

Guidance for Purchasing Technology Platforms to Support CDC-Funded Strategies Related to the National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DPP), Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES), and Pharmacists

Guidance 2.25.2022

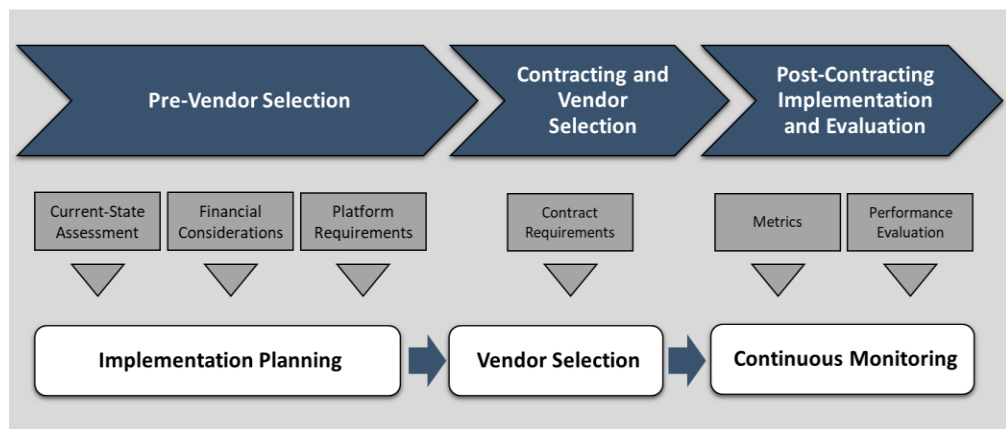
***Disclaimer:** Publication of this guidance document does not imply CDC endorsement of any particular vendor or technology platform. This document provides objective criteria for use by CDC-funded recipients when selecting platforms to achieve progress on required strategies in funded cooperative agreements.*

Introduction

This guidance document was created to assist Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)-funded recipients (state health departments and national organizations) in selecting and implementing technology platforms to deliver and/or bill for the National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DPP) lifestyle change program and/or diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES). In limited cases, this guidance may also be used to assist in selecting pharmacy care platforms designed to support Pharmacist eCare Plans (PeCP) (Note: Any work with pharmacy care platforms must have prior approval from a Project Officer).

Because the purchase and support of these platforms represent a major infrastructure investment, it is critical that recipients complete a thorough needs and capacity assessment before selecting a technology platform vendor. Since recipients may be in various stages of this process, all components covered in this guidance

document do not have to be completed in their entirety, nor do they have to be viewed in any specific order. Rather, it is intended to be a resource to support decision-making at any stage of the process.



Insights and experiences from multiple recipients were incorporated into the development of this document. Several platform vendors, state representatives, and other organizational representatives also provided lessons learned that informed the contents of this document. By reviewing and considering the guidance in this document, recipients can reduce confusion related to selecting a technology platform to support the National DPP, DSMES, and/or Pharmacist e-Care Plans. For additional information on the key terms used in this document, please reference the glossary in [Appendix A](#).

How to Use this Document

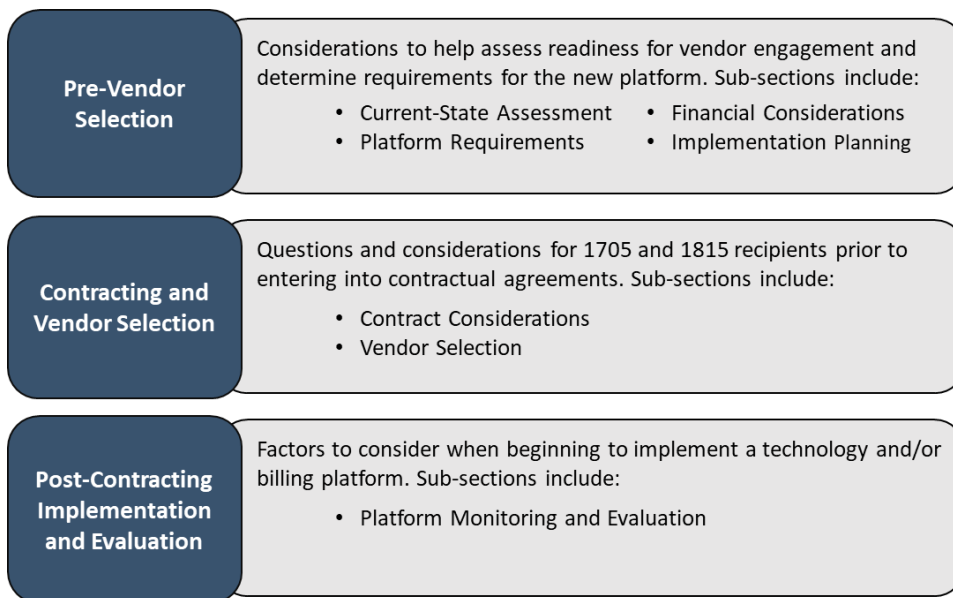
This document is organized and divided into three sections: a) pre-vendor selection, b) contracting and vendor selection, and c) post-contracting implementation and evaluation. Before reviewing each section of the document, please note the key considerations below.

- a) *Pre-Vendor Selection* – Before researching and soliciting vendors, it is critical to conduct an internal scan of current user needs and challenges. When identifying current gaps, consider the following questions before moving forward:
 1. Who will be the primary users of the platform and will there be enough users to justify this infrastructure investment?
 2. What are the current unmet needs of the users and how does this new platform address those needs?

3. What is the sustainability plan for this new platform, and has it been shared with and agreed upon by the users?

For recipients that have already initiated the contracting process, it is recommended they go back and answer these questions before continuing to move forward.

- b) *Contracting and Vendor Selection* – This section outlines specific contract requirements that should be considered as part of the acquisition process. There is also an emphasis on the importance of reviewing all relevant options before selecting a final platform. Before finalizing a vendor contract, it is recommended that recipients conduct pre-purchase testing.
- c) *Post-contracting Implementation and Evaluation* – This section highlights the importance of continuous improvement and quality control. It is essential to monitor how the purchase of the new platform may impact program enrollment, delivery, and/or billing processes.



Pre-Vendor Selection

The following considerations will help assess readiness for vendor engagement and identify gaps in existing capabilities to determine requirements for a new platform.

Subject	Context
<p>Current-State Assessment This section includes considerations to help identify gaps in existing programs and assess the need for a new platform.</p>	<p>Identify Users and Their Infrastructure Needs – <i>Determine who will use the platform and what they need. Users can include delivery organizations/pharmacies, participants receiving the program/service, payers, partners, and states/national organizations. Consider their challenges and if a technology platform is the best solution.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State/National Organization: Consider what infrastructure gaps exist across geographies or organizations. • Delivery Organizations/Pharmacies: Weigh whether a billing platform, delivery platform or both are needed. • Participants: Consider whether the projected participant enrollment/reach supports the need for a platform and if utilization would justify associated costs. • Payers: Determine whether a streamlined billing process will be beneficial for reimbursement from payers. <p>Evaluate the Participant Population – <i>When necessary, assess the participants’ needs, preferences, and possible barriers relative to the services you wish to offer (e.g., National DPP lifestyle change program, DSMES, pharmacy care). If participants will access the platform directly, assess whether the platform will be able to effectively reach these individuals. Determine if potential participants have access to the necessary technology and internet infrastructure to maximize the use of the platform.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population Needs: Identify and assess the needs of potential participants and if there are priority populations that need to be considered (e.g., Medicare, Medicaid, racial/ethnic minorities, individuals with disabilities, etc.). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Determine which key platform features are required to effectively support and reach participant groups (e.g., 24-hour access to coaches, desktop vs. smartphone access, quick ramp-up). ○ If applicable, assess the need and ability for the platform to be culturally adapted. Determine how gaps in cultural adaptation may impact participant engagement and success. ○ Review the platform’s accessibility requirements for priority populations (e.g., desktop computer access for individuals who may not have access to a smartphone or other accessibility accommodations).
<p>Platform Requirements This section includes considerations to help recipients identify non-negotiable platform</p>	<p>Identify and Prioritize Requirements – <i>The various user groups will have differing platform requirements. These requirements may conflict or not be available from the same vendor/platform. Requirements must be prioritized to ensure the selected platform and agreement produce the maximum benefit.</i></p>

