

# Request for Information

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**Project:** Legacy Systems Refresh Market Research Initiative

**Responses Due:** June 30, 2026

**Questions:** Email [Lowela.Goessling@abc.ca.gov](mailto:Lowela.Goessling@abc.ca.gov) by June 19, 2026, to receive a timely response.



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## Introduction, Project Overview and Content

The California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) is currently planning a project to replace several enterprise systems that support its core program activity. ABC has prepared this Vendor Information & Response Packet to share information with vendors about ABC's operations, objectives, and current state and also gather information about potential solutions from vendors. This effort is a key component of ABC's ongoing market research, technology modernization planning, and evaluation of potential solutions that can meet the department's enterprise-wide licensing, enforcement, and public-facing needs. The implementation phase of this project is estimated to begin late 2028 or early 2029.

This packet is organized into three sections:

### Section A – Department Overview, Environment, and Future Objectives

This section provides vendors with an understanding of ABC's current operations, challenges, and strategic direction. It includes detailed descriptions of our organizational structure, licensing and enforcement processes, investigative workflows, field operations, document management practices, reporting and analytics needs, public-facing services, technology environment, data migration considerations, and statewide operational objectives.

The information in Section A reflects extensive input from subject-matter experts, program management, and field staff across the department. It is intended to give vendors a clear picture of ABC's current systems, pain points, constraints, and the capabilities being sought in a future solution.

Referenced attachments and links provide supporting materials, workflow examples, workload summaries, policy references, and technology diagrams to help contextualize ABC's needs. Vendors are encouraged to review these materials closely, as they are foundational to understanding the department's expectations for a modernized system.

This section is extensive to allow vendors insight into some of the complexities of the licensing program and to further illustrate the current state of operations for ABC's programs. For a quick, high-level view of this section the following content is recommended:

- Overview
  - ABC Program Overview chart on Page 20 – Overview of organization chart, program, and key workflows.
  - **Attachment Y: Program Statistics** – Provides a sense for the volume of workload across the programs.

- **Attachment B: North Star** – High-level description of what a successful project would deliver for different stakeholders.
- Licensing Program
  - **Attachment F: License Count and Categories** – Provides a sense for the volume and mix of ongoing licenses and illustrates some of the complexity related to the ability to combine licenses.
  - **Attachments G: Application Process and H: Form List for Application** - Lays out the licensing process and the forms required for license application.
- Enforcement Program
  - **Attachment Q: General Complaint Intake and Investigation Workflow** – Lays out the workflow for enforcement from receiving a complaint through passing off a request for accusation to the Office of Legal Services.
  - **Attachment S: Disciplinary Process** – Provides workflow for administrative action on licenses.

## Section B – Vendor Response Requirements

This section outlines the questions and information ABC is requesting from vendors. Responses will assist the department in understanding the functionality, architecture, technical approach, integration capabilities, implementation methodology, mobility/offline features, security and compliance posture, reporting and analytics capabilities, and overall solution design each vendor can offer.

Vendor responses will also support ABC in planning next steps, validating feasibility of proposed approaches, and conducting early-stage market research, including pricing estimates.

## Section C – Workflow Demonstrations

This section outlines provides vendors with an opportunity to demonstrate how their proposed solution could support ABC's core business processes through practical, scenario-based workflows. While Sections A and B focus on describing the department's operational environment and gathering written solution information, Section C is designed to translate that understanding into action. These demonstrations allow vendors to showcase how their system handles licensing and enforcement activities in a functional, end-to-end manner that reflects ABC's real-world needs. The workflows presented in this section are intended to help ABC assess usability, process alignment, and solution capabilities in a more applied and interactive format.

These demonstrations will be requested at a later stage, with scheduling to occur between **August 5, 2026, and August 15, 2026**, and vendors will be contacted by **July 31, 2026**, to confirm their demonstration date.

## Invitation to Respond with Information

You are invited to respond with information to assist ABC in identifying a potential solution to replace several enterprise systems that support its core program activity. The intent of this effort is to provide enough information about ABC's project needs so vendors can effectively evaluate and present potential solutions to ABC with reasonable approximations of fit for the project, timeline, and costs.

### How to Submit Your Response

- Review Section A and all attachments in full before responding to Section B. The context provided in Section A is essential to producing accurate, relevant, and actionable responses.
- Review the questions in Section B and organize your response by ID number. Responses can be given in a easy to read format (Excel, PDF, or Word).
- Clearly identify any assumptions, dependencies, or alternative approaches you believe ABC should consider.
- If any requested information is not available, please note this and provide an explanation or recommended substitute.

### Submission Deadline

Please submit complete responses to Section B no later than: **June 30, 2026**.

Responses should be submitted electronically to the point of contact identified in the transmittal communication.

## SECTION A - Department Overview, Environment, and Future Objectives

### Organizational Overview

The ABC is responsible for regulating the manufacture, distribution, and sale of alcoholic beverages in California. ABC ensures a safe, fair, and compliant alcohol industry through licensing, enforcement, legal oversight, and administrative support functions. Approximately 539 staff statewide carry out these responsibilities across multiple divisions and district offices.

ABC's work spans two primary mission areas:

- **Licensing**, which evaluates and issues retail, wholesale, and manufacturing licenses; and

- **Enforcement**, which supports public safety and industry compliance through inspections, investigations, statewide enforcement programs, and administrative hearings to impose disciplinary actions, as necessary.

The division and office information provided below offers a high-level summary of each area, while detailed operational processes, such as investigations, inspections, application workflows, complaints, evidence management, and administrative hearings, are addressed in subsequent sections of the packet.

ABC's organizational structure is visually represented in **Attachment A – Organizational Chart**, which should be referenced alongside this summary for a complete picture of departmental functions.

## Divisions & Offices

### **Enforcement Division**

The Enforcement Division ensures compliance with California's alcoholic beverage laws through field operations conducted from 21 district offices statewide. Agents, who are full peace officers, perform investigations, inspections, and public safety operations – often, in collaboration with local, state, and federal partners. This division focuses on day-to-day public safety challenges, regulatory enforcement, industry oversight, and community-based problem solving related to alcohol.

### **Headquarters Enforcement**

The Headquarters Enforcement Unit manages specialized statewide programs, including Targeted Responsibility for Alcohol Connected Emergencies (TRACE), Alcohol Policing Partnership (APP) Program, trade enforcement, recruitment and training, youth-access prevention initiatives, and internal affairs investigations. This unit provides policy guidance and ensures consistency across all enforcement operations.

### **Licensing Division**

The Licensing Division administers more than 70 license types and manages application intake, review, investigation, and issuance from 22 district offices and a centralized headquarters unit. Staff include Program Technicians, Licensing Representatives, and district management, who work with applicants, local governments, and community stakeholders to ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements related to the issuance of alcohol licenses.

### **Office of Legal Services (OLS)**

The primary role of OLS is to provide legal representation for the department's licensing and enforcement programs in license protests and disciplinary actions respectively, including representation in administrative hearings. Legal support staff in OLS support this primary function through the coordination of subpoenas, and case documentation and also serve as the primary coordinator of Public Records Act (PRA) requests received by the department as a whole.

### **General Counsel, Law & Policy**

This unit oversees ABC's regulatory frameworks, manages rulemaking, develops industry advisories, and ensures policy clarity and legal consistency across all departmental functions. The General Counsel also serves as the Director Offices' legal counsel on disciplinary actions and as such, must remain independent of OLS on the specifics of cases as they are being prosecuted.



## **Administration Division**

The Administration provides the internal infrastructure needed to support ABC's program operations, including human resources, accounting, budgets, business management, information technology, and enterprise initiatives. This division ensures operational continuity and supports strategic planning and modernization efforts.

### **Director's Office**

The Director's Office leads policy development, makes final determinations on administrative discipline of licensees, oversees enforcement and licensing priorities, ensures statewide regulatory compliance, coordinates with government and industry partners, and guides overall strategic direction for the department.

### **Legislation & Government Affairs**

This office monitors, develops, and analyzes legislation affecting ABC's licensing, enforcement, and public safety responsibilities. It also provides technical assistance to policymakers and coordinates implementation of statutory changes in alignment with the ABC Act.

### **Public Information Office**

The Public Information Office manages external communication with media and public stakeholders, coordinates messaging on sensitive issues, and provides information on departmental activities and public safety initiatives.

### **Administrative Hearing Office**

The Administrative Hearing Office conducts impartial hearings for protested applications, denials, and disciplinary matters. Administrative Law Judges review evidence, conduct proceedings, and issue proposed decisions to the Director for consideration regarding the Department's final determinations.

## ABC Primary Systems

ABC's technology ecosystem is built around a set of applications that together support licensing, enforcement, training, payments, and internal operations. While each system has its own function, several are tightly integrated, particularly those supporting licensing (LSP), training (RBS/Moodle), reporting (LQS/RQS), and the core system of record (ABIS).

These systems include:

- **Alcoholic Beverage Information System (ABIS)** is the System of Record and sits at the center of ABC's enterprise systems. It houses authoritative licensing and enforcement data. ABIS has no public-facing user interface.
- **Licensing Services Portal (LSP)** is a public-facing system that has been developed since 2020 to provide some level of online application and payment for licensing transactions. LSP connects to ABIS via a controlled API layer referred to as eServices.
- **Responsible Beverage Services (RBS) Portal** was also developed since 2020 and is built on the same technology as LSP. RBS registers and tracks the certification of training provided by approved training providers to all servers of alcohol in the State of California. The RBS Portal also hosts the exam servers must pass to gain certification. The exam functionality is provided via an integration with Moodle.
- **Licensing Query System (LQS)** provides public-facing license lookup and reporting functionality on the ABC website by pulling data from ABIS at a daily interval.
- **Report Query System (RQS)** provides internal users with a variety of reports on licensing and enforcement data based on data from ABIS. RQS also uses data from a copy of ABIS data that is refreshed daily.
- **Fiserv** handles electronic payment for LSP and RBS transactions.
- **Laserfiche (eRecords and enforcement forms)** stores supporting documents tied to licensing and enforcement workflows. ABC is currently completing the scanning of paper licensing files and is planning to establish some level of integration between ABIS and Laserfiche by the end of 2026. ABC is also considering the utilization of Laserfiche for the establishment of electronic enforcement forms that would be utilized by Agents in the field and capture key data from field activities.

The functionalities of all these systems are within scope of the Legacy System Refresh Project, with the possible exception of the RBS Portal, which has very limited integration with ABIS and can stand alone if the decision is made to focus on core program functionality.

## Objectives

ABC's primary business drivers for replacing its current systems (ABIS, LSP, RQS, LQS, BizMod, and RBS) stem from significant functional gaps, structural weaknesses, and operational burdens that prevent the department from delivering the modern, digital licensing services expected by the public and required by ABC's own workforce. Today's enterprise system is incomplete: most workflows remain paper-based, online services cover less than half of ABC transactions, and staff rely heavily on spreadsheets, email attachments, and manual data entry to compensate for missing functionality. These workarounds have produced inconsistent statewide operations, limited visibility into the workload, and limited ability to track or manage program performance. Critically, two high-risk issues, poor data integrity and lack of system stability or redundancy, pose substantial operational risk and make both reporting and decision-making unreliable. The system is not easily scaled to support new license types or mandated changes, and ABC struggles to meet legislative reporting needs due to fragmented, inaccurate, or inaccessible data. Additionally, online services are scattered across multiple portals (ABIS, LSP, RQS, LQS, RBS), creating a disjointed and confusing experience for applicants, licensees, and internal staff.

To address these challenges, ABC's objective is to modernize its enterprise information systems to:

- Provide complete, end-to-end digital services for licensing, enforcement, and legal operations;
- Automate internal and external workflows;
- Ensure accurate, well-structured data; and operate on a stable, secure, and scalable cloud platform.

Specifically, a successful solution will:

- Enable applicants to submit **all** license, permit, and modification transactions online;
- Allow the public to pay electronically for every fee-based service;
- Support the use of GIS-enabled data for internal and external customers;
- Provide ABC staff real-time workload assignments and tracking tools, improve data quality and reporting, and eliminate today's manual workarounds; and,
- Provide staff working in the field the ability to access and enter information into the system from mobile devices.

