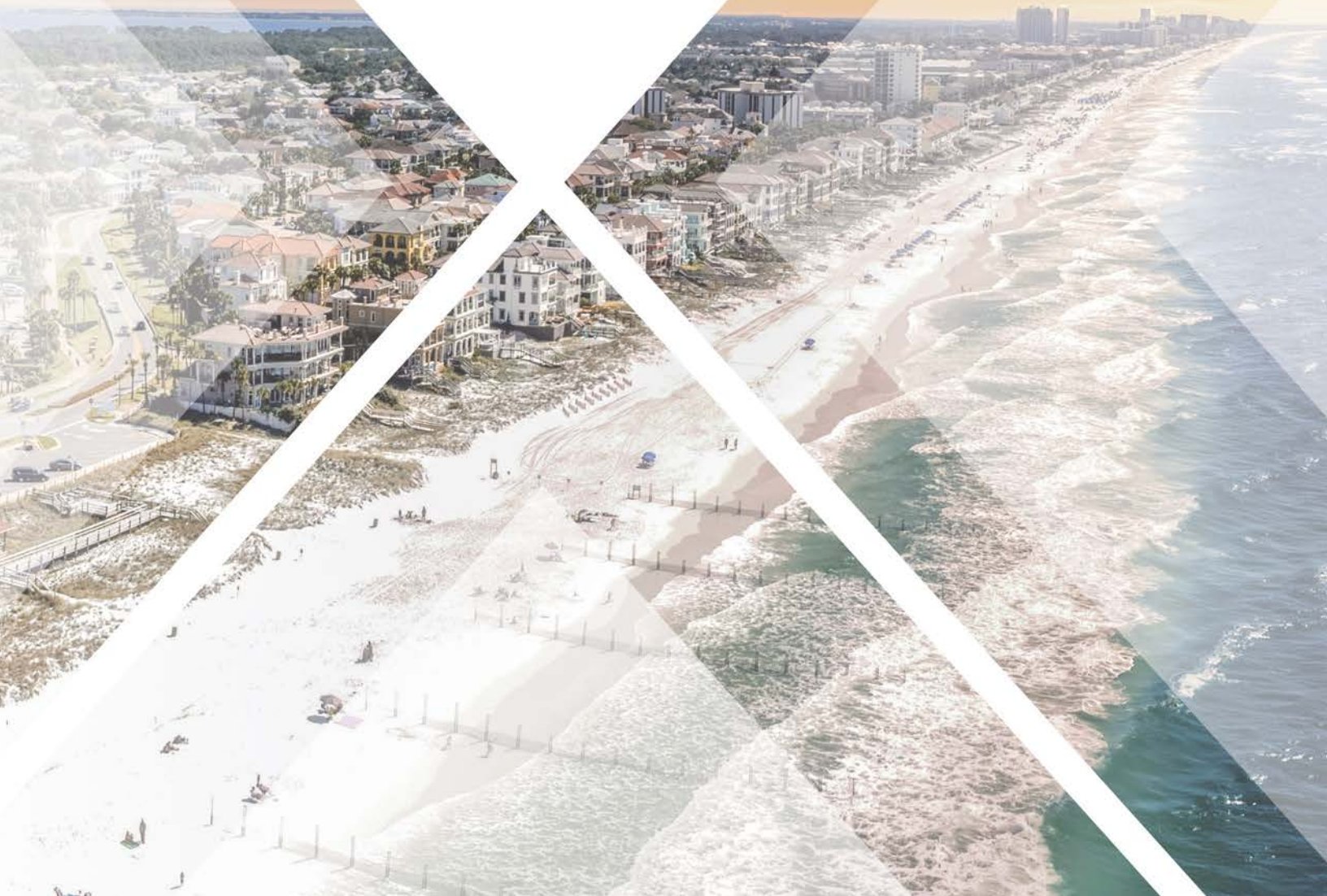




Short-Term Rental Management Strategies for

Coastal Communities



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Introduction

As one of the first companies to enter the short-term vacation rental compliance industry, GovOS has been working with communities on short-term rental (STR) management for over a decade.

Throughout this time—with new ordinances, industry trends, and legislative activity—the solution has continued to grow and scale with the industry in a way that makes it a truly dynamic solution for local government. Scaling alongside the industry has given us deep insight into each step of the STR management process, and the opportunity to share those strategies with communities like yours.

