



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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City of San Diego Receives Government Experience Award for Website Improvements

AWARD RECOGNIZES HOW QUALITY DIGITAL EXPERIENCES HELP BUILD TRUST BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND THE PEOPLE THEY SERVE

SAN DIEGO – In recognition of its efficient and user-friendly digital experience, the City of San Diego has received a first place award in The Center for Digital Government’s [2024 Government Experience Awards](#). These awards recognize the achievements of states, cities and counties that have raised the bar on the experience of government services to create a better-engaged constituency and a more responsive government.

This year’s winners used tools like customer experience portals, multilingual chatbots, live chat, voice submissions, generative AI (artificial intelligence), online help, location services, and personalization to improve constituent experience in many areas.

“We are proud of the work done by the Department of IT and Departments across the City to make interacting with the City online a positive, intuitive and informative experience,” said Jonathan Behnke, Chief Information Officer for the Department of IT.

According to The Center for Digital Government, the City was awarded first place in the “city” category for its [website’s](#) topic-based organization, readable content, user-centric design, increase in online forms and greater transparency and accountability. The City was also recognized for the continued revamping of its customer engagement strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic to foster ease of access to City programs and services for residents and businesses via [Sandiego.gov](#). Significant enhancements to areas of the site include:

Incorporating AI Technology – The City, working with the Regional Cyber Lab, developed [My eCISO](#) (My Electronic Chief Information Security Officer) which helps organizations assess the robustness of their cybersecurity. This tool, offered free to regional agencies, local businesses and individuals, guides users through a question-and-answer process, generating a report card on their cybersecurity strategy.

Online Scheduling – The Development Services Department (DSD) adopted Microsoft Bookings for online scheduling of virtual or in-person appointments with a DSD representative.

Expanded Online Permitting – DSD also improved its permitting processes by expanding the types of permits that can be submitted online. This includes new permitting services for Short-Term Occupancy, Historical Resource Nominations, and the Mills Act.

Live Chat/Chatbot – The Environmental Services Department incorporated a chat feature on its department site that facilitated interaction with live agents during business hours or a chatbot after hours.

Department Website Redesigns – The San Diego Police Department and the Homeless Strategies and Solutions Department redesigned their respective sites to improve access to their programs and services. They also emphasized data transparency, including mandatory records disclosures.

Program Websites – The City of San Diego’s Web Team employs distinctive design templates to distinguish program sites from department sites. The templates offer enhanced creativity and create a more visually appealing website for promoting new City programs and initiatives.

Resident Feedback – The feedback from San Diego residents continues to play a vital role in refining SanDiego.gov. Substantial updates and enhancements to the website are a direct result of resident input. For example, the creation of the Citywide Agendas and Minutes page, which includes a comprehensive list of meeting documents for all City boards, commissions, committees and planning groups, was a response to resident requests made through feedback channels like public surveys and questionnaires.

The [Center for Digital Government](#) is a national research and advisory institute focused on technology policy and best practices in state and local government.



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