete Progress

What is one piece of advice you have for other state and local government leaders looking to make concrete progress toward a more effective and efficient citizen-centric experience?

"To transform service delivery methods, we must first understand the **needs and priorities of citizens**"

"**Accelerate investment** in digital technology solutions to improve organizational efficiency"

"Quit worrying about **'what we've always done'**, and think about 'what can be done' to make things easier on your constituents"

"Actively **adapt to change**, and constantly enhance the sense of urgency for self-innovation"

"Look at how and where citizens interact with the government and **improve these touch points** to meet their expectations"

"Do not lose focus on **security and interoperability** of the systems"

**TAKEAWAY:**
Adapt to Innovate

# Recommendations

## Innovate with Technology

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fragility of critical service delivery. It revealed cracks that formed through years of patchwork fixes and outdated technologies, and spurred agencies into action by necessity.

To build on this momentum, organizations must continue investing in scalable technologies, like cloud computing, and focus on digital delivery goals via electronic forms, mobile applications, and digital processes.

## Strategize for Success

In the digital age, citizens expect to transact anytime, anywhere. They increasingly expect the same from their state and local governments.

In order to best serve the needs of the people, organizations must get a better understanding of their constituents' pain points and how they'd like to interact with key government services online. Consult with citizens and be prepared to pivot strategies based on new findings.

## Look to Leaders

While the majority of SLG leaders say the pandemic has accelerated digital government by at least three years, there is still more work to do.

Beyond modernizing technologies and consulting citizens, senior leadership must take an active role in prioritizing the digital shift, including operating under a "digital government is critical" mindset.

All departments must be fully engaged for intrinsically digital services.

# Methodology

## Respondent job titles

| | |
|---|---|
| Secretary/administrator | **3%** |
| Deputy or assistant secretary | **1%** |
| Department director or deputy director | **21%** |
| Program manager or other program lead | **25%** |
| Executive level IT decision-maker | **10%** |
| Department level IT decision-maker | **10%** |
| Data center manager | **3%** |
| IT project manager | **20%** |
| Cybersecurity manager | **5%** |
| IT acquisition manager | **2%** |

## Primary role

| | |
|---|---|
| Executive leadership | **23%** |
| Program/project management | **23%** |
| Information technology | **38%** |
| Operations | **16%** |

## Employer

| | |
|---|---|
| State government | **62%** |
| Local government | **38%** |

## Expertise

**100%** of qualifying SLG IT and program managers are familiar with their organization's plans for digital service delivery

MeriTalk conducted an online survey of 200 state and local government (SLG) IT and program managers familiar with their organization's plans for digital service delivery in May 2021. The report has a margin of error of ±6.89% at a 95% confidence level.

# Thank You

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