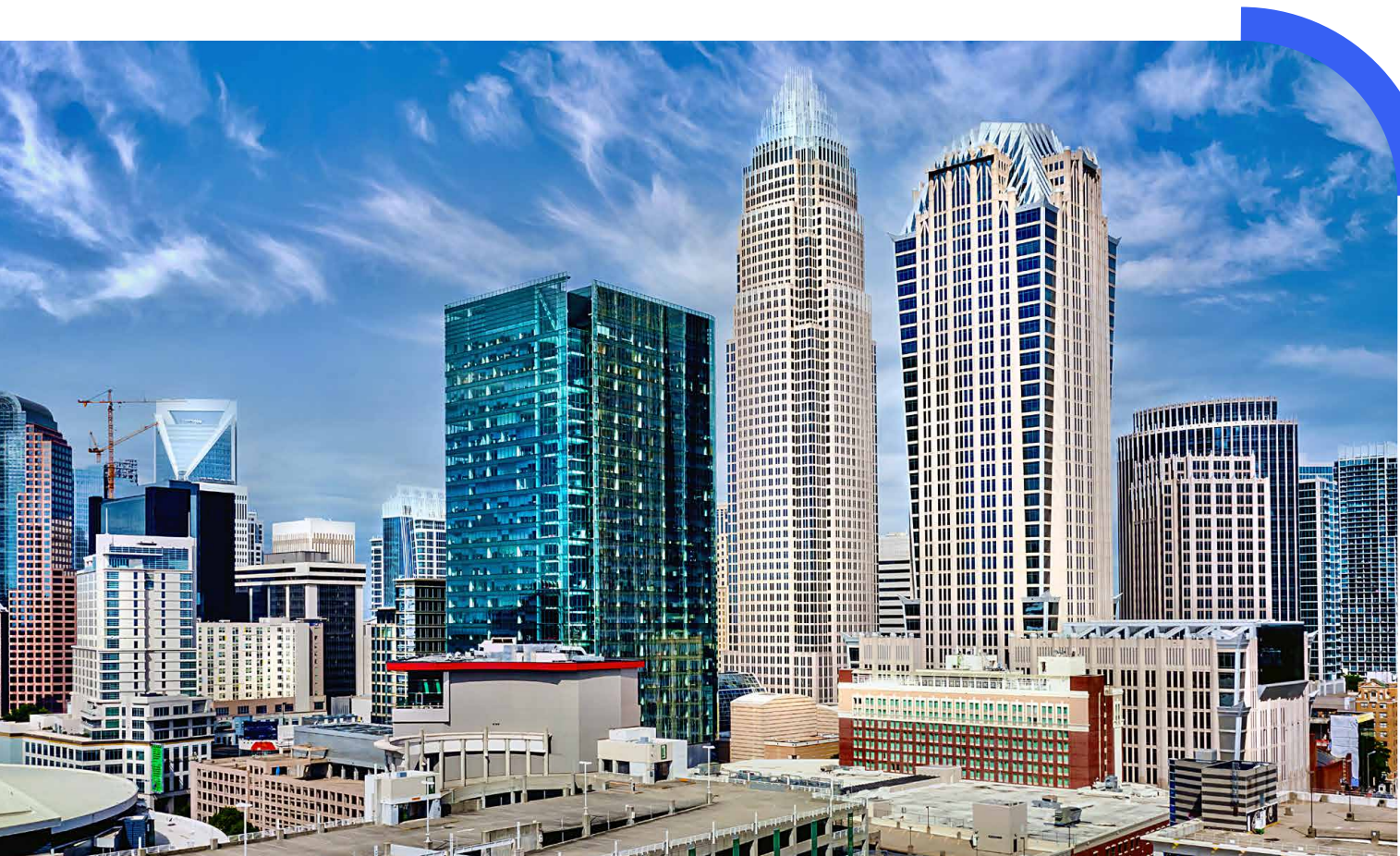




Guilford County: achieving automated, streamlined communications with Everbridge Mass Notification

Located in Greensboro, North Carolina, Guilford County has a population of 541,299 citizens, making it the third-most populous county in North Carolina. The Guilford County mission is to provide an efficient, effective, and responsive government that meets public needs while maintaining a high-performance workforce that provides exceptional services, supporting a high quality of life and sustainable economic growth.



Challenges:

