

Request for Information (RFI)

Modular Digital Permitting Platform: Market Analysis & Discovery

ISSUED BY: New Jersey Department of Community Affairs

RFI ISSUE DATE: July 14, 2026

RESPONSE DUE DATE: July 29th, 5:00 PM EST

1. Purpose of this RFI

This Request for Information (RFI) is exploratory in nature. The goal is to conduct market research and understand the solutions for implementing a modular permitting ecosystem in which individual components — intake, review, payment, inspection, issuance — can be improved or replaced independently. Information gathered here will inform future technical requirements and project scoping. This is NOT a competitive procurement, and no contract will be awarded directly from this document.

Vendors of varying scale are encouraged to respond. If your product addresses only part of the scope described here — for example, a mid-market platform, or a platform serving a subset of the capability pillars — respond to the sections that apply and state your fit plainly.

Interested parties are advised that the State will NOT pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI; all costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested party's expenses.

The information provided in this RFI is subject to change and is not binding on the State. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future solicitation, if issued. It is the responsibility of the interested parties to keep up-to-date information pertaining to this potential requirement. RFI responses will not receive a response from the State.

DCA may, at its discretion, invite a subset of respondents to provide a live demonstration of their platform after the response deadline. Demonstrations are informational only and do not constitute a competitive process. Respondents should indicate in their response whether they would be available for a demonstration in early August.

Proprietary information, if any, should be minimized and must be clearly marked.

2. Current State & Problem Landscape

DCA operates a permitting portal that works for some functions but has taught us an important lesson: **we need a system where components can be swapped out**

independently. Right now, if one piece doesn't meet our needs, we face replacing everything, which is costly and disruptive. We're looking for a more modular approach from a system and procurement perspective.

Current Architecture Constraints:

- Tightly coupled frontend and backend architecture
- Proprietary data model (Common Data Service)
- Limited API flexibility outside Microsoft ecosystem
- Difficult integration with non-Microsoft systems

Current Functional Gaps:

- Not all permit types available online
- Limited online plan submission and digital review capabilities
- No automated completeness checking at intake — incomplete submissions are a primary driver of review delay
- No integrated online inspection scheduling for applicants
- No real-time public status tracking with timeline visibility
- No applicant-facing dashboard showing permit progress
- No multi-jurisdiction support
- Individual permits do not roll-up into a jacket

Core Functional Requirements: The platform must support end-to-end digital permitting including:

- **Online Payment Processing:** Integrated payment collection for permit fees, linked to NICUSA (state payment processor)
- **Automated License Verification:** Real-time integration with Division of Consumer Affairs databases (licensed Home Improvement Contractors, registered new home builders) with automated flagging of unlicensed or expired credentials during permit intake and review workflow
- **Online Plan Submission & Review:** Digital upload and submission of construction plans, architectural drawings, and supporting documents for staff review
- **Online Inspection Scheduling:** Self-service scheduling by applicants to book inspections, with calendar availability and automated notifications
- **Applicant Dashboard with Timeline:** Personalized dashboard where applicants can see all their permits, current status, timeline showing completed steps and upcoming milestones, and estimated completion dates
- **Digital Signatures:** Support for legally valid digital signatures on applications, plans, and issued permits

Existing Integrations to Preserve:

- Your system will need to integrate with New Jersey's statewide single sign-on system (SAML 2.0). Keep in mind that the identity provider may change over time, so authentication must be modular and swappable (see Section 4.1 for more details)
- **NICUSA:** State payment processor (credit card and ACH)
- **ESRI ArcGIS:** GIS and mapping services

Operational Scope:

The platform must support New Jersey's Uniform Construction Code (N.J.A.C. 5:23) and serve:

- State-occupied buildings (direct DCA management)
- Approximately 70 municipalities where DCA serves as enforcing agency
- Approximately 495 municipalities with independent building departments (potential future expansion)

3. Technical Capability Pillars

We are seeking information on how vendors address the following core pillars of a modular permitting ecosystem:

Capability Pillar	Purpose of Discovery
I. Modular Architecture & Component Replaceability	To understand approaches to building platforms where individual components (payment, authentication, plan review, completeness checks, scheduling, storage, frontend, etc.) can be replaced with either new versions you release or 3 rd party solutions without system-wide disruption
II. API Design & Ecosystem Integration	To assess whether external developers can build on the platform without vendor involvement or restrictions
III. Data Portability & Migration	To evaluate how data ownership, export, and migration from Dynamics 365 are handled
IV. Multi-Jurisdiction Scalability	To identify strategies for supporting 70+ municipalities with varying needs within shared infrastructure
V. Implementation & Commercial Model	To understand realistic timelines, resource requirements, and total cost of ownership

