



# Unlocking Clerk Superpowers as Organizational Superglue

Presented by

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# Main Session Points



Building a Plan for  
Success



Balancing Expertise with  
Back up Support in the  
Office



Telling the Story of the  
Clerk's Office



Thinking Beyond  
Departmental Boundaries

# Introducing Myself:









# History of the Clerk Role

- Oldest role in Western government structures
  - Remembrancers
- First government position at Plymouth Colony
- In many U.S. states, the Clerk is the only required position in every municipality



# History of the Clerk Role

- Evolution of manager role and splitting of clerk responsibilities
  - Professional managerial role versus administrative role division
  - Gender balance shifts
  - Educational backgrounds
  - Shift to prevalence of Council-Manager form of government, now more common than Commission form or Strong Mayor among 11,000 municipalities across US with more than 2,500 residents
- Next evolution of the clerk role

# Common Clerk Responsibilities

**Council Support**

**Agenda and  
meeting  
management for  
Council**

**Elections – regular,  
special, petitions,  
candidates**

**Records  
management –  
Information  
Governance**

**Records requests**

**Licensing – liquor,  
marijuana and  
other**

**Boards and  
Commissions  
appointments &  
administration**

**Municipal Court  
Administration**

**Administrative  
Hearing support**

**Front Desk  
services**

**Passports**

**Domestic  
Partnerships  
registry**

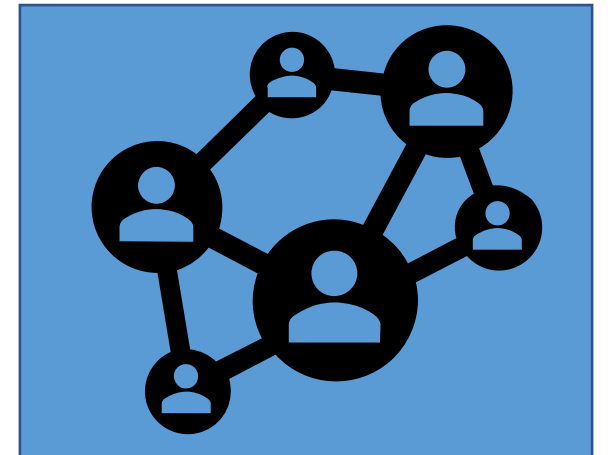
# Common Office Operational Models

**All in one** = smallest communities, where the clerk is all there is

**Utility Player** = Clerk does whatever needs to be done, filling in gaps around the organization; common in smaller communities alongside a manager or administrator

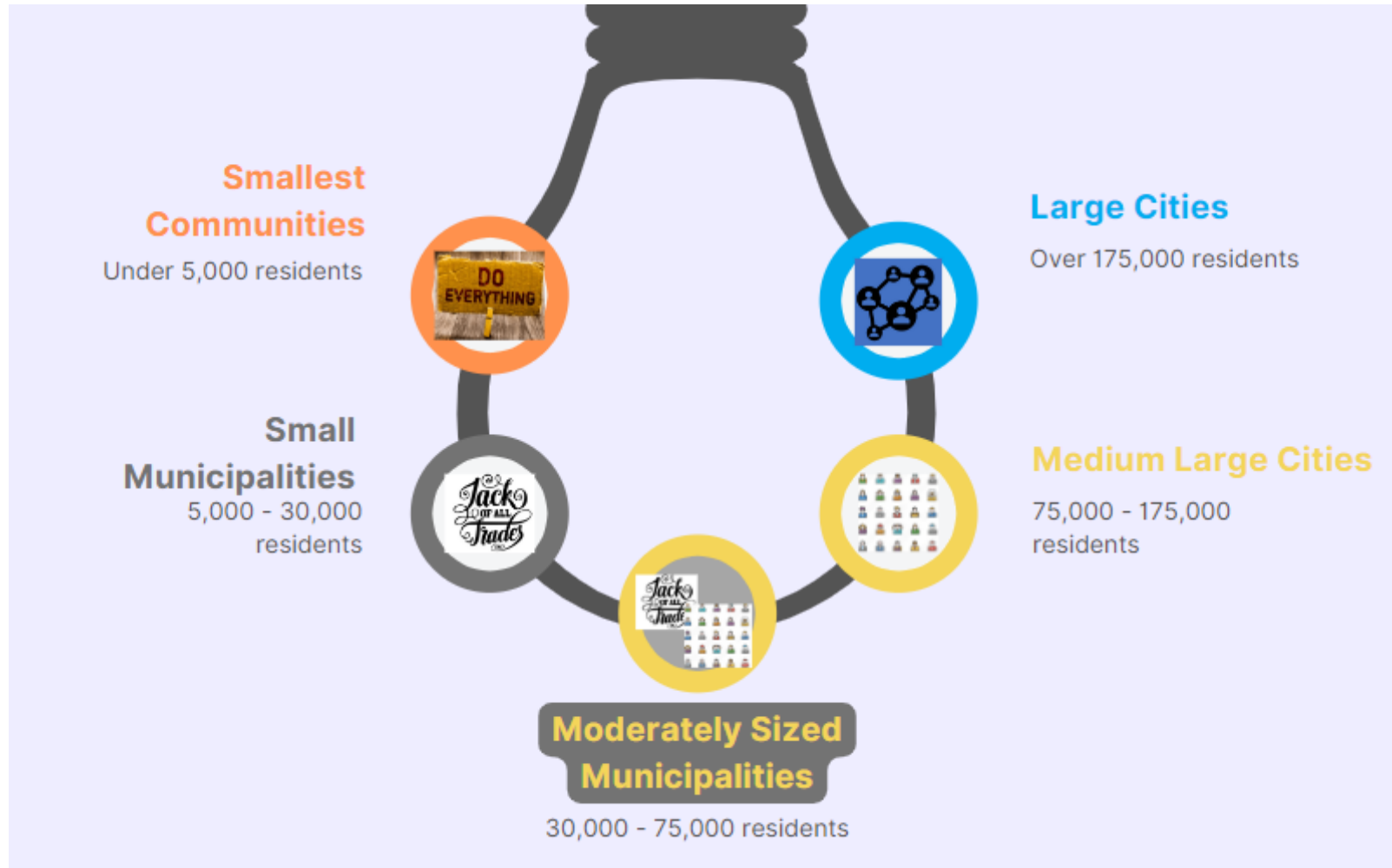
**Role Player** = Fulfills assigned tasks and roles; resources typically a constant challenge for this function as well as organizational integration

