

CASE STUDY

St. Joseph County Government

A county government moves from benefits administration fire drills to a system HR can trust.



selerix✓

Company Overview

ORGANIZATION

St. Joseph County
Government

INDUSTRY

Public Sector / County
Government

LOCATION

South Bend, Indiana

POPULATION SUPPORTED

Approximately 1,300 active employees, 300 retirees, and 700–800 dependents and spouses — more than 2,000 people overall.

SELERIX SOLUTIONS

BenSelect, Engage, ACA Services

St. Joseph County Government manages benefits for a workforce almost as varied as the community it serves. In addition to roughly 1,300 active employees, the HR team supports retirees, dependents, spouses, seasonal workers, and part-time employees with differing eligibility and benefit options. That complexity makes having the right benefits administration partner especially important.



“It’s the wow factor of somebody that actually takes your personal needs into account. It’s face-to-face, person-to-person, knowing exactly what we needed.”

Blaine Tiller | St. Joseph County HR





The Challenge

For years, the St. Joseph County HR team kept a reminder posted on the wall of their office in South Bend, Indiana:

Be the thermostat, not the thermometer.

Always set the temperature in the room; don't react to the temperature in the room.

They found themselves needing this advice after meetings with their benefits administration provider. Even after years on the same platform, biweekly calls could leave the team frustrated and stressed. Their representatives changed frequently, and the county had to explain its needs again and again. Instead of making benefits administration easier, the relationship was creating more work for a team already responsible for supporting more than 2,000 employees, retirees, spouses, and dependents.

The county estimated that benefit reconciliation alone consumed five or more hours every week, — and that's before accounting for troubleshooting and employee support.

The strain became especially visible around open enrollment. In the year leading up to the switch, benefits work consumed so much of the team's capacity that taking vacation or simply stepping away became difficult. Work-life balance suffered.

The problem wasn't that St. Joseph County expected benefits administration to be simple. Its workforce and benefit rules genuinely are complex.

For HR, the issue had become bigger than technology. What they needed was a system — and a partner — capable of handling that complexity without continually handing it back to them.

By the fall of 2024, they were ready for something different.

The Partnership

St. Joseph County's relationship with Selerix began at an Association of Indiana Counties event in September 2024. The county knew its current benefits administration experience wasn't sustainable, and the team wanted to explore alternatives as soon as open enrollment was over.

But making a change of this size still required confidence.

One of the things that helped came from an unexpected source: other Indiana HR teams. County HR leaders across the state participate in an informal email group where they share resources, ask questions, and compare experiences. Shortly after St. Joseph County began talking with Selerix, another municipality asked the group whether anyone had worked with the company.

More importantly, the feedback wasn't generic. Other public-sector teams talked about specific problems the partnership had helped them solve, including issues that had been persistent pain points before the relationship began.

For a county government accountable for both service quality and taxpayer dollars, that kind of peer validation mattered. So did the cost: the Selerix contract ultimately came in below what St. Joseph County had been paying for its previous benefits administration platform.

By spring 2025, the county was ready to move forward.

**About a dozen responses came back.
Not one was negative.**

"It wasn't everybody just saying. Yep, they're great. It was people saying. They really helped us figure that out. or This had always been a problem, and now it's fixed."

Blaine Tiller | St. Joseph County HR

The Solution

Implementation began in April, with St. Joseph County, Selerix, and the county's Board of Commissioners' working toward a July 1 go-live.

The work included benefits administration **through BenSelect, payroll configuration and carrier integrations, Engage for employee communications, and ACA services**. Just as important, the system had to accommodate the county's unusually complex eligibility rules, retiree population, and benefit structures.

An early configuration meeting became a turning point. The county team began walking Selerix through the kinds of scenarios that had historically created friction: spousal carve-outs, different rules for active employees and retirees, full-time versus part-time eligibility, and multiple layers of "if this, then that" logic.

With the previous system, those conversations could become lengthy battles over what the technology could or couldn't accommodate.

This time, Selerix began mapping the logic almost immediately. Within minutes, the team had outlined a path that would allow employees to answer the questions relevant to their situation and be guided automatically toward the benefits available to them.

Blaine compared the eventual employee experience to a choose-your-own-adventure book: employees wouldn't have to understand every rule operating behind the scenes. They could simply follow the path that applied to them.

That moment helped establish something even more important than system capability: **trust**.

Instead of asking St. Joseph County to solve every unusual situation from scratch, Selerix could also draw on experience with other public-sector organizations facing similar challenges.

"I don't need to solve something for the first time. I need to know how your other customers are doing it. They already have the answer. I just want to use it."

Blaine Tiller | St. Joseph County HR

That approach helped St. Joseph County cut down a lot of the work time and stop rework — and also benefit from solutions tested elsewhere.

