

DATA ANALYTICS DRIVE COVID RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

In this Q and A, **Andy Maclsaac**, **Solutions Marketing Director** at Alteryx, explains how analytics process automation can help government agencies better serve constituents, stakeholders and communities during the pandemic response and the recovery.



For state and local governments, COVID-19 poses an array of challenges, from the public health crisis, to widespread unemployment, to the impacts on agencies' internal operations. To deal effectively with the emergency, governments need to collect, manage and draw actionable insights from vast volumes of data.

Q What challenges posed by the pandemic can government agencies address through data analytics?

First and foremost this is a public health challenge, but in many ways it is also a data challenge. To understand what is happening and how to respond, governments need insights based on data about test results, virus spread, hospital admissions, resource availability and more. Second, there is the spike in service requests related to food, housing, physical and mental health, childcare and other essential needs. Governments need data-driven insights into the dimensions of those needs, to help them determine how to deploy resources. Finally, data analytics can help agencies support their employees through the response and recovery, whether that means equipping them to work from home or helping them cope with new pressures they face on the job.

Q What difficulties do governments face when they use traditional processes to analyze all that data?

Many agencies are still managing by spreadsheet, which entails a great deal of manual labor. They don't have the agility to handle the hundreds of thousands or millions of data points coming at them at dazzling speed. They need to develop actionable insights quickly and continuously, so they can keep improving their response and provide services to people in need as the environment evolves.

Q How can Alteryx's analytics process automation technology help with those challenges?

We provide a broadly accessible, end-to-end process for gathering, cleansing and

preparing data, creating analytic models and putting those models into production. Our solution is designed to support data workers at any level. Even if an agency doesn't have a team of data scientists, it can benefit from a robust analytics platform that democratizes data, automates processes and upskills their existing resources.

Q Can you offer some examples of analytics process automation at work during the pandemic?

When schools closed, one state family services agency needed to quickly identify and analyze the physical locations of children in foster care. Were they in virus hot spots? Did the foster parents have ready access to food, medicine and shelter? Where were those children during the day, or what were their caretaker arrangements? We helped the agency develop a geospatial analysis so they could overlay information about the foster children onto the location of existing services.

In another state, we worked with the chief data officer on an automated process to analyze statewide applications for unemployment benefits. That helped agency officials quickly pinpoint where requests were being stalled and determine if they needed to redeploy resources to clear that logjam. Once they generated their insights, they could share them with their executive leadership team, all the way up to the governor and the legislative leaders, empowering them to answer constituents' questions directly. More importantly, they were able to get applicants through the system much more efficiently, so they got the help they needed without delay.