



# Digital First: Blazing a Trail For Public Service Agencies

State Agency Proves Bold Digital Initiatives  
Achieve Quick Results, Lasting Benefits.

This statewide imaging initiative is complete—and it sets a new benchmark for digital transformation in government. Over the last five years, this state agency has moved from outdated, paper-based processes to a scalable, cloud-based infrastructure that supports secure access, rapid collaboration, and improved service delivery.

## How an ambitious, holistic approach is delivering on the promise of digital transformation.

They bet early on the value of digital transformation. A statewide imaging and digital transformation initiative launched in 2019 by one state agency set a new benchmark in public service modernization. Today, the agency—and the public it serves—is winning big.

Fueled by rising public expectations in an on-demand world, digital transformation was becoming a government imperative well before 2020. COVID-19 and the swift pivot to remote workplaces served as the jetpack that accelerated it.

Many agencies were reluctant to make the necessary financial and resource investments pre-pandemic. That risk aversion slowed progress and left some lagging far behind the private sector in harnessing the power of digital. However, pockets of innovation excellence do exist in the public sector, and this agency's digital-first initiative is one great example.

The agency took an early, forward-thinking position, realizing that waiting to go digital would be far more costly than an early investment in it. What started as a bold initiative to digitize archives and streamline operations, has resulted in real, measurable outcomes: improved access, enhanced security, and cost reductions. By 2024, the agency eliminated 12 storage facilities and digitized over 1.74 million documents—proving that a digital-first approach delivers.

Agencies struggling to adopt their own digital initiatives can look to this agency as proof that digital-first is a winning strategy and a good (and necessary) bet for future success.





## The Cost of Waiting

The agency's success with digital can be traced to the initiative's roots. The internal team began the effort not as a standalone project, but a holistic approach focused on agency-wide goals of cost-cutting, greater efficiency, and better service delivery.

Paper documents, related paper-based processes, and outdated, legacy systems were costing the agency too much. The volume of information and caseloads the agency was required to manage only continued to increase, and digitizing was the best way to control costs and scale while maintaining high levels of service.

Specifically, digitization for the department addressed:

- Soaring costs of paper-document storage in remote warehouses;
- Ongoing costs of document loss, damage, and recovery, as well as repair of its off-site warehouse, resulting from increasingly frequent hurricanes and flooding; and
- Outdated technology making document access and collaboration increasingly slow and inefficient.

For the agency, the long-term, negative effects of these direct and indirect costs made digital transformation critical. Waiting was simply not a viable option.

Hurricanes alone made a compelling argument to move forward quickly. In 2017, a hurricane claimed an entire container of the agency's records. In



October 2018, a hurricane completely destroyed the agency's document storage warehouse and the 1,300 boxes of paper records inside.

Hurricanes, flooding, and other natural disasters had become an expected reality for which the agency must plan and budget for. Risk of loss and exposure of sensitive information had to be addressed because their effects were long-term and far-reaching—for the agency and the public. The only solution was to eliminate paper and its inherent risk. Digitization reduced much of the risk and related costs for the agency—estimated in the millions and climbing.

"Our goal was to become a digital-first agency by 2023, and we saw that as critical to the successful long-term operations of the agency, not simply a singular IT project," the department's Chief Information Officer explains. "The problems with paper and paper-based manual processes only get

bigger and more costly. They don't go away, they compound. Our move from paper means cost savings and efficiency gains that are changing the way work gets done throughout the agency for the long term."



For this agency, the five-year initiative to become a leading digital-first public agency:

- Supported accessibility and collaboration within and across all departments;
- Reduced the risk of document loss and security breaches related to sensitive agency information in the event of a hurricane, flood, or any natural disaster; and
- Improved efficiency of slow, paper-based manual processes through better document accessibility and collaboration across teams and systems.

"As we drive agency-wide efficiency, we're improving service delivery internally and to the public. We're using technology to ultimately achieve a more people-focused environment. That's where the positive results of going digital become truly transformational," their CIO says.

To create government agencies that are fit for the future takes reinventing how they operate, including organizational structure, processes, culture and mindset adaptations. It means using a wider lens to consider how digitization will affect the entire organization and all the relationships within it—internal and external—so all stakeholders benefit. That's how this agency is getting it right.





