



COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS

# A DIGITAL BAHAMAS

## IMPROVING GOVERNANCE THROUGH DIGITIZATION

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# A **FOCUS** ON THE **FUTURE**

A digital Bahamas is unquestionably one of the **pillars of our economic recovery** and, in fact, the economic recovery of **every country in the world.**

**Senator Kwasi Thompson**  
*Minister of State for Finance*



## **INCREASING ACCESSIBILITY TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

The government is focused on making its services available through easy-to-use online platforms to simplify complex processes and allow the public to access them at any time, from anywhere.

## **PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH THROUGH INNOVATION**

By developing virtual contact tracing and call centers, the government is now able to track and respond to cases as they emerge during the pandemic.

## **KEEPING THE ECONOMY AFLOAT AMIDST CRISIS**

The government is engaging in efforts that concentrate on the intersection between technology and business in the country to ensure a strong recovery.

## **PREPARING FOR A DIGITAL REVOLUTION POST-PANDEMIC**

The government is streamlining processes, adapting to the everchanging landscape of modernization to remain competitive.





## CONTACT TRACING

The contact tracing team activated during the second wave of the virus made use of the state-of-the-art **Hubcat electronic monitoring system**. This tool uses **geofencing** and a person's cell phone to **monitor adherence to quarantine protocols**.

## SHAREPOINT APPLICATION

In the first wave of cases, the government set up a **comprehensive SharePoint application** to track **contact tracing, symptoms of the virus** and provide **food assistance options** for those people in mandatory quarantine. The app also gathered **valuable demographic information and travel details**. This data also guided recommendations for medical assistance.

## VACCINE REGISTRATION

With **20,000 doses** of the COVID-19 vaccine now in the country, the government has rolled out the **Electronic Immunization Register (EIR) software** for the public to begin signing up for vaccination appointments online.

## VIRTUAL CALL CENTERS

COVID call centers helped to stifle the proliferation of COVID-19 cases during the first wave. Medical personnel manned the line and fielded nearly **10,000 calls** within the first two months. **175 persons** were flagged as suspect cases and an additional **276 persons** with symptoms were referred to community clinics.

When the pandemic struck, the Ministry of Finance provided funding to the Ministry of Health to support the development of **virtual platforms** to help **manage the growing crisis**.

# A DIGITAL COVID RESPONSE TO -19

# MODERNIZING SOCIAL SERVICES

In the wake of a public health crisis, the Department of Social Services quickly **moved its assistance programs online**. This effort saw **improved processing and response times** and allowed people to **access support services without unnecessary exposure to the virus**.

With the help of the Department of Transformation and Digitization (DTAD), the Ministry of Social Services and Urban Development has already successfully made two essential social assistance programs available online:

## FOOD EMERGENCY PROGRAM

## FOOD DISASTER PROGRAM

**2,405**

ESTIMATED PEOPLE CONVERTED TO THE DIGITAL PLATFORM

Approximately **\$554,587** in food assistance was spent in 2020 from July to December. People received benefits via **electronic wallets** that could be accessed on their phones instead of the traditional forms of vouchers, cheques or cash.

**900+**

PEOPLE RECEIVED DIGITAL RENTAL ASSISTANCE

Bahamians in need received **vital rental assistance** over the course of the pandemic through a pilot program developed by The Ministry of Social Services and Urban Development. People were **paid via digital currency using electronic wallets**.



### AVERAGE DELIVERY TIME

**5-7 days**  
for New Providence passports and expedited overseas requests

**10-14 days**  
for Family Island passports and regular overseas requests



**6,000**  
**ONLINE E-PASSPORTS**

The Passport Office has successfully produced thousands of e-passports since **December 1, 2019**.

## E-PASSPORT ONLINE RENEWALS

Bahamians now experience **reduced wait times** and can **avoid long lines** thanks to the Passport Office's new **digital e-passport renewal service**.

# GOVERNMENT SERVICES GOING ONLINE

## MY PILOT SERVICES

The Digital Transformation Unit within the DTAD has been working to add **200 additional online government services** to a single-use platform, putting the entire government **at the public's fingertips**. This will make it easier for the public to do business with the various ministries, departments and agencies by **improving efficiency, eliminating in-person visits and providing access to services from the comfort of homes or smartphones**.