From system infrastructure and support perspective, the future system must:

- Deliver high availability, fault tolerance, and resource scalability;
- Improve query efficiency;
- Reduce the number of technologies ABC must maintain; and

- Strengthen business continuity and disaster recovery for all critical and public-facing services.

Ultimately, success means ABC can provide the modern digital licensing experience expected in 2026 and deliver accurate, reliable, and actionable data to effectively manage programs, evaluate performance, and meet statutory responsibilities.

Additional information about how success is defined by key users is captured in **Attachment B – North Star**.

## COMMUNICATIONS, DOCUMENTS & REPORTING

### Communications

#### Current Communication Processes

Except for communication with servers utilizing the RBS Portal, where their email address is the primary contact option, ABC's communication with its stakeholders is largely paper-based, expensive, and slow. This section walks through the current communication processes by audience that may be within scope of the LSR Project and the key areas for improvement envisioned.

- **Existing Licensees** - The mailing address collected at the time of application (or as updated since) continues to be the primary method by which ABC contacts existing licensees for standard licensing business processes or industry advisories.
  - License Renewal - The most extensive effort is mailing related to license renewals. At a minimum there are two: the renewal notice and the delivery of the new license. However, late notices can increase the volume. Additional mailings could be triggered if notifications need to be made related to holds on the renewal of a license based on non-compliance with tax laws.
  - Industry Advisories – When there is information that needs to be shared across all or a substantial subset of existing licensees, an industry advisory may be issued. All Industry Advisories are posted on the website, released on social media, and sent to ABC's email subscriber list. If these processes are insufficient given the importance of the advisory – mailings could be initiated for all licensees or a subset that is impacted. If the change is not urgent or is related to a change occurring more than a year out, a notification can be included in the renewal notice process. Finally, if an issue is urgent, Agents may visit licensed premises to communicate the changes and check compliance – this approach has been employed several times over the last few years for public health related issues.
  - Specific Issue - To the extent there is a specific issue or reason to reach out to a licensee – staff may look to see if there is a phone number or email associated with the license in the system. Of course, for most licensees, there is contact information on the internet that would provide an avenue for contacting someone at the business and working your way to the appropriate person.

- Enforcement - ABC's current enforcement communication model is predominantly paper-based, reactive, and tied to field activities such as IMPACT inspections and Minor Decoy operations, where Agents must complete triplicate or carbon-copy forms on site and either leave them at the premises or mail them to the licensee after the activity. The primary method for notifying licensees of violations (whether informal notifications of violations, or a formal accusation) is the use of mail.
- **License Applicants** – The majority of communication with license applications will happen over the phone and via email during the licensing investigation. Official notices or forms that cannot be emailed, will be mailed. There is no functionality to provide automated notifications to applicants during the application process. All updates on status are made from email or phone contact initiated by one of the parties.
- **Local Government Agencies** – Local law enforcement and planning departments are ABC's partners in the evaluation of license applications.
  - Permanent License Applications Notification - When ABC receives an original application for any license or an application for transfer of any license, it must immediately mail a written notice consisting of a copy of the application (**Attachment C – Application for ABC License (ABC-211) generated out of ABIS**) to:
    - The sheriff, chief of police, and district attorney of the locality where the premises are located.
    - The city or county planning director (whichever has jurisdiction).
    - The board of supervisors of the county if the premises are in an unincorporated area.
    - The city council or other governing body of the city if the premises are in an incorporated area.
  - Zoning Confirmation – Applicants are required to submit a Zoning Affidavit (ABC-255) regarding zoning information. ABC staff verifies the information submitted with the local planning department via phone call or email.
  - One-day licenses – Applicants for one-day licenses are required to secure local law enforcement approval for their proposed event. If there is any reason to question the authenticity of the approval or if enforcement staff have any concerns with the event, ABC staff may call or email the local law enforcement agency to verify or discuss the event.

## Opportunities for Improved Communications

ABC intends for the LSR Project to deliver functionality that will significantly reduce postage costs, increase the speed of critical communication, provide applicants greater

transparency regarding the status of their application, and create a much better record of communications between ABC and its stakeholders. ABC recognizes that the lynchpin to any effort is the initial curation and ongoing maintenance of contact information for licensees, local government agencies, and applicants. ABC anticipates this will require ABC to develop:

- A process for gathering electronic contact information that is to be used for official communication with licensees and applicants and securing agreement that this form of communication can be used as formal notification from the department to the licensee or applicant.
- A process for effectively maintaining the contact information for licensees over time – facilitating timely updates to ensure effective delivery of information to the correct persons.
- A process for identifying, storing, and maintaining the accuracy of the local government agency contacts for each process that requires communication to these local partners.

Within the envisioned enterprise system, ABC envisions that the following processes may add significant value:

- **Application status** – Workflow triggers in the application process that will update the status of the application in a way that can be communicated to the applicant via email, an update within an online portal, or both.
- **Local Government Notifications** – The ability to have workflow triggered communications to local government agencies to either deliver notification or verify their approval of information submitted by applicants.
- **Communication documentation** – The ability to incorporate messaging within the system, so electronic conversations between ABC staff and applicants or licensees can be captured and associated with the license.
- **Industry Advisories or Notifications** – The ability to efficiently execute mass messaging to all licensees or a targeted subset of licensees using attributes of the license such as location, license type, license category, or license status.
- **Enforcement notifications** – To the extent a notification that is currently mailed can be sent electronically and also stored in the system, ABC would like to implement such a process. Primary candidates would receive notification letters or copies of inspection forms that result from Minor Decoy Operations and IMPACT inspections respectively, and the delivery of the informal communication regarding observed violations – the Notice of Violation.
- **Internal Reporting and Notifications** – There are a number of opportunities to create either workflow triggered or periodic notifications to licensing and

enforcement staff and management to create much greater visibility and accountability regarding workload and timelines. These can include periodic reports on outstanding investigations, aging reports for open applications, ageing and priority reports on complaints, etc.

**Attachment D – Communication Inventory** lists some of the communications that would be significant opportunities for improvement and their estimated volume.

## Document Management

Document management across ABC is currently distributed across multiple systems, shared drives, email, and legacy applications, resulting in fragmented storage practices and limited visibility into document status. Staff manage a high and growing volume of records, including operational documents, licensing and agent files, administrative forms, correspondence, and program-specific reports. Retention and disposition are largely manual and inconsistent, as staff often lack clear guidance on record classifications and retention timelines.

### **License Files**

ABC is in the process of transitioning paper licensing files into digital format within LaserFiche, a content management and business process automation platform. This large-scale conversion project is ongoing, and is scheduled to be completed by June 30, 2027, with approximately 15 million images created and stored. All files related to active licenses and those that are inactive but still within retention requirements, will need to be retained in their digital format and be accessible from whatever enterprise system is implemented. The type of documentation retained in the license file is expected to evolve as more of the information retained is collected through online application services rather than the submission of paper documents or emailed forms that are then scanned or uploaded to the digital licensing file.

### **Document Approvals**

eSignature needs continue to expand, especially for approval workflows and forms requiring multi-party signatures from applicants or licensees. Today, ABC uses Adobe Sign to collect electronic signatures; however, usage varies across programs, and workflows are not standardized.

### **Public Records Act (PRA) Requests**



The PRA process requires staff to search multiple repositories, manually review and redact documents, and coordinate responses without centralized tracking, contributing to delays. Redaction functionality is a significant current need; today, it is handled manually with various stand-alone tools, creating inefficiencies and risk. ABC is actively procuring a SaaS solution to establish a centralized public records request management system designed to streamline the PRA process, provide workflow management, and enable integrated redaction within the platform. It is currently unclear if PRA processes and associated redaction functionality would be within the scope of the LSR Project or if this need will be met by the current efforts in development.

Overall, the historical environment for document management of program files has been paper-based, labor-intensive, difficult to standardize, and presented challenges in terms of consistency, compliance, version control, and security. Although current efforts are underway to improve these practices, it is expected that the document management capabilities of the system put into production as a result of the LSR Project may define and even replace much of even the more recently developed document management functionality for ABC's license files.

## Reporting

ABC's current reporting environment is highly manual, fragmented across systems, relying heavily on historical, after-the-fact reports that provide fixed, non-interactive summaries of licensing processing times, backlogs, application volumes, enforcement activity, violation rates, and staff workloads. Many of these reports are generated through ABIS and RQS, with additional tracking in SharePoint logs, binders, spreadsheets, and locally maintained files, resulting in inconsistent data capture and heavy reliance on staff expertise for interpretation.

Critical reporting obligations include processing times, enforcement activity, disciplinary actions, and legislatively mandated information such as licensing counts, as required under Business and Professions Code §23055, along with high-demand internal metrics such as accusation tracking, complaint processing, district workloads, violation history, license conditions, and census-tract-based licensing compliance. Consumers of these reports span licensing staff, district offices, enforcement leadership, executive management, legislative affairs, and external partners such as law enforcement, industry attorneys, consultants, and grant-related local law enforcement agencies. Another emerging reporting need is the ability to accurately track, maintain, and report on special license categories created by new legislation. These licenses often include unique statutory conditions, such as limits on the number of licenses, restrictions tied to

specific census tracts, and ongoing compliance or eligibility criteria that must be monitored over time. Licensing currently lacks a reliable method to capture, validate, and report on these legislatively authorized licenses, which has created challenges in demonstrating compliance with statutory caps, geographic eligibility rules, and legislative reporting requirements. A future system must support structured tracking, geospatial validation, and reporting of these license types to ensure consistent statewide administration and transparency.

The department faces significant challenges: data is scattered across systems, many workflows rely on paper or duplicative data entry, case tracking lacks automated triggers or alerts, and staff cannot easily visualize operational bottlenecks, track license conditions, monitor statute-of-limitations risks, or view geographic complaint patterns. Enforcement teams struggle with limited ability to track evidence, inspection activity, and complaint outcomes in a unified system, and licensing staff cannot readily see where an application is in the process or what tasks remain. Moreover, ABC lacks the capability to produce the types of real-time, easily consumable dashboards/reports or cross-cutting analytics needed to respond quickly to legislative inquiries, monitor statewide workload, or identify emerging trends. These limitations directly contributed to past challenges in fulfilling legislatively requested reports, including those tied to census-tract-restricted license allocations.

To overcome these gaps, ABC seeks modern analytics capabilities that deliver:

- Integrated, real-time visibility across licensing, enforcement, and administrative functions;
- Executive-level dashboards;
- Workload, backlog, and timeliness scorecards;
- Ad-hoc self-service reporting;
- Predictive modeling to forecast caseloads and identify bottlenecks;
- Automated alerts for deadlines and statute-of-limitations risks;
- Geospatial validation;
- Reporting for special license categories created under new legislation, including license types restricted to specified census tracts or subject to unique statutory conditions; and
- Ability to perform geographic, trend, and density analyses for both internal and legislative use.

Staff envision a system capable of:

- Consolidating licensing, enforcement, inspection, evidence, and complaint data, enabling drill-downs by district, agent, license type, census tract, or geographic radius;
- Integration with mobile field tools;
- Mapping capabilities;
- Transparent tracking of legislatively created license categories; and
- Improved reporting to partners and grant agencies.

Altogether, ABC aims to move from a reactive, paper-heavy environment to a modern, analytics-driven operation that supports data-informed decision-making, efficient workload management, and rapid response to internal, public, and legislative information needs.

## **ABC CORE PROGRAM OPERATIONS**

### **Core Program Overview**

The chart below provides a high-level overview of the primary functions performed at ABC in support of the core programs of licensing, enforcement, and education. The chart is followed by a summary of each of the primary organizational units. Taken together, these two sections are intended to provide an overlay of the organization chart to the operation of the programs ABC's enterprise systems support.

## ABC PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND OUTREACH

Director's Office General Counsel/Law and Policy Legislation and Governmental Affairs Headquarters Enforcement Public Information Office

Collectively, these units develop and implement operational and program policy, collaborate and communicate with key stakeholders within state and local governments and the public, and provide leadership to the department and within the industry in service of accomplishing ABC's mission.