## A Successful Start: Thoughtful Planning and an Experienced Partner

An early, key decision in a successful digital transformation is whether to manage it entirely with internal resources or bring on the expertise of a partner. To ensure its digital transformation was successful, the agency determined it needed a trusted partner with proven experience delivering digitization solutions with quick time to value. After careful consideration, the agency chose Docufree.

With Docufree, the department mapped out a phased plan that allowed for small, rapid tests and high adoption. The approach would demonstrate value quickly and build an early business case for a long-term digital vision.

Planning included these elements:

- Detailed roadmap to identify and prioritize projects. The team chose the departments, content, and processes to be digitized first based on considerations such as impact on service delivery and workflow efficiency.
- Paper-to-digital strategy to determine the most critical documents for digitization at each stage. This included careful consideration of how documents are used and where digitization would have the greatest impact on overall objectives.
- Integration and process automation strategy to determine the paper-based processes to be automated.
- Eventual cloud migration and technology strategy to move outdated, on-premises systems to the cloud for remote access. By integrating cloud-based Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) imaging, content management, and digital process automation, the agency will reduce hardware and maintenance costs, enable better collaboration, increase productivity, and improve security and overall user experience. The cloud also allows for cost-effective future scaling needs.



## A Supported Execution

After working closely with Docufree to properly plan for success, the agency leveraged Docufree's experienced team of professionals and technology and services solutions. As its partner, Docufree supported execution of the agency's digital transformation with a constant focus on the holistic, agency-wide goals and objectives.

The initiative addressed paper-based inefficiencies and cost-control measures across departments and functions. At the heart of the agency's paper problem are 15 off-site warehouses.

With agency goals in mind, here's what phased execution looks like:

Department: Human Resources	
<b>Project Description:</b> Integrated Docufree's document management software with the agency's HR platform to enable staff to access documents in one system.	<b>Benefits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased productivity</li><li>• Improved service delivery</li><li>• Strengthened security</li><li>• Better collaboration</li></ul>
Department: Finance & Administration	
<b>Project Description:</b> Transitioning department from paper and paper-based processes, moving from an outdated, on-premises system to Docufree's cloud-based document management software.	<b>Benefits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased productivity</li><li>• Improved service delivery</li><li>• Strengthened security</li><li>• Better collaboration</li></ul>
Process: Background Screening	
<b>Project Description:</b> Transition department from paper and paper-based processes, moving from an outdated, on-premises system to Docufree's cloud-based document management software.	<b>Benefits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased productivity</li><li>• Improved service delivery</li><li>• Strengthened security</li><li>• Better collaboration</li></ul>

## A Supported Execution Continued

### **Department:** Records Phase 1: Archive Records

#### **Project Description:**

Digitize archive records stored in 15 warehouses into Docufree's cloud-based document management software for fast, easy, and secure access.

#### **Benefits:**

- Cost savings related to the elimination of all 15 off-site warehouses, including storage, retrieval, shipping, and retention
- Reduced risk of loss and exposure of sensitive information due to hurricanes, flooding, and other natural disasters
- Increased productivity
- Improved service delivery (record requests fulfilled in minutes, not days)
- Stronger security

### **Department:** Records Phase 2: Active Records

#### **Project Description:**

Integrate case file system with Docufree's document management solution to allow staff to upload and retrieve documents, automate workflows for document routing, and integrate electronic document signatures. Implement a day-forward strategy to scan and upload all active records.

#### **Benefits:**

- Continued cost savings related to the elimination of all 15 off-site warehouses
- Increased productivity
- Improved service delivery (record requests fulfilled in minutes, not days)
- Stronger security

## Quantifiable Results

The agency's well-planned and forward-thinking strategy has delivered positive, quantifiable results.

