



2025 NASCIO State IT Recognition Awards

State of Vermont
Agency of Digital Services

Award Category: Information & Communications Technology (ICT)

Project Title: Simplify VT Interactions – The Experience-Led Contact Center Modernization Project

Project Dates: January 2024 to August 2024

Contact: Denise Reilly-Hughes, Secretary & CIO, Denise.ReillyHughes@vermont.gov

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY..... 3
 Idea4
 Implementation.....6
 Impact.....7

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Threading together experience and technology to improve access to services.



Human centered design



Cloud based solutions



Scalable model

In 2024 the Vermont Agency of Digital Services (ADS) completed the groundbreaking modernization of the State’s Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) system with modern Call Center as a Service (CCaaS) technology. This initiative was delivered in just eight months for ten call centers across eight agencies, which we believe is one of the fastest such modernization for this capability at the state level that we know of.

The solution emphasized human-centered design, scalability, and rapid implementation, resulting in achieving significant improvements in service delivery, agent experience, and operational efficiency in a very short period of time.

The new CCaaS is the foundational platform that will help to simplify interactions with State government for both constituents and employees. With the new CCaaS, Vermont now has access to capabilities and innovation immediately and several agencies are discussing use cases such as call sentiment analysis, AI generated real-time recommendations for agents, and omni channel interactions with the state.

1. Human-Centered Design and Rapid Implementation

The project emphasized human-centered design, scalability, and speed. Eight agencies now operate ten call centers on the new platform, resulting in significant improvements in service delivery, agent experience, and operational efficiency.

2. Real-World Impact: A Use Case

One standout feature of the new system is the ability for callers to request a callback without losing their place in the queue. This eliminates the need to wait on hold and enhances the overall experience for Vermonters. With fewer technical disruptions and access to real-time reporting, agents can focus on what matters most—delivering uninterrupted, high-quality support.

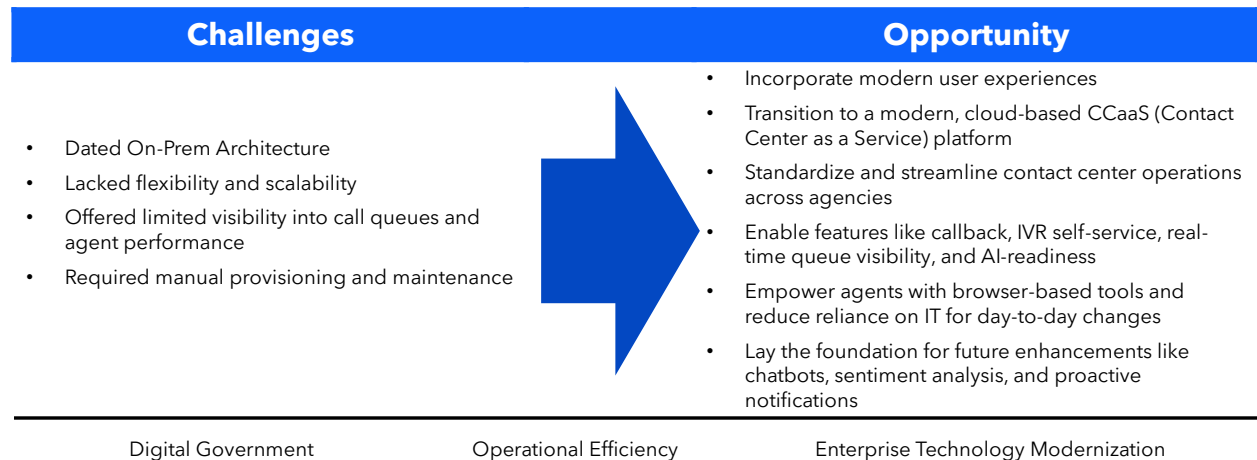
3. A Platform for Innovation

The CCaaS platform lays the foundation for future enhancements. Several agencies are exploring the integration of artificial intelligence and virtual agents to reduce resolution times. Additional use cases under discussion include call sentiment analysis and omnichannel communication, which will further streamline interactions between the public and state government.

Idea

What problem or opportunity does the project address?

In Vermont, state agencies serve as vital lifelines for residents, particularly those most vulnerable. However, outdated on-premises contact center technology hindered efficient service delivery, creating barriers for citizens seeking critical support such as SNAP benefits, DMV services, and employment assistance. These limitations not only limited service delivery but also placed a burden on agents and IT support teams, resulting in inefficiencies, inconsistent user experiences, and high operational costs. The new system aimed to dissolve these barriers by transitioning to a modern, cloud-based system, thereby enhancing accessibility and responsiveness of state services.



