Individual Service Level (ISL) Validation Test Plan Companion Guide

A step-by-step guide from preparation to a signed, technical go-live decision

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This guide walks your county through the Individual Service Level (ISL) Validation Test Plan workbook, from preparation to a signed technical go-live decision. Keep it open beside the workbook and use the table of contents to jump to each step in the process.

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Section Finder

#	Section	Use it when you need to
1	Before You Start	Know who is involved and finish the pre-work
2	The Workbook at a Glance	Understand the four tabs and how they connect
3	Step-by-Step Workflow	See the order of use from preparation to approval
4	Test Phases	Find a phase, its test IDs, and exit criteria
5	Running a Test	Complete a test row correctly
6	Logging and Resolving Defects	Log, fix, retest, and close a defect
7	Reading the Executive Summary	Check readiness and the GO / NO GO result
8	How the Automatic Calculations Work	Understand how GO / NO GO, phase statuses, metrics, and prompts are calculated
9	Go-Live Sign-Off	Collect approvals and confirm final readiness
10	Quick Reference	Look up a status, the defect lifecycle or workbook rules
11	Resources and Where to Get Help	Find DHCS resources and where to send questions

Section 1. Before You Start

Complete the pre-work below before running any test. The configuration tests compare your EHR against it, so testing cannot begin without it.

Role	Responsibility
County testers and validators	Run each test case, record results, and log defects
QA lead	Oversees test execution and defect follow-up
Fix owners	Resolve logged defects by the target fix date
Project leads and steering committee	Review readiness on the Executive Summary
Behavioral Health Director, County ISL Business Lead, County IT/EHR Lead, Billing/Fiscal Representative	Sign the Go-Live Readiness Sign Off

Pre-work

- ☐ Fill in the Executive Summary header: County, EHR system, Test Cycle, Go-Live Target Date, Prepared By and Date
- ☐ Program Inventory Exercise #1: review current EHR programs active in FY 26/27 across the four ISL dimensions, with start / stop / continue flags and notes
- ☐ Program Inventory Exercise #2: review FY 26/27 programs not yet in the EHR (programs to be added) the same way
- ☐ Program Inventory Exercise #3: assign the ISL codes to each program
- ☐ Confirm Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) ISL Reporting Portal accounts are set up for your testers

Section 2. The Workbook At a Glance

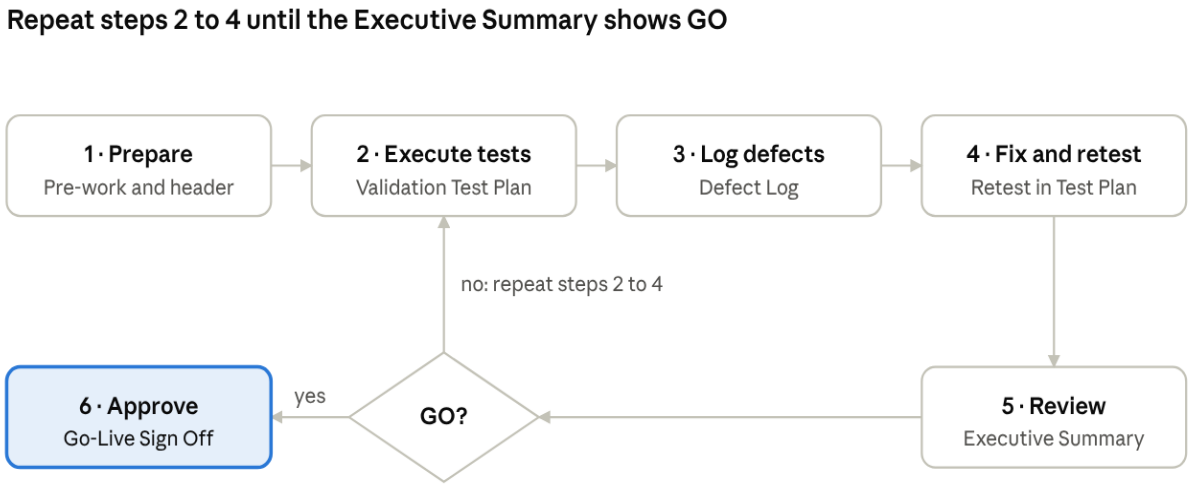
The workbook follows one path: plan and run the tests, log defects, review readiness, then approve go-live. The Workbook Overview tab repeats this guidance inside the file.

