Tyler Excellence Awards

Fairfield County, Ohio: Building a Fully Connected Community Through ERP Innovation and Governance

<u>Table of Contents</u>

Overview: Integrating Technology to Strengthen Community Services

Fairfield County, Ohio, is honored to submit this application for the **Tyler Excellence Award**, recognizing the County Auditor's Office for its leadership in forming an **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Data Governance Work Group** and for its strategic integration of Tyler Technologies' solutions. This initiative is transforming financial reporting, interdepartmental collaboration, and service delivery across the county and within multiple political subdivisions.

By prioritizing data integrity, stakeholder engagement, and continuous improvement, Fairfield County is setting a new standard for local governments — enabling more agile, informed, and community-responsive decision-making. These efforts are not just improving internal operations; they are directly benefiting the residents of Fairfield County.

A Vision for Connected Government

Fairfield County's vision is to **enhance the agility of data-driven decisions** and ensure **optimal use of ERP solutions**. ERP is not just a software solution — it is a catalyst for cultural and operational transformation. The county's approach embraces Tyler Technologies' cloud-based, SaaS-enabled ERP platform to:

- Centralize data
- Decentralize certain processes, empowering departmental leaders
- Automate critical processes
- Break down silos across departments and jurisdictions
- Improve accuracy and efficiency
- Drive smarter decisions at every level

In an era where public trust hinges on transparency, reliability, and responsiveness, Fairfield County is harnessing ERP to ensure its financial operations are not only effective but also accountable.

Background: Moving from Contract Monitoring to True Collaboration

While ERP systems have been used in Fairfield County for years, past implementation models lacked sustained stakeholder involvement. The process for contract approval once involved limited engagement, which narrowed the understanding and potential of ERP tools.

The Auditor's Office recognized a pivotal opportunity: to **elevate ERP from a transactional tool to a collaborative, strategic platform**. Thus, the **ERP Data Governance Work Group** was formed — a cross-functional team of professionals committed to broadening **stakeholder involvement** and deepening organizational learning around ERP capabilities.

This initiative shifted the culture from passive adoption to **active collaboration**. The Data Governance Work Group has become a space for departments to share insights, raise challenges, and co-develop solutions using Tyler's suite of ERP tools.

Mission Statement: Guiding Principles for ERP Governance

The ERP Data Governance Work Group's mission is to:

"Establish guidelines and procedures for the effective management, protection, and responsible use of data within the Enterprise ERP SaaS environment — ensuring data quality, security, and compliance while promoting data-driven decision-making."

This mission supports not only technical excellence but also ethical stewardship and operational transparency — values that underpin public trust.

Goals: Driving Performance and Accountability

The Data Governance Work Group identified clear goals, each tied to improved outcomes for departments and residents alike:

- Ensure **data integrity** and accountability
- Identify areas for **process improvement**
- Develop **targeted stakeholder training**
- Leverage ERP functionality for **streamlined operations**
- Maintain compliance with **state and federal regulations**
- Build trust with **consistent, high-quality data**

Key Outcomes were:

- Improved **data security**, identifying and remediating vulnerabilities
- Increased **efficiency** through reduction of errors and manual input
- Greater **transparency** through robust reporting and data access
- Stronger **collaboration** across departments and political subdivisions
- Enhanced **strategic planning**, budgeting, and risk management
- Support for **data-driven customer service** improvements

Tools That Enable Connection and Engagement

To support this transformative work, Fairfield County has introduced a series of tools and processes that promote visibility, accountability, and continuous improvement, with the foundation of the Tyler solutions:

- **ERP Business Case Intake Form** – evaluates new initiatives against strategic priorities
- **ERP Project Roles and Responsibilities** – clarifies stakeholder involvement and expectations
- **ERP Implementation Plan** – ensures consistent, measurable deployment strategies
- **Stakeholder Survey Results** – captures feedback and drives user-centered improvements
- **Implementation Site Report** – detailed tracking of progress and key learnings from Tyler consultants

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Notable Successes: Impact Across the County

Fairfield County's ERP initiative has delivered tangible results across **30+ departments and multiple political subdivisions**. A few standout outcomes include:

- **Streamlined Processes:** Consolidated and standardized workflows across departments and jurisdictions
- **Decentralized Purchasing:** Reduced manual data entry and empowered departments to manage purchase orders directly
- **Enhanced Accuracy:** Improved data consistency, reducing errors and rework
- **Smarter Budgeting:** Simplified budget tracking and enabled data-informed financial decisions
- **Better Planning:** Investment assessments allowed for continuous improvement for Utility billing
- **Efficiency Gains:** Freed up staff time to focus on strategic work rather than repetitive tasks

Arising from feedback from the ERP governance committee members, the Innovative Making Numbers Count Seminar that blended leadership training and technical training of ERP for all county departments, with tremendously positive feedback for the professionalism and relevance of the training. This seminar was at no additional cost to the county and was informed by data governance practices.

