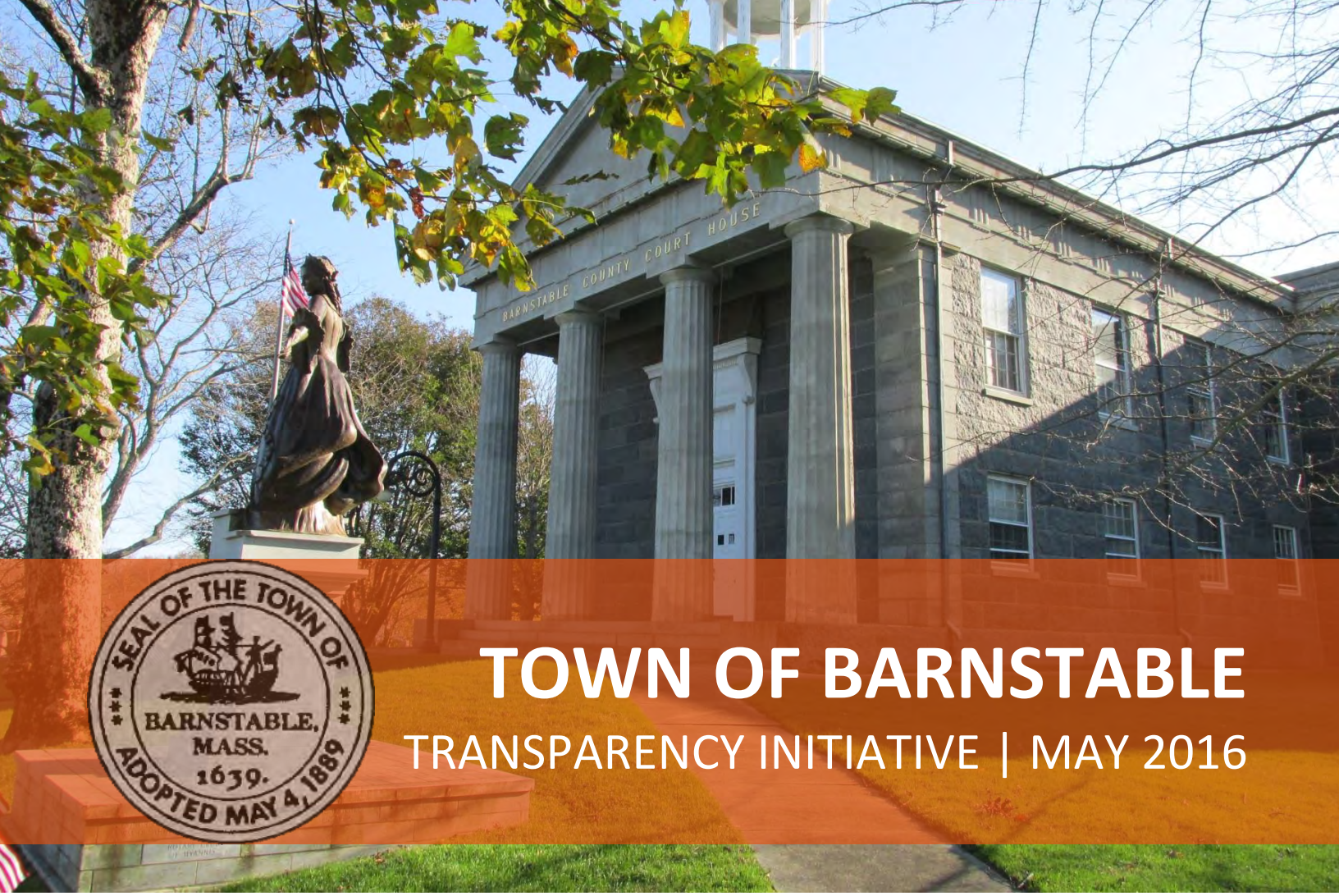
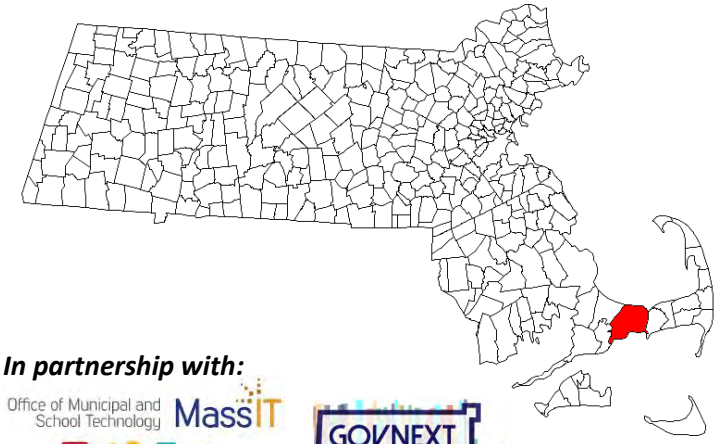


TOWN OF BARNSTABLE

TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE | MAY 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Barnstable, Massachusetts, has recently launched a new Open Budget initiative in partnership with the Community Compact program: mass.gov/ccc. The tool can be accessed through the town's website homepage at www.TownofBarnstable.us or directly at budget.townofbarnstable.us. Finding a way to make financial data transparent can be an intimidating project and is often expensive; however, Barnstable was able to obtain an open data platform that is specific to digital government.



In partnership with:

Office of Municipal and School Technology MassIT

GOVNEXT

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Town of Barnstable is located in the southeast of Massachusetts and is the largest community, both in land area and population, on Cape Cod. The town is composed of several villages, including Hyannis, which is home to the Barnstable Municipal Airport.

Population is 44,529 residents*
Annual Budget is $181M (FY 2016)
Median Household Income is $58,933*
Facebook www.facebook.com/townofbarnstable/
Twitter @BarnstableMA

**US Census 2014*

THE CHALLENGE

Barnstable wanted to make budget information more accessible to the general public, which would allow any interested party the ability to track the town's budgetary performance for revenues, expenditures and its capital program.

Constituents become more knowledgeable about how their government is financed and the services they receive. This initiative would also reduce the costs of responding to requests for information, allow others to evaluate the town's performance, possibly reduce the number of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and creates a more efficient workplace.

THE SOLUTION

The town implemented the Socrata Open Budget cloud-based solution for federal, state and local governments. The open budget platform allows Barnstable to take the financial information in their current financial platform - Tyler Munis - and transform it into intuitive, visually-rich consumer friendly information; quickly and economically.

THE RESULTS

Providing the Town's financial information in such a way improves transparency, promotes a better understanding from where government resources are derived, and how they are allocated. Rather than wading through hundreds of pages of budget documents and Munis financial reports, citizens and staff can see budget data in the form of charts, graphs and images, all in an attractive, easy to navigate and understandable way.

Screenshot of Barnstable's Expenditure Budget for 2016
Source: http://budget.townofbarnstable.us

"Citizens can see budget data in the form of charts, graphs and images, all in an attractive, easy to navigate and understandable way."

- Thomas K. Lynch, Town Manager