



Denver virtualizes emergency operations center amid global pandemic

Denver quickly transformed its Emergency Operations Center to be virtual, using digital forms created with Nintex.

Organization

City and County of Denver

Website

www.denvergov.org

Industry

Public sector

Country

United States

Business situation

Denver's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) had to quickly move its operations online to ensure productivity while EOC members worked from home during COVID-19 social distancing measures.

Solution

Denver used Nintex Forms to quickly bring 65 paper forms online, enabling EOC workers to continue to work productively from home. Denver also used Nintex Mobile to create a symptom monitoring application for all Denver staff that had to report in-person for work during the pandemic.

Benefits

Virtual EOC forms brought online over one weekend

Eliminates paper forms and manual in-person processes

Forms are quickly repurposed to emerging needs

Nintex Mobile data integrates with existing analytics technology

An emergency unlike any other

“Our ability to digitize these forms has been key in keeping the EOC running during the pandemic.”

— **Evan Pfaff**, Digital Transformation Engineer, City and County of Denver

On Friday, March 13, 2020, Denver’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) faced an emergency—of its own.

The EOC for the City and County of Denver, Colorado was long used to responding to blizzards, floods, and power outages. But this time was different, because on that particular day, city officials sent workers home knowing that most of them, including those on the EOC, wouldn’t be coming back on Monday, as part of the government’s stay-at-home response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Denver is one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S. with a population of approximately 729,000. The City and County employs more than 11,000 people across 50+ business units, and its EOC is made up of 100 total members with representatives from across the city.

The emergency: how to keep most of an EOC’s shift of 100 members working to ensure public safety when every tool and process they relied on was physically in a 1,000 sq. ft. facility to which they would no longer have access. With the help of the right technology, Denver’s Technology Services department succeeded.

Going virtual over a weekend

Denver's Technology Services department set up a Microsoft Teams site to serve as an online EOC in which workers could communicate and collaborate. It was a great start, but there were still workflows—such as requisitioning heavy equipment—that were dependent on moving some 50 pencil-and-paper forms from desk to desk in processes that could each take up to seven steps. The team wanted more customization than it could get from InfoPath, and just using SharePoint as a repository for Word docs was likely to result in the templates getting inadvertently overwritten.

Fortunately, Denver's Technology Services department had experience with Nintex and knew it could provide the solution they were searching for. Over the weekend, they digitized 20 forms using Nintex Forms, and quickly brought that number up to 65 over the three month activation.

When Denver officials told workers, including their EOC members, to stay home in March, they didn't know how long that directive would last. Three months later, it was still in place—and the EOC kept functioning, even more productively in some ways. "Our ability to digitize these forms has been key in keeping the EOC running during the pandemic," says Evan Pfaff, Digital Transformation Engineer at the City and County of Denver.

"We have to cater to people with varying levels of technical expertise," says Walter Van Lue, Senior SharePoint Administrator at City and County of Denver. "We customized fields so our EOC staff only see the ones relevant to their current tasks. We used placeholder descriptions and drop-down lists to make the fields more intuitive, so people can complete them more quickly and more accurately. Staff hit 'send' and know the forms are going to the right place right away."

Empowering employees to work better

Denver's EOC was ready to respond when civil unrest and protests erupted across the U.S. at the end of May. Van Lue and his colleagues repurposed and re-customized their Nintex Forms in one day. Now, they're looking at other, more predictable emergencies—such as extreme weather events—that they can quickly support via Nintex Forms.

Denver has found other pressing needs that it can also address with Nintex. Throughout the pandemic many employees, especially first responders, still had to report to a physical office or city location for work. To ensure safety, the City and County Denver needed a way to monitor employees for potential symptoms of, or exposure to, COVID-19.

Denver's Technology Services team pushed out a solution on Nintex Mobile to all city-issued phones. Workers planning to report in person complete a Nintex Mobile form to record the presence or absence of any symptoms, such as fever. If the responses

exceed specified parameters, the form advises the workers to stay home rather than go to work. The results are automatically routed to the appropriate managers to inform them of their workers' status.

Beyond making the symptom monitoring process practical, Nintex Mobile also feeds its data to Power BI dashboards for on-the-fly analysis that never would have been possible with old-style dry-erase boards. "If workers have submitted their forms, we know how many are sick and how many are well, and which direction the trends are moving in," says Van Lue. "We couldn't do that before."

Now that the City and County of Denver, like much of the country, has begun to reopen and more staff is going in, it's more important than ever to continue to monitor.

“Since we activated the virtual EOC, the need for virtual forms has only increased. I see Nintex having a much greater role in government here in the future.”

— **Evan Pfaff**, Digital Transformation Engineer, the City and County of Denver



Ensuring employee safety beyond COVID-19

The swift activation of the virtual EOC not only allows Denver employees to be productive, but it also keeps them safe. City officials and employees no longer need to report to a physical office to respond to an emergency. With Microsoft Teams and Nintex Forms they can be effective and even more productive from the safety of their homes.

Both Pfaff and Van Lue anticipate broader applications of Nintex in the City and County of Denver. “Since we activated the virtual EOC, the need for virtual forms has only increased,” says Pfaff. “I see Nintex having a much greater role in government here in the future.”

About Nintex

Nintex is the global standard for process management and automation. Today more than 10,000 public and private sector organizations across 90 countries turn to the Nintex Platform to accelerate progress on their digital transformation journeys by quickly and easily managing, automating and optimizing business processes. Learn more by visiting www.nintex.com and experience how Nintex and its global partner network are shaping the future of Intelligent Process Automation (IPA).

Product or service names mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners.