

Cities implementing a unified enrollment

Cities implementing a unified enrollment system typically build or contract out for an “application management system” (AMS) to collect and store application data from families. An RFP process is typically used to identify a contractor. Here is a basic set of technical requirements for an AMS that a city could edit and customize to meet their specific needs.

SAMPLE FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Key elements of application management system (AMS) functionality include:

Overall

- Customizable user interface so that AMS can include logo and branding of the overall initiative
- Collecting applications, storing data securely, and displaying lottery results to parents/students, schools, and staff
- Accommodation of different types of users, including:
 - Central administrators with super admin access
 - Individual parent/student users able to select school choices and rank them in preferred order
 - Hotline / support staff users able to view, edit and submit applications on behalf of parents
 - School users able to view a limited set of application data and make limited edits to applications according to defined rules (example: approve or deny sibling preference for applicants to their school only)
 - Magnet/selective school users able to view a different limited set of application data (example: recommendation letter submitted by applicant to their school)
- Allowing parent/student users to indicate that an applicant is eligible for a specific school preference, and giving school users at that school access to approve or deny eligibility for the preference (example: preference for siblings of current students)
- Linking sibling applications together in the database if submitted by the same parent user (to allow for the administration of “sibling accepted” preference within the lottery)

- Using the address provided on the application, identifying whether an applicant is eligible for any geographic-based preferences and attaching any preferences to the particular school selection in the database (example: applicant lives within the specific catchment area or zone of a school and is eligible for a neighborhood preference at that school, but the preference does not apply to the applicant's other school selections)
- Customization by school to allow for a unique preference structure at each school and unique sets of questions at different school types or for different grades (example: may require a special set of questions or requirements for magnet school selections (such as recommendation letters or essays), or unique questions seen only by Kindergarten applicants)
- Capacity to manage waitlist data using the same business rules as applied to lottery applications (example: neighborhood preference) so that applicants are slotted onto the correct place on the waitlist and status is updated in real-time for parents/students/schools to view

Parent/Student User Functionality

- Ability for parent/student users to create accounts using emails or mobile phone numbers
- Ability for parent/student users to edit their applications and re-submit prior to key deadlines
- Ability for parent/student users to save and print PDF of submitted application

Administrative functionality

- Ability to export application data to Excel
- Ability to send mass emails and texts to applicants or sets of applicants through AMS (example: message to applicants with their lottery results, or reminder to all applicants who have saved but not submitted an application to finish and submit prior to deadline)

- Preventing duplicate applications when possible, and allowing for the screening and deletion of duplicate applications which are identified later
- Reporting and analysis features to allow central administrators and school users to produce reports on application data (example: individual school can run report to see the number of school applications they have received by grade, preference, and ranking (number of applications on which their school was selected first, second, etc))
- Audit trail for any changes to applications

Accessibility

- Accessibility in multiple languages
- Mobile compatibility so parents/students can submit applications and view lottery results on smartphones