

Avoid Buyer's Regret with These 20 Questions

to Ask When Purchasing Public Records
Request Management Software



New public records request management software represents a commitment of time, money, and staff resources. Make sure you consider every critical factor before signing a contract with a new software vendor.

To help you uncover any potential red flags, hidden fees, missing features, or disappointing service streams, ask

the following questions of all prospective public records request management software vendors.

Note: We've also answered these questions ourselves to aid in your consideration of CivicPlus® as a potential vendor.

1. Is the software vendor a leader in the public records request management space?

Yes **No** **CivicPlus**

With over 4,200 clerk customers, CivicPlus serves more clerks than any other government technology partner. We're proud that our software is built for clerks by former clerks.

2. Does the software enable time-saving collaboration?

Yes **No** **CivicPlus**

With [NextRequest](#) public records request management software powered by CivicPlus, **automated workflows streamline request routes for coordination across departments and roles**, saving government agency staff precious time.

3. Does customer feedback affect the product roadmap?

Yes **No** **CivicPlus**

At CivicPlus, we routinely seek customer feedback and use it to inform our product enhancement strategy.

4. Can you trust the vendor to be a long-term partner?

Yes **No** **CivicPlus**

CivicPlus has been making government work better for more than 25 years. We remain on a rapid growth trajectory and are well-positioned to be a long-term government technology leader — and your favorite partner — for years to come.

5. Does the software and vendor receive consistent, positive customer feedback?

Yes **No** **CivicPlus**

600+ agencies trust CivicPlus' NextRequest to manage public records requests for their communities.

"We do business with lots of vendors, and none compare to the service and response time of [CivicPlus] staff."
- Kryss Rankin, City Clerk

6. Does the software offer a start-to-finish public records requests management process?

Yes **No** **CivicPlus**

CivicPlus' NextRequest software modernizes the entire process for receiving and tracking public records requests, redacting sensitive information, and releasing records.



7. Does the vendor prioritize security and compliance?

Yes No CivicPlus

At CivicPlus, we encrypt all data at rest and in transit, map to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) security rule controls, and have completed a Systems and Organization Controls 2 (SOC 2) audit.

8. Does the software keep an audit trail to track the status of each request?

Yes No CivicPlus

CivicPlus' NextRequest maintains a clear audit trail so you always know the status of public records requests made to your agency.

9. Are you able to receive public records requests online?

Yes No CivicPlus

CivicPlus' NextRequest empowers agencies to receive records requests through a modern online portal, route the requests to staff automatically, and release records to individuals or the public at large.

10. Does the software allow you to accept online payments?

Yes No CivicPlus

With CivicPlus' NextRequest, you can accept payments online, send and track invoices, and calculate staff billable hours automatically.

11. Does the software automatically detect and flag sensitive information that could present a risk to your government agency if released?

Yes No CivicPlus

CivicPlus' NextRequest identifies and redacts social security numbers (SSNs), emails, phone numbers, and other sensitive information with ease.

12. Can you easily track records requests, communications, and document production for proof of compliance?

Yes No CivicPlus

Government agencies can improve efficiency and accuracy, reduce errors, and prove compliance by automating the public records request process with CivicPlus' NextRequest.

13. Is the software easy to use and purpose-built for public records requests?

Yes No CivicPlus

CivicPlus' NextRequest is easy to use and purpose-built to simplify the public records request process.



"We love the ease of use of NextRequest! New employees are able to jump right in and start using it."

- Kathy M. Thake, Assistant to the Village Manager



14. Does the software offer batch redaction, even across hundreds of documents or emails?

Yes No CivicPlus

CivicPlus' NextRequest handles batch redaction of SSNs, emails, phone numbers, and other sensitive information with ease.

15. Will the software-enabled process increase transparency for your community?

Yes No CivicPlus

CivicPlus' NextRequest increases transparency in the public records request process. Regarding public records laws, the goal is to be as transparent as possible. To avoid legal challenges, you need to be able to track each request from start to finish in detail. If there is a compliance challenge, it is often because an individual does not feel a government agency is being transparent. Anything your agency can do to provide more information and greater transparency is important. For example, preemptively publishing requests and obvious public information that is likely to be requested increases efficiency and transparency. Publishing requests post-request, when appropriate, also increases transparency.

16. Does the software offer customized reporting to fit your needs?

Yes No CivicPlus

With CivicPlus' NextRequest, you can customize recurring and ad-hoc reports and leverage visual dashboards to identify trends.


17. Does the software have automated reminders to ensure nothing is missed?

Yes No CivicPlus

With CivicPlus' NextRequest, you can receive automated email reminders and set custom notifications to ensure nothing is missed.

18. Do users find the administrative console intuitive and easy to use?

Yes No CivicPlus

 "[CivicPlus] NextRequest is web based and very easy to use. Training new users in our department has been painless."
- Keith Guille, Public Information Officer

19. Are other solutions in the vendor portfolio designed to help governments run efficiently?

Yes No CivicPlus

Ask about other CivicPlus solutions for [social media archiving](#), [agenda and meeting management](#), [codification](#), and more.

20. Has the vendor been awarded for superior customer service and technical support?

Yes No CivicPlus

CivicPlus' Technical Support and Knowledge Management teams have earned Stevie® Award Recognition for Sales and Customer Service for five consecutive years and counting. With always-on chat functionality and a robust online help center, you can rest assured support is available if/when you need it.