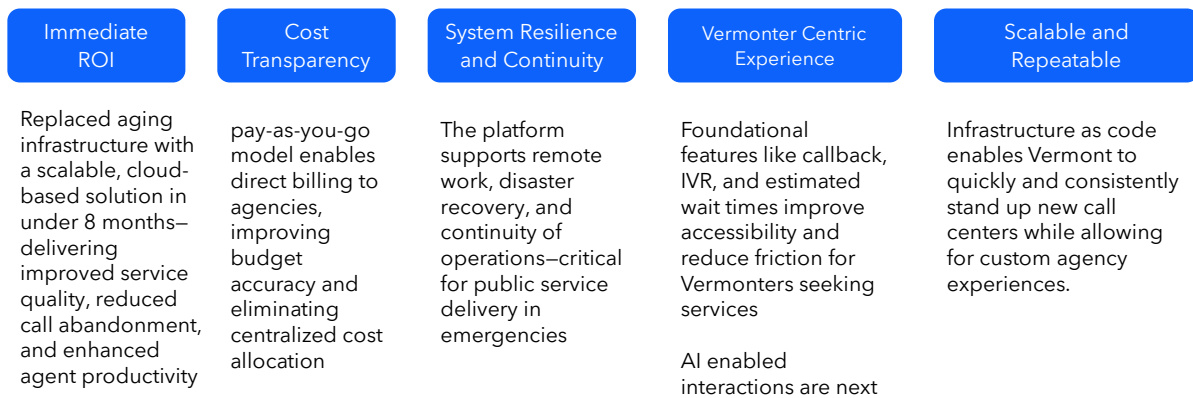
Why does it matter?

The project recognized the imperative to modernize contact infrastructure to improve citizen engagement and ensure service continuity. For Vermont's citizens, timely and effective access to state services can make a significant difference in their daily lives, especially during times of need. This modernization project directly improves how government serves its people.

By adopting a cloud-based solution, Vermont aimed to reduce operational costs and improve the quality of service delivery across the state. This directly impacted the well-being of its residents, especially those who rely most on timely, accessible, and compassionate support.

Benefits to Vermont

cloud services | digital experience | operational efficiency



What makes it different?

The project stands out due to its rapid implementation across multiple agencies, demonstrating an unprecedented pace in governmental tech migration. The collaboration between ADS and its implementation partners showcased a new model for cloud integration in state services—a model characterized by agility, scalability, and citizen-centric outcomes. This project isn't just a tech upgrade—it's a blueprint for how states can modernize citizen engagement with speed, empathy, and sustainability.

Rapid, Multi-Agency Rollout	Human-Centered, Experience-Led Design	Deep Customization + Enterprise Scalability	Transparent, Usage-Based Costing	Future-Ready Platform
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vermont stood up 10 call centers in under 8 months—an unprecedented pace for a government technology migration Each center had unique needs, yet the team delivered tailored solutions using a shared infrastructure as code as the foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project prioritized user interviews, personas, and blueprinting to ensure the solution met real-world needs of both citizens and agents Training was customized by role (agent, supervisor, admin) and delivered through multiple formats including live sessions, job aids, and on-demand videos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 130+ call flow components, 21 data dips, and 270 UAT scripts were developed to support unique and complex workflows across agencies Features like callback, IVR, AI, wrap-up codes, and voicemail were selectively deployed based on each agency's specific operational model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pay-as-you-go model enabled direct billing to agencies, improving fiscal transparency and eliminating centralized cost breakdowns pay-as-you-go model allows for experimentation of leading edge capabilities and proving out use cases with little risk 	<p>Already exploring AI, chatbots, sentiment analysis and integrations with ERP and CRM platforms</p>

What makes it universal?

The challenges of outdated systems and the need to improve service delivery in line with the Top Ten Priorities of State CIOs are universal across states. This project exemplifies how cloud technology can universally optimize service delivery, reduce costs, and enhance citizen engagement, offering a replicable model for other states facing similar challenges who are seeking to modernize their contact centers while balancing speed, customization, and long-term sustainability.

Universal Challenges or Priorities the Project Addresses			
<p>Outdated Legacy Systems</p> <p>Workforce Enablement & Flexibility</p>	<p>Cross-Agency Collaboration</p> <p>Operational Efficiency & Cost Control</p>	<p>Citizen Expectations for Digital Access</p>	<p>Scalability & Future-Readiness</p>

Implementation

What was the roadmap?