Why It Matters: A Government That Works for the People

At its core, this initiative reflects a commitment to **public service**. When governments operate efficiently, transparently, and collaboratively, the people benefit. Residents of Fairfield County can now expect:

- **Faster, more reliable services**
- **More responsible use of taxpayer dollars**
- **Greater access to meaningful public data (records requests are met within one day)**
- **Confidence in the integrity of financial decisions**

Conclusion: Excellence Through Innovation, Measurable Impact, and Replicable Value

Fairfield County's ERP Data Governance initiative exemplifies the principles of excellence recognized by the Tyler Excellence Awards: **innovation grounded in purpose, measurable operational impact, sustainable value, and scalability across jurisdictions**.

This initiative redefined ERP not as a back-office system, but as a **strategic enterprise platform** that supports transparency, accountability, and service delivery. By establishing a cross-functional ERP Data Governance Work Group, the County Auditor's Office introduced an innovative governance model that transformed how data is managed, how departments collaborate, and how Tyler Technologies' SaaS ERP capabilities are fully leveraged.

The results are **measurable and verifiable**. Across more than 30 departments and multiple political subdivisions, Fairfield County achieved:

- Significant reductions in manual data entry and ERP support tickets following decentralization
- Streamlined purchasing, payroll, vendor management, and election worker payment processes
- Improved data accuracy, reporting reliability, and financial decision-making
- Faster turnaround on public records requests and financial transactions
- Increased departmental autonomy while maintaining strong internal controls

These outcomes were achieved **without additional cost**. No new software, staffing, or consulting services were required. Instead, success was driven by governance discipline, stakeholder engagement, and intentional use of existing Tyler ERP functionality—demonstrating exceptional return on investment and strong stewardship of taxpayer resources.

Most importantly, this initiative is **sustainable and scalable**. The ERP Data Governance Work Group is a permanent structure that evolves alongside Tyler's SaaS enhancements, ensuring continuous improvement rather than one-time implementation gains. The tools, processes, and governance framework developed by Fairfield County are **fully replicable** by other Tyler clients, regardless of size or complexity.

Fairfield County's approach delivers lasting value not only to internal operations but to the residents it serves—through faster services, more transparent financial reporting, and increased public trust. This initiative stands as a model for how local governments can leverage Tyler Technologies to build connected, efficient, and accountable communities.

The Tyler Excellence Award would recognize not just a successful ERP project, but a **repeatable governance model** that demonstrates how innovation, collaboration, and disciplined execution can transform public sector operations for the long term.

Appendix A: ERP Data Governance Replication Checklist

This checklist outlines the core elements required for other jurisdictions to replicate Fairfield County's success using Tyler Technologies' ERP solutions.

1. Governance Structure
☐ Establish a cross-functional ERP Data Governance Work Group
☐ Include representatives from finance, IT, HR, operations, and participating departments
☐ Define a clear mission focused on data integrity, security, and decision support
☐ Schedule regular governance meetings with documented outcomes

2. Stakeholder Engagement
☐ Identify departmental ERP stakeholders and decision-makers
☐ Define roles and responsibilities for ERP projects and system changes
☐ Use structured intake forms to evaluate ERP initiatives against strategic priorities
☐ Collect and act on stakeholder feedback through surveys and reviews

3. Process Standardization & Decentralization
☐ Identify ERP processes suitable for decentralization with proper controls
☐ Develop standardized workflows for purchasing, journals, budget transfers, and reporting
☐ Train departments to independently execute approved ERP functions
☐ Measure success through ticket reduction and processing time improvements, as well as increased organizational knowledge

4. ERP Optimization Using Existing Tyler Functionality
☐ Leverage import tools for vendors, invoices, payroll, and employee data
☐ Utilize built-in reports for reconciliation, compliance, and transparency
☐ Automate recurring processes using ERP scheduling tools
☐ Align system updates with governance review and communication

