Microsoft TownHall
For state and local government

Every year, campaigning officials have the opportunity to set their priorities and agenda firmly in the minds of voters. Now with Microsoft TownHall, people running for office can easily connect with voters online, reach out to more people, gather citizen feedback, and gain voter insight.

Connect with voters online

It used to be that campaign speeches, like the State of the State address, were a staid affair, characterized by one-way communication. Today's technology makes it easier than ever to encourage real connections with citizens to help inform and support your agenda, engage people in civic actions, and encourage participation.

By using a simple web-based service from Microsoft, you can engage with citizens online, helping to scale your communication, aggregate feedback, and gain valuable voter insight.

Microsoft TownHall is an online tool that fosters, organizes, moderates, and houses online conversations to drive rich discussion about key issues and concerns. It provides a place to ask, answer, and prioritize questions. The most popular or relevant questions are given the most weight, so participants can readily see timely topics.

Why Microsoft TownHall

Today's on-demand society requires unlimited online access to people, organizations, and information from a variety of electronic devices. Microsoft TownHall provides an online and always-available vehicle to engage with citizens and to gain valuable insights—and works within the constraints of existing budgets. Participants can join the conversation on virtually any Internet-connected device they may be using, on practically any web browser, and across multiple platforms.

TownHall features a user-friendly, lightweight interface that is optimized for the collection of data, which is stored in Microsoft SQL Azure cloud database services. You can easily retrieve data to work with it using existing and familiar tools, including Microsoft Excel.

TownHall software is available at no cost. Because the service is hosted on the Windows Azure cloud-based platform, TownHall is available using a pay-only-for-usage model. Windows Azure performs the heavy technical lifting. You can typically connect with more than 100,000 constituents, 24 hours a day, for pennies per engagement.

How do people engage?

Microsoft TownHall is available to citizens using mobile phones, web browsers, and tablet computers.

Consider TownHall as a forum that public officials can include on their home pages—across multiple platforms, including popular desktop operating systems, and across tablets and mobile devices, such as Windows Phone, iPad, iPhone, and Android.

By using widgets, you can integrate TownHall into Facebook fan pages and third-party sites. Citizens can share TownHall questions and comments on social websites such as Twitter and Facebook, extending the conversation to include members of their broader social communities.

Microsoft Town Hall creates a destination for citizens to voice opinions, prioritize issues, and offer insights.

Explore the capabilities of Microsoft TownHall

- **Online suggestion box.** Voters post ideas and then other members of the community vote on those ideas in an idea forum.

- **Online town meeting.** Voters post questions, other members of the community vote on the questions, and then campaign or organization hosts respond in a moderated forum.

- **Open discussion between you and citizens.** Voters post questions, other members of the community vote on those questions, and then campaign or organization hosts and community members respond in an open forum.

- **User reputation system.** For their contributions to the community, individuals can earn points and badges in several ways. Organizations can "rally the troops" by tailoring TownHall to accommodate various scenarios, including rewarding offline activities.

Partner with agency experts or just learn more

- To get started using Microsoft TownHall, contact a Microsoft certified partner. Many have extensive experience with the TownHall technology. Find a partner at the CampaignReady website at: http://www.microsoft.com/CampaignReady

- To download TownHall source code that is customizable for your specific requirements, go to: http://code.msdn.microsoft.com/TownHall

- Watch online demos and get more great ideas at the CampaignReady website.

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