<p>features vs. preferred platform features.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If applicable, assess curriculum requirements (e.g., use new curriculum vs. pre-existing curriculum). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do curriculum requirements impact platform requirements? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is a vendor-developed curriculum needed? • Assess virtual delivery needs (e.g., long-term or short-term delivery on a virtual platform). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If applicable, what is the anticipated maximum number of participants who will use the platform in future years? • Assess coach, educator, pharmacist and other staff requirements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do organizations have the necessary coach, educator, pharmacist or other staff resources to support the platform? ○ Will any of these resources need to be outsourced? ○ What training is required for coaches, educators, or pharmacists to use the platform? ○ Would priority populations benefit from having local coaches, educators, or pharmacists? How would the use of outsourced resources impact participant outcomes (e.g., language and cultural adaptation considerations)? • Assess requirements to customize offerings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there requirements to create state/organization-specific branding materials? ○ What key language(s) and cultural preference(s) should be considered? ○ Is interoperability required with existing systems (e.g., integration with Electronic Health Records)? ○ Is there flexibility to adapt platform features in the future to meet evolving needs?
<p>Financial Considerations This section includes considerations to help recipients identify their current and future platform funding options.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate existing and future funding requirements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How will the agreement with vendors be structured to ensure long-term sustainability after the initial investment period? • Assess if delivery organizations or pharmacies are seeking reimbursement from payers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Determine the level of network coordination required by payers; determine if payers require a minimum network size before reimbursing delivery organizations or pharmacies. • Assess existing contracts and reimbursement networks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Determine the impact of introducing a new vendor/platform on existing contracts with employers or payers.
<p>Implementation Planning This section includes considerations to help recipients evaluate logistical requirements when</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess institutional requirements and staff available to assist with vendor selection, contracting, and platform implementation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review the intended platform implementation timeline against other organizational initiatives to assess competing priorities.

<p>selecting a vendor or implementing a new platform.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will buy-in be generated from delivery organizations or pharmacies to ensure the platform is utilized? • Determine which vendor selection model/contract type best suits organizational needs (e.g., Request for Proposals (RFPs) vs. sole source). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discuss the pros and cons of different contract types. • Discuss important contract requirements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Determine how to assess all potential vendors against contract requirements. (See Appendix B for a sample evaluation matrix.) ○ Determine who will be the final arbiter for selecting the contract. • Discuss resources needed to conduct testing or develop a small-scale pilot of the platform. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Determine who will support and participate in testing and/or pilot implementation.
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Contracting and Vendor Selection

This section includes questions and considerations for recipients entering into contractual agreements.

Subject	Context
<p>Contract Considerations This section includes critical elements to consider when developing a contract.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine what training will be required for coaches, educators, and pharmacists and how often. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What training will be mandatory to start using the platform? ○ What trainings will be necessary to create and deliver as features are added and updated? ○ Will there be annual training requirements? If so, who will be responsible for monitoring and reporting that requirements are met? • If delivery organizations/pharmacies require outsourced coaches, educators, or other staff consider clarifying the minimum qualifications for these individuals. • Discuss value-based payment options for the National DPP. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider aligning the delivery platform payment structure with in-person delivery (e.g., distribute funds once the participant completes a specified milestone in the program). • Include information on adherence to communication(s), privacy, and data security requirements, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Compliance with HIPAA standards. ○ Data exchange and storage requirements, including those enforced by the state/local jurisdiction. ○ Data security throughout the lifespan of the contract (e.g., secure data storage and transmission, contingency plans for data breaches/leaks). • Data reporting requirements and compliance, including:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The National DPP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Diabetes Prevention Recognition Program - Standards and Operating Procedures ▪ CMS Information Security and Privacy Overview ○ DSMES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognition Requirements American Diabetes Association ▪ Association of Diabetes Care and Education Specialists: Ready to Apply to DEAP ○ Pharmacists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ eCare Plan Initiative ● Interoperability with existing systems (e.g., How will the vendor’s platform integrate with current systems? Will existing systems require enhancements?). ● Consider adding a program/project management section to the contract. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Incorporate a project kick-off meeting with internal project sponsors and the selected vendor. ○ Establish frequent check-ins with internal project sponsors and the vendor once selected. ● Consider specific tasks the vendor should complete before the contract expires. ● Consider adding a section on issue resolution. This section might include the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Performance expectations. ○ Timeliness of task and/or deliverable completion. ○ Data security and information leaks.
<p>Vendor Selection This section includes key factors to consider when selecting a delivery and/or billing platform.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct due diligence on the platforms and vendors – assess their performance at other institutions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meet with other organizations about their experience with a vendor or platform; consider how needs between different organizations may differ and how that may impact platform requirements. ● Conduct pre-purchase testing or implement a pilot if feasible (e.g., test features in a sandbox environment). ● Assess vendor incentives and additional product features and their impact on overall costs. ● Review organizational budgets against the vendor offerings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evaluate the costs of the platform against current needs (as assessed in the infrastructure assessment of the pre-selection phase). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Which pricing model works best? See Appendix C and Appendix D for a sample billing evaluation matrix and decision flowchart. ○ Understand and thoroughly evaluate pricing models. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forecast to account for fixed and variable costs.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assess the potential costs for ongoing customization to meet evolving participant needs. ● Avoid common mistakes including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unintentionally creating competition between vendors and local delivery organizations. ○ Unknowingly causing conflicts with existing partnerships or contracts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fully understand non-compete clauses and potential ramifications on future work.
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Post-contracting Implementation and Evaluation

This section includes considerations for recipients entering the implementation phase.

