



IDFPR

THE FUTURE OF PROFESSIONAL LICENSING IN ILLINOIS

What is the current process to apply for professional licensure?

Many applications for initial licensure or renewal may be completed online, while some applications are exclusively submitted via paper. For paper applications, individuals include a check or money order with their initial mailing. Both methods involve a manual review of credentials, but the paper process is more time-intensive.

Why is this process not working as it should and how does IDFPR intend to solve this issue?

Due to inefficiencies created by an outdated licensing software system from the 1990s - and an unprecedented increase in applications for professional licensure - individuals endured historic wait times to obtain and renew their licenses in 2023.

IDFPR began to lay the groundwork for a new licensing system in the fall of 2022, eventually securing a supplemental appropriation for the purchase of new software in the lame duck session of the 102nd General Assembly. To make a purchase, IDFPR identified multiple procurement methods and elected to utilize “release off master contract,” which is a methodology where State agencies use an existing “master contract” to request products and services from a vendor which already has a contract with the State. However, after months of collaboration with the State’s Chief Procurement Office, it was determined that this option was not applicable.

As a result, IDFPR partnered with the Illinois General Assembly to pursue an expedited, competitive procurement process, providing the Department 180 days to identify and implement a new licensing software system. [HB 2394/Public Act 103-0568](#), sponsored by Sen. Suzy Glowiak Hilton and Rep. Bob Morgan, passed both chambers unanimously during the Fall 2023 Veto Session.

What will happen over the next 180 days?

Public Act 103-0568 also enables IDFPR to, over the course of the next year, extend the expiration dates or renewal periods for licensees if the Secretary finds there is a significant operational need to do so to avoid undue hardship. The bill provides for various factors that may be considered, including the number of pending applications; whether there is a shortage of licensees; the potential impact on the Department’s operational budget; and any other licensing-related factors that are deemed relevant by the Department. This final factor will be prescribed in administrative rulemaking.

The timeline for the selection and implementation of the new software system is specified in the Public Act. The contracts for the new software must be executed no later than 90 days after the [immediate] effective date of the bill. Then, implementation must begin no later than 90 days after the contract execution date. The Department envisions onboarding the professions and licensees to its new system in stages.

What is IDFPR looking for - and authorized to purchase - in a new licensing system, and what could that timeline look like?

Under Public Act 103-0568, the new licensing software has to electronically provide for the issuance of licenses and the processing of new application and renewal fees. Additionally, the software must provide applicants and licensees with online access to their license status and history. In short, the new software system will ensure that every application and fee payment will be available online, and the user experience will provide an individual with more insight into the status of their application or renewal.