

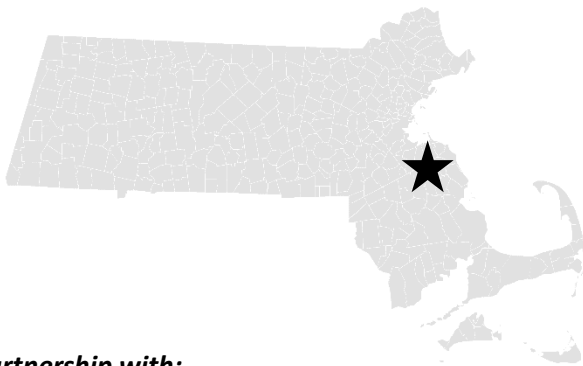


## Town of HANOVER

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Hanover, Massachusetts adopted the Transparency best practice as part of a Community Compact agreement signed with the Baker-Polito Administration in April of 2016. The Town partnered with the Office of Municipal and School Technology at the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security to think through the challenges associated with transparency and so far has adopted an Open Data policy, introduced more transparency elements to its website, and has a plan to deploy the VisGov Visual Budget tool in the near future. This tool will complement the Town's existing award-winning municipal budget document and provide residents with the information they need to stay informed.



## COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Town of Hanover is located in southeastern Massachusetts in Plymouth County. Hanover prides itself on holding onto its “country town” atmosphere while having the convenience of easy access to Boston and Cape Cod. Luddam’s Ford Park, sometimes referred to as a “gem of Hanover”, is on 19.5 acres of land located along the Pembroke border on Elm Street at the fish ladder where the Indian Head River widens into Luddam’s Ford Pond.

**Population** 13,879 residents\*  
**Annual Budget** is \$58.28M (FY 2018)  
**Median Household Income** is \$101,823\*

\*US Census Bureau

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## THE CHALLENGE

Transparency for any Town, but especially a smaller one like Hanover, is challenging. Residents are increasingly expecting data to be available on demand like their favorite television programs. But open data must be provided thoughtfully - protected data must stay protected, updates must be frequent to avoid confusion, and the interface for accessing information must be easy to use or it simply won't be leveraged by users.

## THE SOLUTION

Hanover has taken the challenge of transparency on by using a variety of mediums to provide information to its residents and visitors. These mediums are all backed by Policy #14-01, adopted by the Board of Selectmen in Hanover, which is the Town's official Open Data Policy. A copy of the policy is attached to this report.

## THE RESULTS

The Town's Open Data policy outlines the expectations surrounding data shared by the Town, including the hope that data sharing "will create effective and meaningful opportunities for the Town and members of the public to work collaboratively to generate new ideas to solve complex challenges." The policy also defines what data sets shall include or exclude, what constitutes "protected data", criteria on how a data set shall be identified for inclusion on the Town's website, and also provides for the formation of an "Open Data Review Committee."

Town leadership leverages multiple mediums for communicating with the public, including "Ask the Town Manager" filmed segments aired on Hanover Community Television and posted on the website. The Town's website received the "Top Website" excellence award from the Massachusetts Municipal Association and the Town's budget document received the "Distinguished Budget Presentation Award" from the Government Finance Officers Association in 2016 and again in 2017.

The Town has partnered with several other Massachusetts communities to participate in development of "Visual Budget 2.0" by VisGov. Hanover is interested in using VisGov's technology to create an interactive, pared down version of its longer budget document which allows citizens to compare the budget and individual tax bills with the budgets and tax bills of neighboring communities of similar budgets and populations. The Town is currently investigating how to budget for such an implementation in the near future and also how to automate the process so budget information can be updated more frequently.



The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) presented a Distinguished Budget Presentation Award to Town of Hanover, Massachusetts for its annual budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2016. In order to receive this award, a governmental unit must publish a budget document that meets program criteria as a policy document, as an operations guide, as a financial plan, and as a communications device.

**"Hanover is a leader in the Commonwealth on transparency and citizen engagement. We're grateful to be partners with the Governor's Office in this effort."**

**Troy B.G. Clarkson, Hanover Town Manager**