

Large Municipal County Government Agency

Astadia and Micro Focus Visual COBOL deliver close to 90% cost savings and establish Azure-based foundation for interoperability, efficiency, and increased innovation.



Need for Increased Flexibility and Interoperability to Support Digital Transformation

This County's IT services already ranked above average in terms of customer service experience, but that was just the start for the County. They wanted to establish themselves as technology leaders among state and local governments. The County IT Team is focused on increasing the effectiveness and transparency while reducing cost, enabling increased workforce mobility, and improving the citizens experience when interacting with county departments.

"Astadia partnered with Micro Focus leveraging Visual COBOL, and Microsoft using an Azure-based platform, allowing the County to execute on a broader strategic technology vision with a foundation for interoperability, efficiency, and increased innovation for the years ahead."

WALTER SWEAT

Chief Technology Officer
Astadia

With nearly 30 mission-critical applications based on its Unisys mainframe, the County faced serious challenges. Software code had grown more complex over the years and lacked transparency. This became especially apparent when attempting to hire staff with the necessary skills to maintain them. The mainframe-based applications also lacked interoperability and limited integration capabilities made it difficult to innovate and extend applications. Finally, the environment was expensive to operate, maintain, and support, compared with more modern, cloud-based solutions.

Effective Teamwork Delivers Seamless Transition

The County selected Astadia as their technology partner based on the company's outstanding reputation and its expertise in mainframe-to-cloud modernization. Astadia has built a set of tools and project management methodologies to ensure that the process runs smoothly and efficiently. Microsoft Azure was chosen as target cloud environment for its scalability and superior performance in the Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) category. Azure Government is a separate instance of the Microsoft Azure service, addressing the specific security and compliance needs of state and local US government.

At a Glance

- **Industry**
Public Sector
- **Location**
USA
- **Challenge**
Deliver innovative new services to improve customer satisfaction by moving from Unisys mainframe to cloud environment
- **Products and Services**
Micro Focus Visual COBOL
- **Critical Success Factors**
 - + Visual COBOL supports Azure Government cloud implementation
 - + Increased efficiency with close to 90% operational cost savings
 - + Project completion 10 months ahead of schedule without business disruption
 - + Enhanced development capabilities for future innovation

“We leveraged Micro Focus Visual COBOL to create a seamless transition for the County’s stakeholders without any business disruption. In addition, Visual COBOL provides the County’s development team a wealth of new features and capabilities that will support their continued digital transformation.”

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Astadia recommended Micro Focus Visual COBOL as industry-standard toolset to support the application modernization effort. Visual COBOL includes a native code generator which means the COBOL applications are optimized for the new platform. Visual COBOL’s wide database support means that even though the mainframe-based applications relied on 11 different databases, Visual COBOL was able to support this ensuring all existing processes remained operational. Astadia’s CTO Walter Sweat comments: “We leveraged Micro Focus Visual COBOL to create a seamless transition for the County’s stakeholders without any business disruption. In addition, Visual COBOL provides the County’s development team a wealth of new features and capabilities that will support their continued digital transformation.”

Early Project Completion and Nearly 90% Cost Savings

Constrained by contractual obligations and motivated to achieve ongoing cost savings as early as possible, the County set an ambitious timeline for the project. To make matters

even more challenging, onset of the COVID-19 pandemic occurred midway through the project, threatening to cause delays. Nevertheless, the County and Astadia were able to successfully complete the project ten months ahead of schedule, in just 14 months. Apart from an immediate operational cost saving of over \$500,000 per year, a nearly 90 percent improvement compared to the Unisys environment, the County also realized additional cost reductions by eliminating licensing costs for legacy applications and replacing end-of-life hardware with more cost-effective alternatives.

The modern Visual COBOL environment closes the identified skills gap and makes it easier to attract developers who can innovate and extend applications.

Sweat concludes: “Astadia partnered with Micro Focus leveraging Visual COBOL, and Microsoft using an Azure-based platform, allowing the County to execute on a broader strategic technology vision with a foundation for interoperability, efficiency, and increased innovation for the years ahead.”