State IT Recognition Awards

Category: Emerging and Innovative Technologies

State of Ohio

Ohio Child Licensing & Quality System Project

April 1, 2016 – January 17, 2017

Project Contact:
Deven Mehta
Ohio Department of Administrative Services
Office of Information Technology
614.387.3007
Deven.Mehta@das.ohio.gov

1   Executive Summary

The State of Ohio is at the cutting edge of early care and education licensing and quality rating programming. In the Ohio Child Licensing & Quality System (OCLQS) the State consolidated the functionality related to its robust early care and education licensing and quality rating program into one system. OCLQS is the culmination of a collaborative effort between the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), Ohio Department of Education (ODE), 88 county agencies, and the Ohio Department of Administrative Services (DAS). These agencies first worked together to review and align business processes and policies where possible, and then the State designed a system to enable new, streamlined processes based on the Salesforce.com cloud-based platform.

OCLQS includes both a public facing portal for early care and education providers and an internal application for the 500+ State and county agency staff utilizing the system. Early care and education providers can create one account for all of their licensing and quality rating related work. The internal application allows staff a singular platform to manage the interactions with the early care and education providers and complete this work in the same system.

The State of Ohio has over 10,000 early care and education providers who previously utilized paper forms to conduct their early care and education business. Key business processes such as applying for an early care and education license, registering for a quality rating, submitting amendments, submitting documents, and responding to corrective action plans have now been streamlined and are able to be completed end-to-end within OCLQS.

OCLQS brings many lasting benefits to Ohio's early care and education licensing and quality rating stakeholders. These benefits include:
- The aggregate level data in OCLQS gives State leadership key information to make strategic decisions
- Streamlined and standardized business processes and consolidated technology creates efficiencies for early care and education licensing staff and programs
- Flexible, cloud-based technology gives the State of Ohio the ability to configure the system to meet changing program needs
- A consolidated system, which reduces operational overhead and the maintenance of several systems
- Public facing portal, which simplifies the early care and education licensing processes for providers
- An innovative iOS Offline Mobile Application that is integrated with the internal application to allow staff to enter critical information during inspections onsite at an early care and education provider location where Internet access is not available.

2 Project Narrative

2.1 Project Concept

The State of Ohio is at the cutting edge of early care and education licensing and quality rating programming. Over 500+ staff from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), Ohio Department of Education (ODE), and 88 county agencies manage Ohio's early care and education providers. Prior to the Ohio Child Licensing & Quality System (OCLQS), each of these agencies managed their providers with different business processes and in different systems. To create efficiencies and reduce overhead, the State consolidated the functionality related to its robust early care and education licensing and quality rating program into one system.

The State held joint sessions to align business processes and policies across agencies and identify innovative solutions. In some instances, the business processes could not be aligned due to fundamental policy differences and these instances were noted as variations that would need to be accommodated within the system.

OCLQS was built on the Salesforce platform with some customization to meet specific business needs. Leveraging the multitude of out-of-the-box Salesforce features enabled OCLQS to be delivered on an accelerated timeline completing the design, development, testing, and implementation in less than nine months. One benefit of using the Salesforce platform is that out-of-the-box components are ADA compliant. The cloud-based Salesforce platform is also aligned to Ohio's strategic objective to move to cloud-based technology. Furthermore, the flexibility of the Salesforce platform enables the State to change the system as business needs evolve moving forward. A key consideration in the OCLQS design choices was information security. OCLQS is hosted on Salesforce GovCloud which provides a high level of built-in information security. OCLQS also utilizes Salesforce Event Monitoring to identify any potential security issues. Finally, OCLQS utilizes Salesforce's out-of-the-box role and profile functionality to control user access and protect information.

To facilitate adoption of OCLQS, Ohio developed a communication approach inclusive of both child care providers and State/county staff. Child care providers received communications about the benefits and processes to begin using OCLQS. A select group of State/county staff attended early demonstrations of OCLQS functionality, test during user acceptance testing, and were pilot users to work in the system prior to its release. The staff also received in-person training sessions and over 80 job aids with step-by-step instructions.

OCLQS includes both an internal application for State and county agency staff as well as a public facing portal for early care and education providers. The internal application allows staff to manage the interactions with the early care and education providers and complete this work in the same system. It includes integrations to external systems to view other relevant data (e.g. staff training), as well as the ability to see historical information where available. Key documents are accessible through an integration with

Ohio   Ohio Department of Education
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
Ohio Department of Administrative Services

an external document management system. All necessary information State and county agency staff to complete their work can be directly accessed within OCLQS.