VI. Automated Completeness Checking & AI-Assisted Review	To understand native capabilities for automated intake completeness checks and AI-assisted plan review, the governance posture behind them (human-in-the-loop, auditability), and the platform's ability to integrate third-party review and compliance engines
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4. Exploratory Questions for Vendors

4.1 Modular Architecture & Component Replaceability

- The core challenge DCA seeks to solve is rigid, monolithic systems that require expensive customization despite being sold as configurable. We need to understand how your platform's modular architecture and interoperability enable genuine component replacement and adaptation.
- Describe your platform's architecture and what "modular" means in practice for your system.
- What percentage of your functionality is accessible via documented APIs?
- Provide a link to your API documentation or include samples.
- Can your backend operate independently as a "headless" system serving any frontend? Has anyone deployed it this way?
- Walk through specific replacement scenarios:
 - **Payment Processor:** If DCA wants to switch from NICUSA to another payment processor in 2 years, describe the step-by-step process, timeline, what breaks, and whether anyone has actually done this with your platform.
 - **Authentication:** Same question for switching from MyNJ to a different IAM provider.
 - **Frontend Portal:** If DCA wants to build a custom mobile app or replace your portal entirely, is this possible? Has anyone done it?
 - **Document Storage:** Can clients use their own cloud storage (AWS S3, Azure, etc.) instead of yours?
 - **Plan Review / Compliance Engine:** If DCA wants to route a specific permit type to a third-party automated compliance or review engine — while the permit record, fees, and issuance remain in your platform — is this possible? Has anyone done it? (See also Section 4.7.)
 - Be honest about what creates "stickiness" in your platform and what makes it difficult for clients to leave.

4.2 API Design & Third-Party Integration

- Do your APIs expose both functionality and data? Functionality means actions: submitting an application, uploading or correcting documents, scheduling an inspection, paying a fee. Data means records: permit status, history, documents, decisions. Identify any asymmetries — anything readable but not writable, or writable but not readable.
- Can an authorized external system submit applications, upload corrected documents, or update records in your platform via API on behalf of an applicant — that is, can your platform accept transactions, not just expose data? Has anyone deployed this pattern in production?
- How are your APIs versioned and how long do you maintain backward compatibility?
- Are there features that are NOT accessible via API? If so, why?
- Can external developers build integrations without your involvement?
- Are there licensing restrictions or per-API-call charges for third-party usage?
- Provide examples of clients who have built custom applications using your APIs (mobile apps, integrations, kiosks, etc.)
- Does your platform publish real-time events (webhooks, message queues) that external systems can subscribe to? What events are available?
- If DCA needs to surface status updates to another service (for example, a cross-agency permit dashboard), how is this possible? Has anyone done it?

4.3 Data Portability & Migration

- If DCA decides to leave your platform in 5 years, describe the data export process:
 - How long does it take?
 - What format(s)?
 - What's included (all data, relationships, documents, history)?
 - What's lost in translation?
 - What migration tools do you provide?
- Who owns the data—DCA or the vendor?
- Can DCA replicate data to their own data warehouse (e.g., Snowflake) in real-time? If real-time replication is not supported, what export cadence is?
- Is your data model proprietary or based on industry standards (NIEM, BLDS, etc.)?
- Have you ever assisted a client in transitioning to or migrating from a different vendor? Please provide details of your involvement or explain if your company has not assisted in transition or migration activities.

4.4 Multi-Jurisdiction Scalability

- Is your platform multi-tenant (shared infrastructure) or does each jurisdiction require a separate instance?
- If multi-tenant: How is data isolated between jurisdictions?
- What's your largest multi-jurisdiction deployment (number of jurisdictions, scale)?
- Can different jurisdictions customize independently (workflows, forms, fee schedules) while DCA maintains central visibility?
- Can DCA push configuration updates to all or specific jurisdictions?
- Can a single permit span multiple jurisdictions? How is routing handled?
- What's the typical timeline and process to onboard a new jurisdiction?
- Separate from onboarding: most New Jersey municipalities run their own permitting systems today and may continue to. Can your platform exchange permit data with municipalities operating on other vendors' systems — for example, status feeds, shared applicant identity, or referral of permits between jurisdictions? Have you done this in production, and with which systems?

4.5 Migration from Dynamics 365

- **This is DCA's current system and must be replaced.**
- Have you migrated clients FROM Microsoft Dynamics 365 specifically?
- If no prior Dynamics 365 experience, how would you approach it?
- What tools or methodology do you use to extract data from Dynamics 365 / Common Data Service?
- What typically migrates cleanly vs. requires manual intervention? (data, workflows, forms, integrations, user accounts)
- Walk through your recommended migration approach:
 - Big bang cutover vs. phased migration
 - How in-flight permits are handled
 - Parallel operation period (if any)
 - Timeline from start to completion
 - Rollback plan if issues occur
- What are the top risks (list no more than five) in migrating from Dynamics 365 and how do you mitigate them?