This project modernized the current platform and is the foundation for better interactions with Vermonters. It's the phase 1 "like for like" replacement with customization for individual agencies, but has enabled the state to explore advanced capabilities for future benefit of citizens that will incorporate AI to improve experiences, such as call sentiment analysis and agent effectiveness.

The project was executed with a meticulous roadmap that included assessment, interviews, build, test & learn, go-live, and hypercar phases for each contact center. This structured approach ensured that the migration was seamless, with each agency's specific needs addressed. Simultaneous phases across different centers maximized efficiency.

The project team developed a "wave plan" based on these project phases, whereby each agency was at a different phase at any given time. This required very tight management by the project team and seamless coordination between ADS, the software vendor, and the implementation partner.

Who was involved?

Key stakeholders included the VT CIO and her leadership team, the Agency of Digital Services, agency leaders, the software vendor, the implementation partner, contact center teams across 8 agencies, and technical teams. From concept to execution, these groups collaborated closely, ensuring requirements were clear, training was relevant, and agencies were well supported through implementation.

How did you do it?

As this project was to establish the architectural foundation, we limited involvement to directly impacted stakeholders. This approach allowed us to minimize risks, move fast, and deliver a positive agent experience throughout while not constraining research about Vermonter's needs to be built in future phases.

The project achieved its objectives both on time and on budget. Utilizing the platform's cloud architecture and using infrastructure as code templates allowed for scalable solutions tailored to each agency's needs, emphasizing flexibility and adaptability to improve service delivery without compromising quality or specificity.



Gather Requirements

IT Working Sessions allow us to assess current and determine future state of the projects build out. We met with team members **inside of ADS** and in **contact centers** to understand:



Analyze and Refine

Through a **deep dive** into existing call flows, and our knowledge on what **CCaaS has to offer**, the solution was assessed for its ability to meet **user needs** both for our CORE solution, as well as individual call center customizations.



Validate and Recommend

We **collaborated** on what the base solution looks like, as well as what the **ADS call center** establishes as the **foundation** for all other call centers. From here we customized and enhanced based on individual call center needs, while ensuring they all have the same foundational elements & features.

Call flows

Data dips

Current feature set

Cloud & technology infrastructure

Third-party integrations

Future feature requirements

Impact

What did the project make better?

The transformation of Vermont's contact centers significantly improved service delivery across multiple agencies, ensuring citizens received timely and efficient support. Because of the seasonality in call volumes for many call centers, such as the one that supports the Tax Department, we are realizing significant savings by shifting away from annual licenses to consumption-based cloud service pricing. Overall, the new system reduced operational costs and enhanced the flexibility of service offerings, directly benefiting Vermont residents who rely on state services.

Leveraging infrastructure as code also allows the state to be extremely flexible and fast when new call center needs surface. For example the state was able to quickly stand up a new call center in 6 weeks to support the SummerEBT program.

“The federal government capitalized on the success of the pandemic-era EBT program to provide healthy meals to kids during the summer. This required the creation of a new SummerEBT program, a collaboration between DCF, AOE, and ADS. ADS delivered the solution using our Constituent Engagement platform and began issuing benefits in July, after only 6 weeks of development. Enhancements and additional eligible populations were added throughout the year on a rolling basis. Thanks to the modular approach to our Constituent Engagement platform, the SummerEBT app was able to take advantage of a number of components already available on the platform and added financial benefit and household modules which can be reused by other applications being implemented in 2025” **From ADS 2025 Annual Report p13*

How do you know?

Quantitative success metrics are compelling: We are tracking to realize cost savings of 18% in the first year. 9 out of 10 contact centers were migrated within 7 months, over 130 call components were implemented, 21 data dips were managed, 270 call scripts were developed, and more than 450 agents were trained. Qualitative feedback from agencies underscores satisfaction with the new system, noting improved service delivery and operational cost savings. Increases in year over year call volumes are evidence that citizens are taking advantage of the call-back feature, and not just abandoning their call when asked to hold for the next agent.

What now?

Foundational architecture has been established which is cost effective, scalable, and reusable. The project is supported by a comprehensive IT Transition Guidebook that outlines daily operations, troubleshooting, and escalation paths. Call center administrators are now empowered to better serve constituents. They are trained and equipped to manage users, routing profiles, and call flows independently, reducing reliance on IT.

The State of Vermont is exploring a backlog of next-generation features to use with call centers on the new CCaaS platform in the coming months. Longer term, Vermont will identify additional contact centers for modernization and expand the set of available capabilities, including AI features. The team is also exploring opportunities to further modernize by connecting to other platforms for improved omnichannel capabilities, knowledge management, and process efficiency.

This migration is just the beginning.