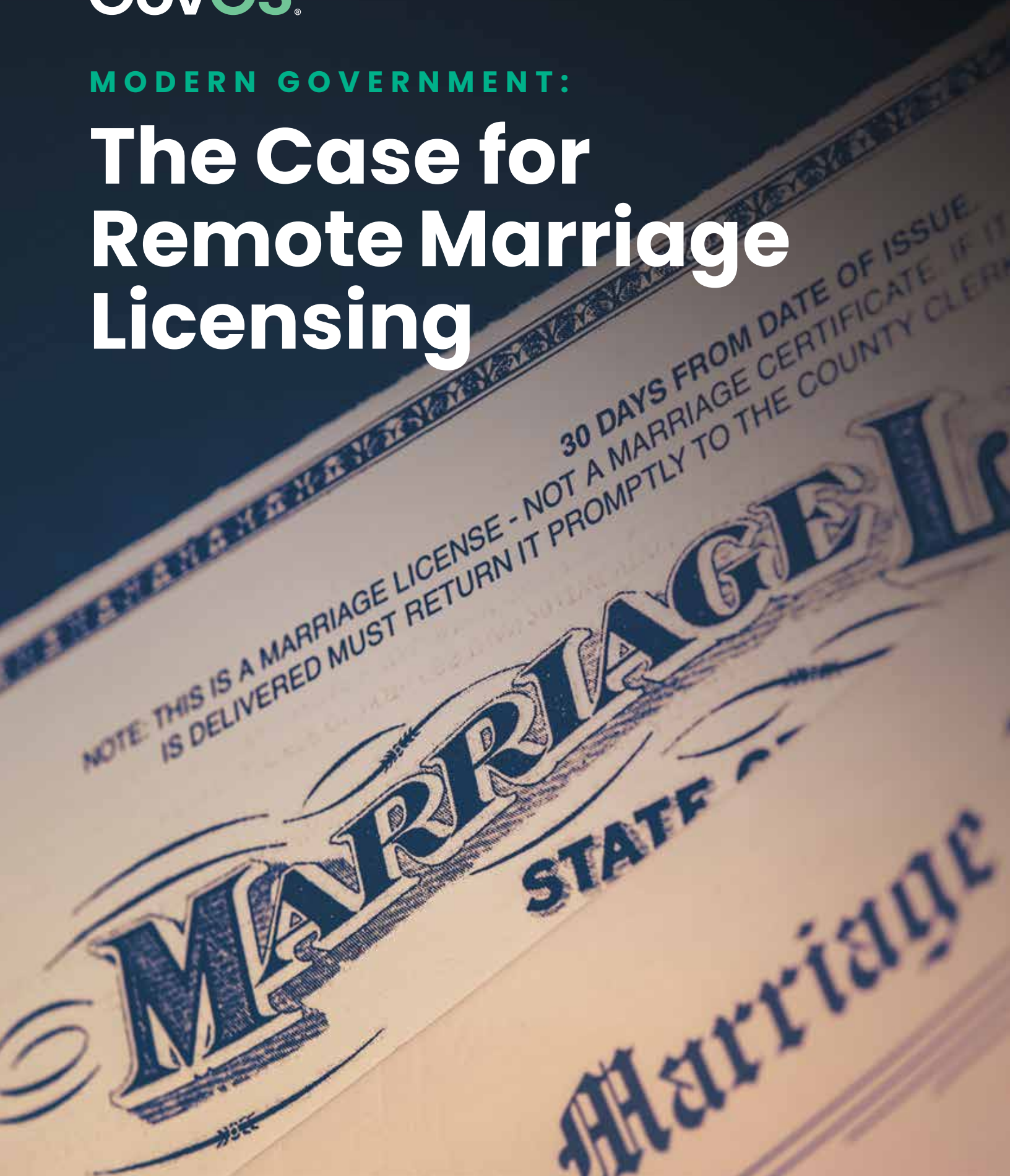




MODERN GOVERNMENT:

The Case for Remote Marriage Licensing





A Turning Point for Local Governments

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, stories that captured the chaos and uncertainty of the time were echoed by couples nationwide.

- One couple in Kentucky drove more than 20 miles to a neighboring county in search of a marriage license, only to discover licenses were restricted to local residents—this after the courthouse just a mile from their home had shut its doors.
- Las Vegas, known for its iconic Little White Chapel and non-stop weddings, suspended all marriage licensing for 30 days.
- A Massachusetts bride made calls to four different town halls, each time being turned away as they had ceased issuing marriage licenses.

