Maximizing GIS

Esri’s newest resources are designed to improve information flow in and outside the organization.

With budgets constrained and demand for services escalating, government leaders are searching for new opportunities to promote efficiency in their operations and expand their relationship with their constituents while capping or even reducing costs.

To meet this pressing need, Esri, the Redlands, California-based market leader in geographic information systems (GIS), has just launched ArcGIS® for Local Government, a complete system for designing and managing solutions through the application of geographic knowledge. It was created for government officials who want to improve information flow within the organization and offer more convenience to constituents. This exciting set of ready-to-use applications is free and available for current customers by simple download from the Esri website.

“This is something that Esri is doing for our customers to help them move ahead quickly,” explains Christopher Thomas, Esri director of government markets. “ArcGIS for Local Government puts them in position to deploy applications tied to their workflow without adding to their expenses.”
Government leaders all across the nation are learning how these application templates and basemaps are changing the way map-based information is being provided and used in local government. Through the features of ArcGIS for Local Government, they are benefiting from technology that now has even more ability to apply geographic information to support daily government activities.

Built to Work across Peer Community

With ArcGIS for Local Government, government leaders are finding new ways of taking advantage of the vast capabilities of GIS and quickly delivering this information for their own management purposes as well as to local citizens, businesses, and prospects. GIS information is now more accessible than ever and can be shared in new ways, across multiple levels, without taxing the resources of information technology and GIS departments. Esri built ArcGIS for Local Government on a common information model that is designed to work together across various departments. In designing ArcGIS for Local Government, Esri matched its tools to the normal workflows of local government: data creation, planning and analysis, field mobility, operational awareness, and citizen engagement. For government leaders, ArcGIS for Local Government fits neatly into and greatly enhances the regular operations of the government.

Because it is built on a common platform, ArcGIS for Local Government gives local governments access to a community of peers who share their needs, values, and challenges. Local government GIS and IT leaders can collaborate, share best practices, and provide feedback and input to Esri and its developer partners. Contributions by users and partners, based on their experiences in implementing the apps and maps in ArcGIS for Local Government, are also incorporated into its templates to enrich its capabilities.

Esri also offers a range of project, implementation, and industry-focused services to support local governments that want the advantages of ArcGIS for Local Government but do not have the resources to dedicate to its implementation.

As a member of the local government’s project team, Esri will apply its extensive application development experience and the lessons learned through nearly 40 years of building innovative GIS solutions. The project solutions are based on the solid foundation of core Esri® technology. Access to a large network of partner organizations supplies additional resources to meet the technological and business requirements of local governments.

50 Applications Ready to Download

Whether using in-house resources or bringing in additional team members, governments gain access through ArcGIS for Local Government to more than 50 (and growing) applications and maps ready to download and configure so they fit easily into a government’s existing infrastructure. Once added to the module, a government’s geographic information comes to life inside and outside the organization as well as being accessible to citizens on the web through desktop browsers, and through the latest mobile devices.

ArcGIS for Local Government maps and apps
are organized into modules to support functions for a number of departments across local governments. Each module covers a core set of work tasks, including a series of maps and apps that are built on the common information model of data, services, and cartographic designs. Implementing the module is as simple as loading a government’s datasets into the information model.

**Currently, the growing list of modules includes the following:**
- Land Records
- Elections
- Planning and Development
- Public Safety
- Public Works
- Water Utilities
- General Government
- Citizen Engagement

Examples abound of how governments are taking advantage of these new applications. Quick deployment of an election tool was an objective of Cabarrus County, North Carolina, officials, who had a congressional runoff election approaching and an early primary soon to follow. They wanted to offer voters a convenient tool for finding their polling place. With a template application provided by ArcGIS for Local Government from Esri, their problem was easily solved.

Since the tool was implemented, city residents are able to click to the polling information page on the county’s website, point to their home on a map (or enter their address into a search tool), and find their voting precinct and polling place. They are able to point to a set of tabs at the bottom of the page that showed additional information on the polling site, including the address, its hours of operation, registration deadlines, election date, and a contact person. A second set identifies their current elected officials, and future enhancements will provide driving directions and ballot information.