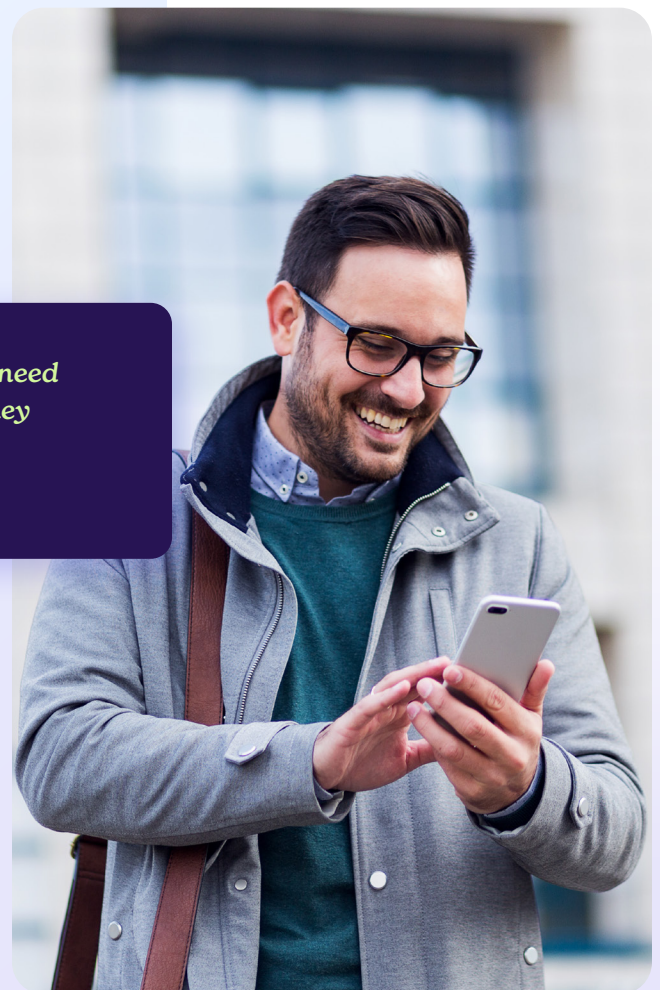
But for St. Joseph County, the most important part of the solution wasn't simply the technology. It was having people behind it who understood how the county actually worked.

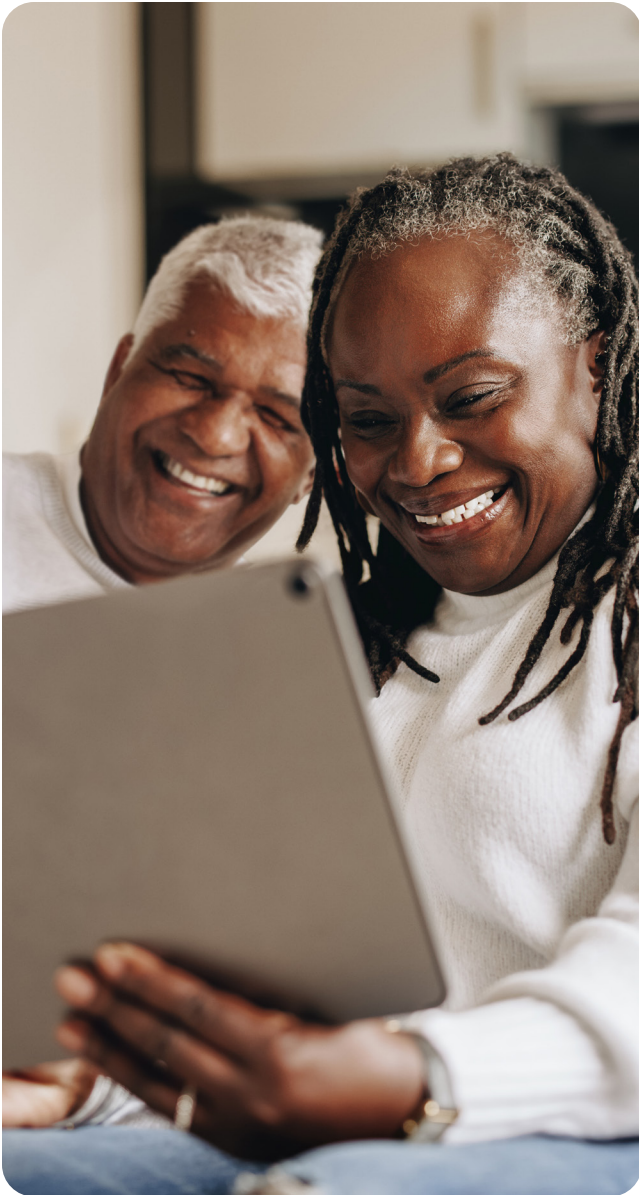
"It's so nice to actually call somebody, and that person says, Yes, I know your account. I know what you have. We've worked on this."