4.6 Functional Capabilities

- Describe core permitting functionality: online submission, workflow management, subcode routing, review approval workflows, plan review, inspections (by subcode), notices, violations, appeals, code enforcement, reporting and dashboards, certificate generation, digital signatures.

- Describe how your system supports all construction permit types across UCC subcodes. Include a description of automated routing to regional offices, workflow-drive approvals, subcode routing and prior approval checks.
- Can your system integrate with the licensing system of the Division of Consumer Affairs to verify professional licenses? Have you done this in other localities? If uncertain, what information would you need from DCA in order to confirm?
- Electronic plan review: describe your plan review workflow for human reviewers — markup, correction cycles, version control, multi-discipline routing. Is this native to your platform or delivered via integration (e.g., ProjectDox, Bluebeam, DigEplan)? (AI-assisted review is addressed separately in Section 4.7.)
- Describe your permitting data model. DCA organizes related permits into a "permit jacket": one container per project that holds the related sub-permits, sub-codes, and trade approvals beneath it. Can your data model represent this parent-child structure natively, and expose the full jacket — parent, children, approvals, and their relationships — through your API? Provide an example or schema excerpt.
- Can applicants track permit status and communications in real-time without logging in?
- Describe what personas your system supports (e.g. Construction official, subcode official, owner, contractor, engineer, etc.).
- Do you provide public-facing performance dashboards (similar to San Francisco's PermitSF vision)? If yes, provide examples or links.
- Do you provide 24/7 online services to residents, property owners, contractors, solar installers, design professionals, and DCA staff? Describe the public portal.
- Mobile experience: responsive web, native apps, or both?
- Describe event based notifications. Can staff, owners, consultants, and developers receive notices via email or SMS?
- How are inspections handled? Mobile apps for inspectors? Offline capability? Ability to upload photos or videos? Integration with staff Microsoft calendars?
- Can your system integrate with the licensing system of the Division of Consumer Affairs to verify professional licenses? Have you done this in other localities?
- Language access: describe multilingual support for the applicant experience — interface translation, supported languages, handling of uploaded documents in other languages, and any multilingual assistant capability.
- Accessibility compliance: WCAG 2.1 AA, Section 508? Date of most recent audit?
- Provide screenshots, demo videos, or links to live examples.

4.7 Automated Completeness Checking & AI-Assisted Review

Incomplete submissions are a primary driver of permit delay. DCA distinguishes between two capabilities that are often conflated: a completeness check (is the application whole — every required document, form field, and signature present?) and a plan review (does the design comply with code?). DCA also distinguishes between deterministic methods (explicit rules over structured inputs, producing reproducible and auditable results) and probabilistic methods (machine learning or language models interpreting unstructured documents, producing interpretations that require human oversight).

- Do you offer automated completeness or intake checking? Describe what it checks, whether the method is deterministic validation logic or probabilistic/ML, and name production deployments.
- Do you offer AI-assisted plan review against building, zoning, fire, or accessibility codes? Describe the method, scope of codes covered, and named production deployments.
- For any AI-assisted capability: describe your human-in-the-loop posture. Which decisions can the system make without a human, and which require staff approval? How are outputs explained and audited? What happens when the system is wrong?
- For which permit types, if any, do you support fully automated instant issuance, and how do you bound that capability to narrow, deterministic project types?
- Can a third-party completeness-check or plan-review engine plug into your intake and review workflow via API — receiving submissions, returning results, and writing outcomes back to the permit record? Has anyone done this in production?
- Describe any existing integration with deterministic instant-issuance compliance engines for residential solar (e.g., SolarAPP+, Symbium): how a qualifying application is routed to the engine, and how the permit record, fees, and issuance remain managed in your platform.

4.8 Implementation & Total Cost

Timeline & Resources:

- What's a realistic timeline from completion of all requisite state approvals to go-live for:
 - State buildings + 5 pilot municipalities?
 - Expansion to 75+ municipalities?

- Based on your experience with state government clients, what should DCA expect state-side processes (security review, IT approvals, procurement steps) to add to that timeline, and what can vendors do to reduce it?
- Break down implementation phases with duration and DCA staff effort required (roles, hours/week).
 - Would a third party implementor be necessary to assist with software rollout and configurations initially or long term?
- What typically accelerates or delays implementations?
- What training and change management support do you provide?

