



EasyVote Solutions

How EasyCampaignFinance and Paulding County, Georgia Simplified Campaign Finance Report Filing

Easy, cost-efficient software eliminates extra workload for staffers

EasyVote Solutions is dedicated to helping county and city election offices be better prepared for a successfully run election. Each EasyVote software module is tailored to a specific process vital in conducting an election. The EasyCampaignFinance module ensures that county and city officials and candidates are in compliance with state laws by automating the necessary forms in compliance with the Campaign Finance Act.

A few years ago, the Georgia Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission (GGTCFC) altered the way campaign finance reports are filed at a county/city level. With the help of Deidre Holden, Supervisor of Elections for Paulding County, Georgia, EasyVote created EasyCampaignFinance. This module gives election offices a state approved medium for officials and candidates to file the necessary forms and for the public to access those documents. This case study will focus on the problem Paulding County faced as well as the results after implementing EasyCampaignFinance into their campaign finance process.

The Challenge

Paulding County has a population of 145,000 and is the second-fastest

growing county in Metro Atlanta. The county has 87,000 registered voters who are managed by an election staff of three full-time employees, two part-time employees and a five-member board.

The election supervisor serves as the local filing officer for 19 elected officials and a number of candidates, including qualifying and the general election. The responsibility for collecting campaign finance forms from county and municipal officials and candidates fell to the GGTCFC. This changed when the Georgia General Assembly voted to give the filing officer's responsibilities back to the counties.

This meant that every elections office had the responsibility of helping the candidates re-acclimate to filing at the local level. Unfortunately, elected officials were accustomed to electronically filing with the GGTCFC and there was no such system available at the county/city level. Now all elected officials would have to go back to filing via a paper form.

The Paulding County Elections Office also had the problem of finding the necessary resources to manage the collection of forms from the officials and candidates in order to send them to the GGTCFC. This was not something the office had budgeted for and it took up to

CUSTOMER

Elections Office of Paulding County, Georgia, the second-fastest growing county in Metro Atlanta.

CHALLENGE

Create an efficient electronic campaign finance filing system in a short amount of time and have it easy enough to use so county officials and candidates did not have a long learning curve.

SOLUTION

EasyVote Solutions' EasyCampaignFinance module.

RESULTS

- Delivered fully working solution in three days after contract signing.
- Significant cost savings each filing cycle.
- Reduced time spent by election staff by 85 percent to fulfill open records requests.
- Significant time saved for county officials and candidates by eliminating the need to print forms and travel to elections office to submit in person.

three employees to carry out the process for each filing period.

The Solution

Holden began searching for a faster and more cost-efficient method to carry out the filing process.

As she searched for a software-based alternative, she found that most companies provided products that lacked necessary features and were not affordable. Holden then turned to EasyVote Solutions for help. EasyVote was already a vendor in Paulding County with a software solution that helped process voters during in-person early voting.

Representatives from EasyVote met with Holden and her team to understand the filing problem and discuss the creation of a solution that would meet the needs of elections offices across Georgia.

"I was searching for a solution that would still allow the officials and candidates to file locally from the comfort of their homes without all of the paperwork," said Holden. "I also wanted a product that would give them confidence in us, knowing we are here to help and support them and that they would be treated with respect should they have issues or questions. In an election office, you have thousands of pieces of paper that you deal with every day. I wanted this process to be paperless. The most important aspect of my desire to have a paperless filing system was for the system to be user-friendly."

After the initial meeting, EasyVote mapped out a solution that became a new module called EasyCampaignFinance. Over the next several months, EasyVote and Paulding

County worked together to define specific features and requirements. After the completion of the module, Paulding County's officials and candidates were introduced to the product and quickly embraced the new filing system.

"Once EasyCampaignFinance was installed, I trained the elected officials and had them well on their way to filing electronically," said Holden. "They could not believe how easy the process was and how happy they were that we would be helping them and supporting them on a local level. During the qualifying period, I was able to give instructions to all candidates for their filing process and they immediately began using EasyCampaignFinance."

The Results

EasyCampaignFinance has resulted in cost savings to the election office during each filing cycle by the elimination of work performed by staff to handle paper filings.

Elected officials and candidates no longer have to go to the ethics website, download and print forms. This would take an individual 15-20 minutes per report, or longer depending on their computer skills. Today, they have everything they need online with EasyCampaignFinance, eliminating the need for downloading and printing forms and traveling to election offices to file in person.

Members of the public make frequent visits to elections offices during an election year to view reports. In the past, staff at the Paulding County Election Office would have to stop what they were doing, pull the report, make copies and collect fees for printing.

"Once EasyCampaignFinance was installed, I trained the elected officials and had them well on their way to filing electronically," said Holden. "They could not believe how easy the process was and how happy they were that we would be helping them and supporting them on a local level. During the qualifying period in 2014, I was able to give instructions to all candidates for their filing process and they immediately began using EasyCampaignFinance."

*Deidre Holden
Supervisor of Elections
Paulding County, Georgia*

Now, if a resident calls, she is simply directed to the EasyCampaignFinance website, where she can view and print any report from home. Individuals seeking this information in person are directed to a kiosk in the Paulding County Election Office which has EasyCampaignFinance available for public viewing of all campaign records.

No longer is a staff member diverted from their election duties to search paper documents and produce copies. In the past, election officer workers would spend about 30 minutes a day on walk-in requests for campaign disclosures. That time has now been reduced to less than 5 minutes.

This piece was produced by the Center for Digital Government Content Studio for EasyVote.



EasyVote Solutions provides software-as-a-service (SaaS) applications that streamlines the processes behind running successful elections. Our customers are city, county and state elections offices currently located in 18 states across the US. Our customers find that the EasyVote Election Management Platform excels at the following; reducing the time to perform election tasks, improving communication and accuracy between election officials and workers; and providing data, enabling election officials to make intelligent, informed decisions.

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