The implementation included:

- Selerix BenSelect benefits administration
- Payroll configuration and carrier integrations
- Support for complex eligibility and retiree rules
- Selerix Engage for employee email and text communication
- ACA services, including support for prior-year and ongoing reporting
- Reporting and data support
- Dedicated implementation and ongoing service





The Results

St. Joseph County wasn't just introducing a new benefits administration platform. That same year, the county also changed insurance brokers and updated its benefit offerings. And because it was an active enrollment, employees and retirees had to log in and make elections.

Blaine describes the year as "controlled chaos." But, he's quick to point out, the enrollment platform itself didn't add to that chaos. Employees responded well to the new experience, and retirees' reaction was particularly meaningful.

Retirees had long been one of HR's biggest concerns. Many were less comfortable navigating digital systems, and the team knew that a poor experience could damage trust that would be difficult to rebuild.

Instead, retirees who contacted HR consistently described BenSelect as intuitive and easy to navigate.

For a team supporting roughly 300 retirees at any given time, that was a significant win.

Behind the scenes, the administrative impact was just as important. Before the switch, the county estimated that benefits reconciliation alone required five or more hours each week. Some manual work remains, but HR says the time required has dropped significantly. When the team compared the amount of time spent per employee before and after the transition, Blaine said it had "nose-dived."

The county is also paying less for its benefits administration platform than before.

Easier access to benefits information and historical records has also helped HR respond more efficiently when employees need help. St. Joseph County's internal HR ticket system now averages a response time of less than an hour, with many straightforward questions handled within minutes.

Because benefits are only one part of an HR team's workload.

"Every retiree that reached out to me said it was very, very intuitive to navigate the different screens and figure out their benefits."

Blaine Tiller | St. Joseph County HR

Results Snapshot

- Lower platform cost than the county's previous benefits administration solution
- Time spent administering benefits per employee dropped sharply
- Successful active open enrollment during a year of major benefits and broker changes
- Strong employee and retiree feedback on ease of navigation
- Internal HR benefits questions now average less than one hour to resolve
- Engage has made year-round employee communication easier to manage
- Less rework around complex eligibility scenarios
- Easier access to information and historical benefits data

**5+ hours
per week**

of manual benefits reconciliation
significantly reduced

300 retirees

successfully transitioned to the new
enrollment experience

The Difference Behind the Technology

The technology solved important problems. But when Blaine talks about what has stood out most, he comes back repeatedly to the people.

By the time implementation was complete, Blaine could call with an employee's name and often find that his dedicated team had already remembered the situation. The Selerix team have also worked closely with the county on reporting and data, including continued conversations about how reporting could be improved ahead of future enrollment cycles.

And when something isn't possible, the county gets a clear answer. That honesty matters.

For a team that had grown accustomed to starting over with new representatives, that continuity has changed the experience.

Blaine says he wouldn't describe it as being "surprised" by Selerix. The better word, he says, is 'wowed'. What has impressed him is the face-to-face problem solving, the memory of the county's needs, and the sense that when something becomes difficult, Selerix treats it as a problem to work through together rather than pushing it back onto HR.

"There hasn't been a time that we haven't felt supported,"

Blaine Tiller | St. Joseph County HR

That support has mattered through more than benefits administration. St. Joseph County itself has experienced significant leadership change during the relationship, making continuity from its external partners even more valuable.

The biggest takeaway is difficult to quantify but easy to recognize:

"Just having that personable, being that honest, being that upfront, and knowing our people — that is huge. It's hard to give that a value, but you just can't oversell it."

Blaine Tiller | St. Joseph County HR



"If there is a constraint, our CSM, Connie, doesn't try to dodge that and give bad expectations. If there is a knowledge question she doesn't know, she doesn't hesitate to state she needs to look into it further and get back with us."

Blaine Tiller | St. Joseph County HR



ST. JOSEPH COUNTY

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Looking Ahead

With the platform in place, St. Joseph County is continuing to refine how it uses reporting, employee communication, and benefits data. The team is already working with Selerix on ways to improve reporting ahead of future enrollment cycles, while Engage gives HR another way to reach employees and retirees without relying on phone calls and one-off outreach.

But the larger transformation has already taken place.

Benefits administration is no longer something the county has to force into a system that doesn't understand its complexity. And HR no longer has to begin every conversation by explaining its account all over again.

The result is exactly what St. Joseph County was looking for when it began searching for another option: a benefits administration system the team can rely on — and a partner that knows them well enough to help when things get complicated.

See how Selerix can help you simplify complex administration, reduce manual work, communicate more effectively, and give your team responsive support they can count on. Contact our team for a tour of the solution.





MAKE THE SWITCH TO SELERIX TODAY

Contact our team to see how your HR department can lead the way in efficiency, compliance, and employee experience.

 [SELERIX.COM](https://www.selerix.com)