



COLORADO

**Governor's Office of
Information Technology**

MyBizColorado

mybiz.colorado.gov

CATEGORY:

Digital Services: Government to Business

STATE:

Colorado

PROJECT INITIATION DATE:

January 9, 2017

PROJECT END DATE:

August 29, 2018

NASCIO STATE IT
RECOGNITION
AWARDS

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Executive Summary¹



When the term “high-tech” is mentioned, many think about Silicon Valley, arguably the most well-known technology hubs in the United States, others will think of lesser known technology meccas such as Denver, Colorado. They may not know that Denver is the home of many tech startups, such as SendGrid, Ping Identity, Userve, and Top Hat to name a few. The State of Colorado has a thirst for innovation and encourages business creation, and since its launch in June 2018, the MyBiz Colorado application (mybiz.colorado.gov) supports our unwavering entrepreneurial spirit.

MyBizColorado is a system envisioned jointly by the Governor’s Office and the Secretary of State to achieve the state’s shared goal of offering the best possible service to the business community. The project engaged more than a half dozen state agencies working together to provide new businesses a better and faster way to register and meet many state requirements. This commitment gives Colorado its well-deserved “business friendly” reputation that encourages so many startups to form here. In the first few months alone, thousands of business registrations and licenses were issued to users of the MyBizColorado system.

MyBizColorado offers new businesses a website built with state of the art technology, a user-focused design, and streamlined procedures to help companies get up and running successfully. What can you do by visiting MyBiz.Colorado.gov? You get a single system to interact with multiple state agencies responsible for new business creation, including the Secretary of State’s Office, Colorado Department of Revenue, Department of Labor and Employment, and Office of Economic Development & International Trade.

MyBizColorado is accessible, intuitive, and efficiently helps businesses register with state agencies and obtain the necessary licenses and permits to begin operations. Users will find a resource library and tutorials to help plan and develop new businesses, and numerous prompts along the way that provide assistance or point to a contact person who can answer questions. With MyBizColorado, users find everything they need in one place - instead of having to go to individual state agency websites. MyBizColorado, which is available in English and Spanish, is especially helpful for small businesses that do not have the resources or staff of big corporations but are vitally important to Colorado’s economy. In fact, small businesses in Colorado employ one million people, nearly half the state’s workforce.

Clearly, Colorado welcomes new business and we’re all willing to lend a hand. We are proud that state agencies collectively built an exceptional tool and resource to support local businesses and help our economy thrive. [Watch a MyBizColorado video](#) featuring Colorado Governor Jared Polis and Secretary of State Jena Griswold.

¹ Portions of this summary are based on an Aug. 14, 2018 opinion piece published in The Colorado Springs Business Journal. Retrieved at <https://www.csbj.com/2018/08/14/opinion-mybizcolorado-gov-makes-state-even-friendlier>.

Project Narrative

Concept

Colorado Business Express (CBE) was an online application intended to help business owners register with the Secretary of State, and fill out unemployment and tax forms with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment and Department of Revenue, respectively. However, the technology behind the decade-old system was slow, cumbersome, and unavailable for use on mobile devices. If a user made an error, they had to start over. The result was high abandonment rates and calls to the state agencies for assistance. All stakeholders agreed it was in need of modernization.

MyBizColorado was a joint effort by the Governor's Office and Secretary of State with the support of several state agencies, the Colorado Statewide Portal Authority (SIPA)² and its portal integrator partner NIC Colorado³, to develop a user-focused, mobile-friendly solution⁴ organized to meet today's needs. As this was a multi-stakeholder project, the Governor's Office of Information Technology (OIT) provided a project manager to work closely with SIPA and the participating agencies. Additionally, third-party vendors were hired to build the solution on the Google Cloud Platform and the required Internal Verification and Validation (IV&V). Using a hybrid Agile/Waterfall approach, the team developed the web application on App Engine, a fully managed, serverless platform, with the data stored in Cloud Storage and Cloud SQL databases. Efforts were placed on the user experience and the elimination of "government speak," including the formation of focus groups to make sure common language was used. The system was financed through SIPA's self-funded model and without the use of taxpayer dollars.

MyBizColorado was specifically created to help new businesses get up and running and become part of the Colorado economy more quickly. As a single system that interacts with multiple state agencies, it is user-friendly, intuitive, and a more expedient way to register a business and obtain the necessary licenses and permits. It is especially helpful for emerging small businesses who don't have the resources or staff of larger companies. MyBizColorado was built in the Google Cloud and uses open source modules. MyBizColorado follows compliance standards that define the best way to make content accessible not only through web browsers but also through assistive technology for users with vision, hearing, or other impairments. Combining 508 Standards with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) means that MyBizColorado adheres to a stricter compliance level. The highly secure site is not only mobile-friendly, a user can log in using their Google, Facebook, or Twitter credentials.

