



Licensing Consolidation Project

Quarterly Digest

November 2007 Issue 4

Licensing Project Summary

More than a year has passed since the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) started down the road to consolidate its 40+ license processes into one central and integrated process. MDA staff, working with local and state partners, have accomplished a lot as you'll read in the following action team reports. MDA is also on the cusp of accomplishing much more - the Central Licensing Unit will be created in November 2007; a vendor has been selected to conduct requirements gathering and existing system analysis services which will guide the remainder of the project; and a central web page (www.michigan.gov/mda-licensing) has been created that will house standardized form-fillable applications and frequently asked questions.

In continuing to work towards these goals, the MDA Licensing Project Core Team participated in a full day session on September 17, 2007 to assess the accomplishments and evaluate the structure needed to support the next phase of this project. As a result, the number of action teams was reduced from 14 down to 6 and should provide the flexibility needed to address upcoming issues. This Quarterly Digest concludes the reporting of the initial 14 action teams as future versions will be formatted according to the new team structure.

- Brad Pagratis, Project Manager • pagratisb@michigan.gov • 517-373-4261

Action Team 1

Create Central Licensing Unit

Team Leader: Rick Harper

The main accomplishment completed by the team was the identification of the structure and organizational placement for the Central Licensing Unit (CLU). The unit will be housed in the Finance and Administrative Services Division and will initially consist of three staff and a supervisor with plans to expand with additional staff as the CLU's responsibilities also expand.

Action Team 2

Development of IT System

Team Leader: Brad Pagratis

Team #2 has worked jointly with the Michigan Department of Information Technology on creating and receiving approval for a Project Charter describing the benefits and high level plan for the entire project. The team has also completed the paperwork for contracting for requirements gathering and system analysis services. It is expected this contract will be in place beginning in November with a six month duration.

Action Team 3 Standardize App and License

Team Leader: Michele Finateri

Team #3 collected and evaluated all the information required on each different license application. As part of this exercise, the amount of data collected by divisions was reduced resulting in efficiency for both internal processing and customers. Additionally, this team created a standardized “look and feel” for departmental applications and licenses (an example of this standard can be found on the Intranet in the “Miscellaneous” folder of the MDA Licensing Consolidation Project page).

Action Team 4 Number of Licenses/End Date

Team Leader: Tim White

Team #4 analyzed the volume and cycle times for MDA’s licenses. From this evaluation, several recommendations were made to the sponsors to improve the licensing process and increase efficiencies. Highlighting those recommendations are transitioning MDA license cycles to a two-year period when feasible and standardizing fee structures.

Action Team 5 Unique Identifier

Team Leader: Byron Beerbower

Team #5 surveyed other state and federal agencies on how they develop and use unique identifiers. The team compared these options to MDA’s program needs but tabled making a final decision until the project completed the requirements-gathering phase. This will allow the recommendations to be based on a broader assessment of stakeholder needs and existing practices.

Action Team 6 Electronic Signature

Team Leader: Byron Beerbower

This team researched other state agencies and courts to determine legality and best practices for using electronic signatures. The team determined that the use of an electronic signature, whether an actual signature captured or certification check box is acceptable.

Action Team 7 Communication Plan

Team Leader: Tom Benner

Team #7 developed a master communication plan which included development and production of the Quarterly Digest to update all MDA staff on the status of the licensing project. Other activities included establishing a listserv for non-MDA stakeholders, coordinating “all team” update meetings and conducting surveys.

Action Team 8 Training Plan

Team Leader: Sue Esser

In conjunction with Team #11’s FAQs, Team #8 completed single page summaries for each license. Reference materials will be incorporated as areas are rolled into the Central Licensing Unit (CLU) (e.g. FDD/PPPM Nursery/LAB - Retail Gas). The team determined through discussion and planning that specific training would be handled internal to the CLU as its responsibilities expand to include other licensing areas.

“We will either find a way, or make one!”

