TeamBudget FAQs

General Questions

Q: Why is TeamBudget a better system than our current budget system?
A: Our current budget system is less a system and more a patchwork of programs that require significant manual effort to create the budget. It is also based on software that is no longer supported, and there is significant risk of failure in each new year. The new budget system will be able to provide us with a list of authorized positions in the budget, a data set our current systems can't provide. The new system will have significantly better reporting capability. TeamBudget will have collection of reports designed to build, balance, and analyze the budget. In addition, departments will have much greater access to the raw budget data allowing for more ad-hoc and customized reporting.

Q: When will TeamBudget be ready? When will we have access and when will it be open for FY 2015 budgeting?
A: Training on the system for DCA users will begin in September and will go live in October. Countywide training will begin in November with go-live coinciding with the Big Release in mid-December.

User Involvement

Q: How is the Core Team integrating advisory teams and users into the system development? Will the technical team and other stakeholders see and provide feedback before the system is finalized and implemented?
A: We are doing this in several ways. At the beginning of the project, we formed a Business Advisory Team in order to provide input and direction to the project. This team consists of Julie Neburka, Les Walker and Wanda Yantis. We meet with the Business Advisory Team every two weeks to update them on project progress and get input into various issues. We also did a walkthrough with representatives from each of the departments in November and another in May. We have acted on some of the input we received from those sessions. We are planning on continuing our integration with the Technical Team to help refine the system, develop training materials, and develop reports.

Q: Do you expect us to do parallel processing for testing purposes?
A: We will not be doing parallel testing, but will begin system training earlier in the budget process and will provide more extensive training than for our current system.

Training and Technical Support plans

Q: What is the plan for training?
A: Training curriculums and plans are under development. Currently our plan is to offer specific trainings dependent on the user type, as well as to have user group forums and updated FAQs.
Q: What is the plan for technical support?
A: As with any new IT application, we are developing a formal support plan. We don't have all of the details yet, but for any technical issues with the system, you would call the help desk and the help desk would route the issue appropriately. The budget office will be responsible for maintaining security, master data and configuration. Some requests, such as for new user accounts, or user account changes, will go directly to the budget office. We are still defining specific processes for handling such requests, and we will communicate details before we go live.

Q: How much training will managers need to enter programs?

A: For the narrative portions of a program offer, TeamBudget has been configured to resemble the webtool to the highest degree possible. We anticipate that a program manager who does not enter budget or position detail into the system, initial training will be less than a day and likely similar in length to the webtool trainings.

Q: Will there be an internal document with Central Budget Office and department user duties?

A: Yes, documentation is being created for both administrators and end users. Some of this documentation will be embedded in the system in the help menus, some will come from Questica and much will be internally developed.

Q: Will there be a Budget user group to share learning and collectively address issues as they arise during the budget process?

A: We are looking to create a user forum and FAQ to help share information across the county.

System Availability and Access

Q: What platform is it on (i.e. are there web access/firewall issues)? Will the system be available remotely?

A: TeamBudget is a web-based Microsoft .NET application. It will run on Multnomah County servers. TeamBudget will be available from outside the firewall over the Internet. Whether you are accessing TeamBudget inside or outside the firewall, you will log in using your network login credentials.

Q: Is the system available 24/7 or are there time restrictions on its use?

A: In general the system will be available 24/7. Technical support will only be provided during standard working hours. There may be times when the system needs to be taken down for maintenance, but these would be infrequent and communicated well in advance.

Q: Are there restrictions on how many people can use the system at once?

A: There are no restrictions on the number of people that can use the system at once from a licensing perspective. There is no defined restriction on the number of people that can access it from a technical perspective. There is always a possibility for large numbers of users to affect response time, but we don't anticipate any significant issues related to that, since the overall number of TeamBudget users will be relatively small.

Security

Q: How are security/roles working out? What are the defined roles (permissions) and how will they be assigned?

A: TeamBudget has fairly robust security capabilities and can be individually tailored to departments. We are still determining what all the security roles will be, largely around positions, but in general there will be three primary security roles: those who can create the budget, those who can submit the budget, and those who can view the budget. The specifics within those roles and who is assigned to those roles will be developed based off department requests.

Data

Q: What data comes over from SAP? How does data initially get into the system?

A: For the go-live we will do an initial load of positions, employees, and employee to position allocations from SAP. TeamBudget will also be loaded with relevant master data from SAP, including cost objects, cost elements, funds, departments, and JCNs. We will give departments advance warning before pulling this data so that any corrections can be made.