Pricing:

- Describe your pricing model (per user, per permit, per jurisdiction, subscription, etc.).
- Provide rough cost estimates for these scenarios (include software, implementation, training, Year 1 support). If your platform targets only a subset of these scenarios, respond to those that apply and say so:
 - **Scenario A:** State buildings only, 50 staff users, 5,000 permits/year
 - **Scenario B:** State + 10 municipalities, 200 users, 25,000 permits/year
 - **Scenario C:** State + 75 municipalities, 500 users, 100,000 permits/year
- What's NOT included in base pricing?
- Are there API usage fees or transaction limits?
- How do costs scale as DCA adds jurisdictions?

4.9 Security & Compliance

- What security certifications do you hold? (SOC 2, GovRAMP, FedRAMP, ISO 27001, etc.) Include dates.
- Can your platform operate in Azure Government (New Jersey's state cloud)? If not, describe your hosting model, government cloud certifications, and how you would meet New Jersey hosting requirements.
- Data residency: Where is data stored and processed?
- Describe any security incidents in the past 36 months affecting government clients.
- How are backups and disaster recovery handled?

4.10 Vendor Profile & Experience

- Company overview: name, headquarters, years in business, number of employees, ownership structure.
- Number of government permitting implementations? Your largest deployment (users, volume, jurisdictions)?

- Do you have experience working with a state agency (not municipal or county government) as your primary customer? We're especially interested in projects that handled both state-level permits and municipal enforcement together.
- Provide no more than 5 government references with contact information, project scope, and key integrations.
- Any current contracts with New Jersey state or municipalities?
- Describe any experience supporting New Jersey's Uniform Construction Code administrative and reporting requirements, or compliance with New Jersey's electronic permitting requirements for local enforcing agencies. If you have no NJ-specific experience, describe how you would approach UCC reporting.
- Are you an authorized vendor on any New Jersey state contract vehicles or cooperative purchasing agreements? (Include contract numbers)

4.11 Usability for other Domains

- If your platform is in use by environmental protection departments, transportation departments, or other non-building code departments for permitting or licensing, please describe them.

4.12 Honest Assessment & Lessons Learned

- For what types of organizations is your platform best suited? For whom is it NOT a good fit?
- What are your platform's biggest limitations or weaknesses?
- What have you learned from implementations that went poorly?
- What differentiates successful implementations from struggling ones?
- If you were DCA, what would concern you most about adopting your platform?

4.13 AI Solar Permitting Platform Integration

Background: New Jersey legislation ([P.L. 2025, c.174](#)) requires DCA to implement AI-enabled residential solar permitting by June 2027. The legislation requires automated review of UCC-compliant plan documents with instant approval for qualifying installations.

DCA Approach: DCA is assessing whether to select the AI solar plan review technology separately based on legislative compliance and UCC requirements. Any permitting portal vendor must integrate such a platform, or effectively integrate to form a complete permitting solution.

Ultimately, DCA is seeking industry perspectives on whether a modular permitting vendor is capable of being (and/or should) be fully responsible for successful integration, implementation, and ongoing support of any AI solar permitting module, regardless of which approach DCA selects.

Additional Background:

DCA recently documented its requirements for a Solar Permitting Vendor in a separate market research effort documented here: [Automated AI-Driven Solar Permitting Platform: Market Analysis & Discovery](#).

Integration Success Factors:

- What makes solar AI integrations succeed or fail based on your experience?
- What information/access do you need from any AI solar permit review platform vendor?
- What information/access do you need from DCA?
- What are the top 3 integration risks and how would you mitigate them?
- If you were DCA, what would concern you most about this integration requirement?

5. Response Instructions

To facilitate our market analysis, please structure responses as follows:

1. **Executive Summary (2 pages max):** Your approach to modular permitting and why your solution fits DCA's needs.
2. **Section 4 Responses:** Answer the questions in Section 4, numbered to match. For capabilities you describe: Note if it's **(a)** live in production, **(b)** in beta/limited deployment, or **(c)** on your roadmap. Include rough dates for roadmap items
3. **Case Studies (5 pages max):** 1-2 government implementations that demonstrate multi-jurisdiction deployment or integration flexibility.
4. **Appendices (optional):** API samples, architecture diagrams, screenshots, security docs, references—include what's relevant. No page limit.

5.1 Submission

Submit a single PDF document, no longer than **25 pages** excluding appendices.

- Use 11-point font, single-spaced, with one-inch margins.

- Appendices may include API documentation samples, architecture diagrams, screenshots, security certifications, and reference information without counting against the page limit.

Submit responses by email to **John.Harrison@dca.nj.gov** and cc: **hayden.clarkin@innovation.nj.gov** no later than **July 29th, 5:00 PM EST**.

Email Subject: "RFI Response - Modular Permitting Platform - [Company Name]"

Questions: Submit questions to **John.Harrison@dca.nj.gov** by July 28th. Answers may be posted publicly.