² Created by statute in 2004, the Colorado Statewide Internet Portal Authority (SIPA) is a self-funded government authority made to be one of Colorado's delivery channels for eGovernment services.

³ NIC Colorado is the vendor partner of SIPA that provides the platform and operational support of the statewide portal. The portal operates through a public-private partnership between the State and NIC Colorado to help Colorado government entities web-enable their services.

⁴ In addition to the project sponsors and project team, participating agencies included the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Colorado Department of Revenue, Department of Regulatory Agencies, Governor's Office of Economic Development and International Trade.

Significance

More than 94,386 new businesses have registered with the state since MyBizColorado went live. MyBizColorado addressed the lack of essential features and functionality in the previous Colorado Business Express that were causing customer dissatisfaction and high-call volumes, and has enabled successful handling of ever-increasing business filings in an intuitive, friendly computer-based experience (in English or Spanish, and for sighted and visually impaired users). If users have additional questions, the site intuitively directs them to the correct call center at each participating state agency.

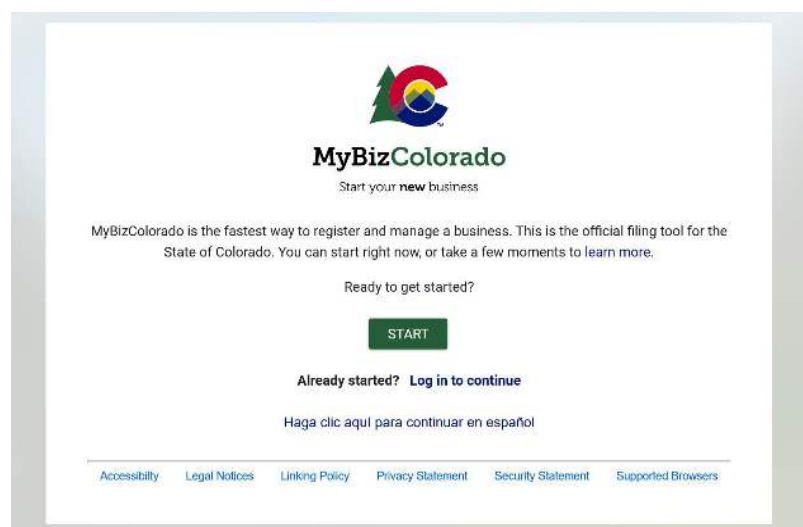
Since the go-live date, the total number of licenses issued through MyBizColorado is:

- Sales Tax Licenses - 28,821
- Wage Withholding - 36,012
- Unemployment Insurance - 29,556

This easy online application guides users step-by-step through the process of registering a new business or expanding an existing business with the state. MyBizColorado enables users to plan and coordinate their initial registration. Rather than visiting multiple websites, this intuitive one-stop-shop provides central access to:

- Secretary of State’s Office (SOS) for business name and other Colorado requirements.
- Colorado Department of Revenue (CDOR) for wage withholding, account creation, etc.
- Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) to register for unemployment insurance.
- Additional resources such as the Governor’s Office of Economic Development & International Trade (OEDIT), representatives of the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), as well the Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA).

The MyBizColorado cloud solution also benefits state agencies. For example, instead of using a local database to store application records, CDLE is now using a secure cloud repository that provides more robust search options. They also are using Google Analytics to analyze site traffic and proactively identify areas where people might be getting stuck in the registration process and then rewording or reordering those to move users through the process faster.



Impact

MyBizColorado was specifically built to be flexible to allow for future enhancements and changes using a technology that will minimize future development costs. Functionality improvements since launch include:

- Increased accessibility for blind residents using JAWS reader
- Enhanced usability/experience
- Refreshed business workflows
- Updated and extended Spanish content

Prior to MyBizColorado, it could take multiple days to get a business started. With the help of MyBizColorado, the process now takes the average user about half of the time to complete an application. Additionally, MyBizColorado:

- Allows most users to complete business registrations the same day.
- Improves the user experience, thereby decreasing the initial session abandonment rates below 12 and decreases phone calls to state agencies by 10-20%.
- Shows +45% increase in online submissions for sales tax filings.
- Doubles the number of forms completed online.
- Reduces the number of paper filings by up to 40%.
- Automatically populates about 150 applications per week within the state's tax system that were manually manipulated.
- Modernizes the registration process by supporting mobile access via tablets and smartphones.

MyBizColorado garnered a State Government Experience award in 2019 from the [Center for Digital Government](#).

“MyBizColorado, the state’s award-winning online platform enables Coloradans to register new businesses and apply for many of the licenses needed to do business in Colorado.”
- Secretary of State Jena Griswold