Tab	Purpose	You enter	It produces
Validation Test Plan	Master list of all 39 test cases across 8 phases	Status, validator's name, validation date, comments, key risks	A pass / fail record for every test
Defect Log_ Resolution Tracker	Tracks each failed or blocked test to a verified fix	Test ID (from dropdown), description, date, severity, root cause, fix details	A traceable record of every defect
Executive Summary	Readiness dashboard, almost fully automatic	Header block, comments, summary line	Phase statuses, metrics and a GO / NO GO recommendation
Tech Go-Live Readiness Sign Off	Formal approval to go live	Four names, signatures, and dates	Signed go-live authorization

Results flow automatically: test statuses and open Critical / High defects feed the Executive Summary, and its GO / NO GO appears in the last row of the Test Plan. The Sign Off is the only manual hand-off.

Section 3. Step-by-Step Workflow

Follow these six steps in order. Repeat steps 2 to 5 until the Executive Summary shows GO.



ISL validation workflow · 6 steps, 1 decision

1. **Prepare.** Complete the pre-work in Before You Start.
2. **Execute tests.** Work through the Validation Test Plan phase by phase and record each result.
3. **Log defects.** For every failed or blocked test, add a row to the defect log.
4. **Fix and retest.** Fix owners resolve the defect; testers rerun the test and set it to Passed.
5. **Review.** Check phase statuses, metrics, key risks, and the GO / NO GO on the Executive Summary.
6. **Approve.** Once the result is GO, or leadership formally accepts the remaining risks, collect the four sign-off signatures.

Section 4. Test Phases

The Test Plan holds 39 test cases in eight phases. Each phase ends with an Exit Criteria row; set its status once the phase is complete.

Phase	Test IDs	Tests	Owner	Systems	Exit Criteria (summary)
Configuration	TC-CFG-001 to 005	5	County	EHR	Programs, ISL codes, taxonomies, NPIs and required fields configured with no critical defects
Preparation	TC-PREP-001	1	County	DHCS ISL Reporting	All users can access the portal with correct upload /

Phase	Test IDs	Tests	Owner	Systems	Exit Criteria (summary)
				Portal	download permissions
Functional	TC-FUNC-001 to 007	7	County	EHR	Create, edit, and report services work; non-Medi-Cal, locked-out, and denied services route to ISL
Bulk Upload	TC-BULK-001 to 004	4	County	EHR	Valid and invalid files process as expected; corrected files reprocess cleanly
Reporting	TC-RPT-001 to 005	5	County Reporting	EHR, DHCS ISL Reporting Portal	Extracts generate, pass JSON validation, upload, process, and download successfully
Replacement Processing	TC-REPL-001 to 005	5	County Reporting	EHR, DHCS ISL Reporting Portal	Corrected encounters generate valid Replace transactions that supersede originals
Void Processing	TC-VOID-001 to 006	6	County Reporting	EHR, DHCS ISL Reporting Portal	Void transactions process and remove prior submissions; voided encounters can be re-identified
Reconciliation	TC-REC-001 to 006	6	County / County Reporting	EHR, DHCS ISL Reporting Portal	EHR data, submissions, replacements, and voids fully reconcile with no unexplained variances

Reconciliation tests sit in the plan right after the step they check: TC-REC-001 to 003 after Reporting, TC-REC-004 after Replacement, and TC-REC-005 and 006 after Void. They still roll up to their own Reconciliation phase, whose Exit Criteria row comes just before the final Go-Live Readiness row.

Section 5. Running a Test

Each row of the Validation Test Plan is one test. Complete it in this order:

1. Filter the table to the phase you are testing (filter only; do not sort).
2. Confirm the pre-conditions are met.
3. Follow the test steps and compare the outcome with the expected results.
4. Pick a status from the dropdown: Passed, Failed or Blocked. Leave Not Started until the test is run.
5. Enter the Validator's Name and Validation Date.
6. If the test failed or is blocked, describe the failure in Comments. The Defect Log Action column will prompt you to log it.
7. Complete key risks if accepted without passed status, so leaders understand the impact of waiving the test.
8. When the phase is finished, set the status on its Exit Criteria row.