The OCLQS public-facing portal for early care and education providers is a custom solution to give Ohio's providers the ability to use self-service options for submitting updated information to the State and manage their full set of licensing and quality rating activities. The portal allows providers to create an account and view their connected early care and education programs. Within the account, users can create new applications, submit amendments, and update their information. The providers are also able to view historical data, such as past inspections conducted at their facility and corresponding action plans. Providers receive messages related to their programs and also report any incidents that occur related to their programs. This new component allows for quicker responses and communication around incidents.

An additional component of OCLQS is the iOS Offline Mobile Application. The mobile application is integrated with the internal application and is built to be used on an iPad. Staff can enter information during inspections onsite at a provider location where Internet access is not available. The information available in the Offline Mobile Application is a mirror of the information from the internal application. Once access to the internet is available, inspection information can be uploaded to OCLQS, which allows for continuity of work and less delays.

OCLQS brings all of the early care and education licensing and quality rating management information into a new, innovative system. This allows the State and county agencies to utilize the same system and provide a consistent user experience for both internal staff and providers.

2.2 Project Significance

Ohio has over 10,000+ early care and education providers; prior to OCLQS these providers primarily used paper forms to conduct their licensing and rating management business. Providers assist participants from birth through age 13 in before and after care, child care, family child care homes and early childhood education. The early care and education related activities related to these providers were managed by over 500 staff from ODJFS, ODE, and 88 county agencies. Each of these agencies used different business processes and policies to manage their work. A significant amount of work utilized paper forms and manual processes to track related activities, which was a burden and caused delays. Moreover, there was no central system to track work across the State and no common processes to train new workers. The State did not have visibility into standardized metrics across the full scope of early care and education licensing activities.

Creating OCLQS as the system of record for all Ohio early care and education licensing and quality rating management gives the State a powerful tool to manage these programs. First, OCLQS increases visibility into the work of each of the agencies. Agency leadership can now evaluate the performance of different departments or groups. They can also investigate variations between agencies in an effort to identify

and share best practices utilized within different agencies. Second, OCLQS gives the State the ability to be more transparent in sharing information with providers and citizens on early care and education licensing activities across the State.

OCLQS also reduces the operational overhead of maintaining multiple systems across the early care and education licensing and quality rating ecosystem since OCLQS can be utilized by all agencies and relevant users. It also allows the State to invest in enhancements to the system that will benefit a much larger set of users and amplify the impact of these investments. Utilizing one system also allows business processes to be streamlined across the various agencies. Standardized process increases operational efficiencies and reduces manual errors.

Combining the early care and education licensing and quality rating information gives staff access to the full breadth of information related to the early care and education provider, and allows them to complete all of this work within one system. For those who exclusively work on licensing or quality rating activities, OCLQS allows them to see information for the other activities, which could be beneficial to them in understanding everything that is happening related to an individual early care and education provider.

OCLQS also integrates with other State systems allowing staff to perform all of the early care and education licensing and quality rating management work within one system. OCLQS integrates with external systems to allow staff a seamless experience of accessing information from these systems within OCLQS, for example, viewing certin documents. This also reduces potential user error in manually transferring information from other systems in the process of completing work.

One of the key early care and education licensing activities for staff is conducting licensing inspections and onsite visits of providers at the provider's facility. This is the most labor intensive activity for State and county staff. OCLQS enhances their ability to effectively conduct inspections by giving the user access to critical information. In many cases, this information was stored in paper files that could not be accessed remotely. Examples of the type of information available in OCLQS include:
- Information from past inspections conducted for the provider
- Trainig records for the provider's staff, which is accessible by OCLQS in real-time
- All information submitted by the provider during their application for licensing
- Any outstanding corrective action plans awaiting a response from the provider

An additional tool provided with OCLQS to support licensing inspections and quality rating onsite visits is the iOS Offline Mobile Application. The mobile application is integrated with the internal application and is designed to be used by staff during inspections and onsite visits where Internet access is limited or not available. This functionality reduces any need for duplicate entry of information. It also helps staff to ensure that all of the appropriate information is gathered during the inspection.