- General Hannibal Barca

Action Team 9 Budgetary/Support Issues

Team Leader: Barb Hensinger

Team #9 identified funding requirements for FY07 including staff and contracting support. The team is continuing to work on funding models for both the Central Licensing Unit and also for support of the project, including system development and implementation.

Action Team 10 Receipt of Licensing Funds

Team Leader: Louis Martin

Team #10 completed its tasks associated with receipting and collection of licensing funds by MDA. The team made several recommendations accepted by Sponsors including parameters for handling non-sufficient funds, collection of funds by field staff, and the use of electronic means as much as possible for receiving payments.

Action Team 11 Centralized Web Site

Team Leader: Matt Clara

Team #11 coordinated the completion of a single web page for all MDA licensing information (www.michigan.gov/mda-licensing). As part of this process, the team completed making all application forms available on-line and created an on-line licensing decision tree to route customers appropriately. The team continues to work on developing a licensing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for all licenses and posting on-line “form fillable” versions of the standardized applications.

Action Team 12 Interim Process Data Flow

Team Leader: Shari Blonde

The team evaluated the existing systems used to support the receipting of funds and issuance of licenses. The recommendations that it made to Team #13 were very important in helping to determine the transition sequence for licensing functions to the CLU. The team also compiled detailed information pertaining to the licenses included in this project (available for review on the Intranet - Inside MDA; click on News, MDA Licensing Consolidation Project, Workshop & Miscellaneous Documents, License List Summary).

Action Team 13 Transition Plan to Interim Process

Team Leader: Barb Hensinger

In support of its charge to oversee the transition to the CLU, Team #13 conducted a task survey of the licensing desks and collected information compiled by Team #12 and Team #4. After evaluation, it determined a “roll out” schedule for the first licensing applications to be moved to the CLU (e.g. Food Service and Handlers – Nov 2007; Nursery – Feb 2008; Retail Gas – May 2008).

Action Team 14 Performance Outcomes/Measures

Team Leader: Mark Swartz

This team focused on the evaluation and performance metrics needed to monitor the process and licensing system. Primarily focusing on the components of the “to-be” process, the team identified the need to further capture and summarize programmatic requirements associated with performance measures.

New Action Team Structure

The following teams were created for the 2nd year of the project:

Action Team #1 - Central Licensing Unit (CLU) Work Rules and Procedures.

Team Leader: Rick Dethlefsen

Action Team #2 - Development of Information Technology System.

Team Leader: Brad Pagratis

Action Team #3 - Licensing Policy Team to create and ensure policy is implemented in MDA.

Team Leader: Gina Davis

Action Team #4 - Develop a communication plan to share information and educate all customers (internal and external).

Team Leader: Thomas Benner

Action Team #5 - Budget and Transition Planning.

Team Leader: Barb Hensing

Action Team #6 - Create a central website with a focus of having all licensing information in one area.

Team Leader: Matt Clara

For a full listing of the team members and tasks assigned to each of these new teams, visit the Intranet Inside MDA; click on News, MDA Licensing Consolidation Project, "Implementation Plan, Updated September 2007. pdf". If you are not a MDA staff member and do not have access to Inside MDA, please contact Thomas Benner by email at bennert9@michigan.gov to request a copy.

Upcoming Milestones

The following dates exist as part of the overall project plan and may be impacted by budgetary or unforeseen circumstance.

Nov 2007

Central Licensing Unit Created

February 2008

Nursery Licensing moved into Central Licensing Unit

April 2008

Requirements Gathering and Analysis Complete

May 2008

Retail Gasoline Outlet Licensing moved into Central Licensing Unit

September 2008

System Development Begins

March 2010

New System Implementation

Not an MDA employee and want to receive updates on the project? Subscribe to the MDA Licensing Project Listserv. Go to www.michigan.gov/mda, click on "Inside MDA," then click on "Programs and Services," and finally on "[Licensing Project Listserv Information](#)" to subscribe.