### CORE PROGRAM OPERATIONS

#### Licensing

##### Licensing Division

##### Transaction Types:

- New licensee/new premises
- Transfers – change of licensee or premises
- Changes in ownership or premises
- One day authorizations

##### Key Work:

- Investigating applicants (the person)
- Investigating premises (the location)
- Addressing public concerns/protests

##### Office of Legal Services and Administrative Hearing Office

- Protest and license appeal hearings

##### Enforcement Division

##### Key Work:

- Compliance inspections (no periodic requirement or quota)
- Investigating complaints:
  - Sales to minors
  - Problem premises (public safety)
  - Trade violations
- Major events (sporting events, music festivals, etc.)
- Targeted operations:
  - Minor Decoy/Shoulder Tap
  - Undercover (e.g. narcotics, prostitution, stolen property)
- On-view (patrol-like observation based)

#### Enforcement

##### Key results of enforcement work:

- Notice of violation (non-disciplinary)
- Letter of Warning
- Accusation (violation forwarded to OLS)
- Office of Legal Services
- Accusation process - documentation of violations, notifications
- Settlement negotiations
- Administrative hearings before AHO
- Appeal hearings before ABC Appeals Board
- Administrative Hearing Office
- Administrative hearings – proposed decision on discipline
- Director's Office with support from General Counsel
- Adopt or modify AHO proposed decision

#### Education

##### Administration Division

Responsible Beverage Service (RBS)

##### Headquarters Enforcement

Licensee Education on Alcohol and Drugs

##### Enforcement Division

Education-focused inspections

##### Public Information Office

Industry Advisories

### OPERATIONAL PROGRAM SUPPORT

##### Administration Division

Human Resources   Business Management   Financial Management   Information Technology   Enterprise Initiatives/Training

## Licensing Program Operations

### Summary

The Licensing Division of ABC is responsible for processing applications for licenses to sell, manufacture, or distribute alcoholic beverages and for administering all ongoing licensing requirements once a license has been issued. License applications are required for the issuance of new licenses, the transfer of existing licenses, and modifications to current licenses. Many applications require thorough investigation into the suitability of the applicant and the proposed premises. Licensing representatives conduct these investigations and prepare detailed reports based on their findings. At the conclusion of the investigation, licensing representatives may recommend approval, conditional approval, or denial of the proposed license.

The Division also oversees the ongoing maintenance of existing licenses. This includes the annual renewal process, which involves issuing statutorily required renewal notices and generating updated licenses with revised expiration dates. Licensees who fail to renew on time incur penalty fees that must be paid before a renewed license can be issued. The Division additionally processes a variety of licensee requests, including corporate updates, condition modifications, premises expansions, and minor business detail changes such as address or DBA updates.

In addition to permanent licenses issued to ongoing businesses, the program administers one-day licenses for nonprofit events and catering authorizations for events ranging from large-scale festivals to private gatherings. Through the issuance of these licenses, the Licensing Division establishes the operational parameters for each licensee, determined by license type and any conditions imposed to address community concerns such as traffic, noise, or hours of operation.

Application and renewal fees collected by the division constitute the primary revenue source for the ABC Fund, providing approximately 96 percent of the department's annual budget. (**Attachment E – Renewal Fee Construction**)

Key statistics include (numbers as of June 30, 2025 or for the 2024-25 fiscal year):

| Key Licensing Program Statistics<br>(2024-25 fiscal year) |        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| High-level Licensing Program Statistics                   |        |
| Active permanent licensed premises (as of June 30, 2025)  | 93,385 |
| Permanent License Applications Received                   | 9,333  |
| Priority License Applications Received                    | 1,034  |
| Applications Protested                                    | 217    |
| Licensing Hearings Held                                   | 30     |
| Applications Withdrawn                                    | 907    |

|                                     |         |             |        |
|-------------------------------------|---------|-------------|--------|
| Applications Recommended for Denial |         |             | 23     |
| Applications Issued                 |         |             | 8,424  |
| Daily and Catering Authorizations   |         |             | 40,403 |
| Permanent License Transaction Types |         |             |        |
| Application Type                    | General | Non-General | Total  |
| Originals                           | 406     | 3,224       | 3,630  |
| Transfers                           | 2,421   | 2,561       | 4,982  |
| <i>Person to Person</i>             | 1,602   | 2,080       | 3,682  |
| <i>Premises to Premises</i>         | 110     | 331         | 441    |
| <i>Double Transfer</i>              | 709     | 150         | 859    |
| Change                              | 328     | 410         | 738    |
| <i>Member Transfer</i>              | 67      | 115         | 182    |
| <i>Stock Transfer</i>               | 249     | 161         | 410    |
| <i>Other Changes</i>                | 12      | 117         | 129    |
| Total                               | 3,155   | 6,178       | 9,333  |
| One-Day Licenses                    |         |             |        |
| Daily License (non-profits)         |         |             | 25,975 |
| Catering Authorizations             |         |             | 14,428 |
| Event Authorizations                |         |             | 503    |
| Licensing Program Capacity          |         |             |        |
| District Offices                    |         |             | 21     |
| Licensing Program Staffing          |         |             | 186    |
| <i>Managers and Supervisors</i>     |         |             | 46     |
| <i>Licensing Representatives</i>    |         |             | 83     |
| <i>Program Technicians</i>          |         |             | 54     |
| <i>Others</i>                       |         |             | 3      |

## License Types

### *Background on License Types*

With some narrow exceptions, it is illegal to manufacture, distribute, or sell alcoholic beverages in the State of California without a license issued by the ABC. Given the historical regulatory approach to alcohol, and the vast variety and ever evolving range of business models involving alcohol-related businesses in California, the provision of license privileges through ABC's Licensing Program has become relatively complicated. The following factors contribute to the number of license types offered and the degree of complexity related to the licensing program requirements that dictate who can operate what and where.

**General regulatory approach (with exceptions)** – Due to the regulatory approach referred to as “tied house”, generally a licensee is not allowed to have a material ownership stake in licensed businesses in more than one of those

three tiers (manufacturing, distribution, retail) of the industry. As such, who owns each licensed business is important to investigate, track, and refer to in subsequent application investigations.

**Variety of business models** - There are specific business models involving alcohol that fall outside of the most common ones (bars, restaurants, stores) that are authorized through specific statutory language. Given the need to speak specifically to business models as diverse as fishing boats, to bed and breakfasts, to tasting rooms for manufacturers, a significant number of specific license types have been established that ultimately end up having a relatively low number of licenses issued.

**Ability to, and prohibition against, combining license types** - A single licensed premises may need a combination of several license types in order to receive the necessary privileges to operate the licensee's business plan. Further, depending on their primary license type, they may secure duplicate licenses to expand their capacity, may be prohibited from securing certain other license types, and may be limited in terms of the type or number of other licenses they could hold for other premises.

**License count limitations** – For some license types, the number of licenses that can be issued is limited by population of the county or census tract – with some geographically-defined, count-limited exceptions. These limitations create additional processes for securing exceptions for some license types, and an annual lottery system administered by ABC for others.

All the factors listed above contribute to the complexity of the business requirements of the licensing-related workflows to be addressed in the LSR Project. Currently, many of the considerations described are addressed through staff investigation of ownership structures, knowledge or reference to licensing policies, and manual tracking of license count limitations.

## License Categories

ABC administers over 70 permanent license types subject to annual renewal. These license types are categorized in a variety of ways that are reflective of their relationship to rules about the privileges they provide and how they can or cannot be combined with others. Key categorizations include:

**Master vs Secondary** – This distinction is primarily relevant when there are multiple license types issued to one premises.



- Master – The primary license type must be a type that can be issued on its own and typically is the one associated with the primary business model. Within ABIS the primary license type is used to count and categorize a license that has multiple license types associated with it.
- Secondary – There are several license types that cannot be issued on their own – all of these will always be considered secondary when issued.

**Retail vs Non-Retail** – All permanent licenses are categorized under one of these two labels. Licensing investigation requirements differ between these two categories due to the difference in assumed impact on the community around the licensed premises (e.g. reduced neighborhood notifications for non-retail).

- Retail - Retail licenses are those whose primary business model is the sale of alcohol to the end consumer. Retail licenses are further categorized by where the alcohol is typically consumed:
  - On-sale – Sales are primarily made for the purpose of consumption on the premises (bars, restaurants, clubs).
  - Off-sale – Sales are primarily made for consumption off premises (grocery stores, liquor stores)
- Non-retail - All licenses not identified as retail are categorized as non-retail. These are typically manufacturers, importers, wholesalers/distributors but this category includes some license types that are primarily for retail purposes but are a secondary license to a traditional non-retail license type. Exceptions have been made to tied-house laws that provide some non-retail licenses with retail privileges under certain conditions and limitations.

**Duplicate licenses (retail)** – Duplicate licenses are required when a licensee maintains more than one room on the premises that will have a fixed bar to sell distilled spirits. For large facilities, such as stadiums, arenas, and amusement parks, a licensee will apply for a duplicate license at each dispensing point where distilled spirits will be sold.

**Duplicate/Branch (non-retail)** – The term *duplicate* is also used for some manufacturers (non-retail) to hold a retail-focused branch. These licenses are investigated as a non-retail application but operate a retail business model. Non-retail duplicates must be associated to a master manufacturing license but can be located separate from the master license's physical premises. ABIS does not have a separate distinction for duplicates – they are issued under the master manufacturing license type that are associated with and receive their own license number. There is a limit on the number of duplicates each manufacturer can

hold. Their existence as one of a limited number of duplicates associated with another license is noted manually in ABIS.

**General** – In California’s alcohol regulation parlance the term general refers to a retail license that provides the privilege to sell distilled spirits, beer, and wine. In most cases, the key distinction is the additional privilege related to distilled spirits. The number of general licenses that can be issued is limited based on county population. This scarcity of general licenses results in the need for an annual lottery system for applicants (referred to as Priority) and a healthy secondary market for the transfer of existing general licenses – often at prices well in excess of the application fee ABC charges.

## License Types

Although ABC administers over 70 different license types, just four license types make up 74 percent of the 93,385 licensed premises in California.

| Most Common License Types                      |                                        |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| License Type                                   | Number of Licenses as of June 30, 2025 |
| Type 20 – Off-Sale Beer and Wine               | 13,651                                 |
| Type 21 – Off-Sale General                     | 14,469                                 |
| Type 40 - On-Sale Beer and Wine – Eating Place | 25,112                                 |
| Type 47 – On-Sale General – Eating Place       | 16,378                                 |

Not surprisingly, these four types represent stores and restaurants. If the next four most common license types are added to the list, 88 percent of total licenses are included.

| License Type                                      | Number of Licenses as of June 30, 2025 |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Type 02 – Winegrower                              | 6,874                                  |
| Type 17 – Beer and Wine Wholesaler                | 2,821                                  |
| Type 48 – On-Sale General – Public Premises       | 2,423                                  |
| Type 42 – On-Sale Beer and Wine – Public Premises | 1,290                                  |

This list includes the two most common non-retail license types and the two types commonly characterized as bars. The term “Public Premises” means it is limited to ages 21 and over – a bar or club.

For a comprehensive list of the categorization and volume of each license type see **Attachment F – License Count and Categories**.

A catalog of license types can be viewed [here](#).

## Transaction Types

### *Original*

Original applications are those for a new permanent license. Licensing investigations into original applications involve investigation suitability of both the applicant and the proposed premises.

### *Transfers*

Licenses can be transferred between people and between premises. As such, there are three primary types of transfers: 1) person-to-person, premises-to-premises, and double transfer (i.e. person-to-person and premises-to-premises). The licensing investigations that occur for transfers is focused on the component(s) that is changing – e.g. the investigation for a double transfer would be the same as that for an Original application, but a person-to-person transfer would only involve the investigation of the new licensee(s). General licenses are capped based on county population, so they often have significant value on the secondary market and will almost always be sold and transferred rather than cancelled by a license holder going out of business.

