

San Francisco Cuts Permit Reviews to Just 5 Days

City and County of San Francisco

The City and County of San Francisco Permit Center oversees housing permit approvals across the city. As housing demand increased and new legislation mandated accelerated permit reviews, the city sought a modern solution to improve efficiency, transparency, and citizen experience.

Overview

When California Assembly Bill 1114 introduced strict permit review deadlines, the City and County of San Francisco faced an aggressive timeline to modernize a historically manual and fragmented process. DataBank partnered with the Permit Center to design and implement a fully digital permit completeness workflow in just 45 days, helping the city achieve compliance while dramatically improving review speed and citizen service.

Challenges

- 1 New state legislation required accelerated permit review timelines
- 2 Less than 45 days were available to design and deploy a new process
- 3 Manual, siloed reviews created inefficiencies and limited visibility
- 4 There was no structured data or performance tracking for permit reviews
- 5 Applicants experienced confusing, inconsistent review processes

Solutions



Workflow & Process Automation



Content Platform Assessment
& Implementation

Implementation



Results



Conclusion

By combining workflow automation with strategic process design, DataBank helped the City and County of San Francisco rapidly comply with new legislation while improving the citizen experience. The new digital permit review process delivers faster, more predictable outcomes for applicants and gives city staff enhanced operational visibility through structured workflow data, providing a foundation that supports smarter decision making as permitting operations continue to scale. The partnership continues as San Francisco refines and expands its permitting process to further accelerate housing delivery.

Client Experience

Mandy Johnson

Strategic Programs Manager

"The ambitious timeline for our project didn't faze our partners at DataBank. They collaborated with us to deliver a strong product on Jan. 1 and rapid follow-up releases in response to stakeholder feedback in January and February. DataBank's partnership was absolutely integral to our success."

More About DataBank

DataBank has spent more than 30 years helping organizations get control of the documents their operations depend on. Public sector work is a large part of that, and it carries constraints private companies rarely face: statutory deadlines, public scrutiny, and review processes that can cross ten departments at once. We map how a process actually runs, then design and implement the digital workflow on a content platform such as OnBase, usually against a date that cannot move. For agencies and regulated industries, success usually comes down to whether staff can tell an applicant when they will get an answer and be right about it.