

# Advocate

## Challenges with the Public Sector

Ryan J. Schebler,  
CEO

“Advocate provides an ecosystem unlike anything in the market, which allows state and local governments to explore a previously untapped technology ecosystem”

**T**he public sector continues to face increased pressure to optimize growth, development, and safety. City and government leaders face challenges to deliver while meeting the digital demands from constituents. With growing citizen expectations and decreasing resources and constrained budgets, government agencies struggle to keep pace with the rate of digital change.

The path to digital transformation for the public sector is a different journey than most industries. Government is broad and complex, with managing factors beyond the

normal private sector, such as tax management, social security, public safety, healthcare, and so on. Many would argue the need for procurement reform, the ability to have long-term strategic planning, and the need to recruit and retain IT workers are key steps towards modernizing and transformation.

The good news is that there are digital technologies and transformative partners available to create opportunities that accelerate services and outcomes for citizens.

We took a deeper look at a highly specialized firm that only works with public sector clients, Advocate Solutions.

## THE ADVOCATEWAY

Established in 1995, Advocate Solutions is an Ohio-headquartered firm that focuses solely on the public sector with a workforce of seasoned experts that are well-versed in government operations.

Advocate provides a wide range of business and technology solutions to state and local governments to transform operations and ultimately better serve citizens and communities. Beyond the industry-focus, Advocate describes unique differentiators that aid and accelerate the digital journey for governments and agencies alike through a technology-neutral approach, removing contract lock-ins, designing outcome-based solutions, and applying a holistic approach called The AdvocateWay that aligns to the standards of Technology Business Management (TBM).

“We design all of our solutions to ensure the maximum amount of flexibility and freedom. By reducing restrictions for our clients, they know we have their best interest in mind. That means unlimited room to identify and choose best in class options in such things as software, tools, partners, or delivery approach. The AdvocateWay is having the client-centric vision amplified with our experience, intellectual property, and accelerators,” says Ryan J. Schebler, CEO of Advocate. He adds, “Our experienced group of talented individuals is anchored on a strong motto, ‘Service Beyond Reason,’ in catering to the government and the people in the way they want to be serviced—as their advocate.”

Part of Advocate’s core services includes operating as a leading provider with state and local health and human services agencies to improve their services to the public and transform their operations. Developing, implementing, and supporting public assistance contact centers, modernizing legacy applications, and managing technology programs to successful completion are some of the mission-critical initiatives that have contributed to their success. Schebler states that Advocate’s deep expertise in all major government benefits programs, including but not limited to, Food (SNAP, WIC), Healthcare (Medicaid), Housing (LIHEAP), Financial assistance (TANF), and Children’s programs is at the core of their success. “Technology skills are seldom the issue in the success of projects but rather having resources who understand the process and purpose of such programs is the key ingredient.”

As a trusted advisor to many public sector entities, Advocate understands the scope of large transformational technologies programs and the tremendous impact they could ultimately have on citizens as well as the real challenges that face the public sector. With this in mind, Advocate aims to act as a gateway between the future technology opportunities and the current state of operations. Advocate is building a bridge for the public sector to plan and take advantage of the future now.



### LEADING THE WAY WITH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Advocate envisions disrupting the future of public sector transformation by allowing entities to view and access innovative citizen solutions without having to enter into long-term, binding contracts. “Advocate provides an ecosystem unlike anything in the market, which allows state and local governments to explore a previously untapped technology ecosystem. Citizens are increasingly bringing their on-demand, app-enabled expectations to the public sector and seeking a similarly convenient government experience,” Schebler states. Advocate does not emphasize bringing a particular technology or vendor into the picture as they follow a technology-agnostic approach while recommending any solution or framework that is most suitable for the project at hand.

Schebler notes that Advocate has successfully implemented critical projects and initiatives for state and local government entities for 25 years and identifies key areas of transformation that he sees as priority initiatives to increase government operations and efficiency.

