

NEWS RELEASE

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Center for Technology in Government Report Details Local e-Government Benefits and Barriers

Albany, NY - Research conducted by the University at Albany's Center for Technology in Government (CTG) finds that, despite a range of barriers, local government leaders are tapping into electronic government initiatives to improve operations and outreach in their municipalities.

E-government is using information technology to support government operations, engage citizens and provide government services.

"The two questions that many local governments are trying to answer are how should I think about e-government and what are others doing to make it work?" says Meghan Cook, CTG project leader. "Through five regional e-government workshops we focused on those vital questions and gained a broad perspective on local e-government across the state."

The report, entitled *Making a Case for Local e-Government*, is based on real-life experiences of local government pioneers throughout New York State. CTG held five regional workshops and conducted interviews with local government professionals who shared information on their e-government projects. They detailed strategies, barriers and benefits of their e-government initiatives, and shared insights and advice for colleagues who are just starting out.

"This briefing serves as a communications tool to assist local governments trying to use technology to pursue e-government," Meghan adds. "By providing case studies of successful initiatives, along with recommendations and advice from e-government veterans, local government officials can approach their own projects better informed and with reasonable expectations of success."

The briefing features the comments of a number of local government officials representing all corners of the state. Their perspectives and hands-on knowledge provide solid ground for colleagues planning e-government initiatives for their communities.

"Local government is given a set of tasks to perform. When we are forced to choose between plowing the roads and buying a computer system, we have to plow the roads," explains John Woodward, Schenectady County Clerk. "But I also have a commitment to provide citizens with a wide-open door to government information through the Internet. The challenge is making sure that it's easy for the user without making them pay for it."

E-government programs are as much about constituent engagement as office efficiency, notes Robert Feldman, Trustee in the Village of New Paltz. "We are really trying innovative ways to get more people involved in our village government. We have started to audio broadcast our village meetings live over the Internet. Trustees respond to real-time e-mail questions during the meeting. This new way of interacting is generating a lot of interest and excitement in the community," he adds.

The Center for Technology in Government is an applied research center devoted to improving government and public services through policy, management, and technology innovation. The Center, located at the University at Albany, works with government, corporate and academic partners to pursue new ways of applying computing and communications technologies to the practical problems of information management and service delivery in the public sector.

Established in 1844 and designated a center of the State University of New York in 1962, the University at Albany's broad mission of excellence in undergraduate and graduate education, research and public service engages 17,000 diverse students in eight degree-granting schools and colleges. For more information about this nationally ranked University, visit www.albany.edu.