

Smart Guide, an AI search solution, is changing government service delivery

Across the country, state and local government agencies are pursuing responsible AI deployments to help modernize digital services. Along with pushing to meet efficiency goals, public sector leaders are investing in AI solutions to improve service and resident satisfaction.



Service discovery is a bottleneck that AI can solve

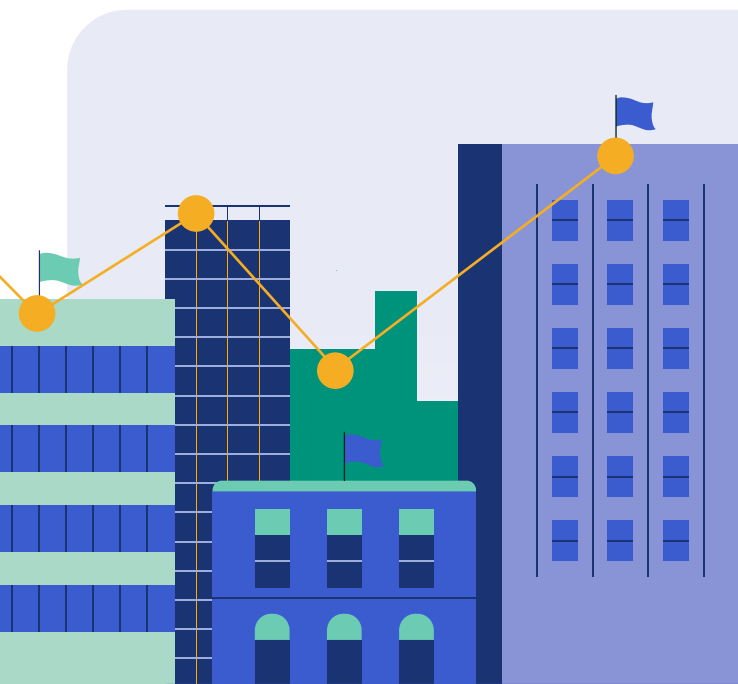
As agencies expand digital offerings, service catalogs grow rapidly: utilities, property tax, permits, licenses, citations, events, and other specialty services — all consolidated into one portal. Consolidation improves access in theory, but in practice, it often overwhelms residents.

They're scrolling and clicking, and sometimes residents aren't even sure what they should be looking for. This is the type of problem that's perfectly suited for introducing a fast, targeted intelligent search tool.

Smart Guide bridges the gap between how residents talk and government websites read

Smart Guide is a task-focused AI search tool built into PayIt's resident experience platform. Residents can type a natural-language request, such as "Pay water bill" or "Do I need a sewer permit?" and immediately get a link to the correct service or form.

Embedded within PayIt's resident experience platform, Smart Guide helps people find exactly what they need using natural-language requests, guiding residents to the right services across the government website without requiring them to navigate complex menus, reducing friction, increasing digital service usage, and lowering support inquiries.



Removing barriers in discovery

Instead of calling the support line or visiting the office, residents are able to search in layman's terms and common questions:

- 🔍 Pay property tax
- 🔍 Renew my driver's license
- 🔍 Delinquent real estate tax
- 🔍 Where's the medical examiner's office?

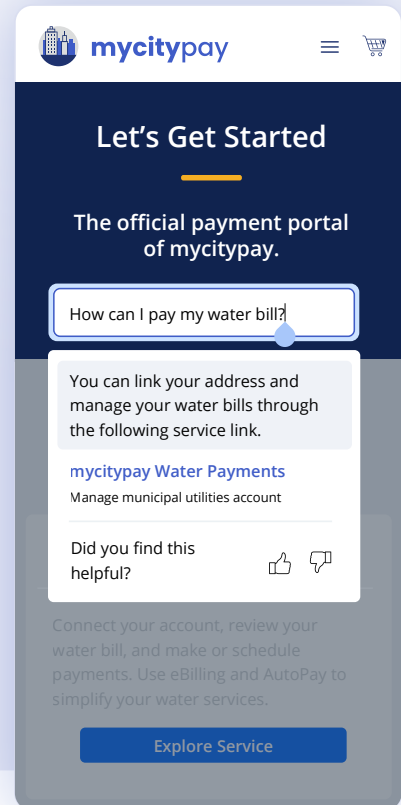
For residents, that means getting more helpful results that match intent to needs.

Residents gain confidence from approved information sources

Smart Guide functions as a governed discovery layer designed to increase completion and reduce support demand. Unlike open-ended chatbots, Smart Guide:

- ✔ References only approved service content
- ✔ Does not pull from the open internet
- ✔ Provides direct links, not long conversations
- ✔ Provides useful data on what residents are searching for

Trust in government is critical, so Smart Guide only uses authoritative, approved sources.



Early adopters are already getting positive outcomes

Early adopters of Smart Guide AI search — including **Anoka County, Minnesota**, the City of Lansing, Michigan, and the **City of Grand Rapids, Michigan** — are proving that when AI is applied narrowly, responsibly, and with measurable intent, governments get immediate benefits.

Their results demonstrate that AI delivers value in government when it is practical, governed, and tied directly to service completion.



Anoka County, Minnesota

Anoka County was among the first to deploy Smart Guide AI search across a multi-service platform.