Not Applicable is allowed only for bulk upload tests TC-BULK-001 to 004. On any other test it is highlighted red, does not count as passed, and keeps the decision at NO GO.

Section 6. Logging and Resolving Defects

Every failed or blocked test becomes a defect on the Defect Log and stays there permanently, even after the test passes. Grey columns fill in automatically; do not type over them.

1. **Log it.** On the next empty Defect Log row, pick the Test ID from the dropdown. It lists only failed or blocked tests not yet logged. Defect ID, Phase, Test Scenario, Owner, System, Status (Open), and the retest columns fill in.
2. **Describe it.** Type the defect description and date identified (highlighted yellow until filled).
3. **Rate and assign it.** Pick a severity (critical, high, medium, or low), then add root cause, target fix date, and retest required (Y/N).
4. **Fix it.** Pick In Progress from the status dropdown while the fix is under way.
5. **Retest it.** Rerun the test and set it to passed in the test plan. The defect status changes to Resolved and retest status to Passed.
6. **Record the fix.** Describe what was fixed in Resolution / Notes (highlighted yellow until filled).
7. **Close it.** Select Closed only after the retest has passed and the fix is recorded.

Keep in mind:

- Resolved defects still count toward open critical / high totals until you select Closed.
- Picking In Progress or Closed replaces the automatic status on that row, so it no longer updates itself.
- If a test fails again after passing, it will not appear in the dropdown. Type its Test ID on a new row and accept the warning.

- The log holds 26 rows. Extend the table if you need more.

Section 7. Reading the Executive Summary

The workbook recommends GO only when every test case has passed. The Executive Summary calculates this for you; you review it rather than type in it.

Section	What to check	Target
Phase Status Summary	Status and key risk for each of the 8 phases	Every phase passed
Metrics	Tests executed, passed, failed, and blocked	39 executed and passed, less one per Bulk Upload test marked Not Applicable; 0 failed or blocked
Metrics	Open critical and high defects (not Closed)	0
Metrics	Replace, Void and Reconciliation success rates	100% each
Go Live Readiness	Overall readiness percentage	100%
Go Live Readiness	GO / NO GO suggestion	GO
Test Cases Allowed as Not Applicable	Status of TC-BULK-001 to 004	Passed or Not Applicable

How GO / NO GO is decided

- Every test case must be passed; TC-BULK-001 to 004 marked Not Applicable count as passed.
- Exit Criteria rows and the Go-Live Readiness row are not counted in the pass rate.
- Any other test marked Not Applicable keeps the result at NO GO.

The full logic behind every calculation is in How the Automatic Calculations Work.

Open critical / high defects and the sign-off signatures are not part of the automatic result. Check both before authorizing go-live. Add narrative in the Comments column and the Summary line for leadership.

Section 8. How the Automatic Calculations Work

Testers type only a status and their notes; the workbook calculates everything else. This section explains each calculation so your county can trust and explain the results.

8.1. GO / NO GO Decision

The recommendation is GO only when the overall readiness percentage reaches 100%. Otherwise, it is NO GO.

Overall Readiness = (Test cases passed + TC-BULK-001 to 004 marked Not Applicable) ÷ All test cases with a Test ID (39)

- Only rows with a Test ID count. Exit Criteria rows and the Go-Live Readiness row are excluded.
- The total stays at 39. An allowed Not Applicable test is counted as passed rather than removed.
- A Not Applicable status on any other test counts as not passed, so readiness stays below 100%.
- Open critical / high defects, Exit Criteria rows, and signatures do not affect the result. Review them separately before approving.
- The result is copied into the status of the Test Plan's final Go-Live Readiness row, shown green for GO and red for NO GO.

8.2. Phase Status

Each phase status looks at the phase's test cases plus its Exit Criteria row. The checks run in this order, and the first one that applies sets the status:

1. **Failed** if any row in the phase is Failed.
2. **Blocked** if any row is Blocked.
3. **Not Applicable** if every test is an allowed Not Applicable and the Exit Criteria row is passed or Not Applicable.
4. **Passed** if every row is passed, including the Exit Criteria row. Allowed Not Applicable tests count as passed.
5. **Not Started** if every row is Not Started or blank.
6. **In Progress** in every other case, including partly finished, In Progress or Deferred rows.