### *Changes*

*Changes* refer to requests that involve an existing license, and the license number will remain the same. Given ABC is responsible for ensuring the suitability of people and places licensed to run alcohol-related business, it is important for ABC to evaluate changes to the people or place to which licenses are issued. As such, there are a variety of application processes related to changes being made to either of these areas of concern.

- **Ownership/management** - Due to tied-house restrictions and the requirements to evaluate the background of people who own and operate licensed businesses, applicants need to apply to make changes to their ownership or management personnel.
- **Premises** – Due to ABC's responsibility to evaluate the suitability of a premises within its community and the obligation to ensure the surrounding community has an opportunity to weigh in on significant changes, licensees must apply for approval to significantly modify their licensed premises.

### *Temporary Licenses*

One-day licenses (first three bullets below) provide flexibility for temporary events at locations that are either not licensed or licensed differently than a particular event requires. Operating permits allow for license privileges to be exercised while application processes are in progress, under certain conditions.

- **Daily-license** – Eligible non-profit organizations can obtain license authority for events they host. May require local law enforcement approval.
- **Catering Authorization** – Licensees with catering privileges must apply for catering authorization for each specific catering event. May require local law enforcement approval.
- **Event Authorization** – Some license types provide the ability for a limited number of events that can occur in an area directly outside, adjacent to the premises of their permanent license.
- **Temporary Operating Permit** - A Temporary Permit allows a person to sell alcoholic beverages while waiting for their permanent license to issue. It is only issued to a person who has applied for a person-to-person transfer at the *same premises*.
- **Interim Operating Permit** - If ABC recommends approval of a protested license application, the applicant may apply for an Interim Operating Permit. This allows the business to sell alcoholic beverages pending the protest hearing and any appeals.

## Key Workflows

### *Applications for Permanent Licenses*

When a person or business applies for the ABC license, the Department conducts a thorough investigation, as required by law. The ABC agent or licensing representative looks into the applicant's personal history, the applicant's source of funds, the suitability of the proposed premises, and any issues raised in the protest(s) (Bus. & Prof. Code § 23958). A diagram of this workflow can be found in **Attachment G – Application Process**.

- **Application Intake** - Program Technicians in District Offices are responsible for the application intake process. A new license application begins when applicants submit the required forms (**Attachment H**), fees, and premises information - a detailed explanation of the license application requirements is provided [here](#). Applications are evaluated for completeness and accuracy, including an assessment of whether the applicant has applied for the appropriate license type(s) for the business model they are proposing. Program Technicians communicate with applicants regarding any deficiencies and will return the application to the applicant if the deficiencies are not resolved within the target time frame. Once an application is accepted, staff enter the application into ABIS and generate the necessary fees in the system, fees are deposited, and the file is

transferred to a License Representative for the initiation of the license investigation.

At the time this package is being put together, not all offices have been converted to digital files and still utilize paper-based processes. Once an office is converted to digital processes, any paper applications received will be scanned into the document management system upon acceptance and transferred to the Licensing Representative.

For applications submitted online, Program Technicians have a modified process for verification of information and completeness.

- **Licensing Investigations** - Once an application completes the intake process the Program Technician initiates the public notice processes and the application is assigned to a Licensing Representative to begin the licensing investigation.
  - **Public Notice** – When an application to open a new ABC-licensed business, change the ownership, or move an existing business to a new site is submitted to ABC, notice must be given to the public and to local officials. This notice occurs in several ways:
    - **Public Notice** – The applicant must post a white or yellow public notice (Form ABC-207 or ABC-207-B) in a prominent place at the proposed premises for 30 days (Bus. & Prof. Code § 23985).
    - **Written Notice by Mail** – ABC mails a copy of the application to the sheriff, chief of police, district attorney, and city council (or the board of supervisors if in an unincorporated area).  
In some cases, the applicant must also mail written notice to residents and owners of real property within a 500 foot radius of the proposed business (Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 23985.5 & 23987).

These notifications are intended to provide the surrounding community with awareness of the application and the opportunity to file a protest within 30 days of the notification.

- **Investigating People** – The Licensing Representative must evaluate the ownership structure of the business for tied-house conflicts and evaluate the applicant(s) and identified management personnel for any disqualifying factors – a process that includes the submission of fingerprints and the handling of sensitive criminal history information from secure law enforcement systems.
- **Investigating Locations** – The Licensing Representative must also ensure the proposed premises is suitable for the license type for which the

application was submitted. Considerations include proximity to schools, churches, and residents. Licensing Representatives will also verify the location has the necessary approvals from local governing agencies.

- **Addressing Public Concerns and Protests** – To the extent that concerns or protests are raised related to the application, the Licensing Representative evaluates the reasonableness and severity of issues and works with protestants and the applicant to resolve concerns – often developing operating conditions on the license that both the applicant and the protestant can agree to, resulting in the withdrawal of the protest and issuance of the license. Conditions are imposed to restrict the use of the license in a manner that addresses grounds or concerns that could have otherwise resulted in denial of the license. For example, a location that is nearby residents may have conditions that limit the type of entertainment that the licensee can provide. Conditions are specific to the circumstances. If concerns cannot be resolved, a licensing hearing will be held to develop a proposed decision based on facts presented at hearing.  
**(Attachment I - Protests)**

- **License Issuance** - Upon completion of the licensing investigation and the approval of the application at the District Office level, the application is forwarded to the Licensing Processing Unit (LPU) in Sacramento for final review and issuance. LPU makes the final change in the system that triggers the printing and mailing of the license and the earning of the fees previously deposited in connection with the application.
  - **Non-Retail Licensing Review** – Prior to LPU issuing a non-retail license type, the application is provided to the Non-Retail Licensing Unit (NRLU). NRLU is also located in Sacramento. NRLU reviews the application to ensure statutes and regulations related to non-retail license types are followed. NRLU will work with the staff that conducted the investigation to address any concerns discovered during the review. If no problems are identified, the application will be returned to LPU for license issuance.
- **Licensing Hearings and Appeals** - Under the California Alcoholic Beverage Control Act (Bus. & Prof. Code § 23000 et seq.), a hearing may be held on a valid protest. This affords the applicant the right to meet the objections with any evidence they may have. Protestants are notified by letter regarding a hearing on their protest if a hearing is scheduled. Protestants or their representative will need to attend the hearing to present testimony and/or evidence to support the

protest. After the hearing, the administrative law judge will take the protest under advisement. The judge will issue a proposed decision, which is a ruling, usually within 30 days, for review by the ABC Director. ABC may adopt or reject the proposed decision of the judge.

Once ABC has rendered a decision, any party to the matter may appeal the decision to the ABC Appeals Board, an independent, three-member Board appointed by the Governor. The ABC Appeals Board decision can then be appealed to the State Courts of Appeal and to the State Supreme Court.

This hearing and appeal process is also available to any applicant whose application was recommended for denial.

The time it takes for a license to be issued varies based on a number of factors. The department's licensing process includes several mandatory waiting periods and investigative steps that influence overall processing time. After an application is submitted, notifications must be sent to local officials and the applicant is required to post a public notice for 30 days, during which objections may be filed. While this posting period is underway, ABC conducts its investigation, which typically takes about 45 to 50 days under normal circumstances. On average, a standard Person-to-Person transfer is completed in roughly 75 days, whereas a new (Original) license averages about 90 days from submission to issuance.

These timelines can vary based on factors such as background issues, local concerns, business ownership complexity, or workload fluctuations, and some applications take longer, particularly when new construction or substantial remodeling is involved. Because final approval is not guaranteed until all conditions are met, applicants are advised not to make major financial commitments or schedule openings prematurely. If construction or significant changes to the premises are planned, applicants generally seek preliminary approval to avoid delays in the final licensing decision.

#### *Other Licensing Applications and Assignments*

In addition to the processing of applications for permanent licenses, there are two other categories of workflows performed by licensing staff. There is the high-volume workflow related to one-day licenses and then the variety of other assignments that can stem from licensees requesting changes to an existing permanent license in one way or another.

- **One-day Licenses** - Applications for Daily Licenses, Catering, and Event Authorizations are processed primarily by Program Technicians in District Offices

and involve processing payment and a review for enforcement concerns – often including local law enforcement review and notification. An online application is available for Catering Authorizations.

- **Changes to Permanent Licenses** - When applications are submitted for changes to be made to an existing permanent license, ABC will often create an Administrative Assignment (**Attachment J**) for a Licensing Representative. Types of applications handled in this manner include:
  - Ownership Changes (that do not require a full application)
  - Qualified Manager
  - Premises Expansions
  - Substantial Physical Changes
  - Condition Modification

There are also changes to existing licenses that do not require an Administrative Assignment. Examples include:

- Adding a secondary license:
  - Catering Permit
  - Event Permit
  - Extended Hours Permit
  - Private Warehouse Permit
  - Wine Sales Event Permit
  - Direct Shippers Permit
  - Beer Manufacturer's Caterer's Permit
  - Estate Tasting Event Permit
- Changing the status of a license
- Updating license details, such as the DBA and mailing address

### Fieldwork and Mobility for Licensing Staff

Licensing representatives regularly go into the field to conduct premises and posting-notice inspections, which include activities such as verifying expansions or reductions of licensed premises, measuring distances between residences or consideration points and the business location, contacting residents or consideration points, inspecting interior and exterior areas of the premises, speaking with protestants, and investigating protest issues.

Historically, this work is done in a manner that requires staff to pull any information they need in the field from a paper file, take notes in the field, and then input information into ABIS when they return to the office. It would be preferred that notes, pictures taken, and



required data entry can be made in the field on tablets, when doing so would be the more efficient option.

For days when Licensing staff perform fieldwork they are required to complete an Employee's Daily Report (**Attachment K**) to record where they went and for what purpose. The system implemented through the LSR Project should automate the collection of all of the information on the ABC-22 and integrate with the assignment or application investigation workflow related to the trip to allow for efficient documentation and update of the assignment in the system.

## Enforcement Program Operations

### Summary

ABC's Enforcement Program is staffed with sworn personnel with full peace officer authority. Although ABC Agents have authority to address any crime at any place in the state, they are focused on the activities on and around licensed premises and other alcohol-related crimes. Agents perform an array of duties ranging from educational inspections to undercover narcotics operations. The mission of the program includes ensuring a fair and equitable market for licensees and puts a high priority on effectively addressing the public safety issues communities may experience as a result of violations of the ABC Act.

### Programs

The daily activities of Agents can vary greatly based on the number and types of complaints, community challenges, or major events happening within their jurisdiction. While addressing the highest priority public safety challenges within a district office's jurisdiction is always the primary focus, there are several programs that target specific issues which make up a portion of the workload and are also often tools for addressing those priority problem areas in a particular community. These programs include:

- **Targeted Responsibility for Alcohol Connected Emergencies ([TRACE](#))** - TRACE is a protocol wherein first responders to alcohol-related emergencies immediately notify ABC when an incident involves a person under 21 and alcohol, which results in great bodily injury or death, OR a person over 21 and alcohol received from a licensed premises, which results in vehicular manslaughter, great bodily injury, or death.
- **Alcohol Policing Partnership ([APP](#)) Program** - The mission of the APP Program is to work with law enforcement agencies to develop an effective, comprehensive, and strategic approach to eliminating the crime and public nuisance problems associated with problematic alcoholic beverage outlets and then institutionalize those approaches within the local police agency. ABC awards \$3 million in grant funding to local agencies every year for the APP Program.
- **Minor Decoy Program** - The [Minor Decoy Program](#) allows Agents and local law enforcement agencies to use persons under 20 years of age as decoys to purchase alcoholic beverages from licensed premises. The Decoy Program has been recognized as an excellent method to attack the problems associated with the unlawful purchase and consumption of alcoholic beverages by people under the age of 21. Minor Decoy operations are often performed on grant funded overtime by ABC Agents and also by grantees of ABC's local assistance programs. As such, it is important to track the results of these operations.

- **Shoulder Tap Program** - The [Decoy Shoulder Tap Program](#) is an enforcement program that ABC and local law enforcement agencies use to detect and deter shoulder tap activity. During the program, a minor decoy, under the direct supervision of law enforcement officers, solicits adults outside ABC licensed stores to buy the minor decoy alcohol.
- **Trade Enforcement Program (TEU)** - The TEU initiates and coordinates investigations and accusation proceedings against licensees arising from both statewide and local trade practice violations.

