



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2021.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

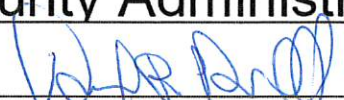
### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Roanoke County  
Program Title: Continual delivery of services during pandemic  
Program Category: Customer Service

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Morgan Yates  
Title: Building Commissioner  
Department: Development Services  
Telephone: 540-772-7521 Website: RoanokeCountyVA.gov  
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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Dan O'Donnell  
Title: County Administrator  
Signature: 

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Roanoke County Department of Development Services faced the challenge of providing continual service to the citizens and developers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The department is responsible for receiving permit applications as well as development and construction plans, performing plan reviews, issuing land disturbance permits, issuing construction permits, and performing field inspections for construction, erosion & sediment control, and storm water management.

Through the use of permitting software and innovative practices, the permitting and inspection process never stopped. The use of CITYWORKS and On-Base permitting software allowed for on-line plan submittals by homeowners and contractors and the program SelectTXT allowed for permit holders to request, cancel, reschedule, or check results of construction inspections.

County staff spent hundreds of hours testing and customizing the software to meet the needs of the department while ensuring ease of use for the applicant. The Department of Development Services requested that Roanoke County administration have a 20-foot x 30-foot tent erected at the administration center so citizens could still meet with staff while maintaining social distance guidelines and remaining outside the building. A bin was also placed in the tent so paperwork could be dropped off/picked up without having to come in contact with a person. Permanent lockers have now been installed outside the county administration center replacing the bin under the tent. Virtual inspection using Facetime or other person-to-person communication applications is offered to all permit holders for construction inspections to

reduce the need for potential close contact while maintaining the accountability and credibility needed to meet code requirements for inspections.

### **BRIEF OVERVIEW**

Roanoke County Department of Development Services made it a priority during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide continual delivery of services. The department is responsible for handling land disturbance and construction permit applications, reviewing all submitted plans, issuing permits once plans are approved, and performing all field inspections to ensure compliance with state and local codes.

Through the use of the computer programs CITYWORKS, On-Base, and SelectTXT, the department was able to allow on-line submittal of applications and plans and issue permits with zero face-to-face interaction. County staff spent hundreds of hours testing and helping to customize the programs to ensure all information required by local and state regulations was received while making the process as easy as possible for applicants. For people who were not comfortable using a computer, a tent was set up outside the administration building to allow for socially distanced meetings outside and a bin was placed in the tent for non-contact pick up and drop off of paperwork. Lockers have been permanently installed outside the administration building to replace the bin.

To address the need for social distancing and reducing human contact, the department offered permit holders "virtual" field inspections using the county inspector's I-pads and Facetime or other person-to-person applications.

## **CHALLENGE**

During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, Roanoke County offices closed for a brief time and also encouraged social distancing at all times. The department of Development Services faced the challenge of continuing to provide services during this time. These services include but are not limited to receiving permit applications and plans, plan review, issuing permits, and performing inspections.

## **FULFILLING AWARDS CRITERIA**

### **Innovative**

Roanoke County Department of Development Services utilizes permitting software, CITYWORKS and On-Base, to allow for on-line application and plan submittal for construction as well as land-disturbing activities. The software also allows for on-line plan review. County staff spent hundreds of hours testing and helping to customize the programs to ensure ease of use as well as collection of all required information. Upon plan approval, the Roanoke County permit center can issue permits via email and take credit card payments over the phone eliminating any need for face to face interaction therefor improving safety for the citizens, developers and county staff.

The Department of Development Services also requested that a 20-foot by 30-foot tent be erected in the front lawn of the county administration center. The tent is to allow outdoor, socially distanced, in-person meetings for anyone who does not feel comfortable using or is unable to use the computer software. There was also a bin placed in the tent for the drop off

and pick up of applications, plans, or permits allowing citizens, developers, and staff to avoid face-to-face contact at all times. Permanent lockers have now been installed outside the front entrance to the Roanoke County administration center, replacing the bin while ensuring security of the paperwork.

Roanoke County Development Services also offers “virtual” field inspections for all permits using inspector’s I-pads and the permit holders I-pad or cell phones. Facetime or other person-to-person communication app allows the permit holder to show the inspector the newly performed work while maintain social distance protocols and ensuring the safety of all. This also allows inspectors to verify the work more thoroughly than with just pictures because the inspector can direct the contractor or permit holder to move their device allowing views from multiple angles and verification that the work being presented is related to the permit.

### **Cooperation with Private Enterprise**

Due to the fact that construction is considered an essential industry, the Department of Development Services felt it necessary to continue to provide services to construction contractors and homeowners throughout the pandemic. To ensure the services could be delivered at all times, Roanoke County staff coordinated with property owners, developers, and contractors to “test” the software for ease of use and to ensure all required documentation and information could be provided on-line. After receiving feedback from multiple companies and individuals, the final products (CITYWORKS, On-Base, and SelecTXT) were implemented at Roanoke County.

