



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2025.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your 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: _____

Program Title: _____

Program Category: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Title: _____

Department: _____

Telephone: _____ Website: _____

Email: _____

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature:  _____

Executive Summary

The Pending Cases Application interface (Chesterfield.gov/PlanCases), an innovative user-centric approach to data interaction and visualization, presents Planning active development and zoning cases by extracting and displaying data direct from the Enterprise Land Management (ELM) community development portal. With more than 500 current pending cases and approximately 100 recently completed cases available, application case data is refreshed every 24 hours and is filterable by name, type, status, sign number, district and meeting dates and is presented both as textual listings and on an interactive map.

The Pending Cases Application was developed in response to a previously burdensome user experience due to duplicative multi-platform data hosting. Since launching in March 2024, the application has seen steadily increasing engagement, generating over 26,000 pageviews and 63,000 unique interactions, averaging over 270 interactions each day. Seamless integration into Chesterfield.gov's omni-channel search experience, enhanced by generative AI, provides at-a-glance cases summaries and streamlined discoverability.

Problem, Challenge or Situation

In December 2023, Chesterfield identified the multi-platform presentation of Planning's active development and zoning cases information as a burdensome user experience. While comprehensive, the data was not easy to find, as users had to navigate three separate

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systems: the county's website (Chesterfield.gov), ArcGIS maps (Esri) and the Enterprise Land Management (ELM) community development portal (an Accela-based system). Unsurprisingly, this triplication of data lead to inaccurate/differing information in the disparate systems, both due to information update schedules as well as manual data entry human error.

By siloing case information across three systems, concerns also arose regarding accessibility and inclusion. Asking users to navigate to and interact with three very different interfaces caused an unnecessary barrier to accessing the full complement of data regarding a particular case. And, worse, it was unclear what data points could be found in each system.

In addition to a generally cumbersome end user experience, the management of three separate systems for, essentially, the same data was also a huge burden on Planning and IT staff to maintain. Some staff positions had to dedicate nearly 50% of weekly working hours just to update the (hundreds of cases worth) of repetitive data in all locations. This maintenance caused strain on other initiatives, as staff time allocation was limited due to the ongoing nature of the duplicative manual data updates.

Awards Criteria

As evidenced by the launch process of the Pending Cases Application, there are many ways to provide data digitally. Regular assessment and reinvention of data visualization and

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discoverability is necessary in our constantly changing digital landscape. The iterative and agile approach taken to quickly respond to the identified need (in December 2023), develop and launch a viable 1.0 version (March 2024) in three months, and then, once user feedback data was available, reimagine, develop and launch a 2.0 version (August 2024) only five months later, is rather remarkable.

In the spirit of working smarter, not harder, the development of the Pending Cases Application 2.0 version was also completed with overall integration into the recently redesigned (May 2024) Chesterfield.gov's capabilities. This new site search experience leverages ChatGPT to provide at-a-glance summaries of case statuses and details for queries matching case numbers or active project titles, making information more accessible and navigable. By combining the conversational ease of an AI-powered chat interface with familiar, Google-like search results into one unified experience, user attention is not split between multiple agents or search tools. This streamlined solution provides clarity, immediacy and simplicity. Users benefit from reduced clicks, more accurate information and faster resolutions.

To continuously refine our digital experience, we apply a three-tiered evaluation framework. Analytics and heatmaps track user behavior, engagement trends and search success rates. Community input is gathered through direct public engagement feedback. Regular accessibility audits ensure ongoing compliance and usability enhancements. These insights drive measurable enhancements, including achieving a search success rate exceeding 99% and delivering more than 65,000 AI-assisted responses. By combining data-

driven insights with proactive community engagement, Chesterfield continues to set a high standard for digital excellence, ensuring an inclusive and seamless constituent experience.