All of these programs except for the TEU program are activities that must be tracked for the purpose of measuring achievement of objectives tied to grant funds. This includes grant funds received by ABC and grant funds awarded by ABC. As such, the system produced by the LSR Project should deliver the ability to capture specifics of these programs both internally and from outside agencies to which ABC awards grants for these program activities.

#### *Enforcement Statistics*

The table below contains the statistics ABC regularly tracks for its enforcement program. Currently, these statistics are tracked in ways that make effective reporting difficult or impossible. It is envisioned that the LSR project will deliver a system where all of these activities are tracked and can be reported on by geographic, personnel, date, and license categories.

| <b>Enforcement Activities 2024-25</b>                                                                |        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Enforcement Premises Visited                                                                         | 33,302 |
| <b>Inspections</b>                                                                                   |        |
| IMPACT Inspections                                                                                   | 3,312  |
| Minor Decoy Operations                                                                               | 213    |
| Hemp Product Emergency Regulation (three weeks of educational visits, then enforcement)              | 12,844 |
| Kratom/7-OH Enforcement Visits: 8,100+ in 2026 (three weeks of educational visits, then enforcement) |        |
| <b>Investigations</b>                                                                                |        |
| Complaint Investigations Completed                                                                   | 2,286  |
| Police Report Investigations                                                                         | 394    |
| TRACE Investigations                                                                                 | 107    |
| <b>Enforcement Actions</b>                                                                           |        |
| Citations Issued (criminal violations against a person – typically misdemeanors)                     | 2,430  |
| <i>Citations to Minors</i>                                                                           | 1,934  |
| <i>Citations to Adults</i>                                                                           | 496    |

|                                                                                                                               |       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Notice of Violations Issued (Informal attempt to address violations)                                                          | 349   |
| Total Warning Letters Sent (Formal warning of violation)                                                                      | 160   |
| Total Accusations (administrative cases against license - can include multiple violations)                                    | 1,060 |
| <i>Underaged Drinking</i>                                                                                                     | 673   |
| <i>After Hours violations</i>                                                                                                 | 34    |
| <i>Illegal Trade Practice</i>                                                                                                 | 203   |
| <i>Disorderly House</i>                                                                                                       | 12    |
| <i>Narcotics Violation</i>                                                                                                    | 76    |
| <i>Drink Solicitation</i>                                                                                                     | 12    |
| <i>TRACE</i>                                                                                                                  | 43    |
| <i>Others</i>                                                                                                                 | 345   |
| <b>Trainings/Outreach</b>                                                                                                     |       |
| Roll Call/TRACE Trainings for Local Law Enforcement                                                                           | 325   |
| Visiting Protested Licensees (proactive outreach after issuance to prevent complaints and ensure understanding of conditions) | 126   |

### *Making assignments*

Workload assignments for enforcement personnel are made primarily through the ABC-61 process within ABIS. Supervisors create 61s in ABIS and assign them to specific staff or the “crew” and associate them with the license number of the licensed premises involved (pain point note: to the extent a complaint is not tied to a licensed premises, they become very difficult to find in the system later). At the start of a work shift, if necessary, the team will discuss open assignments and plan enforcement work based on a variety of factors including: if there are ongoing long-term investigations that need to be maintained, public safety priority of the assignments, time sensitive nature of assignments, and the geographic proximity of assignments. All actions taken related to an assignment are noted in ABIS when the Agent returns from the field. If violations are found, then a new document is created in ABIS to facilitate the writing of a report that would serve as the basis for an Accusation to be filed against the licensee. Types of assignments include:

- **Complaints (2,000-2,500 annually)** – Complaints can originate from a variety of sources including the public, local law enforcement, licensees, or observations of Agents. This term is used to describe the reporting of a potential alcohol-related violation. Guidance on the handling of complaints is detailed in **Attachment L – Complaints Involving Licensees (Policy 330)**.
- **Backtracks (approximately 400 annually)** – When local law enforcement creates a report of potential criminal activity or potential ABC Act violations at a licensed premises, they may forward the report to ABC for consideration of administrative action against the license. When these reports are received and

deemed appropriate for additional investigation, an assignment is created for an Agent to investigate.

- **Administrative (700-800 annually)** – Administrative assignments include workload such as posting a suspension or revocation at a premises, hearing preparation, service of subpoenas to local law enforcement, decoys, and lab techs, or any other non-investigative assignment which needs to be made and tracked.
- **Educational (300 for normal local law enforcement trainings, about 3,000 compliance checks, up to tens of thousands of visits for special statewide health issues like COVID, Hemp, and Kratom)**
  - Critical outreach campaigns - At times ABC is tasked with educating licensees about changes in laws or regulations that affect them – sometimes the issue does not directly relate to alcohol, but ABC's enforcement workforce is used as the capacity to reach out to ABC licensees. Examples include visits to licensed premises related to COVID public health related restrictions, the emergency regulations related to hemp products, and now the health issues related to Kratom.
  - Compliance Inspections – The most common of these is called IMPACT. These inspections are intended to identify compliance issues (that are not a public safety risk) and provide licensees the opportunity to address them without administrative discipline.
  - Trainings for local law enforcement - Roll call trainings are used to increase awareness of ABC's enforcement program and how to leverage and partner with ABC to address alcohol-related challenges in their communities.
  - Visits to Protested Licensed Premises – Agents are assigned to visit new licenses that were provided conditional approvals. The intent is to make sure that licensees and their employees understand the community concerns that prompted the protests and resulted in the operational conditions. The intent is to facilitate an orderly transition of the business into the community that expressed concerns about it during the application process and ensure that the conditions imposed are understood and followed.
- **Requests for assistance** – Local law enforcement agencies often request ABC's assistance in addressing alcohol-related challenges in their communities. These can include working large events such as music festivals, rodeos, and fairs, or assistance with specific licensed premises where criminal activity is creating public safety issues – often leveraging ABC's experience in undercover

work and expertise related to the requirements of taking administrative action on licenses, which can often be the most effective way to address the challenge.

- **Partnerships** – ABC also provides grant funds to local law enforcement for the purpose of partnering with them on alcohol-related challenges in their communities. Typically, an Agent is assigned to partner with a grant recipient and will ensure the grantees are trained in ABC programs and operations and often assists directly with operations. The police reports that stem from grant-funded partnerships is a significant source for the backtrack investigations and accusations ABC completes each year.

## Key Workflows

### *Enforcement Activities*

- **Inspections (3,000 - 4,000 annually)** – ABC uses the word inspection to refer to visits to licensed premises that are intended to evaluate and address non-compliance with operating standards – the most common inspections are through the Informed Merchants Preventing Alcohol-related Crime Tendencies (IMPACT) and Retail Operating Standard Task Force (ROSTF) and are documented using standardized inspection sheets (ABC-531 for on-sale; ABC-537 for off-sale). Inspections evaluate compliance with posting requirements, operating standards, signage mandates, exterior conditions, lighting, loitering controls, service restrictions, human trafficking notices, tobacco and alcohol warning signs, and any conditions attached to the license. These visits are intended to be educational in nature, with the intent of giving licensees the opportunity to address any issues of non-compliance that are not public safety related, which may require immediate action. Violations identified are noted on the triplicate carbon-copy inspection form and provided to the licensee. Agents will return at a later date to verify that violations have been addressed and close out the inspection process. If the licensee does not address violations identified during an inspection, then the violations may be elevated to an accusation and administrative action may be taken on the license.

Inspections are typically scheduled in batches and generally will cover a geographical area. Areas may be prioritized based on increased likelihood of violations to be addressed – either based on complaints or common knowledge of compliance issues related to highly visible violations such as graffiti, litter, or loitering.

System workflow for these inspections would include documentation of the initial inspection (date, time, personnel involved, license number, violations noted and any notes), create an assignment for follow-up visit as necessary, documentation

of second visit, assignment for third visit as necessary, elevation to accusation if violations continue to go unaddressed.

**Attachment M – Off-Sale Premises Inspection Sheet (ABC-537) – [Off-Sale Guide](#)**

**Attachment N – On-Sale Premises Inspection Sheet (ABC-531) – [On-Sale Guide](#)**

More information on business inspections can be found [here](#).

**Investigations (2,500-3,000 annually):** ABC uses the term investigation in the enforcement program to refer to workload associated with determining whether or not a violation is occurring at a particular place – typically licensed premises.

Investigations are typically triggered by complaints.

- *Long-term Investigations* - Complaints related to violations such as over-service, sales to minors, the sale of narcotics or stolen property, prostitution, or disorderly behavior cannot be investigated effectively by sending in a uniformed peace officer. As such, investigations of these types of complaints involve Agents working in either plain clothes or an undercover capacity in order to effectively observe what is going on within a licensed premises or initiate interactions to see if the licensee or their employees are participating or facilitating illegal activity. These types of investigations are typically long-term efforts that require multiple visits and support personnel.
- *Condition violations* – Investigations are also triggered by complaints that are not as serious from a public safety perspective as those listed above but can disrupt the peace and well-being of the surrounding community. Often these complaints are related to potential violations of operating conditions such as noise complaints, hours of operation violations, or loitering. Depending on the severity of the issue and at the discretion of the enforcement personnel, these investigations may be resolved with one observation of the problem and a follow up with the licensee, or they could require multiple visits to establish if the complaint is valid.
- *Trade Enforcement* – These investigations are typically triggered by licensee complaints regarding illegal business practices of another licensee that may be creating an unfair marketplace. The violations in these areas are typically not public safety issues, but involve illegal marketing programs, commercial bribery, or business activities in violation of tied house restrictions. These investigations tend to be longer-term and more paper based.

If at the conclusion of an investigation there is sufficient evidence to take administrative or criminal action, pursuant to Policy 309 Report Preparation **(Attachment O)**, the Agent completes an Investigation Report **(Attachment P)** and forwards it up the chain for review and approval. The ABC-333 is generated from a workflow in ABIS that creates a Word document with the case number pre-populated. Agents typically save this document outside the system for drafting and then convert it to a pdf before uploading it back into ABIS. None of the fields in the ABC-333 except for those pre-populated are actually put into the ABIS database through this process. If a report is approved for filing of an Accusation it is forwarded to the Office of Legal Services (OLS). The entire process from complaint to the step of forwarding to OLS is outlined in **Attachment Q – General Complaint Intake and Investigation Workflow**. If the investigation involved criminal violations, the case is also submitted to the appropriate local authorities.

- **Events** – ABC enforcement staff also work large events. These include sporting events like National Football League and Major League Baseball games, concerts in arenas or stadiums, and large music festivals like Coachella, Stagecoach, and BottleRock. In addition to the typical monitoring of licensed activities at these events, ABC Agents are also addressing unlicensed sales in parking lots and surrounding areas, and narcotics possession and sales. These events typically result in a large number of citations and arrests and very few administrative actions because the violations are usually not related to the actions of a licensee.

#### *Administrative Enforcement Actions*

As a result of an investigation, the department may take several types of administrative enforcement actions depending on the severity, nature, and outcome of the violation.

- **Notice of Violation (NOV)** - Upon observation of a violation of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Act, an agent may issue a Notice of Violation **(Attachment R)** to a licensee or the licensee's employee. The agent, or another agent delegated responsibility for the Notice of Violation, shall follow up to determine if the violation has been corrected. Generally, this follow-up should be completed within thirty days of the issuance of the Notice of Violation. If the violation has been corrected, the agent will close the matter. If the violation has not been corrected, the agent will take appropriate steps to determine whether further investigation is needed, or whether an administrative accusation or other action is warranted. The NOV option should not be used for violations with public safety



implications nor when it is clear that the licensee intends to violate the ABC Act or if the violation is part of a pattern of non-compliance.