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## Project Goals (2019–2024)

- Replace legacy content systems with a modern, cloud-based platform
- Digitize historical records across key departments: Human Resources, Finance, Background Screening, and Administration
- Eliminate physical storage dependencies across 12 statewide facilities
- Enable remote access and collaborative workflows through document management automation
- Reduce costs, minimize risk, and enhance continuity of operations

“Our goal was to become a digital-first agency, not just automate tasks. The payoff is an empowered workforce and faster, more secure service delivery.” — CIO

Through this initiative, over 45,000 boxes were digitized, dramatically reducing recovery risks and cutting the high costs associated with physical document management. These proactive steps proved essential in strengthening operational resilience and supporting uninterrupted public service.

## Administrative Accomplishments

- Integrated cloud-based document management with HR and operational systems
- Automated document routing, background screening, and voucher approvals
- Migrated content from local file systems into a single secure repository
- Digitized critical records for Human Resources, Fleet, Property, Leasing, and Records Management



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These milestones reflect the agency's shift from reactive, manual processes to a proactive digital strategy.

## The Numbers

- Pallets Processed: 914
- Boxes Scanned: 45,659
- Documents Digitized: 1.74M
- Images Captured: 119.4M
- Storage Facilities Closed: 12

Thousands of physical boxes once stored in costly off-site warehouses have been digitized and are now available statewide at the click of a button.

## Operational Impact and Quantifiable Results

- Record request fulfillment times dropped by 99%—from days to minutes.
- More than 45,000 boxes have been digitized, dramatically reducing disaster exposure and recovery costs.
- Closure of 12 physical storage facilities is projected to save millions in long-term operating expenses.
- Over 1.74 million documents and 119.4 million images were digitized, eliminating 914 pallets of paper.
- By 2024, the agency fully eliminated 100 % of warehouse-related costs.
- Process automation and SaaS tools reduced reliance on manual workflows, enabling a leaner, faster workforce.

## Phased Roadmap Highlights

Focus Area	Key Modernization Steps	Impact
Human Resources	Integrated cloud document access into HR platforms; streamlined onboarding workflows	Faster hiring and improved compliance
Background Screening	Migrated sensitive files from legacy drive to secure cloud storage	Accelerated clearances and reduced risk
Finance	Automated voucher routing using PrintPlus and Axiom Pro	Quicker payments and greater transparency

A phased approach—targeting the highest-impact departments first—enabled the agency to digitize 10 % of its archive in just six months, proving early ROI and building momentum.

This agency didn't just digitize paper—it redesigned how government works. Integrated systems, cloud platforms, and scalable automation make digital-first both possible and essential.

Other public agencies can replicate this success by prioritizing early planning, choosing a proven partner, and starting with functions that deliver fast returns. Docufree's support—spanning large-volume capture, cloud content management, PrintPlus integration, and day-forward automation—was instrumental in achieving these results.

## Project Closeout

Final tasks included:

- Reconciliation of physical files
- Disposition approvals
- Delivery of final documentation
- Submission of final invoice

With the successful closeout, the agency has completed a major chapter in its modernization strategy.

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## Looking Ahead: Sustaining the Digital Future

The agency continues its digital-first momentum with next-phase priorities:

- Digitization of new incoming materials (day-forward)
- Automated retention schedules within the content platform
- Single Sign-On implementation for user access
- System integration with case management tools
- Ongoing SaaS platform support and scaling

“This isn’t the end of the journey. It’s the start of a fully digital public service model.” —  
Project Director

## Leading Digital-First Public Agencies

Digital transformation—more than anything else—is reshaping the way government agencies spend public money and deliver services. Building a future public sector that thrives requires governments to move beyond digitizing singular pockets of paper logjams. To realize the full promise of digital transformation and achieve quick results and lasting benefits takes holistic, digital-first approaches and committed leadership. This agency is demonstrating that, when done right, an investment in digital delivers a return worth any perceived risk.



## About Docufree

Docufree is a services-led leader in digital transformation solutions including: large-volume document capture; data extraction and integration; intelligent process automation; cloud-based document management; and Enterprise Digital Mailroom services. Today, over 2,000 enterprises and government agencies rely on Docufree to empower their workforces with the information they need and ensure processes are executed with speed, accuracy, and compliance from wherever work needs to happen. For more information, visit [www.Docufree.com](http://www.Docufree.com). Follow us on LinkedIn and X (formerly Twitter) @Docufree, then like us on Facebook.