### INITIAL SERVICES BEING TESTED:

- Certified copy of birth certificate applications
- Certified copy of death certificate applications
- Copy of marriage certificate applications
- Driver's license renewals

### MORE SERVICES TO BE ADDED:

- Money orders
- Birth registrations
- Death registrations
- Police certificates
- Post office box rentals
- Road Traffic applications
- Vehicle registration renewals



**2,125**

MY PILOT SERVICES  
REGISTERED USERS TO DATE



**506**

DRIVER'S LICENSE RENEWALS  
COMPLETED ONLINE



# TRANSFORMATIVE IMPROVEMENTS TO CABINET & CYBERSECURITY

The government is working on initiatives to modernize its proceedings and the security of sensitive data. A digital revolution starts from the top and these new endeavors will ensure a solid foundation for future advancements throughout the country.



## IMPLEMENTING AN E-CABINET



The government is laying out the **Bahamas Electronic Cabinet Management Information System** in an effort to revolutionize Cabinet procedures from end-to-end.

### THE SYSTEM WILL:

- ✓ Innovatively streamline the managerial operations
- ✓ Provide mobile and electronic accessibility for the Prime Minister, Ministers, the Secretary to the Cabinet, Permanent Secretaries and other authorized users that will allow the continuation of work regardless of location
- ✓ Implement advanced security
- ✓ Standardize and automate Cabinet memorandum and agenda approval process workflow
- ✓ Generate Cabinet conclusions and extracts at the end of the meetings for faster approval and dissemination
- ✓ Facilitate electronic collaboration between authorized users 24/7

## STRENGTHENING CYBERSECURITY



The government has partnered with the **International Telecommunications Union of the UN** to conduct an assessment of our nation's cybersecurity and establish a **National CIRT (Cybersecurity Incident Response Team) or CERT (Cybersecurity Emergency Response Team)**.

### THE TEAM WILL:

- ✓ Protect national and economic security
- ✓ Secure ongoing operations of the government
- ✓ Ensure the ability of critical infrastructures to continue to function
- ✓ Identify incidents that could affect critical infrastructures
- ✓ Monitor incidents at a national level
- ✓ Warn critical stakeholders about computer security threats and respond appropriately to such incidents
- ✓ Help Critical Information Infrastructure recover from incidents



The Ministry of Finance has partnered with other ministries and offices to continue rolling-out digital enhancements focused on improving accessibility and operational efficiency.

# WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE DIGITAL SYSTEMS



The ministry is making use of innovative e-learning systems including eNET, a program that places all government schools online.



The office developed E-Courts Pay, an electronic processing system for court-ordered payments.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE & NATIONAL INSURANCE

THE OFFICE OF THE JUDICIARY



The ministry is pioneering the Public Financial Management/Performance Monitoring Reform Project as the government's ICT lead for the procurement of a new Financial Management Information System and Human Resource Management System.



We're making the **changes** to make the government **work for you.**

The Most Hon. Dr. Hubert A. Minnis  
Prime Minister & Minister of Finance



# ADVANCEMENTS IN

## BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY

### NEW FINTECH

The government recently passed the **Digital Assets and Digital Asset Service Providers Bill** which creates new regulations to govern the use of **cryptocurrencies and other digital assets**. The Bahamas can now market itself as a leader in this emerging sector, bringing **new opportunities in digital finance to Bahamians**.

### ACCESS ACCELERATOR

The Technology Innovations Grants (TIG) program, designed by the eCommerce Advisory Board, will support services specifically provided directly to **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises** (MSMEs) to improve their **management** and the **modernization** of their technologies and other digital applications and services. See more at [accessaccelerator.org](http://accessaccelerator.org)

### SAND DOLLAR

The Central Bank's Sand Dollar makes The Bahamas **a trailblazer in establishing a national digital currency**. It will support a national **reduction in cash usage by 50% within 5 years** and **cut logistical costs** by making government payments in the Family Islands more convenient where banking services are unavailable. The system will allow for **links between its digital wallet and individual bank accounts**.

### DIGIPAY INITIATIVE

The government is unrolling a **unified Digital Payment Platform** to allow the public to **pay for services online with credit or debit cards**. The Department of Immigration has lead the way by being the first agency to use this system **since October 2020**. Over time, all current and future digital payment processes in government will be moved to this platform.

### E-COMMERCE MARKETPLACE

In line with one of the recommendations from the Economic Recovery Committee, the process of creating a **Bahamian eCommerce Marketplace** is well underway by the Access Accelerator (SBDC). This will be a game changer in terms of **how small businesses sell and market their products**.

### CUSTOMS CRUISING PERMIT

The **new cruising module** on the Click2Clear portal provides a **seamless and cashless process** for paying cruising permit fees by credit card through its online application. Boaters can now submit declaration forms and make payments **in advance of arrival**.

