

“ClearGov helps us satisfy one of council’s main goals which is being transparent to the public, but it also allows us to do so in a much more efficient manner than before. Unlike the previous transparency provider, ClearGov actually uploads our financials for us — on a monthly basis — so council members and residents always have the very latest data at their fingertips.”



Kirk Johnson
Finance Director

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE:

Find a less labor-intensive transparency solution that’s easy to update and maintain

CHALLENGE:

Ridgefield is the fastest growing community in the State of Washington. The population has surged a whopping 85 percent in the last 9 years and more than 15 percent just since 2018. That kind of rapid and relentless expansion keeps financial director Kirk Johnson and his team on their toes.

Fiscal transparency is particularly important in a dynamic, high-growth city where officials are expected to balance budgets while meeting ever-increasing demands for municipal services. Keeping everyone — council and residents alike — in the know about how funds are collected and allocated is critical.

In 2017, the City contracted with a company to create an online transparency portal, but Johnson and his team found it difficult to build and maintain the site. “We had to do a lot of things ourselves, with limited guidance and not really understanding how to keep everything working properly in the background,” said Johnson.

Even after the portal was up and running, keeping it populated with up-to-date financials simply wasn’t sustainable, “Keeping the site current was practically a full-time job.” Johnson explained, “We’re a team of five, with two people in part-time roles. We just couldn’t keep up. It got to the point where we had to take the site down because we were just too far behind.”



SOLUTION:

In 2018, the City of Ridgefield partnered with ClearGov to launch a new online Financial Transparency Center. Having experienced a challenging implementation process with the last provider, Johnson and his team were especially sensitive to the data onboarding requirements. They chose ClearGov because they were looking for a less labor-intensive approach to transparency — one that could consistently and sustainably deliver real-time insights for their growing community.

Johnson said ClearGov has delivered. “ClearGov helps us satisfy one of council’s main goals which is being transparent to the public, but it also allows us to do so in a much more efficient manner than before ... ClearGov actually uploads our financials for us — on a monthly basis — so council members and residents always have the very latest data at their fingertips.”

Since publishing the ClearGov Transparency Center, Johnson says he fields fewer calls and inquiries because the financial data is always accessible and current. Now, with fiscal transparency clearly under control, he’s set his sights on two key next steps: launching ClearGov project pages to share capital improvements with residents and working with the management team to create department dashboards so they can start tracking performance against goals.

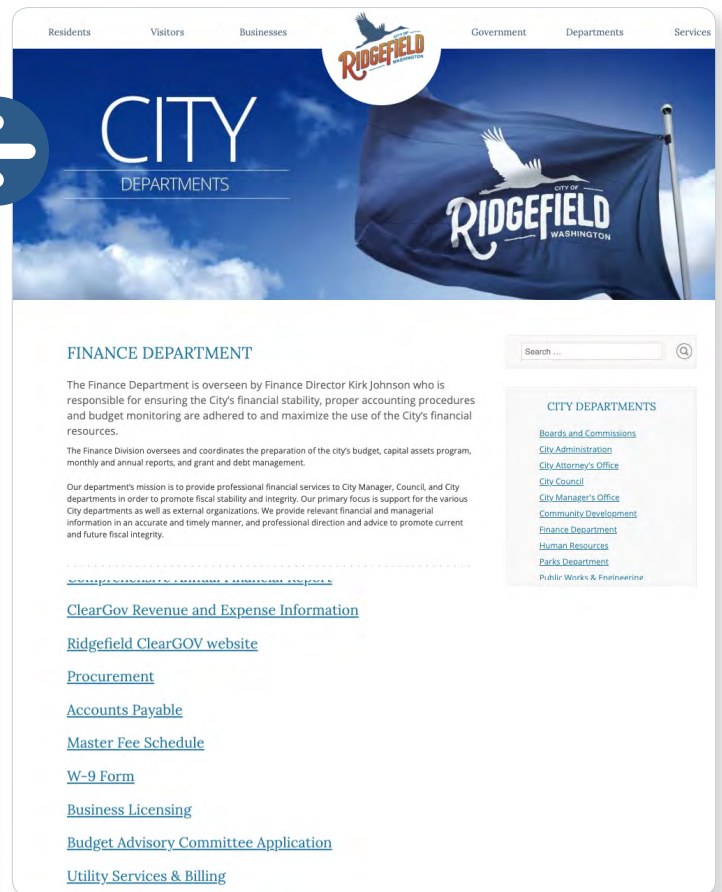
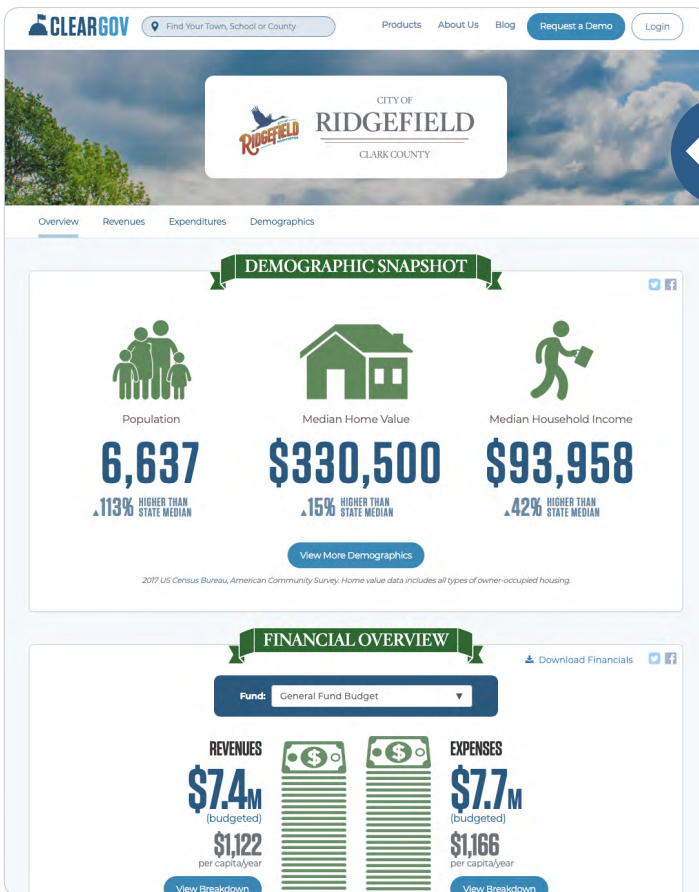
“We really struggled with the other transparency company. We had to do a lot of things ourselves, with limited guidance and not really understanding how to keep everything working properly in the background. The fact that ClearGov does all of that for us and we just need to get the data, review it, and okay it, is a game changer — especially with our limited staff. It’s a pleasure to work with ClearGov.”



Kirk Johnson
Finance Director

CLEARGOV PROFILE

RIDGEFIELD WEBSITE



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Ridgefield Website

“The best thing about the onboarding process was that it didn’t require a ton of work on our part. The ClearGov team really made it easy for us.”