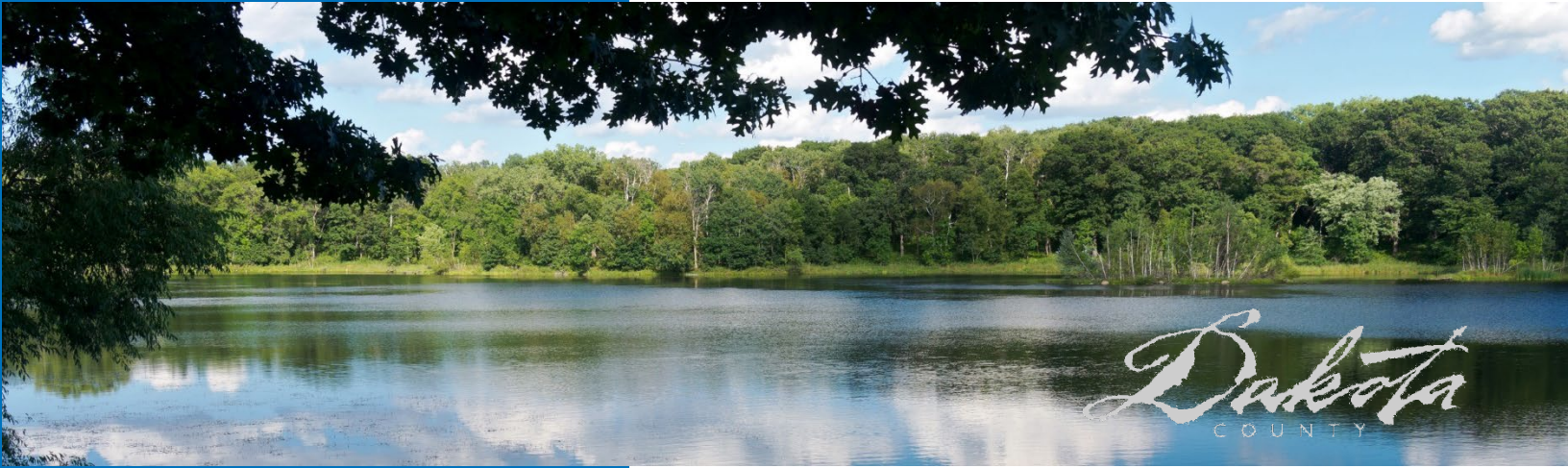


Cloud Applications at Dakota County, Minnesota



With more than 440,000 residents, Dakota County is the third most populous in the state and is situated in the southeastern part of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. It is characterized by a beautiful rolling landscape with vibrant, growing communities as development continues to move outwards from the urban core into suburban cities and townships. The County employs more than 2,000 people who provide services in the areas of public health, community planning, transportation, environmental resources, parks and recreation, the library system, licensing, the court system, law enforcement, corrections, and the historical society.

For years, the County used an application called ONESolution from Central Square. The user community operated in an environment of manual processes, spreadsheets to compensate for missing functionality, and disparate systems which did not communicate with one another. Processes and transactions were built custom to meet the County's needs, causing cumbersome functionality. In addition, the antiquated system did not provide modern features such as mobile computing and automated reconciliation.

In 2020, the County made the decision to replace ONESolution and evaluated the leading Software-as-a Service application suites in order to modernize and improve. In its Request for Proposals, the County described its most painful challenges as follows:

Multiple systems of record resulting in the duplication of data, complicating data availability and reporting

The inability to make data-driven human resource and business decisions due to the absence of data from a single source of truth along with inconsistent answers being provided to the same questions

The inability to consistently manage encumbrances across budget, procurement, finance, and contracts results in incorrect accounting causing significant rework

An environment rife with redundant activity, underutilized systems, and functions contingent on a few critical roles

A recognition that operationally, the existing tools are a barrier to scalability and future operational objectives

IT resources stretched to support and operate multiple solutions and wear multiple hats; become experts in all things

The proliferation of spreadsheets to compensate for shortcomings

The County, advised by Info-Tech Research Group, conducted a thorough evaluation process involving scripted demonstrations of public sector scenarios and reference checks with other local governments. At the conclusion of the evaluation, Oracle Cloud Applications was selected because of its modern user experience and streamlined processes built for government with efficiency, accuracy, and transparency. With Oracle Cloud Applications, the County's users are able to collaboratively transact with one another while realizing innovation through comprehensive

functionality and enabling technologies such as self-service, automated workflow, business intelligence, mobile computing, and world-class security. The applications for the County are deployed on a secure, cost-effective, and integrated infrastructure built for government by Oracle.

Sierra-Cedar's methodology closely aligned with the County's objectives of process improvement, improved access to information, and preparing the user community for the new system through communications and education.



Dakota County selected Sierra-Cedar to be its implementation partner because of our Public Sector know-how and track record of successful outcomes with many other county governments.

