



EKI Project Management Ensures Successful Deployment of Automated Food Inspection and Protection System for the City of Chicago's Department of Public Health

CLIENT

As a service provider to the City of Chicago for several years, Electronic Knowledge Interchange (EKI) has completed an incredibly diverse range of initiatives across its core service areas: program management, collaboration, compliance and systems integration.

From a CDC-gold standard bioterrorism alert system and comprehensive performance management system to a board of ethics lobbyist registration platform, EKI has leveraged technology for greater efficiency, transparency and accountability throughout City agencies.

CHALLENGE

To provide better services to Chicago communities and food establishments, the City of Chicago's Department of Public Health (CDPH) sought to implement a digital health department system. A core program goal was automating food inspection and protection processes, along with:

- ▶ Creating a centralized repository to store business establishment information
- ▶ Electronically assigning and scheduling inspections for better resource utilization
- ▶ Implementing streamlined policies and processes across departments
- ▶ Performing comprehensive reporting and analysis for more transparency
- ▶ Ensuring compliance with federal and state evaluation requests

Additionally, CDPH sought to mitigate a number of inefficiencies within its existing environment, including time-consuming manual processes; long inspection-to-filing turnarounds; and overburdened staff unable to keep pace with service demands.

CDPH selected a robust, Web-based system from Garrison Enterprises, which the department rebranded LeaderRx. As with many large-scale implementations, the deployment encountered a number of internal and external obstacles, from budgetary constraints and unclear policies to paper-based inspection backlogs and inaccurate licensing data. To overcome challenges and create a viable go-forward plan, CDPH selected EKI, an accomplished management and technology consulting firm.

EKI SOLUTION

A senior EKI resource joined the team as advisory project manager with the directive to advance project goals — as well as establish staff comfort levels with the project. In order to bridge the gap between business and technology, EKI quickly engaged stakeholders across the department to develop a clear plan of action.

This end-to-end solution consisted of multiple parallel-track initiatives:

- ▶ TECHNICAL ANALYSIS: Helping to configure and create a functional system
- ▶ CHANGE MANAGEMENT: Improving communications to overcome resistance
- ▶ PROCESS ENGINEERING: Documenting workflows, business rules, policies and guidelines
- ▶ PROJECT MANAGEMENT: Establishing milestones and monitoring operations progress
- ▶ REQUIREMENTS DEFINITION: Defining functional enhancements and bug-fix requirements
- ▶ USER ADOPTION: Developing and delivering training for multiple stakeholder audiences

Offering an unbiased perspective, EKI developed an aggressive but achievable timeline for key milestones that staged training and in-office use to ease the staff's transition to the new system. EKI guided a "soft" go-live plan to promote field readiness and provide additional opportunities for feedback. A staggered rollout, district-by-district, ensured scalability during the critical launch phase.

Every step of the way, EKI supported CDPH with expert advisory and technical resources to guide the team through to project completion. Additionally, EKI developed a comprehensive transition plan to ensure self-sufficiency, long-term viability and return on investment.

RESULTS

EKI's structured project plan regained lost momentum in order to expedite a successful deployment. EKI deployed the system in less than three months, and it was fully operational in five months. The defining moment of the operation — paperless field use — has also been achieved.

Dramatic improvements emanating from the use of the new system speak for themselves. Enterprise-wide LeaderRx usage:

- ▶ Reduced overall process time from 6 months to 2-3 days
- ▶ Reduced inspection review from 5 days to same or next day
- ▶ Reduced re-inspection turnaround from 5 days to 3 days
- ▶ Reduced license inspection turnaround from 8-10 days to 5 days
- ▶ Reduced complaint inspection turnaround from 10 days to 5 days

There were a multitude of hard- and soft-cost savings realized from lower paper usage as well as reduced administrative burden and filing requirements. Additionally, the system offset the staff reduction of nine data entry operators.

With EKI's assistance, the City of Chicago Department of Public Health launched its food protection program into the 21st century, enabling its staff to focus on the real work of ensuring food safety in the community. Introducing transparency and logic throughout the inspection lifecycle, CDPH realized the value of a more efficient, intelligent and innovative technology approach.

EKI developed an aggressive but achievable timeline for key milestones that phased the project's deployment in order to ease CDPH's transition onto the new digital health system.