

Department of Inspections and Appeals - Food and Consumer Safety Bureau
Map Locator & Online Licensing for Food & Lodging Establishments
Implementation Paper
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Goal: This project will achieve several goals:

- Allow the public, both Iowa citizens and tourists, to locate restaurants, grocery/convenience stores, and hotels/motels, searching by name, address, city, county, and/or zip code and providing a map of the establishments identified. More than 17,000 licensed establishments would be included in the mapping display feature.
- Allow new Food & Lodging Establishments to submit license applications and pay associated fees through the web-based application and ePayment system.
- Allow existing licensees to renew their license and pay fees online. This will streamline the renewal process, reduce costs and speed the processing of their applications.

Project Purpose:

The Food and Consumer Safety Bureau, using state employees and contracts with County Health Departments, inspects and licenses approximately 24,000 establishments. In the processes of accepting and approving applications and license renewals, conducting inspections, and investigating complaints, the Bureau collects a considerable amount of information about these establishments. Providing this information to the public provides a beneficial service to the state, to citizens, and to the food and lodging industries.

The purpose of this project is to:

- Substantially improve the accessibility of the information from the Food and Consumer Safety Bureau web site and database.
- Provide increased visibility for licensed Iowa-based restaurants, grocery/convenience stores, and hotels/motels.
- Improve service efficiency by streamlining the licensing process.
- Save time and reduce costs for licensees using the automated system.
- Increase food safety by making inspection compliance more readily accessible.

Background: Nearly two years ago, an online system to provide license and inspection information to the public was developed and implemented. This system provides information in a text-based format.

In July 2006, funding was approved for the Planning phase was approved by the IOWAccess Advisory Council. During the Planning Phase, additional automation capabilities were identified that were beyond the initial vision.

These additional features, above and beyond the mapping capability, consist of:

- New establishments would be able to submit their application on-line, streamlining and automating the process for new applicants as well as licensed establishments.
- Establishments will be able print renewed licenses; saving staff time and mailing costs.
- Automate the process of fee assignment for establishments holding more than one license.
- Print vending machine licensing stickers instead of using a handwritten process.
- Create separate license types for Food Processing Plants and Distribution Centers to allow automated handling, online processes, and avoid manual intervention.
- Additional reporting capability, reducing staff time needed to manually produce reports.

Request: This is a request for Phase 2 funding for the final design, implementation, and roll-out of the project including application programming and testing. Based on the level of details understood at this time, before final design is complete, the estimate to complete the project is \$76,000.

Cost Avoidance: This project will provide automation to increase efficiency and reduce staff time required of Food & Lodging Establishments, DIA and County Health Departments contracted with DIA to complete and process applications for new licenses as well as renewals. In addition, the new system will reduce printing costs, telephone costs, mailing and postage expense, and decrease turnaround time for license applications. When fully implemented and adopted, it is estimated that more than 50% of the establishments will take advantage of online licensing and payment, eliminating virtually all of the manual intervention for more than 12,000 transactions every year. It is estimated that this will save licensees and the state more than \$180,000 annually.

Interested Parties: Parties interested in this project include:

- Department of Inspections and Appeals
- Department of Revenue
- All County Health Departments
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of Public Safety
- Food & Lodging Licensees
- Department of Public Health

Some of the Recipients of this Service:

- Citizens – local and tourists
- Food Establishment Owners and Managers
- Food and Consumer Safety Bureau of DIA