5. Training & Knowledge Sharing
☐ Provide role-based ERP training informed by governance feedback, consider hosting internal conferences
☐ Blend technical ERP instruction with operational and leadership context
☐ Document processes and make resources accessible across departments
☐ Reinforce data literacy as a shared organizational responsibility

6. Measurement & Continuous Improvement
☐ Track performance metrics (tickets, processing time, error reduction)
☐ Review outcomes pre- and post-implementation
☐ Adjust governance standards as organizational needs evolve
☐ Use data to inform budgeting, risk management, and service improvements

7. Sustainability & Scalability
☐ Embed governance practices into standard operating procedures
☐ Ensure continuity through documentation and shared ownership
☐ Scale participation to additional departments and other political subdivisions
☐ Continuously align governance with Tyler SaaS enhancements

Appendix B: Decentralization Process

Decentralization empowers departments to perform financial functions independently within ERP. Processes such as purchase order change orders, general journals, and budget transfers or amendments are completed by the decentralization participants. Decentralization of these procedures helped streamline processes and eliminate redundancy. The governance initiative was critical to the success of decentralization.

Department participants = Commissioners (including HR, Airport, Transit and Facilities), EMA, FCBDD, Health, JFS, MCU

We began preparations for decentralizing departments in February 2025. We held our first official training for Phase 1 participants June 5th – comprising of Commissioners (including HR, Facilities and Transit), EMA, FCBDD, Health and MCU departments. We originally intended to have them test through early to mid-July and then determine when to transition into production. It was soon decided that the departments were confident and successful, so they were transitioned into full decentralization by July 7th. In late September/early October, JFS was also transitioned into production and became fully decentralized. The speed of the process was supported by the ERP governance foundation.

Decentralization – Ticket Data Parameters
- Ran report/query in old TDX ticketing system for 2024 tickets
  - To include all 2024 tickets before the new TDX ticketing system was launched
  - To include all tickets after 12/31/23 but before 1/1/25

- Ran report/query in new TDX ticketing system for 2024 tickets
  - To include all 2024 tickets post-launch of the new TDX ticketing system
  - All tickets after 12/31/23 but before 1/1/25

- Ran report/query in new TDX ticketing system for 2025 tickets
  - Includes all tickets after 12/31/24 but before 1/1/26

- Compared 2024 tickets to 2025 tickets – noting difference in amount of ERP tickets so to compare pre & post decentralization ticketing amounts
  - Demonstrating the amount of work streamlined enabling departments to be able to perform certain functions independently within ERP as opposed to most financial functions being completed solely by the Auditor's Finance Department.

* Tickets for Assets or Remitters were eliminated from all reports/ticket counts

TICKET COUNTS

Yearly Totals

- **2024 (1/1 - 12/31) = 5604 total overall tickets**
  - Commissioners = 653
  - EMA = 83
  - FCBDD = 681
  - Health = 279
  - JFS = 1802
  - MCU = 62
  - All other depts = 2044

- **2025 (1/1 - 12/31) = 5405 total overall tickets**
  - Commissioners = 419
  - EMA = 57
  - FCBDD = 390
  - Health = 208
  - JFS = 1573
 - MCU = 65
  - All other depts = 2693

Pre-Decentralization Totals: (1/1/25 - 7/6/25)

- **2916 total overall tickets**
  - Commissioners = 326
  - EMA = 38
  - FCBDD = 268
  - Health = 166
  - JFS = 922
  - MCU = 48
  - All other depts = 1148

Post-Decentralization (7/7/25 – 12/31/25)

- **2489 total overall tickets**
  - Commissioners = 93
  - EMA = 19
  - FCBDD = 122
  - Health = 42
  - JFS = 651 (Phase 2 began 10/1)
  - MCU = 17
  - All other depts = 1545

*The majority, if not all, of the tickets submitted for the decentralized group during the Post-Decentralized period was for vendor setup or vendor modifications – which cannot be completed by the decentralized groups based on control procedures.