**Connector** = through core functions integrates connections across and outside the organization





# Evolution of Clerk Offices



# Key Steps to Maximizing the Resources of the Clerk's Office

1. Assess the current state
2. Optimize existing resources
3. Build a vision
4. Keep implementing & iterating
5. Nurture partners and advocates

# Step 1: Assessing the Current State

- What does the office's org chart look like?
- What are your existing functions or programs? What's mandated?
- How do people and programs match up?
- What are kind of back up is there for each function?



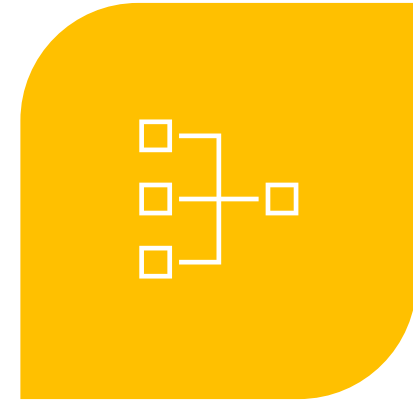
# 3 Most Common Challenges



STAFF RESOURCES



TECHNOLOGY  
RESOURCES



STRUCTURE

## Step 2: Optimize Current Resources

- Build team value
- Manage performance
- Shift existing structures first

# Step 3: Build your Vision

- Clearly establish the purpose of the Clerk's Office within the organization
- Everything we do is centered on helping people connect to, work with, understand, and impact their local government
- What are the biggest gaps and opportunities within the Clerk's Offices?
- What resources do you need to implement and execute this vision?
  - Start with ideal state first
  - Then build incremental steps forward



# Step 4: Keep Implementing and Iterating

- Tell the story of the Clerk's Office through data and metrics
- Do your research
- Be realistic about the risks of an ineffective Clerk's Office

# Legal Risks

POTENTIAL FOR ACTIONS  
NOT TO BE VALID

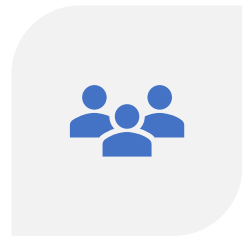
BUSINESSES COULD FACE  
REGULATORY ACTION BY  
THE STATE

VIOLATIONS OF STATE  
STATUTE AROUND RECORDS  
OR PRIVACY COULD SUBJECT  
MUNICIPALITY TO PENALTIES  
AND LAWSUITS

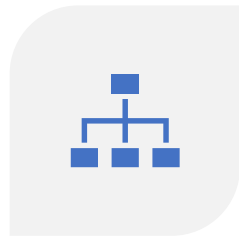
ELECTION RESULTS COULD  
BE INVALIDATED OR  
SUBJECT TO REVIEW OR  
LAWSUITS

POTENTIAL PERSONAL  
LIABILITY FOR STATUTORY  
VIOLATIONS BY THE OFFICE

# Risks Surrounding Expectations



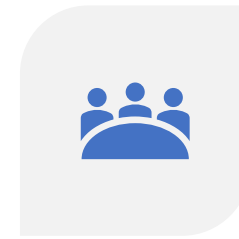
RESIDENTS AND  
ELECTED OFFICIALS



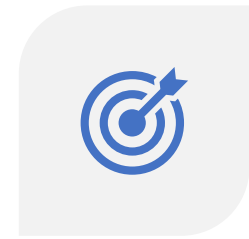
PERCEPTION OF  
PROCESS ISSUES  
CAN CLOUD  
POLICY WORK  
AND OBJECTIVES



ELECTIONS  
INCUR  
SIGNIFICANT  
IMPACTS FROM  
PUBLIC  
IMPRESSIONS



BUSINESS  
STAKEHOLDERS,  
INCLUDING  
ENGAGEMENT  
WITH ELECTED  
OFFICIALS AND  
CITY MANAGER'S  
OFFICE



ACCURACY AND  
TIMELINESS ARE  
UNRELENTING



# Human Centered Risks



# Step 5: Nurture Partners and Advocates

- Be daring in hiring decisions
- Continually share information across divisions
- Tell the story of the division



# THANK YOU

For Questions or Comments, Please Contact:

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