Intensified operational needs & lack of automation

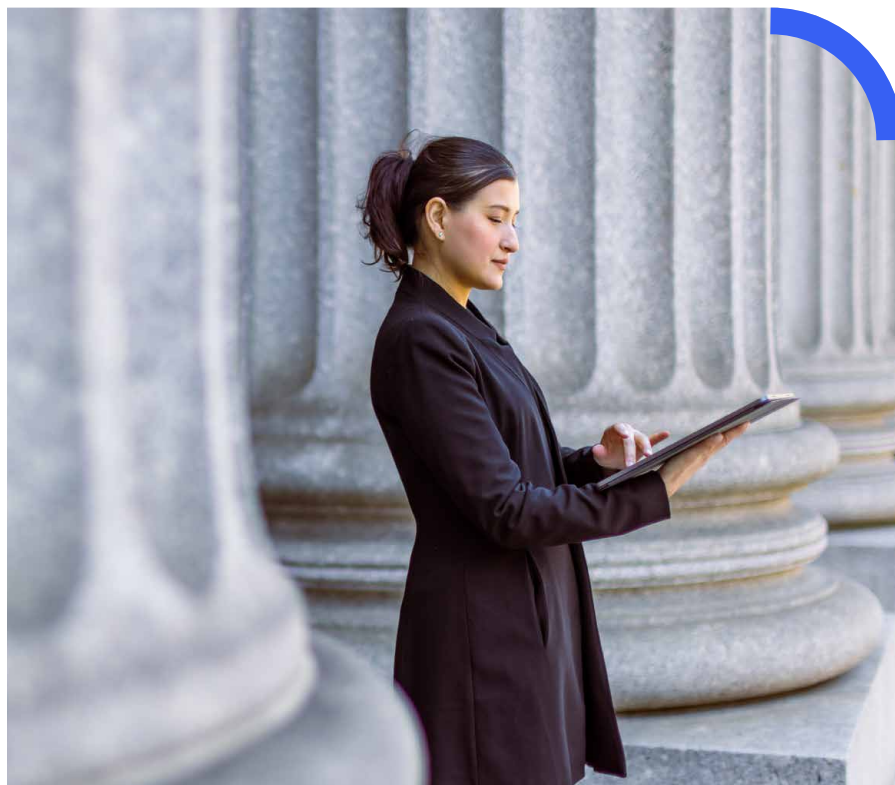
Guilford County, like many others, found that when COVID-19 struck, it intensified other existing operational issues. The Emergency Management branch found itself taking on many simultaneous tasks. Digital transformation changed from being a lofty goal to an immediate necessity to not only handle the pandemic, but other challenges such as civil unrest, severe weather, and day-to-day operations. The adoption of technology was required to keep up with mounting responsibilities.

The County of Guilford required:

- A comprehensive notification solution that could keep citizens and employees informed before, during and after all events, operational incidents, and emergencies.
- The ability to engage in two-way communications with the public.
- Automated and streamlined alerting capabilities that provide information to the public, employees, and key stakeholders.

“There were so many roles that we had to take on throughout the pandemic from pairing with the health department to guide our county through initial COVID response to establishing testing and vaccination centers,” said Baker. “We needed to leverage technologies as much as possible, and really put Everbridge to the test, using the tool in more ways than we ever would’ve thought.”

Conor Baker
Operations Coordinator,
Guilford County



Solution:

Everbridge Mass Notification

Guilford County selected and deployed Everbridge Mass Notification as their communications platform because their previous solution could not fulfil their requirements. With Everbridge, Guilford County could more easily communicate with all stakeholders and residents to better suit the needs of the county.

We sat down with Conor Baker, Guilford County's Operations Coordinator, who stated the old tool "...wasn't user friendly or reliable. Without Mass Notification, our ability to communicate with our population would be severely limited. There is so much value that we find in simply being able to relay information to our community."

The county has experienced significant value from Everbridge's Mass Notification in the form of community feedback.

"The tool has increased both community engagement and feedback simply because we can effectively communicate with our community," said Baker.

Everbridge's Mass Notification really came into its own during the pandemic, allowing for a streamlined way of communicating vaccine and availability and scheduling.

"When the vaccine rollout first started, getting an appointment was difficult. We created a Nixle keyword for easy opt-ins. We would then publish the appointment schedule publicly online, which would trigger an alert to be sent notifying the opt-ins of when they needed to be online to snag an appointment" explained Baker.



This method helped significantly when it came to solving community concerns about the vaccine.

“Offering an opt-in text service for notifications helped resolve concerns that the community had about not knowing when vaccines would be available. This was very successful as we had 26,000 Spanish and English opt-ins,” said Baker.

This automation allowed Guilford to operate much more effectively and efficiently.

Baker explained, “Our only way of notifying people without Mass Notification would have been through indirect notifications such as posting to our website and social media. Everbridge was instrumental in notifying people for weather delays and other issues.”

Guilford also relied heavily on Everbridge to distribute and manage situation reports to key stakeholders, which has enhanced the county's productivity while saving countless hours of manual labor.

“We use Everbridge to distribute and manage situation reports to our key stakeholders on a cadence as often as daily, which allows us to deliver directly to their inbox...We never imagined handling these reports like this, but Everbridge offered a very convenient way of doing so. This makes consumption much easier and saves a lot of time. If we didn't have a means to notify people internally, it would be a very long process of notifying people manually through a phone call. Everbridge makes this seamless as we already have a template ready to execute,” said Baker.

Strengthening resilience for the future

When asked about the roadmap forward for Guilford County, Baker explained how the pandemic showed the importance of having a strong public warning/alerting platform with up-to-date messaging templates.

“We now recognize the importance of having pre-scripted templates for all alert types. We're currently executing an assessment to revamp our public warning/alerting system from execution to our messaging templates...We'll be adding templates for WEA (Wireless Emergency Alerts) messages because we've used them so frequently in the past year,” said Baker.

Guilford County has since extended the use of Everbridge Mass Notification to two new departments - their Public Health department and their city water system, the latter in response to a recent precautionary advisory.

Baker stated, “The county had a boil water incident which caused our city water system to reach out with the need for an alert issued to the affected area. This resulted in a great open conversation where we found that utilizing Everbridge was a no-brainer. Seeing as Guilford has a county-wide account, folding in the city water alerts is simple and just makes sense.”

Get in touch to learn about Everbridge, empowering resilience.