Pre- vs Post- Decentralization Ticket Counts
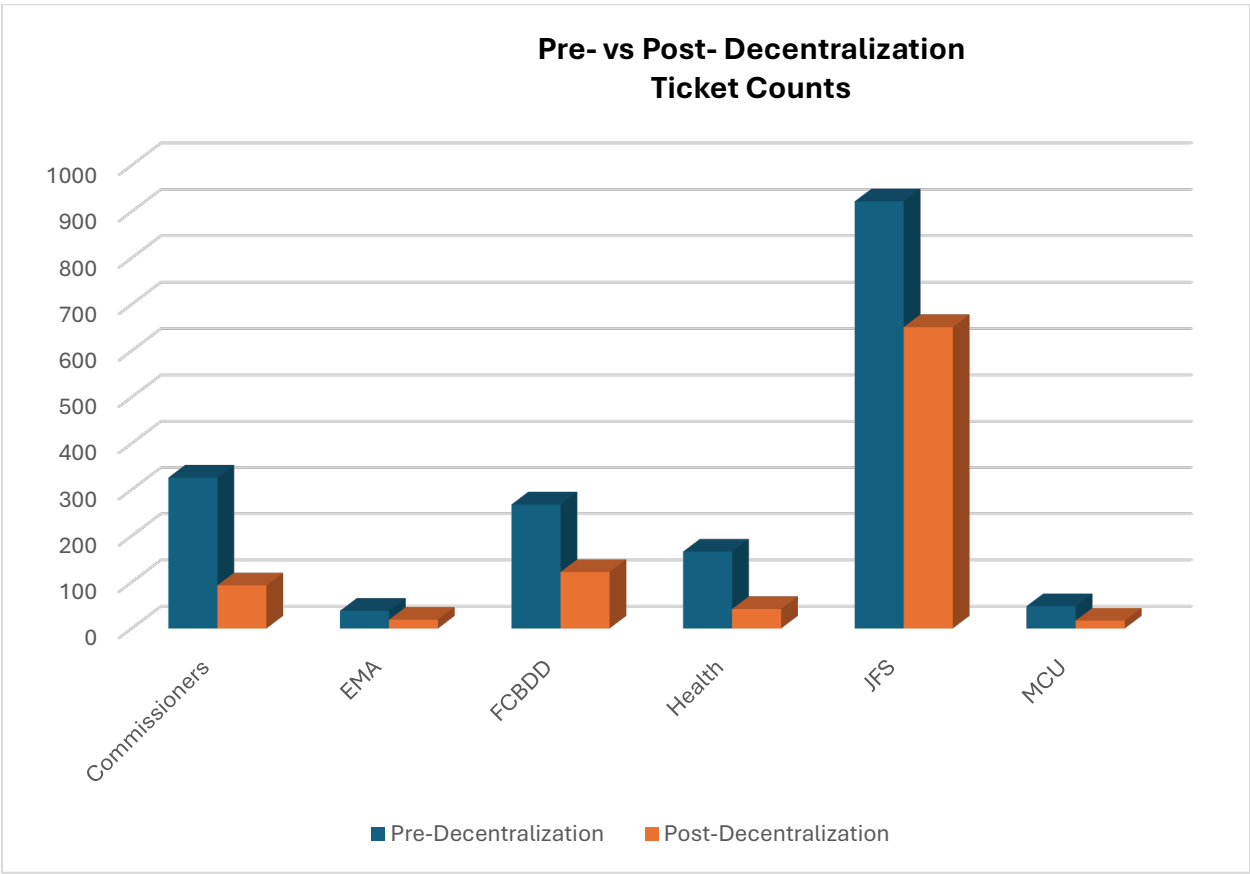
Appendix C: ERP Vendor Import Example
Streamlined BOE Election Worker Payment Process

The governance initiative allowed for implementation of a streamlined payment process for BOE election workers using ERP vendor import functions.

Previous process:
BOE sent vendor packets requiring 1–2 hours of manual entry per packet. This meant that there would be potentially multiple packets per election due to uncertainty of worker attendance. The County Auditor's Office manually assigned vendor numbers and processed invoices individually within ERP. The payments were issued during regular agency check runs.

New, improved process with governance initiative:
We created a vendor import file to assign vendor numbers in bulk.
After validation, we processed invoices and issued checks in 1–2 hours via a special check run.

Future benefit:
Vendors now exist in ERP, so BOE will only need to provide invoice import file; new vendors can be easily added to the import file for upload. The process has saved significant time compared to manual entry of 40–60 new vendors per election.

