

Agency 5-Year Plan

Issue 1 Licensees need more online tools and information to manage their license requirements.

Description: One of the agency's goals is to offer more online opportunities for licensees to manage their license requirements.

Adding web-based capabilities for licensees to track their continuing education credits, notify the Board of address and employment changes, request license verifications, etc. would significantly improve customer satisfaction and save funds and staff resources. As more of our licensees embrace online activities, the Board wants to be able to address their needs with the most time-efficient and cost effective methods available.

Licensees are required to submit written address/employment changes within 20 days of the change. Staff receives those changes and must manually input the information into our database. Enhancements to our website/database would allow licensees to create an account online and make those changes themselves, thus ensuring that it is done in the required timeframe and saving staff resources to complete the task.

Many licensees who are in the process of obtaining licenses in other states need the Board to provide an official license verification. While the Arizona Board has an average 1-day turnaround time on such requests, most other states' processes are much slower; some states take up to 3 months.

Solutions:

In FY17 the agency acquired the capability for licensees to update address/employment information through the new online license renewal system when that system is active during the renewal period. An IT project to add the ability for licensees to change address/employment information online at any time, which will link to the agency's database, saving staff time/resources to input by hand, is expected in FY19-20.

While the Board had planned to create an online license verification ordering/payment option, the Board is now exploring other options partnering with the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) that would provide more economical options. As well, the Board is working with other states' boards to develop a more uniform nationwide system of providing license verifications, to speed the process for licensees wishing to work across state lines.

The agency is working with the American Association of Veterinary State Boards to develop methods for licensees to easily track and maintain records of continuing education completed that is necessary for license renewal.

Issue 2 Few resources exist for licensees to seek support and treatment when challenged with substance abuse issues. Currently, Board staff implements and monitors Board Orders for individuals who have been ordered into treatment/monitoring.

Description: As part of the Board's mission to ensure that veterinary professionals provide competent care to animals, taking action to assist a professional struggling with substance abuse issues is sometimes necessary. The Board has the statutory authority to develop a monitored treatment program specifically for the agency's licensees and certificate holders, in which they may confidentially enter if no other Board action is pending.

Solutions:

Efforts have been underway to research best practices in regulatory board diversion programs and consider partnerships with other boards to develop a treatment/monitoring program. Upon review, the agency determined that a program specific to each profession was more desirable to licensees. Efforts are underway to launch the new program by early FY20. While costs for treatment, testing, and monitoring will be paid by the licensee, the agency will have expenses related to assistance needed from the program's medical director and staff for expert witness duties and other consultations.

Once implemented, the Board's resources to direct treatment and monitor licensees will be decreased, as the treatment/monitoring program's administrator will take on the majority of that role.

Issue 3 To operate more efficiently and cost-effectively, while improving customer service, the transition away from paper documents is critical.

Description: The agency has limited space for storing paper documents that must be kept for long timeframes. Keeping those documents safe from fire, flood, etc. is also a concern. The public and licensees increasingly expect instant access to public records via the website and other methods. Electronic management and easy retrieval of documents by staff will increase productivity, allowing more time for direct program-related activities. A project to procure and implement a document imaging/storage system is proposed.

Obtaining a high-quality document imaging/management system would provide many solutions. Retrieving and organizing records would be simplified, creating more efficient internal operations as well as enhanced customer satisfaction, as it is expected that more public records could be provided electronically or posted on the agency's website. Currently, most public records requests involve staff manually pulling a record file, photocopying needed pages, then mailing to the requestor.

Depending on the system obtained, it is possible that record retention management could also be automated by use of an electronic system with storage/destruction capabilities.

Solutions:

Procuring and implementing a document imaging/management system is planned to solve the issues noted and enhance the agency's capability to more quickly respond to public record and Board requests. As most organizations move to electronic documents as the norm, we expect that additional uses would follow in the next few years as well.

The document imaging/management system planning is expected to be developed in FY19-21. Part of the research prior to procuring a vendor involves study of state laws and best practices pertaining to digital records and how such a system could synchronize with an E-licensing system. An enterprise solution offered by the State, if available, will also be considered.

Issue 4 Veterinary license applicants are required to appear in person to take the required State Veterinary Exam.

Description: All veterinary license applicants must pass the State Veterinary Exam, which focuses on jurisprudence and diseases/hazards to animals in Arizona, prior to licensure. The exams are held once per month in Phoenix; many states offer their state exams only quarterly, or less. Many applicants do not reside in Arizona at the time of application; thus, they are required to travel to Phoenix for the exam, creating additional time and financial requirements on the applicant.

Solutions:

In FY17, the Board completed a research project focused on offering State exams at testing centers across the country. This was rejected as being too expensive; thus, other options have been being explored.

The Board recently adopted the plan to partner with the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) where the AAVSB will administer an online exam to applicants. In FY19, Board staff will be developing the process and documentation for use of the new testing system. This new exam method may require Administrative Rule changes. The online examinations are projected to be available in FY20.

Issue 5 License applications and supporting documents are mostly submitted via paper form. Staff must organize documents as they arrive in the office and manually input applicant information into database.

Description: The agency continually strives to increase efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and customer satisfaction. By providing an online solution for license applications, all these are expected to be enhanced.

Applications include not only the application form submitted by the applicant, but other documents that must be sent from other organizations (e.g. transcripts), individuals (e.g. references), and other state boards (e.g. license verifications). This means that documents are arriving from several different sources for each applicant; this is important to verify the authenticity of the documents. Because of the multi-source document procurement, the applicant cannot simply apply and pay online and be done.

Solutions:

Research on e-licensing systems began in FY16. There are various possibilities open to the agency, including partnering with the American Association of Veterinary State Boards, expanding on the online license renewal system currently under development, and/or procuring e-licensing software. Depending on progress and success of the E-licensing solution initiated by a group of other 90/10 Boards, the agency will study and consider procuring that system as needed after thoroughly analyzing costs/benefits of all options available.

Resource Assumptions

	FY2021 Estimate	FY2022 Estimate	FY2023 Estimate
Full-Time Equivalent Positions	6.0	6.0	6.0
General Fund	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Appropriated Funds	625,000.0	650,000.0	625,000.0
Non-Appropriated Funds	0.0	0.0	0.0
Federal Funds	0.0	0.0	0.0