The automation and process improvements delivered by Oracle Cloud Applications enable Dakota County to meet current demands for its employees and its citizens while positioning the County for future growth and new initiatives.

The project scope included the deployment of Financials, Procurement, Inventory Management, Projects & Grants, Budget Development, Personnel Administration, Benefits Administration, Time & Absences, and Payroll. The implementation launched in March 2021 and went live in January 2023.

As the County continues to grow, the ability to have an accurate picture of operations and the workforce is essential. As a result of the implementation project, the County has realized significant gains.

Process Automation

- Oracle Cloud Applications have an intuitive and modern look-and-feel which dramatically improves the user experience.
- The County's user community is now able to transact anywhere, anytime, and on any device, leading to greater productivity.
- The County requisitioners have an "Amazon-like" shopping experience with six digital punchout catalogs.
- The manual processing for procurement cards has been replaced with automated accounting and workflow approvals which improves accuracy and reduces paperwork.
- The Sheriff's Office is able to manage its inventory online which saves time, reduces shrinkage, and improves product availability.
- Reconciliation of bank accounts was performed manually but now can be done automatically with data files received directly from the bank.
- Benefits administration was previously performed across many screens. Now, users can find all benefits information and transactions in one spot.
- Benefit Eligibility Profiles and Life Events drive automation through system-generated action items based on conditions. This results in better accuracy, timely processing, and fewer corrections.
- The Self-Service Portal provides employees with a better experience and reduces the workload for HR Administrators. Employees will also have a more streamlined application for the Open Enrollment process.
- Sierra-Cedar deployed prebuilt bi-directional integration between NEOGOV and Oracle Cloud HCM for the County. NEOGOV was not previously integrated with ONESolution which caused significant data entry and opened the door for mistakes to be made.

Business Intelligence

- The powerful and interactive Business Intelligence platform provides decision makers with accurate, real-time information.
- Reports and dashboards are designed and built by the user community rather than IT. This results in user empowerment, faster time-to-value, and IT resources being assigned to higher value activities.
- The system provides better data transparency and financial reporting.

Better Controls

- Oracle allows the County to have automated budgetary control that intervenes on transactions that go over the available funds, eliminating overspending and providing real-time guidance on County finances.
- Procurement processing is guided by automated workflow which provides standardization and efficiency, which is especially important given that the County operates in a decentralized fashion with 80+ departmental purchasing agents.
- Accounting for projects and grants previously occurred in a number of different systems, numerous spreadsheets, and billing for reimbursements was performed manually. Accounting for grant awards is now done in a purpose-built module with useful reporting with the ability to bill the grant awards up to their limit and achieve compliance with the conditions of the grant award. This increases revenue, saves time, and enables the County to link grant funding to outcomes. The module increases transparency into the statuses of projects and grants.
- The County is able to manage grant awards and payments to subrecipients more effectively and with better audit trails.
- Payroll tax tables are updated on a monthly basis. This was previously a manual process that resulted in occasional errors.
- Segregation of duties is enforced which is especially important in the areas where payments are processed for business partners and employees.
- The data security model is effective and easy to manage, which is especially helpful for agencies, such as Social Services, which transact with highly sensitive information.



"Dakota County's Oracle Cloud Application implementation project is one of the most successful of its kind. This success can be attributed to the talent of the County's project team and their commitment to embracing the best business practices that are inherent in the Oracle Cloud Applications. In addition, Dakota County leadership provided the team with the necessary vision and support to define and achieve their ambitious objectives. We have thoroughly enjoyed working with the County on this important project and look forward to a long-lasting relationship."

Kim Sprankle
Sierra-Cedar's Project Manager
at Dakota County

About Dakota County, Minnesota



Just a short drive to the Twin Cities and characterized by rolling landscapes, rivers, and lakes; Dakota County provides an ideal location for its growing population of 440,000 residents. Attracted by the excellent public schools and variety of entertainment and recreational options, many families and young professionals have chosen to live in Dakota County. Some of the larger communities within Dakota County include Apple Valley, Burnsville, Eagan, Farmington, Hastings, Inver Grove Heights, Lakeville, Rosemount, South St. Paul, and West St. Paul. One of the premier attractions within Dakota County is Lebanon Hills Regional Park which contains almost 2,000 acres, offering miles of trails and many lakes for year-round outdoor sports, recreation, and environment.

About Sierra-Cedar



Sierra-Cedar is an Oracle Partner specializing in the delivery of Oracle Cloud Application implementations. It is one of the largest consultancies focused on delivering implementation services to public sector clients, including states, cities, counties, school districts, public retirement agencies, and public transportation authorities. Over the past 27 years, Sierra-Cedar has delivered more than 2,500 Oracle ERP projects.

Please contact Sierra-Cedar to learn more about our service offerings at Contact@Sierra-Cedar.com or find us online at www.Sierra-Cedar.com.