



Frequently Asked Questions about DEL's Electronic Licensing Forms

To help improve accuracy and consistency in child care licensing, the Department of Early Learning (DEL) began to use electronic licensing forms in March 2011. DEL worked with a contractor to create a mobile software program on tablet computers for our licensing staff to use when doing monitoring and inspection visits.

This technology upgrade has exciting benefits.

- Child care providers will benefit from licensors who can more easily access forms, collect signatures, and reference specific WACs and RCWs without Internet access. DEL licensors will be able to spend more quality time observing and providing technical assistance to licensees.
- DEL staff will spend less time preparing paper-based reports, inputting data and mailing copies to licensees. They will be able to travel more easily and have fewer printing costs.

The data collected through electronic forms will allow DEL to better analyze our work for consistency and make data-driven decisions.

What is the timeline for this project?

Training began in early March and will continue through early April 2011.

In these tight budget times, why was this change necessary?

DEL licensing staff conduct almost 7,000 renewal and monitoring visits every year. This work has been done using carbon copy paper checklists and forms, which are filed in DEL's 17 offices. It's difficult to gather data for public disclosure and extremely time-consuming to do data analysis, including for DEL's various reporting requirements such as the Governor's Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP) program.

There are many opportunities for cost-saving through this new technology: less printing, less staff travel to submit and pick up forms, and less time entering data into duplicate forms.

What will improve because of this change?

We expect to see:

- Greater staff mobility and access to provider information from remote locations.
- Increased accuracy and consistency in licensing documentation practices.
- Improved performance management and accountability.
- Improved overall customer service to both child care providers and parents.
- Greater efficiencies in staff time and printing costs.

How much did this cost, and how did DEL pay for it?

The contract cost for the software, technical support and training was \$344,460. The funding source is the federal Child Care and Development Fund, which also pays for DEL's licensing activities. The funds were repurposed from other IT related work. Tablets were purchased several years ago. Updated tablets are part of ongoing agency technology equipment costs.

The electronic forms include the ability for child care providers and DEL staff to sign electronically. How do you know this is secure?

Once signed, forms will lock and become "read only."

Are electronic forms available in multiple languages?

The initial release of electronic forms will be in English, but DEL is exploring the possibility of creating forms in Spanish.

Will electronic data be available to the public?

Some licensing information is already publically available through public records requests and online through DEL's Child Care Check tool (www.del.wa.gov/check). This online data includes valid complaints, but not the specific inspection records. DEL is exploring how to make more data available to the public.