Subject	Context
<p>Platform Monitoring and Evaluation</p> <p>This section includes considerations for evaluating platform utilization, vendor performance, and customer satisfaction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider establishing and monitoring the following metrics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enrollment and participant trends. ○ Attendance trends post-implementation of the new platform. ○ Participant outcomes. ○ Coach/educator/pharmacist and participant satisfaction (if applicable) with the platform. ○ The efficiency of reimbursement for billing platforms. ● Consider frequent contractor performance assessments and any implications on the contract renewal process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider establishing a routine Period of Performance to ensure the vendor is meeting requirements within an expected time frame. ○ Consider continuous risk evaluation and data testing (e.g., regular cybersecurity testing, HIPPA compliance monitoring, etc.). ● Monitor staff compliance with training and security procedures.

Conclusion

The information contained in this document is based on available information at the time of creation. It is understood that processes are constantly evolving. As a result, the CDC will strive to keep this information updated regularly.

Appendix A. Glossary

The following glossary provides context and definitions of the terms specifically used within this document.

- **Delivery Organizations** – Organizations delivering the National DPP lifestyle change program or DSMES.
- **Diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES)** – DSMES is a critical element of care for all people with diabetes (PWD). The purpose of DSMES is to give PWD the knowledge, skills, and confidence to accept responsibility for their self-management. This includes collaborating with their health care team, making informed decisions, solving problems, developing personal goals and action plans, and coping with emotions and life stresses.
- **Employers** – Organizations or institutions covering the costs for eligible employees to participate in the National DPP lifestyle change program or DSMES as an employee benefit.
- **Infrastructure** – The systems, competencies, frameworks, relationships, and resources that enable public health agencies to perform their core functions and essential services.
- **Landscape** – The environmental factors affecting diabetes prevention and management activities in each jurisdiction.
- **National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DPP)** – The National DPP is a partnership of public and private organizations working collectively to build a nationwide delivery system for a lifestyle change program proven to prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes in adults with prediabetes.
- **Technology Platform** – A program delivery or billing tool used to enable effective delivery of or reimbursement for the National DPP lifestyle change program or DSMES.
- **Payers** – Health insurance companies or government institutions covering the enrollment cost of the National DPP lifestyle change program or DSMES as a benefit (e.g., private insurance companies, Medicare, or Medicaid).
- **Priority Population** – Groups identified as having adversely high rates of diabetes, specifically those affected disproportionately by diabetes or prediabetes due to socioeconomic or other characteristics, including inadequate access to care, poor quality of care, or low income.
- **Pharmacist eCare Plan (PeCP)** - An interoperable standard that allows for pharmacy technology providers to have a common method of exchanging information related to care delivery, including patient goals, health concerns, active medication lists, drug therapy problems, laboratory results, vitals, payer information, and billing for services.
- **Users** – An individual or entity that interfaces with the platform in any way, including delivery organizations, program participants, payers, employers, partners, and states/national organizations.
- **Vendors** – The entities selling technology platforms to CDC-funded recipients.

Appendix B. Sample Program Delivery Evaluation Matrix

The matrix below provides potential considerations for selecting a vendor and should be tailored to fit organizational priorities and requirements.

<i>Criteria</i>	Vendor 1	Score 1-5	Vendor 2	Score 1-5
Mode of Delivery	<i>Example. Virtual and Live In-person Coaching or Instruction</i>	5	<i>Example. Live In-Person Only Coaching or Instruction</i>	2
Language(s)				
Coaches				
Technology				
Costs				
Payment Method*				
Marketing				
Referral Process/ Enrollment				
Class Availability				
Class Size				
Class Makeup				
Class Design				
Participation				
Incentives				
Noteworthy Features				
Privacy/Safety				
Reporting				
<i>Total:</i>	Score: Vendor 1		Score: Vendor 2	

*See Appendix C and D for assistance with evaluating the payment methods that vendors offer.

