



Illinois CORE: A Digital Leap in Professional Licensing

Digital Experience: Enterprise Solutions

State of Illinois
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (DFPR) is responsible for effectively regulating and licensing the professions in Illinois, guided by the mission to protect consumers. DFPR was struggling to keep up with the inflow in initial licenses and renewals since 2019, as applications were almost entirely mailed in paper format. The problem was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and affected mailing systems. In late 2023, applicants were experiencing “historic wait times,” per DFPR Director Mario Treto, Jr. and the situation had become a “crisis.” The Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT), in partnership with DFPR, embarked on a transformative modernization of the process and system utilized to review and ultimately grant professional licenses in Illinois. The Comprehensive Online Regulatory Environment (CORE) system was created as an online and groundbreaking digital licensing system designed to streamline and modernize professional licensure in Illinois, complete with electronic notifications to prospective licensees.

By replacing a decades-old, paper-based legacy licensing and enforcement system with a modern, cloud-hosted vendor solution, CORE is creating a transparent, user-centric experience for both DFPR employees and Illinois licensed professionals. The first group of seven licensed professions was launched within 90 days. The CORE platform is scalable for future growth to accommodate all professions regulated and licensed by DFPR, demonstrating the power of agile, outcomes-driven digital transformation that delivers easily configurable user interfaces and the ability to add applications and expand as new applications are created.

IDEA

DFPR licenses more than one million professionals and firms in Illinois including healthcare workers, financial advisors, and realtors. DFPR’s outdated legacy licensing system had become a significant obstacle to operational efficiency and public satisfaction. It relied on manual, paper-based processes, fragmented data systems, and limited public-facing capabilities.

"Applicants tell us that there's no real way for them [health care providers] to obtain status updates on their applications or renewals," said David Porter, the senior vice president of health policy research and advocacy for the Illinois State Medical Society, before a new solution was implemented. [WAND News](#)

The inability to apply, track, or renew licenses online caused delays that affected workforce readiness and service delivery, especially in critical sectors. Delays in licensure can halt careers, hinder staffing in key industries, and disrupt services. A solution was needed to streamline processes, modernize technology, and deliver a user-friendly and transparent licensing platform.

CORE offers a unique approach, distinguishing itself from typical system modernizations. By prioritizing data security and implementing a rapid, phased deployment, CORE quickly addressed critical issues and adapted to user feedback. Following this strategy, CORE instills confidence in users that their sensitive professional and personal information are safe. This ensures a responsive and user-friendly experience, aligning with current public sector technology priorities as well as the Chief Information Officer’s priorities.

The new system includes intuitive online portals for applicants and licensees. This means real-time application status tracking, automated notifications, and online renewal options which reduces processing times, improves communication, and maximizes satisfaction.

The need for efficient, transparent, and user-friendly licensing is universal. Every state relies on professional licensing to ensure quality and protect consumers. CORE's model of modernizing legacy systems and enhancing operational efficiency provides a blueprint for digital transformation that can be adapted by any state and addresses several State CIO top ten priorities including:

- Digital services and citizen experience;
- Legacy modernization;
- Cybersecurity; and Cloud services

As DFPR Acting Director of Professional Regulation Camile Lindsay envisions, this initiative redefines the professional licensing process, enabling more qualified workers to provide essential services. [DFPR Launches New Online Professional Licensing System | WSIU](#)

IMPLEMENTATION

CORE is not a simple system upgrade. It consolidates over 300 applications into one unified platform, leverages cloud technology, and uses agile delivery to rapidly adapt to user needs. Unlike previous siloed solutions, CORE is scalable, modular, and user-first in design.

Following executive sponsorship and initial buy-in from both DFPR and DoIT, continued support was secured through regular cross-agency stakeholder meetings and opportunities for more targeted and transparent communication. Town halls, status dashboards, and targeted messaging for impacted users were frequently used tools to maintain momentum and enthusiasm for the new way of doing business in Illinois.

The CORE project is a true collaborative effort that brought together the business areas at DFPR with technical teams at DoIT and the vendor. The Project Governance Board ensured alignment with state IT strategy, budget, and compliance while DFPR subject matter experts defined the licensing business process workflows and provided regulatory insight. DoIT led architecture, integration, security efforts and cloud deployment strategies and relied on the vendor to provide the core platform and configuration expertise. Continued executive and operational oversight was a joint effort led by a cross-functional steering committee.

