



# Provincetown, MA Says Goodbye to Paper with OpenGov Budgeting and Performance

TYPE  
Municipality

POPULATION  
3,000

ANNUAL BUDGET  
~\$40M

## Challenge

Before implementing OpenGov, Provincetown's biggest pain point was internal operational efficiencies. Josee Young, the town's Finance Director, described life before OpenGov's Budgeting and Performance solution, saying, "my staff was printing and distributing budget-actual reports on paper. These reports were irrelevant the minute we delivered them because transactions are in constant motion." Young wrestled with many painstaking tasks in the process of developing the Town's budget-to-actual reports, which used to take a day for the staff to create. "With OpenGov," Young happily explained, "we no longer have to create these reports, as departments have access to the budget-actual information, which is updated weekly."

## Solution

OpenGov Budgeting and Performance.  
OpenGov Stories.

**"We had a shared drive, 25+ Excel spreadsheets and as many Word documents that had to be moved and updated numerous times during the budget process. OpenGov has really changed that process for us in a positive way."**

**JOSEE YOUNG,  
FINANCE DIRECTOR**

## Results:

- ✓ Employees have more time, spending less time copying and distributing reports
- ✓ Accurate reports allow budget changes and updates to be made on the fly
- ✓ Citizens are more informed and engaged, thanks to OpenGov Stories
- ✓ Ease of accessibility lets stakeholders to find the information they need, when they need it

## About Provincetown, MA

The proverbial saying, "the streets roll up in the winter," could not be more relevant for this small New England town located at the tip of Cape Cod in Barnstable County, MA. This coastal resort is known for its artistic and diverse community, sandy beaches, and seasonal draw. The population explodes during the summer season, leaping from roughly 3,000 to 60,000 people. Furthermore, approximately 70% of the residences in Provincetown are vacation homes, which means that the town literally shuts down in the winter, leaving a grocery store, bank, and hardware store to serve the remaining townspeople. This places the town's government in a very unique position, making it the only year-round employer which offers benefits to its employees.

One of the most significant challenges facing Provincetown has been affordable housing, especially for seasonal workers. When homes are offered up on the market, they are quickly snatched up as second homes or vacation rentals. As a result, some businesses are going to great lengths to maintain their workforce, even purchasing property for these workers to maintain during employment.



Example of Provincetown's use of Reporting and Analysis

## Love at First Sight

Ultimately the person charged with managing the project implementation, Lynn Martin, MIS Analyst, was the catalyst for a positive change. "In my position as an analyst and project coordinator, I saw the need to streamline services internally and, as a result, increase productivity," Martin pointed out. She was determined to help ease the pain of mundane processes that existed throughout the team. Lucky for her, the Cape Cod Commission introduced OpenGov to municipalities on Cape Cod.

It was "love at first sight" with regard to the transparency that OpenGov's platform delivered. According to Martin, "OpenGov was a product that offered so many benefits to our internal organization (staff, management and administration), and it was easy to set up and use." The icing on the cake for Martin was how OpenGov eliminated the need for producing, printing, and distributing monthly department reports and supported cross-department collaboration.

Provincetown most recently implemented OpenGov's Performance Measures, which, as Martin explained, is great for demonstrating their active efforts toward strengthening the community. The ability to easily report on the performance of various community initiatives speaks to the government's focus on community development while also revealing the areas where they need more support and funding.

## No Looking Back

After witnessing the power of a more streamlined internal process, Young began to imagine what life would be like if they could harness the power of OpenGov's Budget Book. She described life before online budgeting, explaining, "We had a shared drive, 25+ Excel spreadsheets and as many Word documents that had to be moved and updated numerous times during the budget process." She added, "OpenGov has really changed that process for us in a positive way."

Both Young and Martin view OpenGov as a strategic partner, specifically noting the consistent and thoughtful team that has assisted with implementation and training. "We feel very, very supported," Young expressed. "The support makes us feel like we are working with a team."

## Proactive Citizen Communications

Both Young and Martin give OpenGov's Stories credit for driving the most significant changes in the way they served their community. After attending a local conference in Boston on performance measures, Young saw the value in proactively serving information to the community, taking advantage of the ability to simply present content in a widely accessible manner. She explained, "I realized we were going about this the wrong way. Instead of just throwing random information out there, we started compiling a list of questions [from citizens] and then answering them." Martin added, "One of our projects was getting a lot of questions [such as] 'How much are you spending?' 'What is the timetable?' We ended up doing a Story on the project [using OpenGov Stories], and it answered all the questions that kept coming in."

### Understanding Town Expenses

Expenses show how the Town spends its money. A lot of consideration and strategy is put behind budgeting how the Town spends money to provide the best services for the community.

<p><b>How much does Provincetown spend on Education?</b></p>  <p>Education expenses include salaries, supplies, athletics, early learning program activities, federal and state grant programs, student activity funds and other education related costs.</p>	<p><b>How much does the Town spend on Personnel?</b></p>  <p>This section reports personnel expenditures for all funds and all activities of the Town including full time, part time and seasonal employees.</p>	<p><b>How much does Provincetown spend on Public Safety?</b></p>  <p>Here you will find general fund expenditures for the Public Safety Division which includes Police, Fire, Ambulance, Community Development, Emergency Management, Harbor and Parking Departments.</p>
<p><b>How much does the Town spend on Technology and Information Systems?</b></p>  <p>Technology and Information Systems include hardware, software, licensing and telecommunication expenditures for all Town departments.</p>	<p><b>How much does Provincetown spend on Capital Projects?</b></p>  <p>The Town's capital improvement plan is presented annually with the operating budget. This view shows the annual capital expenditures for all funds.</p>	<p><b>How much does the Town spend on State and County charges?</b></p>  <p>These are the annual charges from Barnstable County and the Commonwealth of MA for educational, regional transit and other state charges.</p>
<p><b>How much does the Town spend on Public Works?</b></p>  <p>This division includes expenditures in the general fund for Buildings &amp; Grounds, Public Works, Highway, Snow &amp; Ice, and Solid Waste &amp; Recycling departments.</p>	<p><b>How much does Provincetown spend on Tourism?</b></p>  <p>Tourism Fund expenditures are appropriated by Town Meeting for marketing, promotional events, municipal projects, beautification and coordination &amp; support. The Tourism budget is funded by thirty-five percent (35%) of Provincetown's local room tax proceeds.</p>	<p><b>How much does the Town spend on Public Services?</b></p>  <p>General Fund expenditures for Human Services, Council on Aging, Library and Recreation departments are included in the Public Services Division.</p>

Example of Provincetown's Story Builder, proactively serving important updates to citizens



**“We learned about Performance Measures and Stories, and that’s when Administration saw the potential for big changes in providing information to the public.”**

**JOSEE YOUNG,  
FINANCE DIRECTOR**

## Long-Lasting Effects

Young and Martin knew they were making progress when the town’s police chief saw benefit in moving to The OpenGov Cloud™. Previously unable to do any work from home, the police chief is now able to access rich content anywhere, thanks to OpenGov’s cloud-based platform. Martin added, “[OpenGov] gives you the opportunity to work from home and access what you need when you need it.”

They also take advantage of every meeting, virtually or in-person, to demonstrate the power of OpenGov. Young’s message is simple: “There is too much work to be done, we had too much manual operations and too many people making updates.”

What started out as an internally-focused solution has evolved into not only a tool for the entire Provincetown budget, but a solution that proactively serves the community to improve transparency and provide clarity.