In just a couple of months, Anoka reports:

- **30% reduction** in support volume since launch
- **20% of new service traffic** has been driven by Smart Guide AI search

One surprising insight

A large percentage of residents searched for services already on the page rather than scrolling below the fold to find them; they used Smart Search, and the AI tool routed them instantly.

This isn't a navigation failure; it's a behavioral preference, highlighting how intelligent search can accelerate service access, even for services technically on the page.



City of Lansing, Michigan

Smart Guide is helping Lansing make big improvements: Residents have already taken advantage of the new search option, and previously hard-to-discover workflows are now receiving steady traffic without additional marketing or outreach.

In just the first weeks:

- **Hundreds of residents used Smart Guide**, and many of them made payments through the AI-guided suggestions
- **Nearly 50%** of people who used Smart Guide ended up on a service page, showing how quickly it helps residents find what they need

Lansing's service structure includes nested departments and branch-based workflows. Previously, residents had to:

1. Select the correct department
2. Choose the correct branch
3. Locate the appropriate workflow

Now, residents can simply type:

- 🔍 "Sewer permit"
- 🔍 "State financial assistance"

AI routes residents directly to the correct service or form, helping surface underutilized digital services.



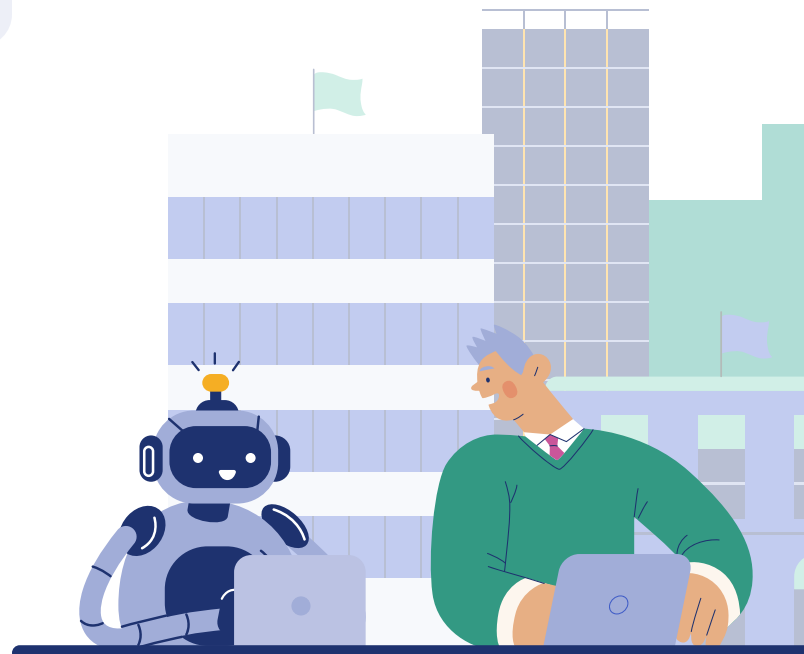
City of Grand Rapids, Michigan

Grand Rapids quickly realized that Smart Guide was more than a front-end feature — it's also a source of insight. Search logs reveal how residents described their needs, often differently from how agencies labeled services.

Their data exposed:

- Opportunities to clarify service language
- Confusion around delinquent tax workflows
- Content gaps affecting conversion

Instead of guessing about improvements, the city used real resident language to refine its digital experience. For Grand Rapids, AI became both a routing tool and a feedback loop that leads directly to user experience improvements.



AI search has eased web navigation and access to government services

This change is already showing up in how people use the site. **About 1 in 5 visitors now start by typing what they need**, instead of clicking through menus.

Across early deployments, approximately **80% of Smart Guide engagement has been directed toward long-tail services — lower-volume offerings typically located below the fold**. Historically, these services required:

- Targeted marketing
- Direct staff assistance
- Or in-person visits

AI-driven search changed that equation. By enabling natural-language discovery, agencies broadened equitable access across the full service catalog, not just high-visibility services like utilities and property taxes. This is a meaningful shift in digital inclusion.

A smart way to use AI

Anoka County, Lansing, and Grand Rapids are demonstrating that when tightly scoped and well governed, AI solutions like Smart Guide make an immediate positive impact for government agencies:



Reduced support burden



Increased digital adoption



Greater use of long-tail services



Clear insight into resident intent

These agencies did not deploy open-ended, internet-trained chatbots. Instead, they implemented AI built on disciplined guardrails:

- ✓ AI references only official agency content, never the open internet
- ✓ Residents receive concise guidance and direct links, not long conversational threads

Keeping pace with evolving resident expectations for digital services

The results these agencies are reporting, even mere months after launching, reflect a broader shift in expectations. Residents no longer want to navigate government by department structure or sift through complicated websites. They expect to type what they need and receive instant guidance. Agencies that meet that expectation get fewer support calls, faster task completion, and stronger engagement across digital services.



About PayIt

PayIt enables state and local government agencies to deliver a great resident payments experience that accelerates the shift to digital. Agencies choose PayIt to better achieve their mission through improved operational efficiency, customer support, and resident satisfaction. Our solutions span property tax, courts, utilities, DMV, outdoors, and more. PayIt provides a single resident profile across agencies and jurisdictions, integrates into back-office and adjacent systems, and our team helps clients drive adoption of digital channels. Serving more than 150 million residents in North America, we have received awards from Fast Company and StateScoop, and have been listed in the GovTech 100 for 10 years and counting.



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