The project was guided by a hybrid project management methodology that merged the structure of traditional project planning with the flexibility of agile delivery. This approach enabled the team to meet aggressive milestones that included the development and configuration of the licensing platform and delivery of licensing functionality for the first grouping of licensed professionals within 90 days. The project was started on August 1, 2024, with solution delivery for this licensing group completed on October 30, 2024.

CORE is built on a robust, cloud-based vendor system tailored for government licensing and regulatory functions, hosted in a secure, scalable environment. CORE is interoperable with state systems to support

data accuracy and user authentication. Its user-friendly interface is optimized for desktop and mobile access. CORE's modular architecture ensures flexibility, security, and scalability to meet evolving public-sector demands.

With the proven success of the rollout, the scalability of this platform will allow for future licensed professions to be added to the platform. DFPR's goal is to add all license types to the system within two years. The early delivery of working functionality helped drive momentum, demonstrating progress and value to internal teams, the professional community, and the public. With a focus on the user experience, transparency and entire process transformation, the technology was intended for the broader good of an improved public service.

IMPACT

The success measures were established and easily met by achieving the 90-day statutory mandate from contract to implementation. The first group of licensed professionals were able to use the system and experienced a high degree of satisfaction. Audit outcomes for compliance and security were met by the quickly launched and scalable modern platform that has a high level of availability, performance.

Before CORE, Illinois' professional licensing processes were slow, opaque, and heavily reliant on manual paperwork. These inefficiencies caused frustration for licensees and staff alike, delayed workforce entry, and hampered regulatory oversight. By streamlining licensing, Illinois has upped its service delivery game while delivering a tool that can be used by licensed professionals to remain nimble in a competitive and evolving job market.

The first group of licensees can now submit, track, and renew licenses entirely online without the wait time or travel, enabling a more equitable and accessible experience for users. Turnaround times have significantly decreased from weeks to days in many cases and DFPR staff can now work in a centralized, real-time system with improved accuracy. The move to a modern platform has enhanced regulatory transparency and citizen trust.

With the rollout of the first group, the State of Illinois and DFPR can point to some real measurable outcomes. Application processing times for DPFR have been reduced by roughly 50% and customer service inquiries are down due to improved self-service and communication. The DFPR call center handled over 770K calls in 2024, while the first quarter of 2025 has seen just over 111K calls, a significant reduction. If Q1 trends hold, the call volume for 2025 is projected at 444K calls, an annual reduction of 42%. Potential savings to DFPR in calls alone could save over \$100k "User satisfaction scores have increased; customer satisfaction survey results are 98%, even with a record breaking 120,933 licenses issued in 2024," said Camile Lindsay, Director, DFPR Division of Professional Regulation. "That is an almost 14% increase from the previous record set in 2023."

Positive audit outcomes affirm the platform's reliability and security. Functionality, vulnerability and accessibility assessments were successfully performed with no critical issues identified. In addition, effective communication and teamwork between the project team and audit team from the outset assisted in the successful go-live of CORE.

Comment from a platform user:

One midwife, seeking to return to clinical work after taking a ten-year break to raise her children, applied for her midwife license on January 19, 2025, and described the application process through CORE as “seamless” and “easy to understand.” The licensing team confirmed all the required materials were submitted, and they issued her midwife license on January 22, 2025, just two business days after she applied. This user is back in the workforce with a long-term goal to eventually train younger midwives and serve populations that traditionally have not had access to midwifery care. This is a real-life example of how the new platform’s agility and ease of use can leave a positive impression and become a potential marketing tool for the public-facing solution.

The state has a very clear plan to ensure the long-term success of the CORE platform. An annual contract with the vendor will ensure ongoing platform maintenance and upgrade, while DoIT staff will continue managing system performance, enhancements, and integration.

CORE is set to drive long-term cost savings and process efficiency, increased public access and equity with stronger data and oversight capabilities. CORE is a foundational change, not a one-time fix. CORE is more than a licensing platform – it’s a blueprint for digital government done right.