The use of the tent space at the administration center was the result of department staff and construction companies communicating concerns about face-to-face meetings and ways to allow for safe, in-person interactions as well as the desire to receive and deliver applications, plans and permits without computers or face-to-face interactions.

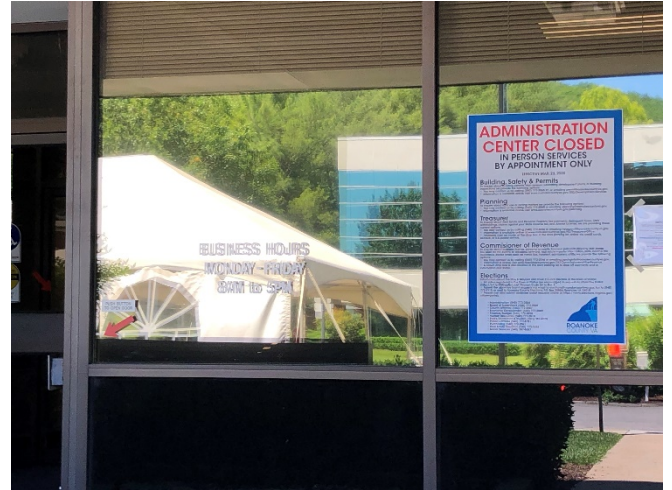
### **Model for Other Localities**

The software used for on-line plan submittal (Cityworks and On-Base) may be purchased and customized by other localities. SelectTXT may be purchased by other localities allowing for scheduling, rescheduling, canceling, or checking on the status of inspections. Other localities may also purchase and install lockers at their permit office to allow for the exchange of applications, plans and permits without personal interactions. There are numerous person-to-person communication applications available for virtual inspections by the staff of other localities as well.

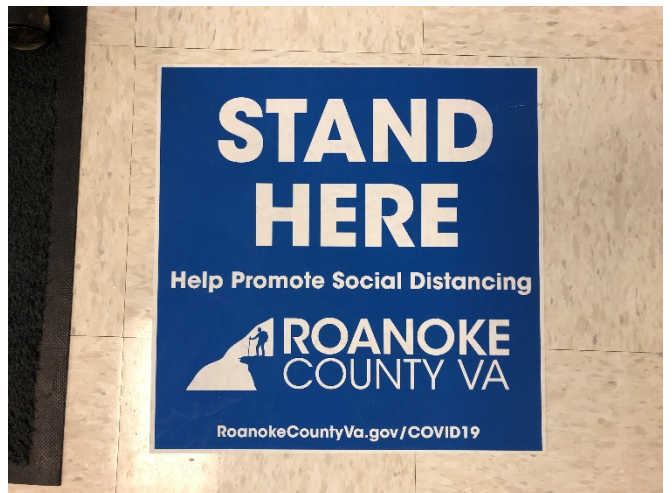


Roanoke County Development Services' Continual Delivery of Services During the Pandemic  
VACO Achievement Awards 2021  
Customer Service Category

A tent was erected outside of the Administration Center for citizens to drop off documents or meet with staff.



Staff met with citizens inside by appointment-only. Plexiglass barriers were installed to ensure the safety of citizens and staff.



Roanoke County Development Services' Continual Delivery of Services During the Pandemic  
VACO Achievement Awards 2021  
Customer Service Category

Lockers were installed for citizens to drop off and receive documents.



The CITYWORKS on-line permitting system, enabled citizens to apply for permits, upload plans, see review status, request inspections, and see inspection results, without face-to-face interaction.



**Better Buildings, Safer Communities**

The Office of Building Safety enforces the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code within Roanoke County. This includes plan review, permit issuance, and inspection of buildings and structures during the construction phase.

Our office establishes and enforces minimum requirements to safeguard the public health, safety, and general welfare through adequate light and ventilation, energy conservation, means of egress, property protection, stability, sanitation, structural strength, and systems efficiency.

**Important Changes to Permit System**

- Beginning October 28, 2019, the Office of Building Safety will transition to a new permitting system.
- Effective Friday, October 25, 2019, ePermit Center, EZ-Trade Permits, and Inspections Portal will no longer be available.
- The Office of Building Safety will offer a new online permitting services in January 2020.

**Plan Submittal Requirements**

All Commercial Plans submitted for review will require 2 paper copies and 1 PDF digital copy, combined in one document, (CD, Flash Drive, etc.).

**Contact Us**

**Morgan Yates**  
Building Commissioner  
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**Building Safety**  
[Email](#)

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