In this guide, we'll look at the impacts of STRs in coastal communities and how agencies can use proven STR management strategies to create a harmonious experience for the entire community.



The State of Short-Term Rentals in Coastal Communities

With miles of beachfront property, beautiful weather, and other attractions drawing people en masse to coastal communities, tourism is often one of the largest revenue producers for local governments. Over the last decade, large tourism numbers have also resulted in many STR property listings in these communities.

As many sectors of the economy were recovering from the pandemic, the [STR market grew at an annual rate of 11.1% between 2022 and 2023](#)¹. This left local government agencies tasked with finding solutions that protect the interest of all stakeholders, including residents, existing businesses, STR hosts, and property managers.

Many jurisdictions along the coast have already begun taking proactive steps, such as passing an ordinance to establish guidelines for operating an STR in their community. For example, in jurisdictions throughout New Jersey, we've seen local governments begin to [require that property managers activate a business account with the city, complete safety inspections, and provide emergency contact information](#)² for someone who can be reached around the clock.

For other jurisdictions, finding the right solution for their community is still a work in progress. However, the need to identify the correct approach is becoming more urgent as community members eagerly await a solution that doesn't prevent hosts from operating, minimizes the impacts of visitors on the community, and provides a safe and enjoyable experience for guests and community members.

Short-Term Rental Identification in Coastal Communities

With a fluctuating number of tourists and STRs throughout the year, how do coastal communities gather and maintain accurate data on STR activity?

The first step to effectively managing your STR market is to collect accurate data on how many STRs are in your defined area. Some communities start by collecting emergency contact information from the property manager.

In communities with high tourism numbers, the GovOS team has found one overarching trend related to STR identification:

The volume of STR listings changes drastically by season and, in some cases, on a daily basis.

With the constant flux in listings, keeping up with them manually is impossible, and only getting updated data every few months or once annually just doesn't cut it.

The GovOS STR identification system checks for new listings with a physical address in your defined vicinity *continuously*. When a new listing appears, our expert property review team verifies that it is a real listing and whether it complies with the guidelines the jurisdiction has provided us.

When seasonal tourism picks up, this in-depth review process does not change even though they might be considered seasonal listings—our process is the same year-round. This means government agencies will always have an accurate and up-to-date number of listings and know who is compliant with local regulations.



"Our partnership with GovOS will give us the data we need to evaluate the local market and help build a healthier STR community."

April Akins

*Revenue Services Manager,
Town of Hilton Head Island, SC*



Short-Term Rental Account Activation for Coastal Communities

With some communities unable to license/permit STRs per state or local laws, how do coastal communities keep track of those operating in their communities?

The second step to effectively managing your STR market is working with STR property managers to get them into compliance with local government regulations, however that looks for your community: account activation, registration, licensing, or zoning permits.

The journey to reaching a high compliance rate looks different for each jurisdiction.

The key to improving compliance rates is to educate STR property managers so they know how to follow local regulations. In most cases, property managers want to follow local regulations, but they don't know the steps it takes to get registered/activated, and in some cases, they don't even know the requirements exist.

GovOS supports STR property managers by:

- Streamlining the account activation process with an online task portal that allows property managers to access their accounts anywhere, anytime
- Supporting bulk/consolidated filing for property managers, like those operating STRs in condos, to make it easy for one person to submit information for multiple units
- Providing ongoing software support for accessing and completing tasks in the online portal
- Educating property managers with online resources and webinars with the assistance of GovOS partners



Lodging Tax Collection for Coastal Communities

How can coastal communities that generate revenue from tourism simplify the tax remittance process for STR operators and government staff?

The third step to effectively managing your STR market is to streamline the tax filing process for everyone involved.

For jurisdictions with a large volume of STRs, additional tax revenue is an essential way to reinvest in the community. In some cases, this revenue helps maintain and improve local infrastructure as well as the attractions that keep tourists coming back. But, while collecting lodging tax from STRs may reduce the tax burden on residents, it can also lead to more work for government staff in charge of the collection process.

Outdated manual processes often equate to missed revenue if staff resources are stretched too thin. Simplifying the tax payment process by bringing it online is a proven way to increase compliance and ultimately benefits both citizens and staff.