The lack of access to essential services not only added significant stress but also piled on the logistical challenges for couples eager to tie the knot.

It became clear that transitioning to a remote marriage licensing process would not only streamline one of the most crucial steps of the process but also make it more accessible for couples across the country.

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Introduction to Remote Marriage Licensing Software for Government

What Are Remote Marriage Licensing Services?

[Remote marriage licensing services](#) have altered the way local governments handle issuing marriage licenses. In the past, couples had to visit a government office in person to fill out forms, verify ID, and take oaths in front of a clerk.

Now, thanks to digital solutions, couples can complete the entire process online—from application and identity authentication to saying their oaths via video conferencing and receiving their marriage license.

This change fits well with the ongoing move toward digital services in government and meets the public's expectations for convenience, efficiency, and easy access.

The Rising Demand for Remote Marriage Services

The pandemic [accelerated many changes](#) that were already starting to happen in government services. Due to lockdowns and social distancing, there was a push to develop remote options for services usually requiring in-person interactions.

Marriage licensing experienced a meteoric rise in demand for remote options. This demand, along with the need to keep legal processes for marriages going, quickly led to the creation and use of online systems for marriage licensing.

Even though the pandemic has since faded from the public discourse, the need for remote services remains urgent, and local governments must quickly find more lasting solutions.

Continuing to enhance and adapt the marriage licensing process will ensure it meets ongoing demands for efficient and accessible government services, well into the future.





Local Governments Using Online Marriage Licensing Software

Local governments across the country are increasingly adopting online marriage licensing software to enhance service offerings. Here's a look at how some agencies have successfully implemented systems—improving service delivery, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency.

While many states have embraced the convenience of online marriage licensing, the extent to which the process can be conducted remotely varies according to state laws.

For instance, states like Michigan allow most steps of the marriage licensing process to be completed online, but still require couples to present identification in person. This means that although the initial application and other steps may be handled digitally, final verification steps may necessitate a physical presence.

It's important to help couples understand that the specifics of what can be completed online versus what must be done in person are determined by individual state regulations.



Dauphin County, Pennsylvania faced the challenge of continuing to offer essential services without a physical office after a state mandate required office closures during the pandemic.

Initially, the Register of Wills & Clerk of Orphans' Court and her First Deputy developed a system using GovOS technology for online forms combined with available video technology to carry out some of the work online.

Later, GovOS partnered with the County to integrate a scheduler platform and added automated workflows, so communication between couples and the office was faster and more efficient.

The impact was immediately clear—Dauphin County received 475 marriage license application submissions in the first 4 months and issued 347 licenses. The following year, the County reported a total of **2,100 marriage license applications**—about 86% of all applications received—were submitted online.



Dauphin County Recognized by Governor with Excellence Award

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Calhoun County, Michigan also embraced the shift toward digital by implementing remote marriage licensing software. Initially, marriage licensing was a labor-intensive process that took around 45-60 minutes per application, requiring in-person visits and handling of paper forms prone to errors.

The introduction of the GovOS system allowed couples to submit applications and fees online, **reducing processing times dramatically to just 20 minutes.**

Although the final step is still required by state law to take place in-person, the new system has enhanced readability of applications, saved costs on paper, and been well-received by the public, garnering hundreds of applications that account for more than a third of the County's marriage licenses.



How Calhoun County, MI Reduced their Marriage Application Processing Time by More Than 50%

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Tarrant County, Texas was the first public agency in Texas to implement remote marriage licensing software. As the third largest county in Texas, Tarrant processes around **1,500 marriage license applications per month**.

Traditionally, obtaining a marriage license involved a time-consuming process where applicants filled out paper forms, waited in line, and had clerks manually re-enter the information.

This method typically took 25-30 minutes per application, and required all hands on deck due to the heavy usage in the vital records office. The County sought to **reduce the time to process an application down to 10-15 minutes** with the GovOS system.

This efficiency not only frees up senior staff for other projects but also enhances service delivery, making Tarrant County a pioneer in Texas for adopting this advanced technology.



Tarrant County, TX First in Texas Remote Marriage Licensing

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It's Time Your Agency Becomes the Easiest Wedding Vendor to Work With

The digital transformation of marriage licensing processes represents a significant step forward in the modernization of government services. It's evident that remote marriage licensing can alleviate much of this burden by streamlining the issuance of marriage licenses.