The Key Risk column joins each test's entry in key risks if accepted without passed status, as "Test ID: risk." It shows "None identified" when the phase has no entries.

8.3. Executive Summary Metrics

Metric	How it is calculated	Desired outcome
Total Test Cases Executed	Test cases with Status Passed, Failed, Blocked, or In Progress	39, less one per allowed Not Applicable
Passed	Test cases with Status Passed	39, less one per allowed Not Applicable

Metric	How it is calculated	Desired outcome
Failed / Blocked	Test cases with that Status	0
Open Defects (Critical / High)	Defect Log rows with that Severity, a Status other than Closed, and a Retest Status other than Not Applicable	0
Replace / Void / Reconciliation Success Rate	Passed tests in that phase divided by all tests in that phase; Exit Criteria rows excluded	100%
Test Cases Allowed as Not Applicable	Looks up the scenario and current Status of TC-BULK-001 to 004	Passed or Not Applicable

8.4. Defect Log Automation

Column	What it does
Test ID	Dropdown of Failed or Blocked tests not yet logged; shows “None” when there are none
Defect ID	Numbers each logged row D-001, D-002, and onward
Phase, Test Scenario, Owner, System	Copied from the Test Plan by Test ID; shows “Test ID not found” if there is no match
Current Test Status	The test’s live status in the Test Plan; blank shows as Not Started
Status	Resolved when Current Test Status is Passed, otherwise Open; picking In Progress or Closed replaces the automatic value
Retest Status	Passed when the test passes; Not Applicable when TC-BULK-001 to 004 is set to Not Applicable; otherwise Pending retest
Highlights	Defect Description and Date Identified turn yellow until filled; Resolution / Notes turns yellow once the test passes and stays yellow until the fix is recorded

8.5. Test Plan Prompts

The Defect Log Action column shows one of three results for each test:

- **Log this defect in the Defect Log** when the status is Failed or Blocked and the Test ID is not yet on the log.
- **Passed - enter the fix in Defect Log Resolution / Notes** when the status is Passed and its logged defect has no Resolution / Notes.

- **Blank** in every other case.

Section 9. Go-Live Sign-Off

Sign the Tech. Go-Live Readiness Sign Off tab only after the Executive Summary shows GO, or after leadership documents acceptance of any open risks. Each approver enters name, signature and date.

- ☐ Executive Summary shows GO, or risk acceptance is documented
- ☐ No open critical or high defects remain
- ☐ Behavioral Health Director signed
- ☐ County ISL Business Lead signed
- ☐ County IT/EHR Lead signed
- ☐ Billing/Fiscal Representative signed
- ☐ Completed workbook saved as the go-live authorization record

Section 10. Quick Reference

Test statuses

Status	Meaning
Passed	Expected result met
Failed	Expected result not met; log it on the Defect Log
Blocked	Test cannot run because of a dependency or open defect; log it on the Defect Log
In Progress / Deferred	Run under way or postponed
Not Started (or blank)	Not yet run
Not Applicable	Allowed only for TC-BULK-001 to 004

Phase status on the dashboard: Failed if any test failed; otherwise Blocked if any is blocked; Passed when every row, including Exit Criteria, has passed; Not Started when nothing has run; otherwise In Progress.

Defect lifecycle: Open → In Progress → Resolved → Closed. Open and Resolved set themselves; you pick In Progress and Closed.

Rules to keep the workbook accurate

- Always pick Status and Severity from the dropdowns. Other wording is not counted.
- Type Test IDs exactly, with no extra spaces.
- Do not rename tabs, tables, or column headers; the dashboard depends on them.

- Do not sort the Test Plan. Filtering and adding rows are safe.
- Do not type over the grey formula columns on the Defect Log.

Section 11. Resources and Where to Get Help

Use these Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) resources alongside this guide.

Remember

DHCS resources are the official source for ISL requirements. This resource adds practical tips and examples to support ISL code selection and reporting.

- ISL Code Library and Encounter Fields
- ISL Encounter Reporting Guidance
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about ISL
- DHCS ISL Portal (county login required): technical specification documentation and portal resources

Where to Get Help

When in doubt, check with your county's ISL point of contact. Counties may submit ISL questions to CalMHSA through the ISL ticket form (https://www.calmhsa.org/isl-ticket/).