Prior to OCLQS, early care and education providers had to follow separate processes for early care and education licensing and quality rating. OCLQS provides early care and education providers with a consistent user experience across both early care and

education licensing and quality rating management. OCLQS also gives providers the ability to use online self-service functionality in the OCLQS Portal to complete early care and education related activities. A few examples of activities that providers can complete in the OCLQS Portal include:

- Granting access for the employees of the provider to view and manage early care and education licensing and quality rating information in OCLQS
- Submitting licensing applications, amendments, and quality rating registrations
- Viewing documents submitted in previous applications
- Making payments online for transactions that require payment
- Reviewing information from licensing inspections or onsite visits
- Viewing messages related to their licensing status and activities

Overall, State of Ohio providers are given significantly more access to information related to their early care and education licensing activity and status through OCLQS.

2.3 Project Impact

OCLQS brings many benefits to Ohio's early care and education licensing and quality rating stakeholders. OCLQS changes the landscape of how early care and education licensing and quality rating operates in the State of Ohio.

ODE, ODJFS, and the 88 county agencies each benefit from OCLQS. The primary benefit is access to Statewide data for early care and education licensing and quality rating programs. The out-of-the-box Salesforce reporting capabilities included in OCLQS coupled with the fact that OCLQS is a consolidated system gives agency leadership the ability to view detailed information on early care and education licensing and quality rating operations. Analysis of OCLQS information gives leadership opportunities to see the highest performing groups within the State and can use that data to identify best practices. Leadership can also use the reporting capability to identify potential risks or problem areas. The detailed data also helps users to follow-up with specific groups to help resolve any operational issues. Overall, access to this data will enable more informed strategic decisions related to the State of Ohio's full early care and education licensing and quality rating programming.

OCLQS sends information regarding early care and education providers to several State systems. These systems are then able to update their information with the latest information from OCLQS. The comprehensive data contained in OCLQS gives users of all of the other systems a more accurate view of the overall early care and education licensing and quality rating providers.

Early care and education licensing and quality rating staff benefit in many ways from OCLQS which will vary by group since each was using different business processes and systems prior to OCLQS. However, some general benefits for staff include:

- Utilizing one system for early care and education licensing and quality rating activities, which reduces time in entering information in multiple systems.
- Accessing information from other State systems through integrations within OCLQS, which allows real-time access to documents, training, and other data.

- Managing comprehensive information for early care and education providers within OCLQS. The staff do not have to individually manage the information manually and there is a reduced reliance on individual staff maintaining this information since it is now all contained within OCLQS.
- Receiving more complete information from providers. Validations within the OCLQS Portal ensure that providers complete all required fields for their transactions, upload documents where required, and make any necessary payments prior to submitting the transaction to the early care and education licensing and rating management staff. This reduces the staff's efforts in reviewing and returning incomplete transactions to providers and following up on these incomplete transactions.
- Workflows that automatically assign transactions to the appropriate staff and then to supervisors for approval to effectively manage work within the system.
- Processes are standardized allowing staff to follow repetitive processes. For example, the process to approve an item within OCLQS is the same across different items (e.g., inspections, applications).
- The functionality related to licensing inspections and quality rating onsite visits, including the iOS Mobile Application, allows staff to enter the information during the inspection or onsite visit and then utilize that same information going forward. It eliminates the need for multiple entries or maintaining paper documentation.

The early care and education providers in Ohio have a drastically different experience of managing their early care and education licensing and quality rating activities. First, the alignment of ODJFS, ODE, and county agency policies and business processes gives early care and education providers a more consistent experience across these agencies. Second, the dependable experience from these areas is amplified by the fact that providers related to all of these agencies are now using OCLQS for their work. This gives individual providers a inclusive way to view and manage all of their activities.

The ease with which early care and education providers can access their information is a major benefit. Specific employees within their organization can be granted access to OCLQS and providers can easily manage/edit their security roles. Moreover, al of the programs that providers manage can be tracked in one easy-to-use dashboard. The provider is also able to respond to requests from the licensing staff such as documents returned for revision or corrective action plans.

OCLQS also contains general informational messages that can alert early care and education providers to any significant changes or other items that they should be aware of when using the system. Overall, in OCLQS the early care and education licensing and quality rating information is more transparent to the State's providers and their experience with managing their activities is streamlined in the same system.

The URL for the public facing provider portal is **https://oclqs.force.com**. An account is required for most activities, but this link will show the initial page. The OCLQS internal application for ODJFS, ODE, and county agency staff is located at a different URL.