



Former Gov. DeSantis staffer launches MyGovGuide to help businesses, lobbyists navigate state government

The platform makes a mountain of state government records easy to search, view, read and understand.

A new online business intelligence platform that makes a mountain of state government records and data easy to search, view, read and understand is launching today.

MyGovGuide, co-founded by **David Clark**, searches state agency websites and databases for budget documents, contact information, personnel movement, contract data and more. And within a few clicks, users can find every detail they're looking for using predictive search capabilities and displayed in a visual format.

Clark, now a strategic consultant and lobbyist, has worked in state government for most of his professional career with a four-year break to serve as an Airborne Officer in the U.S. Army. Spanning four gubernatorial administrations, he has held high-level executive positions at the Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Management Services and the Executive Office of the Governor.

He most recently served as Deputy Chief of Staff to Gov. **Ron DeSantis**. Already an intense job, the position was made all the more grueling by the pandemic — so much so that he viewed launching a consulting firm and a tech company while attending graduate school as more tenable.

Clark is currently earning a double MBA through Cornell University and Queen's University, and that ended up providing the business framework catalyst that took MyGovGuide to the next level. As part of the program, he was tasked with building a business and it quickly became clear that the concept was worth more than a good grade.

The idea: Create a business environment that fosters seamless communication, collaboration, and transparency between public and private sectors to drive meaningful engagement and ultimately forward progress.

“The goal was to help organizations intelligently navigate the state of Florida government space by increasing efficient public and private sector interactions through leveraging data, which is one of the common elements that everyone can understand if they know how. We wanted to build a solution that demystified the who, what, when, where, and how of the executive branch of state government.”

How to do it: Put real-time state agency records, budget data and staff contact information, among other things, in one place and make it easy to browse, search, view, tag, track and understand.

Clark said, “MyGovGuide incorporates predictive searching with autocomplete functionality to help a user find the information they need when they need it. Our local development team, **Contextual Code**, also included automated AI image cropping to improve image capture and display.”

As anyone who works in The Process will tell you, that’s easier said than done. There are 42 state agencies, each with its own budget and processes. Some state agency records are available a few clicks from their landing pages, but others require the public to navigate a labyrinth of databases. The record they’re looking for, if they find it, usually requires fluency in state-agency steno to comprehend and there is not really any connectivity between those data points across the executive branch enterprise.

MyGovGuide changes that, and even has a GovSpeak section to decipher the government lingo.

Yes, it makes your folder of bookmarks to hard-to-find state agency records pages obsolete. But it also visualizes the data in those records by producing charts and graphs on the fly. It shows the real-time, top-line budget allocations for each agency, but it also goes a couple of steps further by leveraging budget and expenditure databases to show users how much money an agency has left to spend this fiscal year, as well as what they must spend it on and the details on how they have already spent some of it.

All of this information is automatically updated on a nightly basis to ensure the user has the most up-to-date intel. And it helps users connect with the right state employee to talk to about a particular program or pot of money they're interested in.

Clark said the inspiration for MyGovGuide came from a recurring theme in meetings throughout his career – both during his 17 years in state government and for the past two years working directly with the private sector while running the consulting firm **Allegiant Strategies Group**.

Many organizations and businesses looking to sell their products and solutions start with an introductory meeting with a department head or one of their top lieutenants just to let them know they exist. Of course, they want to explain their products too, in hopes they can strike a deal down the line.

Sometimes those meetings were scheduled three weeks after agency budget requests were due. Other times the agency is one year into a 10-year contract. Either way, timing is everything and often the timing was off, or the presentation was ill-informed if they didn't have representation helping them.

When users log into MyGovGuide, they'll be greeted with a tutorial on how to use the site. Front and center is a timeline of key dates in the budget process.

"While MyGovGuide is only a piece of software and can't replace the human relationship, we hope it makes private and public sector collaboration easier," Clark said.

"For example, consultants and lobbyists can use MyGovGuide as a resource to help them reduce the time they are spending on data mining and research so they can hopefully use their time doing what they do best which is building relationships across the enterprise."

The software could also help them enhance their business relationships as well. With a few clicks, they could find a program with unallocated and unencumbered (there's a tooltip for that word if you need it) funding that would be a perfect fit for their client. That insight shows their client the additional value that comes from understanding the government data.

The business applications are many, and the day-one Professional subscription of MyGovGuide is focused on attracting those users. Private sector businesses can use the solution to help understand Florida and strategically focus their business, sales and government relations teams to scale and grow.

"If you save your teams time by automating the things that can be automated, you save money and can develop more business by allowing your teams to focus on what they were hired to do which is usually not data mining and analysis," said Clark.

The solution is a software-as-a-service model with monthly and annual single-user subscriptions with a price break available if users purchase the 12-month plan. There is also




an enterprise package with multiple licenses for a company with multiple users. Customers can test drive it with a 14-day free trial.

Post-launch, Clark sees MyGovGuide offering additional functionality catered toward other types of users, including the government itself. There are already some features that would catch other user groups' eyes with additional enhancements rolling out soon.

"I'm very proud of the team for what we have built so far with much more to come," Clark said.

Details on future subscription types will be announced at a later date.

Clark said, "We are definitely open to feedback on how to improve the solution and help others strategically navigate the data so they can focus on doing what they do best while MyGovGuide does the heavy data lifting and giving users a competitive advantage when doing business with the State of Florida."

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 July 27, 2022	Contextual Code
 11 min	David Clark

Government Records
Lobbying
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Drew Wilson covers legislative campaigns and fundraising for Florida Politics. He is a former editor at The Independent Florida Alligator and business correspondent at The Hollywood Reporter. Wilson, a University of Florida alumnus, covered the state economy and Legislature for LobbyTools and The Florida Current prior to joining Florida Politics.