How the Program was Carried Out

In December 2023, Chesterfield identified the then-current multi-platform presentation of Planning's active development and zoning cases as both a concerning user experience and an inefficient staff process. In response, Enterprise IT worked with Planning staff to quickly develop the Pending Cases Application ([Chesterfield.gov/PlanCases](https://chesterfield.gov/PlanCases)), which launched as a functional 1.0 version in March 2024 and, based upon user feedback, a comprehensive 2.0 version in August 2024.

Application development was completed by Chesterfield IT staff, with utilization of some open-source data (for the integrated map component), and did not require contributions of other partners. The application is embedded on the county's website, [Chesterfield.gov](https://chesterfield.gov), which is also managed by Chesterfield IT staff.

The 1.0 version (March 2024) of the application focused on recreating the 2023 data visualization experience, mimicking the "look and feel" of the multi-platform system for end users, while improving the backend process for staff by directly extracting and displaying pending case data from ELM, the community development data source of truth. An independent search for pending cases allowed for case data to be filtered by case name, type, status, sign number, district and meeting dates. This 1.0 launch eliminated

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concerns of public data being inaccurate by removing manual data duplication and allowed staff time to be reallocated to other project needs.

The 2.0 version (August 2024) of the application gathered months of user-generated data feedback on how to improve the interface experience itself, including navigating to and within the system. The cases are presented both as textual listings and on an interactive map, and contain a description of the case, status updates, meeting information and plat data. The 2.0 version allows for seamless integration of case information across Chesterfield.gov through an omni-channel search experience enhanced by generative AI, which provides at-a-glance summaries of case statuses and details for queries matching case names or numbers.

Financing and Staffing

The Pending Cases Application utilizes enterprise systems and architecture, including ELM, Microsoft Azure Cloud Services and the county's website, Chesterfield.gov. This minimizes any capital costs, as the solutions used incur no additional costs.

Development of the application's software was completed by Chesterfield IT staff, utilizing open-source data for the integrated map component. Implementation was easily achieved by embedding the application code on the public website.

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Operational costs include maintenance of the data itself, which is performed by Planning staff in ELM, as well as occasional assistance from IT staff regarding the application interface and website presence.

Overall, the Pending Cases Application is a cost-saver, as it greatly reduces, by a significant amount, the staff time needed to maintain Planning's publicly available active development and zoning cases information.

Program Results

Since launching the Active Development and Planning Cases application last year, Chesterfield has seen strong and steadily increasing engagement. The application has generated over 26,000 pageviews and 63,000 unique interactions, averaging over 270 interactions each day, driving growth among returning users, while also successfully reaching and attracting new visitors. This growth is achieved in part by the seamless integration of case information across Chesterfield.gov through an omni-channel search experience enhanced by generative AI, which provides at-a-glance summaries of case statuses and details for queries matching case names or numbers.

This streamlined discoverability and access is a marked improvement to user experience and removes duplication by providing data from a single source. AI-generated summaries simplify complex planning case details, making information more accessible while linking directly to full case records for deeper exploration, expanding access and driving

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continuous community engagement, underscoring the success of Chesterfield's user-centered approach.

Chesterfield's constituent digital experience program is built on accessibility, usability and data-driven decision-making. Our award-winning website, Chesterfield.gov, serves as the digital front door, offering seamless access to services, intuitive navigation and WCAG 2.1 AA standards compliance. In May 2024, Chesterfield launched a redesigned website, creating a modern, user-centered experience. In 2024 alone, there were 1.2 million site searches conducted and over 65,000 generative AI responses given, which users visiting Chesterfield.gov from 197 countries and translating the site into 76 languages. To better serve mobile users (56% of visits), significant improvements were made in page load speed, navigation and enhanced touch-friendly interactions.

Additionally, by evolving the data management process to remove manual data duplication needs, the Pending Cases Application has had significant positive impact regarding staff time and resources allocation (and thus cost savings) in both the Planning and IT departments. This staff availability continues to positively impact other projects and initiatives that are now able to be addressed.