The success of remote licensing during the COVID-19 pandemic serves as a powerful reminder that change can happen fast, emphasizing the need for local governments to continue enhancing and expanding these services to meet modern expectations for convenience and efficiency.

Here are 5 key takeaways:

- 1. Creates a Better Experience for Constituents:** Remote marriage licensing cuts down the time and stress involved by allowing paperwork and verification to be completed online.
- 2. Increases Efficiency for Government Staff:** Automation in remote marriage licensing reduces staff workload, freeing up resources for other tasks and improving operational efficiency.
- 3. Enhances Security and Fraud Prevention:** Advanced digital verification tools in remote systems enhance security and minimize the risk of fraud.
- 4. Promotes Accessibility and Inclusivity:** Remote marriage licensing benefits those with mobility issues or living remotely, making government services more accessible and inclusive.
- 5. Future-Proofs Services:** Investing in remote marriage licensing software prepares local governments for future needs and enhances resilience in government operations.



Understanding the Need for Efficient Online Marriage Licensing Software

Who Benefits From Remote Marriage Services?

Government staff and couples applying for marriage licenses benefit significantly from the adoption of remote marriage licensing systems. The automation and streamlining of the process saves time and reduces the workload. The convenience of handling marriage licenses remotely, without the need to visit government offices, aligns with the modern expectations of residents and supports those with limited mobility or those living in remote areas.

What Are the Impacts on Government Staff?

Remote marriage licensing software significantly impacts government operations, primarily by enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the staff involved in these processes:

INCREASED SELF-SERVICE

One of the key benefits is the increase in self-service capabilities. By allowing couples to fill out applications, submit necessary documents, and schedule appointments online, the workload on staff is considerably reduced. This shift not only frees up resources but also allows staff to dedicate more time to complex tasks or customer service improvements.

MORE PRECISE IDENTITY VERIFICATION

Modern remote marriage licensing systems can incorporate advanced digital tools for identity verification. These tools use a combination of data sources to ensure that the identity information provided is accurate and genuine. This precision is far superior to manual verification methods, which are susceptible to human error and can be more easily circumvented by fraudulent parties.



What Are the Impacts on Constituents?

The adoption of remote marriage licensing software also offers significant advantages to constituents:

TIME SAVINGS

The convenience of online form submission, where data is auto-filled using information extracted from government databases or the constituents' digital ID, dramatically reduces the time required to complete applications.

Plus, being able to say the oaths in front of a clerk via an online video meeting rather than in person saves an enormous amount of time for the constituent, eliminating the need for them to schedule time off work and drive to the office.

This efficiency not only enhances user satisfaction but also accelerates the overall process from application to issuance.

FRAUD PREVENTION

The verification processes built into online marriage licensing systems play a crucial role in preventing fraud.

By ensuring that all transactions are authenticated and the identity of applicants is verified against reliable sources, these systems offer a defense against identity theft and related fraudulent activities.

INCREASED COMFORT & TRUST

Knowing that their personal information is handled through secure channels and their government is proactively using technology to safeguard their identity can provide great comfort to constituents.

This trust is fundamental in encouraging the adoption of online services and in fostering a positive relationship between government and constituents.

The Benefits of Implementing Online Marriage Licensing Software

The implementation of remote marriage licensing software is not just a response to a temporary crisis but a long-term investment in the efficiency and security of government services. There are several key benefits your agency will experience when implementing remote marriage licensing software, including:

STREAMLINED LICENSE PROCESSING

The digital handling of applications ensures that each step of the marriage licensing process is conducted smoothly and without unnecessary delays. Automated workflows reduce the need for manual input and handling, thereby speeding up the entire process from application to issuance.

SECURE DATA MANAGEMENT

Remote marriage licensing systems are designed with rigorous security measures to protect sensitive information. Encryption, secure access protocols, and compliance with data protection regulations ensure data handled through the system is safe from unauthorized access or breaches.

EFFICIENT RECORD-KEEPING

With digital systems, all records are maintained in a structured and accessible format. This not only facilitates easy retrieval and management but also ensures that records are kept safe and are tamper-proof.



How Does Remote Marriage Licensing Work?

5 Features to Look for in an Effective Online Marriage Licensing Solution

To ensure the effectiveness of an online marriage licensing system, it is essential to have features that support both the operational needs of the agency and the usability requirements of the public.