Scores	Explanation of Score
1	Strongly Unfavorable
2	Unfavorable
3	Neutral
4	Favorable
5	Strongly Favorable

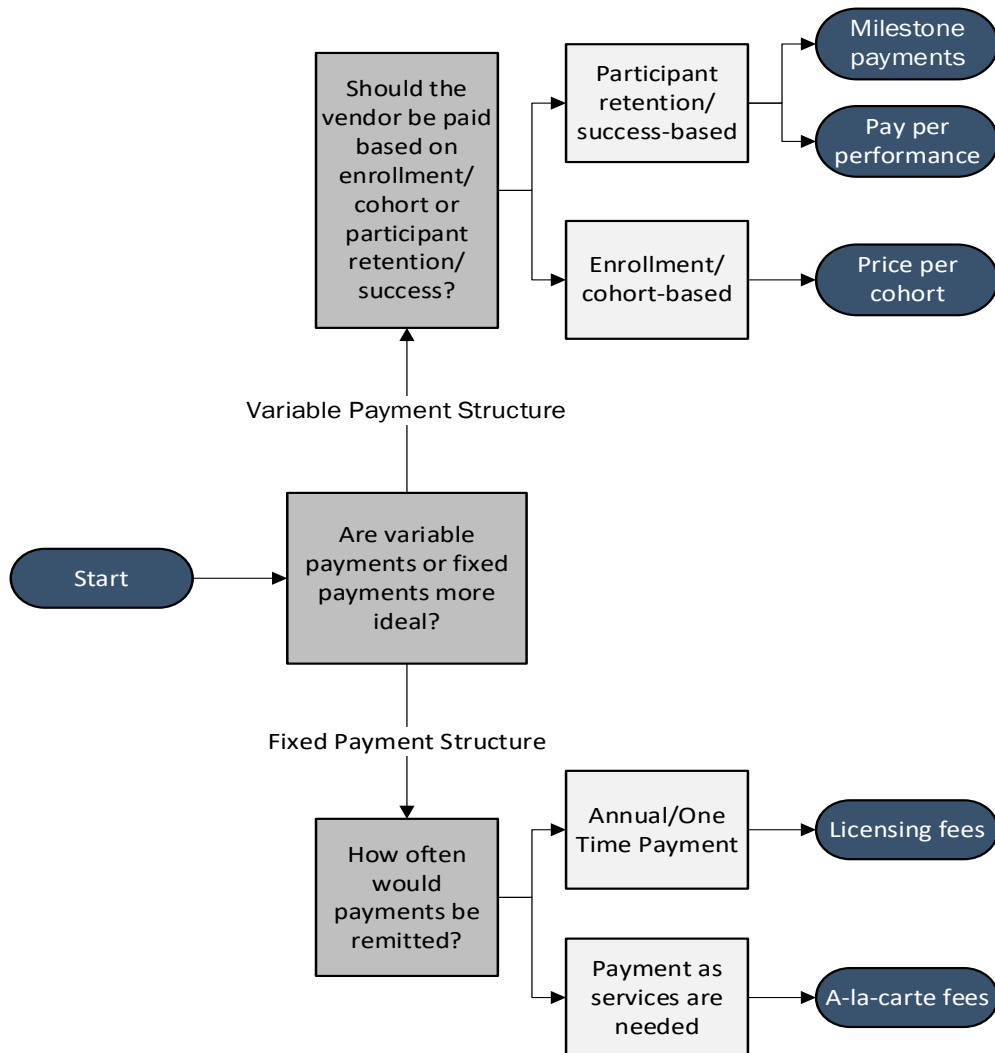
Appendix C. Sample Cost Pro and Con Matrix



The below matrix should be used as a baseline for considering various fee types and payment models. The availability of these options varies across vendors and is dependent on platform requirements.

Cost Type	Definition	Sample Pros (Advantages)	Sample Cons (Disadvantages)
A-la-carte	Costs for specific features or services required by the purchaser.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexibility to add or remove features and services as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Features and services may be more expensive when not packaged together.
Milestone payments	Payments are remitted based on successful completion of predetermined targets or dates (e.g., 80% of participant retention participants after 6 months).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vendor will be held accountable for meeting the targets; payments will be reduced or not remitted unless targets are met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to reach targets could be impacted by conditions outside of the vendor's control (e.g., COVID-19 restrictions).
Price per participant cohort payments	Payments are remitted based on the number of participant cohorts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrollment targets will be met before funds are distributed to vendors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants might enroll but not be retained throughout the program. Some cohorts may have low enrollments.
Pay for performance	Payments are remitted based on the vendor's ability to meet predetermined participant success targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures participant success targets are met before payments are distributed to the vendors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vendor and purchaser may disagree on acceptable performance targets. Participant success is influenced by factors outside the vendor's control.
Yearly or monthly licensing fees	Payments made for the right or ability to use a property or asset for a given period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs are easier to track and budget for. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payment is not influenced by performance.

Appendix D. Sample Billing Considerations Flowchart

The flowchart below can be used when determining which payment model best suits organizational priorities. The final cost structure will likely have variations of multiple fee types. Additionally, the availability of different payment models varies between vendors and is influenced by platform requirements.



Key	
Start/End	
Decision	
Process	