“It would have taken months to develop an app from scratch,” says Todd Shanley, IT manager for Cabarrus County. “We would have had to devote resources and money to a third party. This was a time-saver and a money saver. And we were able to provide an app for end users quickly. We’ve gotten a lot of good feedback.”

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Adds Debbie Brannon, the county’s IT director, “These targeted applications are what the public expects from a government, and they are exactly what we in IT are looking for in one application to meet our specific needs.”

**Ft. Lauderdale Develops App Gallery**

In Fort Lauderdale, Florida, the GIS department has pulled together a number of modules into an app gallery that delivers information on a variety of services through maps and related tables, allowing residents to drill down for data related to their local neighborhood.

One of the modules helps citizens find services provided by the Department of Parks and Recreation. Type in “basketball,” and the tool immediately locates 20 parks in the city with basketball courts and shows the closest location on the map, along with address, phone number, days and hours of operation, and additional features at the park such as swings and picnic tables.

“We had this up in a matter of days,” says Ian Wint, the city’s GIS manager. “Had we not used the templates, development would have taken months.”

Wint is especially pleased that the templates that Fort Lauderdale has developed with ArcGIS for Local Government are formatted to work across the variety of devices now used to access information through the Internet. “Instead of spending time to develop an application for the web and separate applications for multiple devices, these applications work on computers, mobile devices—all platforms,” he says. “It saves lots of time.”

Wint is also enthusiastic about the city’s ability to use a single template to produce three applications that provide a wealth of information on a variety of subjects. In this case, the primary application is a module that the city calls My Government Services.

With this module, a range of services provided by the city is all laid out together. By entering an address, the user’s home is located on the map. In a series of tabs below, a broad picture of city services is on display.

For a given location, for example, My Government Services shows the frequency and day of the week...
The City of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, has created a GIS Application Gallery on its website to provide key information, such as polling places in the county, to its residents.

for trash pickup, recycling, yard waste, and bulk trash; the name of the drinking water provider; information about the neighborhood schools; identification of the hurricane zone; location of the nearest emergency shelter; and the nearest police and fire stations. For each, the module lists relevant information, such as address and phone number.

From the same basic template, the city has also developed a module with more extensive information on emergency services, including data on the number of fire calls and false alarms, and education facilities, including private schools and higher education. “Once you get the template and information together,” Wint says, “you can do whatever you want with it.”

As a next step, Fort Lauderdale is launching an outreach program to local civic associations, with the goal that they will spread the word about the new online capabilities. “We want to educate people on the new products that are available to them,” Wint says.

Wint believes that the common platform provided by ArcGIS for Local Government will promote more sharing of data among local governments. As more governments adopt the templates, he foresees modules that integrate data from a variety of sources for more comprehensive presentations. For example, a map might show emergency routes for the entire metropolitan region rather than for a single community.

On its drawing board, the city has a project to bring together information from an array of sources into an executive management system, or an executive dashboard, using the templates of the ArcGIS for Local Government, Wint says.

By focusing on police activities by location, for example, the city will be able to identify crime hot spots, or by using reports from public works, it will be able to learn where there are exceptional issues. In addition, Twitter and news feeds will be integrated into the program, which will be designed for a tablet device.

“This is an opportunity to put GIS directly in control of the city manager and elected officials who handle the budget,” he says.

Brannon, the Cabarrus County information director, says that ArcGIS for Local Government templates, which are flexible, easy-to-use, and integrated into the normal workflow, are a great tool for the work of local government, especially in times of resource constraints.

“ArcGIS for Local Government saves us time and resources,” she says. “In this economy, anything that improves service delivery without added expense is a tremendous value to local government.”

**Get Started**

Whether you are new to Esri technology or a longtime user, ArcGIS for Local Government will propel your GIS initiatives forward.

**New to Esri GIS?**

Visit [esri.com/localgov](http://esri.com/localgov) to learn more about implementing the ArcGIS platform through various tested and government-approved deployment and licensing options. Once you have core ArcGIS software, ArcGIS for Local Government best practices and resources will be available to you at no additional cost.

**Already Using Esri’s Core Technology?**

Whether your organization currently deploys GIS at a small or large scale, you can take advantage of ArcGIS for Local Government resources today to maximize your return on investment.

Visit [esri.com/acclocal](http://esri.com/acclocal) to access best practices, applications, and resources that will extend the reach of your GIS.