- **Letter of Warning (LOW)** – A Letter of Warning is a non-punitive action that serves as a formal notice that ABC believes violations have or are taking place. LOWs are issued if for some reason the violations do not seem to rise to a level that a suspension of the license would be warranted or if ABC is confident that there are violations but for some reason does not have sufficient evidence to recommend an Accusation be filed.
- **Accusation** – If an investigation results in findings of violations that warrant consideration of suspension or revocation of a license, the Supervising Agent ensures the approved report is sent to OLS along with a Request to File Accusation (RFA) pleading, including a penalty recommendation.

#### *Administrative Discipline*

ABC has the authority to take administrative action against licensees who have violated the ABC Act through either the suspension or revocation of ABC licenses. The RFA process at ABC is similar to the forwarding of a police report to the District Attorney's Office - it is the forwarding of the facts of a case as discovered through investigation and documented by the ABC Agent to attorneys who will evaluate and ultimately prosecute the case if it moves forward. Once an accusation is filed, OLS takes the reins of the disciplinary process and licensees are provided due process in the adjudication of their case. There are options for settling cases, having a hearing, and an extensive opportunity to appeal the decisions of ABC to an independent state agency and ultimately the courts. In summary, this process involves the following steps (see **Attachment S – Disciplinary Process** for a workflow diagram):

- Enforcement
  - Violations being reported to ABC.
  - An investigation to gather facts of the case.
  - An evaluation of the case and determination if administrative action may be warranted and sufficiently established with the facts gathered.
  - Request to File Accusation and Report forwarded to OLS.
- OLS
  - OLS attorneys determine the appropriate penalty based on the facts of the case. Disciplinary Guidelines can be found [here](#). OLS delivers the accusation package to the licensee.
  - If case is contested, an administrative hearing is held before an ABC Administrative Law Judge from ABC's Administrative Hearing Office to hear the facts of the case from both sides and produce a proposed decision to the Director's Office. The Director can adopt or modify the

decision which then can be appealed through three additional levels – the ABC Appeals Board, a District Court of Appeal, and the California Supreme Court.

- If the licensee does not respond to the accusation, an order for suspension or revocation is issued that the license can challenge as described above.
- With the intent of efficiently resolving cases without the time, expense, and uncertainty of a hearing, licensees have the option to enter an agreement whereby they agree to a penalty and waive their right for appeal based on an agreement with ABC on the relevant facts of the case and the penalty level that will be imposed.
- Although ABC only has the options of license suspension or revocation for imposing administrative penalties, the ABC Act provides licensees with a process to Petition for Offer in Compromise (POIC). The POIC process provides for a suspension to be converted into a monetary penalty that can be paid instead of serving a suspension. The amount of the POIC is defined and is intended to represent an economic impact similar to suspension – however, there are caps on the amount. ABC is not required to approve a POIC and has some discretion to require the suspension to be served.
- Enforcement
  - To the extent a suspension or revocation is imposed, enforcement staff will post a notice at the licensed premises.

OLS does considerable tracking of statistics related to their workload as outlined in the Reporting section. The following table is included to provide a sense for the volume of accusations flowing through the Administrative Discipline workflow.

| <b>Administrative Discipline Workflow Statistics 2024-25</b> |       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Accusations Registered                                       | 1,060 |
| Stipulation and Waiver (settlements)                         | 886   |
| Number of Enforcement Hearings Held                          | 30    |
| Dismissed Accusations                                        | 8     |
| Penalties Imposed as a Result of a Hearing                   | 42    |
| Accusations Sustained After Hearing                          | 30    |
| Proposed Decisions Adopted                                   | 30    |
| Proposed Decision rejected Under Section 11517(c)            | 4     |
| Suspensions                                                  | 192   |
| Revocations Including Those Stayed                           | 238   |
| Appeals filed to Appeals Board                               | 20    |

|                                                           |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Court Actions Filed/Pending                               | 2   |
| Stipulation and Waiver Received After Attorney Assignment | 123 |

## Fieldwork and Mobility for Enforcement

In contrast to the licensing program, enforcement staff spend the majority of their work time in the field. The Key Workflows section above describes the various types of work performed on a daily basis.

### *Equipment and Data*

This section will focus on the equipment and data collection aspects of the work and the vision for how enforcement staff can work more effectively in the future as a result of LSR and other modernization efforts.

The current mode of operation for Agents in the field requires them to carry physical documents into the field. These could be copies of licensing documents needed for an investigation, and the forms required for inspections or operations. This manual approach requires forms to be filled out by hand in the field and then the additional repetitive task of entering data into ABIS at the office.

Looking ahead, ABC prefers a system capable of supporting mobile data capture in the field, with the ability to automatically sync information into the enterprise system, reduce unnecessary travel, prepopulate forms with licensee data, and send electronic notifications or documents directly to licensees to improve transparency. To make these capabilities effective across the state, including remote areas, ABC anticipates the need for detailed vendor discussions around offline functionality, local device data storage, what tasks must remain available without connectivity, how syncing should occur once connections are restored, and whether optimizing travel routes or providing map-based geographic intelligence should be built into the solution. These capabilities may help modernize both enforcement and licensing field operations and ensure staff can perform duties efficiently regardless of connectivity constraints.

Opportunities to use or collect data in the field:

- GPS guided/planned trips based on assignments of officers deployed
- Availability of assignments on tablet
- Note taking and picture taking directly to or from tablet or phone
- Collection of existing data requirements (from ABC-22) regarding daily activities
  - Premises visited, reason, and outcome/notes, time in/out

- Vehicle used/miles driven
  - Partner
- Inspection forms
- Operations/Investigation forms or data fields
  - Decoy/shoulder tap (**Attachment T**)
  - Investigation notes
  - Operational Plans (limited access)

#### Current Mobility tools

- Tablets – Mid-2026, ABC is in the process of deploying tablets to Agents for use in the field and to replace their laptops. This equipment will immediately facilitate Mobile CLETS, but is envisioned to also be the device through which Agents will retrieve information from ABC's enterprise system and record data or information they need to collect while in the field from investigations, inspections, or other enforcement activity.
- Mobile CLETS – The California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) is a statewide computer network that allows law enforcement agencies across California to access, exchange, and share critical information from various databases maintained by the FBI, California DMV, and other state and national sources. It provides police departments and criminal justice personnel with real-time access to criminal records, driver information, restraining orders, and other law enforcement data, enhancing public safety and investigative efficiency. During 2026, ABC was granted permission to access CLETS via the newly acquired tablets.
- Cell/Sonim Phones – ABC Agents use cell phones to capture picture and videos as necessary. Historically, Agents have been issued iPhones. As an option to replace handheld radios, ABC has issued Sonim phones, which provide push to talk (radio-like) communication across a cellular network and will be coupled with the FirstNet service to ensure Agent communication on Sonim phones receives first-responder priority.

#### *Evidence Collection*

During enforcement investigations, ABC Agents collect a broad range of evidence to support administrative and criminal cases. Evidence may be physical, digital, or documentary in nature, depending on the circumstances of the contact or violation.

#### **(Attachment U - Policy 400 Property and Evidence)**

- **Digital Media:** Agents routinely gather photographs, audio files, video recordings, surveillance footage, and, in the future, will collect body-worn camera

media. Currently, all digital assets are uploaded into ABIS; however, over the next several years, ABC is considering transitioning to Evidence.com as the primary repository for future body-worn camera footage and other sensitive digital files.

- **Physical evidence:** Physical evidence such as seized items, including drugs, alcohol, and firearms, or hard-copy documents, are retained in secure evidence rooms consistent with departmental policy.
- **Field documentation:** Documents and reports also constitute key evidence. Agents complete IMPACT forms, Notice of Violations, daily reports, and supplemental notes related to public contacts, licensee inspections, on-view violations, complaints, and police-initiated referrals. These materials are initially collected on paper, then scanned and uploaded into ABIS to become part of the official case record.

Each report or evidentiary item is tied to the case number and corresponding ABIS entry. Although the current process remains largely manual, it maintains a strict chain-of-custody protocol and ensures that all evidence, photographic, digital, physical, and documentary, is properly captured, preserved, and associated with the investigative file.

## Educational Program Operations

The primary educational program at ABC is the RBS Training Program. The RBS Portal that was developed to support this program was created within the last several years and has very minimal integration with ABIS. As such, it is not decided whether or not the RBS system is within scope for the LSR Project. This decision will be made based on costs and risks and how they might be offset by the advantages to ABC and the public that may stem from a vendor's proposal to replace the current system.

There are three other educational programs ABC provides, two of which (IMPACT and ROSTF) were covered in the enforcement section above and the third, the Licensing Education on Alcohol and Drugs (LEAD) was the education program before RBS, but transitioned to an off-sale education program once RBS was implemented. LEAD is not currently in scope of the LSR project.

## Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) Training Program

### *Background*

In 2017, the legislature passed a bill requiring ABC to establish the Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) Training Program. This program is designed to educate alcohol servers and their managers at on-sale licensed premises of the state laws and regulations related to ABC, the social impacts of alcohol, the impact of alcohol on the body, and the prevention of service or sale of alcoholic beverages to underage or intoxicated persons. The training itself is administered by various training providers approved by ABC. In order to implement the RBS Training Program, ABC developed a new application referred to as the RBS Portal. The RBS Portal went into production in 2021. The initial workload was to accept training provider applications so they could be reviewed and approved prior to the July 2022 requirement for all servers to be certified.

The RBS program significantly expanded the number and type of stakeholders ABC interacts with. Previously, ABC primary engagement was with licensees. With RBS, ABC's interactions with individuals who work in the industry has expanded to include more than one million alcohol servers.

### *Key Workflows*

There are three key workflows in the RBS system, the application process for Training Providers, the registration and certification process for servers and managers, and the ability for licensees to create rosters to manage the RBS certification status of their employees.

- **Training Provide Applications** - To become a certified training provider, businesses must create an account in the ABC RBS portal, upload their training materials, and identify where their content covers [California Code of Regulations](#)

[\(CCR\) Sections 162-166](#). The current system allows uploads up to 16 MB per file with a total of 512 MB. Providers may save progress as they complete their application. Training providers are issued a unique ID number to track the status of their application. After the application is submitted, ABC staff use the administrative side of the RBS portal to assign the application to RBS staff, review the uploaded training materials, verify payment of fees, request additional fees if necessary, and update the application's status.

ABC reviews course material to ensure compliance with CCR Sections 162-166 and approves training providers within 12 weeks if they meet all program requirements. ABC collects fees to cover the costs of review, approval, and renewal of training provider accreditation. When new regulations are implemented, training providers must incorporate updates to their material, after which ABC conducts a new compliance review.

Upon completion of the application, providers receive a fee summary based on the following schedule:

| RBS Fees        |                                                                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Type of Fee     | Amount                                                                   |
| New Application | \$1,000                                                                  |
| Renewal         | \$250                                                                    |
| Fingerprinting  | \$63 for each officer if they haven't been fingerprinted with ABC before |

RBS training providers are authorized to charge a fee for their training program. The cost of training is determined by the training providers.

- **RBS Certification for Servers and Managers** - Servers must register through the RBS portal and are issued a unique Server ID. Registration requires a non-refundable \$3 fee and includes up to three exam attempts. Additional attempts require another \$3. Payments can only be made by Visa or Mastercard.

Once registered, servers can browse a list of approximately 90 accredited training providers and select the training program (available in eight languages) they will use to fulfill the training hours requirement. These lists can be downloaded in CSV format, and there is an ongoing interest in making a formatted Excel version available in the future.

Servers complete training through the training provider's website or in-person and the training provider reports to the RBS Portal that the server completed the training. After completing the training, servers have 30 days to return to the RBS

Portal and pass the 50 question RBS exam hosted by ABC. Once passed, servers receive a certificate of completion and their status is updated in the portal. Certification is valid for three years and may be renewed within 90 days of expiration.

- **Server Rosters for Licensees** - Licensed on-sale businesses must ensure that any person who serves alcoholic beverages for consumption, or a person who manages or supervises that person, completes the RBS training within 60 days of employment, including designees working under temporary licenses. Licensees are required to maintain records related to their employees RBS certification. As a service to Licensees, ABC built a feature by which a server can share their certification status with their employer, allowing a licensee to maintain a roster in the RBS Portal that meets the requirements for maintain records of their compliance.

