



APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2018.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Hanover County
Program Title: Online Vendor Payments Reporting
Program Category: Customer Service

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Kathleen T. Seay
Title: Deputy County Administrator
Signature: *Kathleen T. Seay*



ONLINE VENDOR PAYMENTS REPORTS
VACo 2018 Achievement Awards

Presented by: Hanover County, Virginia
P.O. Box 470
Hanover, VA 23069

Hanover County

Online Vendor Payments Report

Executive Summary

As one of its Fiscal Year 2018 Initiatives, the Hanover County Board of Supervisors advocated providing an 'online checkbook' that would enable citizens to view payments made by County departments to vendors. This initiative was timed to coincide with the implementation of a new financial system that would make it easier for departments and citizens to access this information. After working with departments to remove any information that would violate privacy standards, the Departments of Finance and Management Services and Information Technology unveiled the new online feature to the Board of Supervisors on December 13, 2017.

The Excel-based reports are placed on the Open Government page of the County's website (www.hanovercounty.gov), which is dedicated to links providing a wide variety of financial and meeting information. Beginning with November 2017 check disbursements, each transaction is detailed by Date, Fund, Department, General Ledger Object, Vendor, Check Number and Distributed Amount. Any citizen with access to a computer can view hundreds of vendor payments, beginning with the most recent, and see how and with whom the County is spending taxpayer money. The report also enables viewers to sort or filter the details of each transaction. The file is formatted to prevent the contents from being altered. Future phases of this project include further refining the filtering criteria and potentially expanding to other entities/funds.

Implementation Challenge

The reporting capabilities of the County's previous financial system were not robust enough to generate interactive, Excel-based reports without a significant amount of manual intervention.

This proved to be an inefficient way to report the data. In planning for the implementation of the County's new financial system, the County was able to require the functionality needed to extract this information and make it easily accessible to the public. The County went live with the new financial system and through its reporting capabilities was able to produce interactive, Excel-based reports with minimal manual effort. The system design and functionality created an efficient way to prepare the information for public consumption.

On a function-specific level, one challenge that had to be worked through was how to provide information on County credit card (P-card) transactions. With P-card purchases outside the normal accounts payable process, staff needed to integrate the P-card information with the regular accounts payable check runs. Working with the Department of Information Technology enabled the Department of Finance and Management Services to make the needed adjustments without having to engage the software vendor.

The other primary challenge in implementing this system was not technological but to avoid the disclosure of information that was confidential or sensitive. For example, the release of health information is restricted or prohibited by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Information that is confidential, private or protected is redacted from the reports. Examples of redacted information include tax refunds, juror payments, employee or payroll related information and certain expenditures related to people who are clients of our Human Services departments. Information that would identify Sheriff's Office personnel who have sensitive or 'undercover' job designations is also redacted. Implementation of this Board Initiative involved the collaboration of numerous departments, including the Sheriff's Office, Public Utilities, Treasurer's Office, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Fire/EMS, Human Resources, Economic Development, County Attorney's Office, Public Works, the Community Services Board and Social Services.

How the Program is Carried Out Monthly

At the beginning of each month, a report is run for the prior month's transactions. The report is built to remove any areas that are deemed sensitive for the reasons stated in the previous section, but the Director of Finance, Finance Division Director and an Accountant review each month's report for any items that raise questions, and reach out to departments directly if there are concerns. When the review is complete, the report is sent to the Department of Information Technology for posting on the County's website prior to the 10th day of every month.

Financing and Staffing

No additional staff was hired to implement this program. No additional cost was incurred beyond the implementation of the new financial system, which was funded as part of a multi-year application replacement plan. There was no assistance from outside experts or consultants. Hanover County believes this is a model that can easily be replicated by other local governments as they seek to implement their own systems.

Results of the Program

The Vendor Payment Reports on the County's Open Government page (<https://www.hanovercounty.gov/891/Vendor-Payment-Reports>) contains monthly reports extending back to November. These reports include accounts payable transactions, P-card purchases and ACH payments for the General Fund, Capital Improvements Program, Public Utilities, Airport and Debt Service funds. These online reports have had more than 120 unique pageviews as of May 29, 2018.

However, the success of such a program is not necessarily measured in terms of a financial return on investment or numbers of users. Having an online vendor payment report represents a small financial investment but an important commitment to financial transparency, increasingly expected by customers of local governments.

Overview

Beginning in December 2017, Hanover County, Virginia has reported local government payments made to vendors on the County's website. These Excel-based reports reflect all vendor payments except those containing confidential, private or protected information. The rollout of this 'online checkbook' project coincided with a new financial system that made it easier for citizens and departments to access this information, but was implemented within existing staff resources.