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Understanding Program Offers

This volume contains program offers submitted by departments and funded in the budget. Each section is separated by department or division and contains the following items, in order:

- Introduction to the department, a department budget overview, budget trends summary, and a budget summary by division.
- Division narratives including significant changes by division.
- List of all of program offers in the department.
- The department's program offers.

Program offers form the basis for the County's budget process. The offers constitute a department's budget request and provide information to the Board of County Commissioners so they can select programs that best serve the community.

Program offers are labeled with a five digit document number and title (e.g. 50005 - DCJ Human Resources). Throughout the budget document, readers will see references to program offers by number and/or title. To find a program offer that is referenced in this document, go to the department's section in Volume 2; the program offers are listed in numerical order.

What Makes a Good Program Offer

A good program offer explicitly shows the relationship between the program and the desired results for services. Program offers should:

- Describe how they will make a significant contribution.
- Show why the County's spending on this program is effective.
- Show evidence the program can deliver and measure its results.
- Give accurate performance measures to track the program's contributions.
- Link the offer to the policy direction/frameworks.
- Describe program activities in layperson's terms.

Program offers are not about funding programs simply because they already exist – they are about outcomes. They emphasize meeting the County's goals, not preserving the government status quo. The following pages describe the configuration of each program offer and the major types of information each should contain.

Anatomy of a Program Offer

Executive Summary & Description

In Multnomah County's budget, a "program" is an organizational unit that provides services to the public or to other County departments/divisions. Program offer documents explain all aspects of the program through the following sections: executive summary and description, performance measures, legal and contractual mandates, revenue/expense detail, explanation of revenues, and significant program changes.

The program executive summary should briefly and clearly explain the activities in the program offer. The description should describe how the program will support department strategies or known County policy frameworks. If the offer represents a change in current practice (e.g. a reorganization or change in staffing levels, service hours, etc.), it should briefly describe the nature of that change. The description should cite research, experience, or logic to convincingly make the case for program selection. New programs should note how the department created program cost estimates.

"I have no data yet. It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories instead of theories to suit facts."

~Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes

Performance Measures

Performance measures are organized in a table in each program offer. The table identifies the type of measure, the measure's definition, and measure results. Where available, the table reports history, annualized current service level estimates (what's being delivered at the time of printing), and anticipated target service level for the upcoming year. Additional supporting information, such as explanations of notable performance changes, are located in the narrative section below the table. Every program offer includes two to four performance measures indicating the level of service expected if the program is selected. Two types of measures are required: the output, which represents the volume of work, and the outcome, which represents the measurable results of that work. For example, a hypothetical addictions treatment program for teenage girls might report the number of girls who received treatment (output), and the percentage of teenage girls who achieved sobriety and completed their treatment plan upon exit (outcome).

Departments may also include additional measures to further illustrate a program's performance, such as resource measures (inputs other than staffing or finances) and measures of service quality/efficiency. Using the addictions treatment example, inputs might be reported as the number of treatment beds available. Quality could be reported as the percent of teenage girls that rate counseling staff as engaging and supportive, and efficiency might be reported as the cost for each successful treatment completion.

Legal and Contractual Mandates

Many program offers will be constrained by legal or contractual mandates. If a program offer is affected by a mandate, the mandate and its authorizing document (a statute, contract, etc.) should be noted.

Revenue/Expense Detail (Program Costs)

This area shows the cost to the County of providing the program, as well as the revenues generated by the program for its support. These costs include personnel, contracted services, materials and supplies and internal services.

Explanation of Revenues

This section explains how non-General Fund (Other Funds) revenues or General Fund fee revenues were estimated. Revenue estimates should clearly demonstrate the reasonableness of the estimate.

Significant Program Changes

This section details significant programmatic changes that affect the program - not financial changes up or down. Such changes might include:

- Increases or decreases in the scope or level of services.
- Increases or decreases in net personnel resources (FTE's).
- Revenue increases or decreases.
- Impacts to other departments and/or service delivery programs.

In this section you will also find a reference from this year's program offer to its predecessor in the previous year, if applicable. (Note that program offer numbering can change between fiscal years.)

Types of Programs

Program offers are categorized based on the “type” of services they deliver. Program offers fall into one of the following groups:

- Administration
- Support
- Operating Program
- New/Innovative Program
- Program Alternative/Reconstruction
- Internal Service
- Revenue

Administration

Department or division level management and related expenses (e.g. office space, supplies, telephones, etc.) Direct program supervision is considered to be a part of the operating program (NOT administration), and could be included in the operating program’s offer.

Support

An activity in a department that provides services directly to some or all operating programs within a department. Examples include the Health Department’s pharmacy, which supports the various health clinics; the Library’s Technical Services, which maintains the Library’s materials and catalog systemwide; or the District Attorney’s Human Resources unit.

Operating Program

An “on the ground” activity of the County. Includes front-line supervisors/ program managers with specific responsibilities for particular operating programs. For example, the Health Department’s Primary Care Clinics.

New/Innovative

“On the ground” or support activity the County currently does not perform.

Program Alternative or Reconstruction

A current or former program with changes to operations, different providers, or with different business models than in the previous year.

Internal Service

Programs that support countywide operations. Examples include Fleet or Information Technology services.

Revenue

Programs used to budget discretionary (primarily General Fund) revenues at the fund level. (Program revenues are budgeted within the applicable program offer.)

Additional Program Details

Program Offer Characteristics

Program offer documents also include information on program characteristics (see below). Program characteristics provide additional information on the type of funding for the program.

A letter at the end of a program offer number indicates a scaled program offer. Scaled offers are a way for the Board to make choices on the size of programs to fund (see next page).

At the top of each program offer, you will see a list of program characteristics (if they are applicable):

Backfill - Backfill is defined as discretionary dollars (General Fund) applied to a program formerly funded by a grant, state, or other dedicated funding source. Explicitly identifying backfill allows the Chair and the Board to decide to partially or fully backfill expiring grants, state, or federal funds with General Fund dollars.

One-Time-Only Resources - In most budget years, the County has a varying amount of one-time-only funds. These funds will not be available in the following years and thus should be spent on projects that do not have (or have minimal) ongoing expenses.

Measure 5 Education Offers - In Oregon we have a constitutional limit on how much real property tax we can spend for educational services. Multnomah County has General Fund revenues which are not derived from real property taxes, and these revenues can be expended on educational services without violating the Constitutional limitation. In order for the County to easily demonstrate that it has complied with the Constitutional limitation, departments can designate a program as a "Measure 5 Education Offer" indicating the program may be funded by non real property tax revenues.

Scaled Program Offers

Program offers represent discrete increments of service and many County programs have the ability to deliver services at varying levels. For example, an alcohol and drug treatment program may be able to offer 100, 150 or 200 beds. Departments were asked, when appropriate, to provide decision-makers with the option to choose from those service levels. Scaled offers are indicated by including an A, B, C, etc at the end of the program offer number. When looking at scaled program offers, one should consider the following definitions:

- Base Level of Service - Program "A" is the base level of service that can be provided while still delivering the expected results. In the example above, the base level of service would be 100 beds.
- Increments of Service - Program "B" (and beyond, e.g. "C", "D") represent incremental levels of service that buy additional outcomes. In the alcohol and drug treatment example, Program "B" could be 50 additional beds, and another, separate increment (Program "C") could be 100 additional beds.