Before-and-After Process Comparison

Step	Previous Process	New Process
Vendor Setup	Manual entry of 40–60 new vendors (1–2 hours per vendor packet)	Bulk vendor import file (initial setup took 8+ hours)
Vendor Number Assignment	Assigned individually in ERP	Assigned automatically via import
Invoice Entry	BOE manually entered invoices into ERP batch (about 80 hours)	Finance creates invoice import file (initial 8+ hours with BOE validation)
Payment Processing	Included in regular agency check run	Special check run (1–2 hours to process and print checks)
Overall Time	Multiple hours per election, repeated for each packet	Initial setup: 16+ hours; future elections: only invoice import required – no additional time
Efficiency Gain	High manual workload	Significant time savings; streamlined for future elections

Appendix D: Enhanced Payroll Operations with ERP

- Due to our use of readily available reports regarding payroll reconciliation, (deduction reports, accumulators, accumulator gross verify, etc.) we have prepared and distributed W-2 forms to over 1,000 employees no later than January 17th for the last three years.

- Information about the process has been provided to all departments through the governance initiative. Timelines were improved as understanding increased.

- As SaaS clients, our System Analysts regularly deploy the latest versions of our ERP suite, maximizing enhanced features and capabilities with our system. This has saved a full position within the IT department. Therefore, there has been a decrease to the general fund budget of about $100,000, and those resources have been used for other county-wide IT efforts and improvements.

- We created a custom import template when our IT department adopted a new software application to issue all existing employees' new badges. This data was imported directly into ERP. We then activated a job within the ERP scheduler that runs every 15 minutes, syncing new badge information to Time & Attendance. This process saved manual entry of badge numbers into ERP and Time & Attendance, for over 1,000 employees.

- We continue to use this new badge practice daily for recently hired employees or reissued badges for existing employees. Without the collaboration of ERP governance, this process would have been incredibly burdensome. Communication was key.

- When necessary, we run accrual year-end processing for maintaining our numerous accrual tables in accordance with departmental policies and union agreements. This process eases the burden of required compensated absences reporting and accrued wages. This has created increased efficiencies and has saved hours of chargeable contracted services with the Auditor of State. We process over 200,000 records annually.

- The governance initiative supports understanding of how things get accomplished across all departments, and this is important to help manage and meet departmental expectations and to truly increase organizational knowledge.

<u>Appendix E: Executive Summary:</u> Building a Fully Connected Community Through ERP Innovation and Governance

Fairfield County, Ohio, proudly submits this nomination for the **Tyler Excellence Award** in recognition of the creation and success of its **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Data Governance Work Group**, which has driven transformative change in how the county governs financial data, collaborates across departments, and delivers services to its residents.

The Vision: ERP as a Strategic Tool
The County Auditor's Office envisioned a government where **data-driven decisions, cross-department collaboration, and transparent financial management** are made possible through optimal use of Tyler Technologies' ERP solutions. This vision has evolved into an actionable plan to create a **fully connected community** — improving operations within the county and across jurisdictional boundaries.

The Innovation: ERP Data Governance Work Group Grounded in Stakeholder Theory
Historically, ERP contract decisions involved minimal stakeholder engagement. Recognizing this gap, the county launched an ERP Data Governance Work Group with a mission to foster broad collaboration, promote shared governance, and improve ERP utilization. This Data Governance Work Group ensures responsible, **secure, and effective use of data** in the county's SaaS-based ERP environment.

Measurable Successes:
- Streamlined financial workflows across **30+ departments and political subdivisions**
- Reduced manual entry through **decentralized purchasing**
- Improved **data accuracy, reporting**, and financial decision-making
- Developed tools like the **ERP Business Case Intake Form, Roles & Responsibilities matrix**, and stakeholder feedback surveys to guide ongoing improvement
- The **decentralization** project was **efficient and improved operations**
- **Vendor imports were seamless** and helpful to collaborating departments
- **Payroll operations improved with greater functionality and understanding**
- **The project is scalable, and a checklist for implementation is provided.**

This initiative has significantly improved:
- **Operational efficiency** and **cost savings**
- **Transparency** and **public trust**
- **Interdepartmental collaboration**
- **Compliance** with state and federal standards
- **Service delivery** for Fairfield County residents

Fairfield County's ERP initiative is more than a technical upgrade — it is a model for modern governance. By leveraging Tyler's solutions and cultivating a culture of continuous improvement, the county is redefining how local government serves its people.