GovOS supports government staff by:

- Streamlining the payment collection
- Getting rid of manual data entry
- Automating penalties and interest, when needed
- Providing the reports needed to find inaccuracies

GovOS supports property managers by:

- Offering an easy way to submit payment
- Providing an online portal so they don't have to fill out paper forms, calculate the tax due, or mail in payments

Best-in-Class Support for Coastal Communities

How can agencies ensure that all stakeholders – STR operators, community members, and internal staff have the support needed to maintain a successful program?

At GovOS, our goal is to provide government agencies with sophisticated technology and the most comprehensive and reliable client support services in the industry.

We want to ensure all stakeholders involved with STRs—from operators and residents to government staff and the online travel agencies filing taxes—are supported through all stages of their STR journey.

Here's a look at how we support all stakeholders involved in the STR conversation:

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

GovOS has been in the industry for over a decade, and we've seen the way the industry has changed. No matter where you are in your STR journey, whether you're at the beginning stages of identification or if you've been monitoring compliance for years, we can help answer new questions that come up along the way because our team has been in your shoes and experienced the challenges you're going through alongside other communities. We support your team with:

GovOS Admin Support

This includes thorough training and resolution for staff and users via phone or email. No question is off limits – our support team is comprised of tax, accounting, and finance specialists, along with former government employees who are ready to work with you on questions like:

- What data you should be watching
- How to interpret the data you're collecting
- What information to ask STR managers for
- General troubleshooting

GovOS Partner Resources & Education

- The GovOS Partner Program creates value for state and local governments, as well as STR operators. We collaborate closely with industry leaders to deliver expertise, innovation, community building, and educational resources that foster engagement.

In practice, this means:

- Hosting a virtual webinar with STR managers to educate them about the changes happening in their community and how they can be compliant with regulations
- Recommending ways to make rental properties safer
- Recommending ways to handle common complaints, like noise and trash

CONSTITUENTS

Our 24/7 live-operated STR hotline provides a communication channel for the public to engage with the correct authorities without wasting valuable public safety response time. Our live, nonrobotic operators address the situation and forward complaints to the right people. We support your constituents with:

GovOS Hotline

- Trash complaints
- Noise complaints
- Safety concerns

To resolve the issue, a GovOS support representative may:

- Call the emergency contact listed for the property and work with them to resolve the issue
- Escalate the issue to the local police department, if necessary

This benefits local governments by:

- Mitigating some of the stresses that dispatch in high tourism communities see. For complaints about traffic, noise, or trash, an intermediary can step in and help resolve the problem without using the jurisdiction's police department resources.
- Enabling them to collect baseline data and make decisions based on it. For example: Does the jurisdiction really have a trash problem, or is it one neighbor next to the STR that has specific expectations that the city doesn't have in an ordinance?

PROPERTY MANAGERS

We support STR property managers in your jurisdiction with training and troubleshooting, as needed, via phone and email. We know change can be difficult, so no question is off-limits. We're ready to: access the online STR portal, learn how to complete tasks the municipality requires for STR operation, and other general troubleshooting.

GovOS Phone & Email Support

- We guide STR operators through the STR process, helping them learn where to go to complete the tasks their municipality requires and helping them get those tasks completed online.

GovOS Notification Tools

- After the initial launch, the GovOS notification tool is available to jurisdictions to help keep communication channels open between your jurisdiction and STR operators—regardless of where their primary residence is located. For communities along the coast or in high tourism areas, this feature becomes even more important since operators don't always live in the community.



Conclusion

Coastal communities face unique challenges when it comes to managing their STRs. Whether it's the sheer number of STRs, the large volume of seasonal listings, the high percentage of condos, or the need to give permanent residents a way to voice concerns: these unique challenges demand a solution that can adapt to and support all of these needs.

GovOS offers a holistic solution that benefits government staff, STR property managers, and residents. As one of the first companies to enter the short-term vacation rental compliance industry over 11 years ago, we've scaled alongside the industry and have developed a deep understanding of STR identification and compliance processes.

To learn more about GovOS, visit:

<https://govos.com/about/contact>

References

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2. Short-Term Rental Report: The State of New Jersey STRs in 2023, Part 1 (<https://govos.com/blog/new-jersey-str-report-part-1/>)



Who We Are

GovOS is the leading digital transformation platform for local governments. Headquartered in Austin, TX, GovOS serves government agencies of all sizes across the United States. Through its secure and integrated suite of cloud-based solutions, governments can automate and streamline operations, provide seamless access to resources and information, and deliver cutting-edge digital services to businesses, residents and agencies.