

**Nomination for 2021 NASCIO State IT Recognition
Award**

**New York State
Office of Information Technology Services
Digital Services: Government to Business
New York State Excelsior Pass: COVID-19 Vaccination
Response
March 2021-May 2021
Angelo "Tony" Riddick, CIO**

What problem or opportunity does the project address?

The New York State Excelsior Pass project developed a digital vaccination record (i.e., a digital version of a person's CDC card) as an innovative method to help New Yorkers to safely and confidently reopen and restart the economy by re-engaging in business and entertainment activities.

Early in 2021 the New York team comprised of Division of Budget (DOB), Department of Health (DOH) and Office of Information Technology Services (ITS) initiated the effort in partnership with IBM:

1. Prior to deployment of the Excelsior Pass platform, no approved government-issued solution intended to verify proof of COVID-19 testing or vaccination existed anywhere in the country. Additionally, vendors, service providers, event venues and other commercial entities needed support to facilitate a safe reopening for patrons and employees. Implementation of the Excelsior Pass platform allows participating businesses the ability to validate an individual's COVID-19 testing or vaccination, thus promoting a safer, more secure, and healthy environment for all.
2. The Excelsior Pass utilizes state of the art technologies to capture an individual's vaccination and testing data while maintaining personal information security and HIPAA regulations. The solution is built on a hybrid cloud model with a blockchain store and offline pass validation capability. The Excelsior Pass business rules comply with current applicable policy and guidance.
3. Once downloaded to a mobile device, the Excelsior Pass application automatically captures limited, but sufficient data known to DOH. This information is always in the user's possession and control. The user can then display the pass on demand as a secure QRC code that can be scanned by participating businesses using an associated application to authenticate COVID-19 vaccination or testing status of individuals. The pass can either be stored on the Excelsior Pass Wallet application or printed for use without a mobile device. The scanner can validate in offline mode allowing for massive levels of scalability.
4. User data is maintained within a secure central database that does not contain Personal Identifiable Information (PII) or underlying medical records. QRC codes generated by the application simply validate COVID-19 testing or vaccination credentials in accordance with New York State DOH guidelines.
5. The "ITS Excelsior Pass Team" led by the CTO, Rajiv Rao worked unremittingly, around the clock to develop a solution that not only meets HIPAA requirements, but also provides criteria for businesses to validate an individual's inoculation status.

Why does it matter?

The New York State Excelsior Pass project supports the safe reopening of businesses, arts and entertainment, sports, and other event venues. Over 1 million passes have already been issued in New York.

What makes it different?

As a response to COVID-19 and in partnership with entities inside and outside of government, the “ITS Excelsior Pass Team” led the way in developing the first government-issued proof of vaccination or negative test result application in the U.S.

What makes it universal?

New York State’s first-in-the-nation Excelsior Pass is a step in the right direction to the responsible and safe reopening of the State and is quickly becoming a model for the country and the world. New York State is proud to be the first in the nation to deploy this revolutionary technology and are equally proud to submit this initiative for award consideration to NASCIO.

New York is beginning to work with partner states and jurisdictions to build standards around a trust model that allows citizens to securely share their vaccination status across borders and jurisdiction boundaries.