Q: When building program offers will we have to start fresh each year, or will TeamBudget populate program offers for the upcoming year?
A: Beginning in year two, we will be rolling over program offers from the prior year with all of the prior year's data including the narratives, expenditure and revenue information, and position allocations.

Q: Will the system load both filled and vacant positions from the prior year?
A: Yes, all authorized positions in the budget will be copied over.

Q: Does the system talk to SAP and, if so, how often?
A: Once team budget is up and running, we will refresh TeamBudget with updated employee and employee to position allocations from SAP once per year at the beginning of each budget cycle. In year one positions will be loaded from SAP, but from then on will be maintained in TeamBudget. After the budget is adopted, it will be loaded from TeamBudget back to SAP in the same way that it is today.
We will also load summary-level actual cost data from SAP to TeamBudget each period. This will include expenditure and revenue detail by cost object by cost element by period.

Q: Will the FY 2014 adopted budget be pre-loaded in the TeamBudget system for the go live of the 2015 budget process?
A: The expenditure, revenue and summary FTE detail will be loaded into TeamBudget through tables in the database. We will not be loading in program offers, narratives, or position detail.

Reporting

Q: Will end users have access to summary and balancing reports?
A: Yes. We are in the process of developing a suite of reports that will be accessible to all users of the system that will include summary and balancing reports. In addition to summary and balancing reports, end users will also have access to raw data reports allowing for adhoc reporting.

Q: What standard reports will be available and will we be able to use a reporting tool to create nonstandard reports?
A: We are creating a myriad of reports from high level summary down to raw data dumps to be used in Excel. Due to security limitations we might not be able to give departments access to ad hoc reporting tools within the system, though the raw data reports should provide that ad hoc reporting capability. We will be continually working with departments to determine how we can improve and expand upon the reports.

Special Features – Granted!

Q: Is there note capability for each of the entries so that we can go back and see why changes were made?
A: Yes, notes and document attachments are available at both the program offer and line item level.

Q: Is there a sandbox?
A: For system development purposes, there are multiple environments of TeamBudget, though these are only accessible by administrators. For departments there is a sandbox phase in which departments can create budget documents without submitting.

Q: Can we enter data through imports to save time?
A: Yes, TeamBudget has an import and export tool based in Excel.

Q: Can we restrict users' access to just the program offer section (meaning, they can't edit budget data)?
A: Yes, we can restrict user access to a fairly granular level. As we work with departments to set up their security roles we will go through the security capabilities.

Budget Process:

Q: Will TeamBudget replace department spreadsheets and/or databases?
A: The intent of TeamBudget is to create a system robust enough that departments can build and monitor their budgets without having to create and maintain shadow systems. There are areas, such as building rates that the system was not designed to do and so some department spreadsheets and databases will still be necessary.

Q: Can we start earlier than we normally would?
A: There are limitations as to how early we can let departments start building their budgets as information such as insurance rates, internal services rates, central indirect rates, cola amounts, etc. are not available until shortly before the big release. We do anticipate starting training earlier than in previous years to help ease the process.

Q: Should we plan to prep our own files for budget development (i.e., should we prepare our budgets "in parallel")?
A: We will be working with Business Managers in August to help develop department's business processes. In the first year some department's may find it helpful to maintain a parallel process and reassess their process in subsequent years.

Internal Services

Q: Will internal service details (fleet descriptions, telecom equipment counts, etc) be available in Team Budget?
A: TeamBudget allows for Excel spreadsheets to be attached within program offers, but this detail will not be explicit within the system.

Q: Can we use the system to actually build rates?
A: No, you will still need to use your current models to build the rates.

Benefits and Indirect

Q: Can TeamBudget assign/track shift differentials, and other types of premium pay? Will we be able to link premium pay to specific positions? Will we be able to auto calculate premium pay? Can TeamBudget calculate fringe and insurance for temporary positions?
A: TeamBudget has a couple of ways to budget for this type of detail, though in the initial implementation we are looking to keep the system as simple as possible. These types of functions are a possibility in phase two.

Q: How are fringe and insurance tables updated?
A: The budget office maintains these tables.

Budget Policy

Q: Will we continue to scale offers that exceed $3.5 million general fund threshold?
A: Yes, the threshold is in place more to give policy makers flexibility and less a function of the budget system.

Q: Does position control need to be implemented in the first year or can it be added in a future budget process?
A: Position Management will need to be implemented in the first year as it is necessary to create a list of approved positions in the budget. There are no plans to implement full position control in the first year.