1. ID Verification

ID verification is vital in ensuring the authenticity of applicant identities using the latest technologies and it provides local governments with a way to verify ID via virtual meetings and a mandatory review of documentation. Real-time data cross-referencing allows the system to check the information provided by applicants against various databases to verify details and prevent fraud.

Additionally, artificial intelligence can be employed to detect patterns indicative of fraudulent activities or to verify document authenticity. These technologies enhance security, reduce human error, and streamline the verification process.



2. User-Friendly Online Application Forms

User-friendly online application forms play a pivotal role in simplifying the marriage licensing process. These forms are designed to be intuitive and easy to navigate, ensuring that even individuals who are not technologically savvy can use them without difficulty.

Auto-populating fields with information verified from digital IDs or data previously entered by applicants drastically reduces the time required to fill out forms and minimizes common errors associated with manual data entry.

Moreover, a well-designed interface guides users step-by-step through the application process, providing clear instructions and feedback that prevent user errors and reduce confusion. This attention to user experience helps in maintaining a high completion rate for applications, ensuring that couples can move forward without delays in their marriage planning.



3. Digital Signature Capabilities

Digital signatures are essential in a digital environment, especially when legalizing documents such as marriage licenses. Compliance with national and international digital signature standards ensures electronic signatures are legally recognized and as binding as traditional handwritten ones.

Beyond legal validity, digital signatures also add a layer of security by using encryption to safeguard the integrity of the signature and document against tampering. The convenience of digital signatures allows couples to sign their documents from anywhere, eliminating the need for physical presence at an office. This feature is particularly beneficial for couples in long-distance situations or those with constraints that make it difficult to attend in-person.

Digital signatures streamline the entire process, cutting down on wait times and making it easier for government staff to manage and process applications more efficiently.



4. Integrated Payment Processing

Integrated payment processing within the marriage licensing platform is essential for simplifying and securing financial transactions critical to obtaining a marriage license.

By incorporating payment processing directly into the system, transactions are secured and processed instantly, ensuring licenses are issued promptly. This integration allows couples to complete their applications seamlessly without navigating separate payment systems, enhancing the user experience and streamlining the process.

This lessens the administrative load on staff by automating the handling and verification of payments, and providing instant confirmations and receipts. This boosts communication and transparency between the agency and applicants.

Furthermore, by encrypting all financial transactions and adhering to the latest security standards, the system safeguards sensitive financial information, thereby bolstering trust in the government's digital services.



5. Seamless Integration With Records Management System

Seamless integration ensures that all documents, recordings, and data are not only securely stored but also easy to access by authorized personnel. A secure records management system offers several advantages over traditional file storage systems, including enhanced security measures such as encryption and multi-factor authentication, which protect sensitive information from unauthorized access and cyber threats.

If utilizing a cloud-native solution, the system can grow and scale to meet the agency's needs without requiring significant physical infrastructure investments. This capability ensures agencies can manage increasing volumes of data efficiently. The cloud also facilitates disaster recovery and data redundancy, which are crucial for maintaining data integrity and availability in case of system failures or other disruptions.

With real-time access and updates, cloud storage significantly enhances the efficiency of record management, providing a reliable and flexible solution for the long-term preservation and management of marriage records.

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To be able to save money and time at our counter is what makes us feel great about this new technology and our partnership with GovOS.

Mary Louise Nicholson

Tarrant County Clerk, TX





Modern Marriage Licensing

Even without a global pandemic shuttering services and throwing the best-laid plans into disarray, it can be easy for couples to forget one of the most critical piece of the process—securing the actual certificate issued by their local government.

Given its importance, simplifying the process of obtaining a marriage license can reduce some of the stress placed on couples *and* the governments that manage, process, and issue marriage licenses.

As weddings evolve with increasing digital integration, it is timely and sensible for local governments to modernize this essential service, providing ease and convenience to couples during one of the most significant moments of their lives.

**Click or scan to learn more about
GovOS Remote Marriage Licensing**





Who We Are

GovOS is a leading provider of transaction and compliance software for state and local governments to streamline property, licensing, and tax interactions with businesses and citizens. Headquartered in Austin, Texas, GovOS serves more than 800 government agencies across the United States. With the company's secure suite of cloud-based solutions, governments can maximize revenue, increase compliance, reduce costs, and meet constituent demand for modern, self-service transaction and payment services.