Alameda County

Headquartered in Oakland, California, the Alameda County Government represents a collection of 21 departments and agencies that oversee the County's 1.5 million citizens. With more than 9,000 employees, the County Government has an annual budget of $2.4 billion and provides healthcare, social services, public protection, and general government services to the area's 14 incorporated cities and several unincorporated communities.

Challenge

Alameda County has long been a leader in developing climate protection strategies. In 2006, The Board of Supervisors adopted the Climate Change Leadership Strategy Resolution, committing the County to integrate climate considerations into County plans and processes. The Board followed that in 2010 by adopting The Alameda County Climate Action Plan for Government Services and Operations, which set out specific measures that County agencies could take to create more efficient government operations to help reach the goal of a 15% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. Susan Muranishi, the County Administrator, challenged each Department to achieve these goals through innovation and modernization.

As Agencies and Departments looked at ways to make their business greener, a recurrent theme was that reducing paper consumption with digital processes would make significant strides toward meeting the County's goals. One sticking point in eliminating paper, however, was that many documents, such as new-hire paperwork, vendor contracts, leases and other agreements, all required signatures. Up to this point obtaining signatures meant that documents had to be printed and then signed. To eliminate its old, manual, paper-based systems, the County needed a digital solution with a legally enforceable eSignature component so signatories could sign documents without needing to print.

The task of finding an eSignature solution that would meet the county's needs fell to Howard Hill, IT Manager in the Information Technology Department.

Solution

As Hill investigated different eSignature options, one of the solutions he encountered was the DocuSign Agreement Cloud. "When I was looking at tools, I knew we needed a solution that not only provided an eSignature component, but that was versatile enough to help us digitally manage a variety of transactions in a variety of use cases,"

Results

Before DocuSign	After DocuSign
21 days Document turnaround time	**4 days** Document turnaround time

"Seeing the versatility I highly recommend the DocuSign Agreement Cloud to other counties and municipalities seeking to go digital to help reduce their carbon footprint. DocuSign has an unlimited number of use cases and has been the catalyst for us in making the transition to a totally digital environment."

Howard Hill
IT Manager, Alameda County Information Technology Department

says Hill. "From the get go, DocuSign stood out among vendors as the global standard — a company that had enough range to address anything that we might need it to." Before doing a countywide deployment of DocuSign eSignature, Howard Hill and the Alameda's Chief Information Officer and County Registrar, Tim Dupuis, decided to test a limited use case: voting location lease cards.

During election years, one of Dupuis' responsibilities as Registrar is to lease approximately 900 locations around the county to serve as polling stations. In the past, this meant that Dupuis' staff had to mail 900 individual agreements to the different property owners. Each agreement had to be filled, signed, and returned to the office of the Registrar by recipients. On average, these agreements took 21 days to get back to the Office of the Registrar during which time there was a total lack of visibility into where agreements were in the signature process. As documents returned, the staff would take turns updating an elaborate Excel spreadsheet that tracked progress on the leases. This process was the perfect fit for piloting DocuSign eSignature.

Prior to deployment, Hill and his team worked with DocuSign's Customer Success Architects (CSA) to develop plans for implementing the product and to roadmap other potential use cases and methods for driving adoption so that the Alameda County could maximize its use of DocuSign eSignature. With DocuSign's Application Program Interface (API), Hill's team was able to quickly digitize the lease agreement paperwork into digital lease cards. They termed the pilot program the 'Polling Lease Card System.' With the click of a button, these cards were sent electronically to each of the property owners of the 900 locations around Alameda County. Recipients used the DocuSign integration to fill out, sign, and return documents. Alameda could continuously track the progress of each document, and the completed documents were stored in the cloud for easy access anytime, anywhere, from any device. The program was easy to design, easy to implement, and the results proved it.

Results

Within minutes of sending the 900 lease cards out via DocuSign eSignature, the Registrar of Voters Office began receiving paperwork back completed. After four days, the majority of the lease cards had been returned, an 80% improvement in turnaround time over the old process. In addition to the faster turnaround, DocuSign improved visibility into the signature process and eliminated the need to consult and laboriously update Excel spreadsheets. Staff at the Registrar of Voters remarked that DocuSign was intuitive enough to be readily adopted by end-users without issue: "The polling place owners found the system easy to use when completing the documents and any issues were easy for our staff to troubleshoot over the phone."

The Alameda County Climate Action Plan for Government Services and Operations has a goal of a 15% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

With the success of the 'Polling Lease Card System,' Dupuis decided to move forward with purchasing DocuSign's Enterprise-Wide Solution for Alameda County's 21 agencies. As Hill noted, "When we saw how easy it was to streamline the lease card process, we started thinking of all sorts of cases where we could implement DocuSign to go fully digital to save time and money, improve our workflows, and drive our green initiatives."

For its next project, Alameda's IT department applied DocuSign eSignature to the new hire process in the Healthcare and Social Services agencies. Collectively, these agencies process more than 500 new hire forms each year. New hire forms often require sign-off from multiple parties, and traditionally paperwork has island-hopped from desk-to-desk accruing signatures, a cumbersome process that lacked visibility and created delays in onboarding. Using DocuSign, the IT team was able to completely digitize this process. Instead of jumping from desk-to-desk, forms that needed signatures could be signed quickly from signatories' email inboxes. At any point during the process, DocuSign eSignature enabled users to track who had signed and to send automatic reminders to signatories who still needed to sign – features which greatly accelerated the overall process and cut back on paper consumption.

The IT Department has continued to apply DocuSign eSignature to various use cases and to drive adoption into many of the County's departments. In the months following the rollout of the initial use case, Alameda County garnered national recognition for its 'Polling Lease Card System,' winning both the National Association of Counties (NACo)'s 2015 Achievement Award for Information Technology and the 2015 Public Technology Institute Solution Award under Web Management and E-Government.

"DocuSign has been a critical element in our overall plan to drive our Green Initiative across Alameda County," says Hill. "Seeing the versatility I highly recommend the DocuSign Agreement Cloud to other counties and municipalities seeking to go digital to help reduce their carbon footprint. DocuSign has an unlimited number of use cases and has been the catalyst for us in making the transition to a totally digital environment."