In order to create a server roster within the RBS Portal, a licensee must create a License Administrator account within the portal. This is done by requesting a validation code be sent to the mailing address on file for the licensee and then using that code to verify the connection of an email address to the license as a License Administrator. Licensees may designate a License Administrator in the online portal, but must first acknowledge their understanding that the administrator will have authority to manage RBS related information on their behalf.

The server roster functionality allows licensees to manage their RBS server roster, providing tools to track training completion and certification renewal. Failure to ensure server compliance can result in administrative action.

| RBS Program Metrics (as of May 2026) |                 |                                    |                     |                 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Servers Registered                   | Servers Trained | Servers with Active Certifications | Servers Recertified | Servers Expired |
| 1,054,989                            | 842,378         | 335,083                            | 115,115             | 517,322         |



## Fees and Payments

ABC's current fee and payment landscape is fragmented across multiple systems and heavily dependent on manual processes. As ABC has rolled out some online services, electronic payments have become available but are still limited. ABC has significant work to do to get payment options and processes to the level the public would expect to be available to them when they interact with a state department.

### Fees

The main webpage for ABCs fee schedule can be found [here](#). This page provides links to current fee schedules for applications, annual fees, and penalty payments, as well as links to schedules proposed for the next calendar year when ABC is exercising its authority to increase fees by the consumer price index.

ABC collects payments for four main categories of transactions:

- **Application Fees** – Application fees are collected for applications for new licenses, the transfer of a license, and or the modification of a license. There are a small number of secondary or duplicate licenses that can be applied for that do not have an applications fee. The schedule of application fees for 2026 can be found [here](#).
- **Annual Fees** – Annual fees are commonly referred to as renewals, but the first annual fee is due upon issuance of a license and is typically collected as part of the application process. After the initial year's payment, licensees receive a renewal notice each year through the mail - typically four to six weeks before the expiration date of the license. The schedule of annual fees for 2026 can be found [here](#). Pursuant to the ABC Act, the late fees for annual renewal are significant and occur in two tiers, 50 percent and then 100 percent, before the license is ultimately revoked for non-payment. The schedule for late fees can be found [here](#).
- **Fingerprint Fees** – For applications requiring a new person to be qualified by ABC, the department collects fingerprint fees to cover the cost of submitting and receiving results from fingerprint checks with state and federal databases. The collection of fees for processing fingerprints typically occurs concurrently with an application, and will be based on the number of people who need to be qualified in connection with the application. However, at times additional fingerprint fees are determined to be necessary as the license investigation progresses and it is determined that additional people need to be qualified. From an accounting perspective these fees are reimbursements to the department, not revenue and are treated differently than all other fees collected.

- **POIC** – As described in the Administrative Discipline section above, licensees can petition to pay a fine instead of serve their suspension. These payments are not based on any schedule – so they are created in the system by staff when a payment amount is agreed to and forward from OLS. All funds from POICs are deposited in the State’s General Fund.

It is important to note that ABC’s annual fees, as listed in the schedule, include surcharges that must be separated from the overall payment and forwarded to funds other than the ABC Fund. These surcharges include:

- **ABC Appeals Board Surcharge** – The Appeals Board surcharge is three percent of the base renewal fee, rounded to the nearest five-dollar increment. Funds collected for this purpose are remitted to the ABC Appeals Fund.
- **California Highway Patrol (CHP) surcharge** – The CHP surcharge is a \$10 fee added to all annual fees. Funds collected for this purpose are remitted to the Motor Vehicle Account.

With the exception of the POIC payments and these two surcharges, all other funds are deposited in the ABC Fund. The actual remittance of funds to their respective funds occurs when the fees are “earned”. Currently, fees related to most applications are earned when the application is completed through either the successful processing of the application or its denial or withdrawal (most applications are non-refundable). Some transactions, including applications for one-day licenses and other transactions not requiring a licensing investigation are “auto-earned”. Historically, ABC has operated with a two week lag between when a payment is recorded in the system and when it can be earned to accommodate for the possibility of checks being returned for insufficient funds.

### Payment methods

Payment methods currently available vary by location the payment is being made and the type of transaction for which the payment is being made:

- **Personal or business checks** - The department accepts checks in-person at district offices, headquarters, or via mail. Staff must manually record payments, submit daily transmittals, reconcile batches, and deposit checks using workflows that rely on spreadsheets, email attachments, and data entry in ABIS. Personal or business checks are not accepted for any transactions initiated online (there is currently no way to separate payment from online application workflow) or for one-day license applications.

- **Cashier's check or money orders** – Cashiers checks or money orders are accepted for all transactions that personal and business checks are accepted and are the only non-electronic form of payment accepted for one-day licenses.
- **eCheck** – Electronic check payments are allowed for all online payments except for the \$3 RBS server registration fee and online applications for one-day licenses. This is because eChecks can bounce and these are one-time payments that would be hard to recover after the business transaction is completed. ABC is working to expand this option to a wider array of transactions that are not online applications.
- **Credit Card Payments** – Credit cards can be used for all online transactions, but not in person at ABC offices. ABC is working to expand this option to a wider array of transactions that are not online applications. With the exception of the \$3 RBS fee, the user is responsible for paying the credit card fee associated with their transaction.

Currently, online payments are supported only for the limited set of transactions available as online services – currently fewer than half of ABC's public-facing transactions can be completed online. Fiserv is used for credit and debit card payments. ABC needs to modernize and create a centralized payment solution that supports all fee types, improves accuracy and reconciliation, reduces operational burden, and provides reliable, real-time revenue data for both internal program management and public service delivery. The future system needs full electronic payment capability, automated transmittal replacement, and integrated payment processing.

| ABC Fund Revenues 2024-25    |                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Revenue Category             | Amount Collected     |
| Renewals                     | \$79,540,074         |
| Originals                    | \$9,295,311          |
| Transfers                    | \$4,351,452          |
| Daily Licenses               | \$2,001,150          |
| Catering Permits             | \$1,796,909          |
| Catering Authorizations      | \$2,269,665          |
| Responsible Beverage Service | \$548,854            |
| Other                        | \$1,654,947          |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>\$101,458,362</b> |

## Public & Licensee Experience

### Public Facing Online Services

ABC's online services allow licensees and applicants to submit original license applications for most license types through the Licensing Services Portal (LSP), set up online accounts using validation codes, and make associated payments through the application process. The public can access RBS training and certification, perform license lookups, view public licensing reports, file complaints, and request public records online. The site also provides access to forms, guides, fee schedules, license type information, and links to district office contact information. Applicants additionally use the portal to submit supplemental documents, respond to certain requests, and check application related information provided by licensing staff. Overall, current online capabilities focus primarily on original applications, RBS services, access to basic license information, and limited transactional functions, with most other licensing activities still occurring through mail, email, or direct contact with district offices.

From a licensee's perspective, ABC's current online services provide only limited support throughout the licensing process and rely heavily on manual steps that reduce transparency and increase processing time. Much of the required information, such as application status, remaining tasks, conditions on a license issued prior to 2020, or reasons for delays, is not available online, leaving applicants dependent on staff follow-up and office callbacks. Because licensing information must often be entered into multiple systems or captured on paper before being scanned into ABIS or Laserfiche, licensees experience slower updates and inconsistent visibility into where their application stands. These gaps also make it difficult for applicants to anticipate next steps, respond promptly to holds such as tax issues, or understand when construction-related approvals are needed, all of which contributes to processing delays.

Additionally, the current system does not offer self-service tools that would allow licensees to check progress, submit documents electronically in a consistent manner, or receive automated notifications. Many licensing-related documents and forms cannot be completed or transmitted digitally end-to-end, leading to duplicative steps. For example, applicants may need to print, sign, scan, and email forms that could otherwise be completed electronically. Licensees who must interact with enforcement (e.g., during inspections or when conditions are imposed) encounter similar limitations, including the absence of a unified online portal showing license history, conditions, inspections, or required actions.

ABC also seeks to provide applicants and licensees with an educational “wizard” tool, similar to the CA Department of Motor Vehicles guided question pathways, that helps the public identify the appropriate license type by walking them through a series of structured questions. This tool would serve as an immediate, user-friendly resource for applicants who are unfamiliar with licensing requirements or unsure which license category applies to their business model.

In addition, the future system must include internal controls that automatically flag conflicts when two license privileges, activities, or conditions cannot legally be issued or approved together. These rule-based checks would help prevent errors, improve consistency, and reduce reliance on staff memory or local workarounds.

ABC would also like to provide licensees with the ability to print their licenses directly from the online system instead of waiting for physical copies to be mailed. Printing and mailing licenses is time-consuming and resource-intensive, and licensees have long expressed interest in a faster, self-service option.

Together, these limitations result in a licensing experience that is slower, less transparent, and more labor-intensive than it could be. A modernized system that allows licensees to file applications, upload documents, view status, receive alerts, see conditions, and interact with ABC digitally throughout the process would significantly improve efficiency and customer experience. The need for real-time visibility, digital forms, integrated workflows, and a consolidated portal to support a more predictable and user-friendly licensing journey grows more pressing each day.

For reference, a list of online services that ABC offers can be found [here](#).

## Unauthenticated Public Access

ABC currently provides unauthenticated access to a significant amount of license and applications data. The License Query System ([LQS](#)) provides a searchable database updated daily and provides license information including the type, ownership, status, address, business name, operating restrictions, and disciplinary action and history. ABC’s [Licensing Reports](#) page provides a mix of static annual reports, lists that get updated as they change, and daily or monthly reports related transactions occurring within the reports timeframe.

ABC may want to expand unauthenticated public access and secure third-party access as part of any future system. Public users routinely seek information such as license lookup, license history, and complaint or enforcement activity within a geographic area,

and staff emphasized the need for easier public transparency reporting, especially to support legislative inquiries and PRA requests. ABC used to provide access to all of the information that is in LQS incorporated into a GIS system that plotted licensed premises on an online California map.

There would also be substantial benefit providing local law enforcement, grant-funded partner agencies, attorneys, and licensing consultants a controlled-access portal to submit reports, upload documents, provide inspection data, and retrieve license-related information relevant to their jurisdiction or casework. Internally, staff expressed interest in allowing approved partners to submit electronic forms, transmit police reports, or access specific complaints or inspection data through a secure gateway rather than relying on email or manual uploads.

In addition, any modernized solution must meet standard accessibility compliance requirements and support multilingual public-facing content to ensure equitable access for applicants, complainants, and community stakeholders across the state.

## CURRENT STATE

### Systems, Integrations & Technology

#### Current Systems Supported by ABC

ABC uses many different systems to support its daily work, including licensing, enforcement, inspections, complaints, reporting, payments, and document management. ABC has prepared two simple spreadsheets: one shows the outside agencies and systems ABC exchanges data with, and the other lists all the major systems ABC relies on today. Together, these attachments explain each system's purpose, who uses it, how it is hosted, and its current status, giving a clear picture of ABC's overall technology environment.

**Attachment V - ABC Supporting Systems**

**Attachment W – Enterprise ABIS and AWS Diagram**

**Attachment X - ABC Data Exchange Partners**

#### ABC's IT Environment

ABC subscribes to the Microsoft M365 at the G5 subscription level. ABC uses Entra for the identity provider for most online applications. The on-prem Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP) is replicated to the cloud and is the source of truth for Identity. There are a few database platforms that are used. MongoDB (atlas cloud) is used for the Business Modernization Project (LSP) and Responsible Beverage Service (RBS). Oracle is used for ABIS, license lookup (ABC public Website), and the reporting system (LQS).

The California Department of Technology (CDT), Tenant Managed Services – Basic (TMS-B) is available for on-prem production deployments and on-prem services. This environment has a small number of ESXI hosts and couple VMWare clusters. Due to costs, the intent is to pivot away from VMWare and possibly pivot away from TMS-B and on-prem deployments in the first place. Some production services, which include GIS and Oracle Managed Services, are a subscription with CDT.