### IMPROVING CITIZENS ACCESS THROUGH APPLICATION MODERNIZATION

The Health and Human Services IT landscape is a potpourri of complex and outdated systems that support the mission critical needs of citizens such as food and cash supplements, Medicaid and Children welfare and enforcement activities. These disparate systems were built at different times, using different technologies and utilizing different master data models. Because of this, the ability to provide mobile access and move them to a lower cost, cloud enabled infrastructure is nearly impossible.

“We design all of our solutions to ensure the maximum amount of flexibility and freedom. By reducing restrictions for our clients, they know we have their best interest in mind”

Advocate has been helping their customers migrate from single-vendor systems to best-of-breed technologies utilizing a wide range of techniques ranging from agile custom development to rapidly deliver incremental results to legacy code conversion which saves time and money by reducing testing cycles by 50% - 90%. Because of Advocate’s deep domain expertise, technology and vendor independence and knowledge of federal and state regulations, Advocate is widely recognized throughout the public sector industry for their quality services and business processes that result in high customer satisfaction.

### PROVIDING FAMILIES IN NEED WITH EASY AND EFFICIENT PUBLIC ASSISTANCE CONTACT CENTER SOLUTIONS

With rising digital demand from constituents, Advocate created a highly flexible and collaborative, yet secure, contact center solution. Through a holistic approach, Advocate provides a modular set of capabilities with integration to backend systems for self-service, enhanced agent desktop applications, and unified reporting. Along with an ecosystem of partners that support the continuous enhancement of user experiences, the robust platform provides a consistent experience regardless of the contact method.

Utilizing Advocate intellectual property and accelerators, Advocate has built and implemented multiple public assistance contact centers for government assistance programs (e.g. Medicaid, SNAP, TANF), with integrated real-time eligibility that results in up to 70%-time savings

on inquiries, allowing caseworkers more time to focus on high-value activities.

Advocate is one of only a few service providers with the deep expertise to truly help states improve their public assistance programs such as Medicaid, SNAP and TANF, through a “state-supervised, county-administered” system says Schebler.

### DELIVERING MISSION-CRITICAL PROGRAM & PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE (GPMO)

Advocate’s Government Program Management Office (GPMO) provides mission critical, public sector specific guidance related to IT program management needed to successfully initiate, budget, plan, manage and complete information technology (IT) projects.

The GPMO works with departments/agencies to guarantee project success rates utilizing the AdvocateWay framework through 1) Governance/Oversight and Risk Management; 2) Establishing and Maintaining Policies and Standards; 3) Promoting Agency Cross-Collaboration; 4) Direct Management of IT Projects and Programs; 5) Provisioning of Project Management Services and; 6) Funding Management.

Advocate has provided program management oversight to 50+ department/agencies and managed the outcome of over \$1 billion of projects ranging from ERP implementations to high profile, dedicated solutions.

### WHAT’S NEXT...

Recognizing continued growth depends upon the talent and effectiveness of their people, Advocate is working to be recognized as the best employer in the IT sector, attracting and retaining the most innovative, technical and government experts. Advocate not only employs people with significant experience in the public sector but also incorporates long-term employee retention policies while opening its doors for new talents. The firm is attentive in retaining employees of outstanding character and professionalism—those who demonstrate mutual respect and dignity in an honest manner. They value the diversity of their people through their ideas and contributions, to operate as high functioning teams that collaborate, commit, consider, as well as support each other. “Advocate continues to invest in our skills and relentlessly pursue being the best player in the public sector IT service industry,” says Schebler.

When it comes to the portfolio of solutions and services, Advocate works with industry analysts to review and identify trends to help navigate and identify the need for new offerings. Along with plans to expand geographically, Advocate reviews and targets potential acquisitions of organization that would enhance and optimize services specifically to the public sector. “Our three key strategies of expansion—Operational Excellence, Innovative Offerings and Strategic Partnerships, and Strategic Acquisitions—provide the framework for achieving our growth objectives,” concludes Schebler.