Field staff (primarily enforcement agents) have apple iPhones and are on the Verizon Network. They are also equipped with Sonim Phones that are connected to First Net. This network utilizes the AT&T emergency network, so they are able to connect when networks are saturated or if they are in more remote locations. ABC will soon (within the next few months) start rolling out tablets to field staff. These tablets can connect to Global Protect (VPN) for accessing internal networks, ABIS, and mobile CLETS. These

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tablets are on the Verizon network. Finally, there is a mobile trailer that is used for major events like the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival. The mobile trailers have supporting infrastructure for the agents and is connected to the same First Net network as the Sonim Phones. There are mobile device management (MDM) policies in place. InTune is used to drive the compliance and to manage the application installations for the devices.



## Data Migration & Security

### Data Migration

ABC will need to migrate all major licensing and enforcement data currently stored across ABIS, RQS, Laserfiche/eRecords, LSP, RBS, POSSE, and various paper-based logs into the new system. This includes active and historical license records, applications, investigations and accusations, inspections, complaints, financial transactions tied to licensing activities, contact and ownership information, and large volumes of scanned documents and docket notes that support case histories.

Because ABC's systems have been in operation for many years, the data requiring migration spans a long historical period and includes both structured records and large volumes of scanned documents and docket notes. The existing datasets vary in quality due to factors such as manual data entry, duplicated or inconsistent information, and reliance on unstructured or scanned materials rather than standardized digital fields, which means data cleanup and transformation will be necessary during migration. Given the age, complexity, and breadth of the information maintained across multiple systems, ABC anticipates the need to keep certain legacy systems available in a read-only mode after go-live to ensure continued access to historical records and support operational continuity during the transition.

### Security and Compliance Standards

ABC is required to adhere to the State of California's established security and compliance standards, which provide a level of rigor that meets or exceeds comparable ABC specific policies. For this reason, no separate ABC policies are included in this packet. The table below provides the State policies and frameworks we follow, along with links for additional detail and reference.

| Requirement | Notes                                                                                                     |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SAM-5300    | <a href="https://www.dgs.ca.gov/resources/sam/toc/5300">https://www.dgs.ca.gov/resources/sam/toc/5300</a> |
| SIMM-5300   | <a href="https://www.cdt.ca.gov/policy/simm/simm-5300/">https://www.cdt.ca.gov/policy/simm/simm-5300/</a> |

|                |                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NIST 800-43    | <a href="https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/SpecialPublications/NIST.SP.800-53r5.pdf">https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/SpecialPublications/NIST.SP.800-53r5.pdf</a> |
| CJIS           | Currently no CJIS data is stored in any of our systems. If this is added to the system then the CJIS requirements would need be followed.                           |
| FedRAMP        | Moderate is adequate because no health or law enforcement data is in the system. If CJIS/Law enforcement data is added, this will need to be FedRAMP high.          |
| California IPA | <a href="https://calmatters.digitaldemocracy.org/bills/ca_202520260ab1337">https://calmatters.digitaldemocracy.org/bills/ca_202520260ab1337</a>                     |
| CCPA           | <a href="https://oag.ca.gov/privacy/ccpa">https://oag.ca.gov/privacy/ccpa</a>                                                                                       |

## PROJECT DELIVERY

### Methodology

While ABC sees clear benefits in a hybrid model that combines upfront planning with iterative development cycles for early testing and feedback, the department does not consider this preference to be limiting. ABC welcomes vendor recommendations regarding delivery methodology or sequencing, whether Agile, Waterfall, Hybrid, or a custom phased approach, provided the proposed framework meets ABC's business needs, supports ongoing validation of functionality, and fits within state technology and procurement requirements.

### Support

ABC has identified Randy Deems as the executive sponsor and Lowela Goessling as the day-to-day project lead responsible for planning and oversight. Participation will include business and technical representatives from all major programs, with the flexibility to scale involvement based on project milestones such as requirements development, configuration reviews, user acceptance testing, and deployment planning. In addition to internal resources, the project may intersect with external vendors providing IV&V services, project management support, solution architecture expertise, and Computronix, particularly with respect to ABIS integration and conversion needs.

## SECTION B – VENDOR QUESTIONS

ABC is requesting vendor responses to the questions below. Responses should be documented in a clear format (Excel, Word, or PDF) and be associated with the ID number listed under the first column so ABC can effectively evaluate each response.

If any requested information is not available, please note this and provide an explanation or recommended substitute.

### ABC Procurement Question Bank - Market Research Phase

| ID     | Area                | Question                                                                                                                         |
|--------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ABC-1  | APIs & Integrations | Does the platform provide a documented, versioned REST or GraphQL API for use by department developers?                          |
| ABC-2  | APIs & Integrations | Are webhooks or event-driven notifications available for real-time integration?                                                  |
| ABC-3  | APIs & Integrations | Is there a sandbox/staging API environment for testing integrations before production deployment?                                |
| ABC-4  | APIs & Integrations | What authentication methods does the API support (OAuth 2.0, API keys, mutual TLS)?                                              |
| ABC-5  | APIs & Integrations | Does the vendor publish an API changelog and provide advance notice of breaking changes?                                         |
| ABC-6  | Security            | What security certifications does the platform hold (FedRAMP, SOC 2 Type II, StateRAMP)?                                         |
| ABC-7  | Security            | What is the vendor's incident response and breach notification policy?                                                           |
| ABC-8  | Security            | Where is data physically hosted? Is US-based hosting available/guaranteed?                                                       |
| ABC-9  | Security            | Does the platform support role-based access control (RBAC) with granularity appropriate for licensing vs. enforcement divisions? |
| ABC-10 | Data Integrations   | What native connectors exist for Oracle databases, document management systems (Laserfiche), and GIS platforms?                  |
| ABC-11 | Data Integrations   | What is the data migration approach? Does the vendor provide migration tooling and support?                                      |
| ABC-12 | Data Integrations   | How does the platform handle data validation at the point of entry to prevent bad data?                                          |

|        |                       |                                                                                                                                      |
|--------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ABC-13 | Data Integrations     | Can the platform integrate with Power BI, Tableau, or equivalent for executive dashboards?                                           |
| ABC-14 | Testing & Performance | What are the platform's published SLA uptime guarantees?                                                                             |
| ABC-15 | Testing & Performance | Can the vendor provide load test results or allow ABC to conduct independent load testing?                                           |
| ABC-16 | Testing & Performance | What is the average page load time for complex forms (e.g., multi-tab license applications)?                                         |
| ABC-17 | Testing & Performance | Does the platform support automated regression testing and CI/CD pipelines?                                                          |
| ABC-18 | Accessibility         | Does the platform comply with WCAG 2.1 AA or higher? Is a current Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) available?         |
| ABC-19 | Accessibility         | How does the vendor handle accessibility in new feature releases? Is it built into the software development lifecycle?               |
| ABC-20 | SSO                   | Does the platform support SAML 2.0 and/or OIDC for single sign-on integration?                                                       |
| ABC-21 | SSO                   | Can SSO be configured per division or role group (e.g., licensing staff vs. enforcement)?                                            |
| ABC-22 | UX & User Experience  | What does the vendor's UX research and design process look like? How is user feedback incorporated?                                  |
| ABC-23 | UX & User Experience  | Can the platform's UI be white-labeled or branded to match ABC/state requirements?                                                   |
| ABC-24 | Configurability       | What can be configured by ABC administrators vs. requiring vendor professional services?                                             |
| ABC-25 | Configurability       | Does the platform support configurable business rules (e.g., license types, fee structures, renewal workflows) without code changes? |
| ABC-26 | Configurability       | How does the platform handle multi-division configuration (licensing vs. enforcement)?                                               |
| ABC-27 | Customizations        | What is the platform's extensibility model? Does it support plugins, custom modules, scripting, or low-code tools?                   |
| ABC-28 | Customizations        | How do customizations survive platform upgrades? What is the upgrade compatibility guarantee?                                        |

|        |                              |                                                                                                                                               |
|--------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ABC-29 | Customizations               | What is the typical cost model for customizations? Are they included in the contract billed per hour, or priced as fixed projects?            |
| ABC-30 | Customizations               | Can ABC's developers' access and modify the underlying codebase or only use prescribed extension points?                                      |
| ABC-31 | Vendor Support & Partnership | What is the vendor's client retention rate and average tenure for government clients?                                                         |
| ABC-32 | Vendor Support & Partnership | Does the vendor have a dedicated government/public sector team?                                                                               |
| ABC-33 | Vendor Support & Partnership | What does the vendor's product roadmap look like for the next 2-3 years? How is it influenced by client feedback?                             |
| ABC-34 | Vendor Support & Partnership | Will the vendor provide reference clients? We are especially interested in state or local government agencies of similar size and complexity. |
| ABC-35 | Vendor Support & Partnership | What does the knowledge transfer and onboarding process look like? How long until ABC staff are self-sufficient?                              |
| ABC-36 | Vendor Support & Partnership | What is the support model? For example: Is it tiered? Does ABC get a dedicated account manager? What are the SLA response times?              |
| ABC-37 | Data Quality & Governance    | Does the platform include built-in data quality monitoring and alerting?                                                                      |
| ABC-38 | Data Quality & Governance    | How does the platform handle data deduplication and record matching?                                                                          |
| ABC-39 | Data Quality & Governance    | Does the platform support configurable audit trails for all data changes?                                                                     |
| ABC-40 | Cost & Licensing             | What is the licensing model (per-user, per-transaction, enterprise, modular)?                                                                 |
| ABC-41 | Cost & Licensing             | What is the total cost of ownership over 5 years, including implementation, customization, training, and support?                             |
| ABC-42 | Cost & Licensing             | Are there additional costs for modules that ABC may need later (accounting, GIS, case management)?                                            |
| ABC-43 | Scalability & Architecture   | Is the platform cloud-native, cloud-hosted, or on-premises? What deployment options exist?                                                    |

|        |                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ABC-44 | Scalability & Architecture | How does the platform handle concurrent users during peak periods (e.g., license renewal deadlines)?                                                                                                                                               |
| ABC-45 | Scalability & Architecture | What is the platform's approach to multi-tenancy and data isolation?                                                                                                                                                                               |
| ABC-46 | Scalability & Architecture | Does the platform support AI/ML capabilities or have a roadmap for AI integration?                                                                                                                                                                 |
| ABC-47 | UX & User Experience       | Does the platform support dynamic fee calculation within application forms, including conditional logic based on license type, entity structure, and transaction type?                                                                             |
| ABC-48 | UX & User Experience       | Can form workflows be configured to present different fields, instructions, and attachments based on user audience (applicant vs. licensee vs. ABC staff)?                                                                                         |
| ABC-49 | Security                   | Will security compliance scan reports be accessible for each release? (this might be on there already?)                                                                                                                                            |
| ABC-50 | Training                   | What level of training is required for a beginner (change wording) intermediate (maintain fees) and expert (maintain form/workflow)?                                                                                                               |
| ABC-51 | Maintenance/agility        | How large of a development effort (in hours) is a small (change wording) medium (maintain fees) and large (maintain form/workflow) effort? And can these changes be delivered individually as they are ready or only collected for a sprint cycle? |

## SECTION C - WORKFLOW DEMONSTRATIONS

ABC kindly requests that each vendor who responds to this Request for Information prepare three demonstrations that reflect key licensing and enforcement processes. We understand that developing meaningful demonstrations takes time, and our intention is to provide a fair and supportive process for all participating vendors.

To give vendors adequate preparation time, ABC will schedule a demonstration with every vendor who submits an RFI response. **Demonstrations will be held between August 5, 2026, and August 15, 2026**, and ABC will reach out to vendors no later than July 31, 2026, to coordinate a date and time.

### Requested Demonstrations

We ask that each vendor prepare the following three demonstrations:

1. Original License Application
2. License Renewal
3. Enforcement Action

### Supporting Materials

To help you develop these demonstrations, ABC has provided scenario descriptions and supporting documents tailored to each demonstration type. We encourage you to review all materials carefully to ensure your demonstrations reflect our operational needs, workflow expectations, and program requirements.

Our goal is to create a collaborative and transparent process that allows each vendor the opportunity to showcase how their solution may support the work of ABC.

Refer to **Demo 1, Demo 2, Demo 3.**