

Understanding Agency Unique Processes

Overview

Purpose

The following questions are provided to agencies preparing for the Personalized Agency Working Sessions to assist in identifying unique processes to be shared with the Florida PALM Project team during the meeting(s). They are not meant to be answered in writing by the agency and provided to the Project team but are to serve as discussion points within the agency to expose areas for later discussion with the Project team during the Personalized Agency Working Sessions.

General Considerations and Differences:

- Agencies and enterprise partners will do business in a single system. A common set of terminology and data definitions is required.
- User access to data and reports is based on roles and business unit security.
- Business events are recorded as part of various business processes.
- Transaction details and balances are recorded in the submodules (e.g., Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable). Accounting entries are generated in the submodules and summarized in the General Ledger module. Some transactions are initiated and managed in the General Ledger module.
- Each transaction is tracked through its lifecycle and described in the business process models.
- Reference identifiers are used to identify specific records, such as a voucher number, supplier number, and deposit number.
- Variations for business processes, transaction populations, and record types are identified and processed in numerous ways in FLAIR. These variations were created to meet specific internal control needs or specific tracking.
- Within some business processes, the key record name changes to account for its lifecycle. For example, a purchase order is recorded as an encumbrance. An invoice is the basis for a voucher.
- Status information and dates are recorded for transactions during the lifecycle. Status information is used to indicate whether the transaction has an error or requires intervention. There can be multiple types of status to consider. For example, a supplier record can have a status to indicate it is ready for use. A voucher status indicates whether it has passed the edit checks or received required approvals.
- Dates are used to indicate when certain activities occurred or assigned. Actual dates are recorded to indicate when the activity occurred, or the information was collected.
- Assigned dates, such as journal dates, may relate to a past, present, or future date. Dates are used for cash and accrual basis reports, and to identify the timing differences.
- The Florida PALM data structure is different from the FLAIR data structure and includes functionality not currently available to agencies (e.g., payment scheduling).
- New functionality includes the ability to load attachments to support transactions.

Chart of Accounts

- What information is your agency capturing by using the following FLAIR data elements? Are external systems reliant upon these values? How are these values used for reporting purposes?
 - Organization
 - Grant
 - Project
 - OCA
 - Revenue Category
 - State program (6-Digit Subclassification Only)
 - External General Ledger
 - External Object Code
 - Time
 - Batch Indicator
 - Agency Unique
 - External Category
 - External Fund
 - Units
- Are your FLAIR data elements smart coded? If so, what is the purpose of this process?
- How often do you perform maintenance and/or clean up on your FLAIR data elements?
- Who within your organization can request the setup of new FLAIR data elements including EOs?
- Who within your organization can request a FLAIR data element to be re-activated?
- Do you have a business system that maintains a crosswalk of FLAIR data elements to specific reporting values for external use?
- Does your agency have any non-CRA revolving or clearing funds? If so, what are their purposes? How does your agency manage these funds?
- How does your agency load FLAIR data elements (i.e., manually, screen scraping, batch upload)?

Budgeting and Cash Management

Budget:

- Does your organization record allotments in FLAIR? If yes, which FLAIR data elements are used?
- If your organization does not use FLAIR allotments functionality, what budget management tools / techniques are used to effectively manage appropriations (e.g., agency business systems, spreadsheets)?
- Does your organization budget check within Departmental FLAIR at any one or more of the following levels? If no, how does your organization handle available balance checking errors?
 - Fund Cash
 - Fund Release
 - Organization Cash
 - Organization Allotment
 - Grant Fund Cash
 - Grant Allotment
 - Contract Allotment
 - Project Fund Cash

- Project Allotment
- Does your agency maintain FLAIR data elements for the purpose of storing unallocated budget (internal agency reserves)?
- When creating a multi-year agreement in FLAIR, how does your agency record encumbrances and/or contracts? Does your agency have a statutory requirement to encumber the entire amount? What FLAIR indicator is used to notate the correct line to be used for the fiscal year?
- What other Fixed Capital Outlay (FCO) activities are reported on outside of the FCO certification process? (Currently, the activities are study, design, land purchase, construction/contingency, equipment, and reserve.)

Cash:

- What tools/techniques, if any, does your organization use outside of FLAIR for cash management purposes?
- What FLAIR data elements do you use to manage cash?
- How does your agency handle cash negatives?
- Does your agency perform expenditure redistributions for cash management purposes?
- What business system(s) or processes outside of FLAIR support your cash and expenditure reconciliation function? What information is transmitted from the business system(s) to and from FLAIR? Can you provide a data flow diagram?

Closing:

- Do you have any unique processes associated with month-end closing and/or year-end closing?
- Do you utilize an agency business to assist with reconciliation effort at month-end and/or year-end?

Receivables and Collection of Funds

Is your agency considering the use of Customers, Receivables – Billing or AR, and Collections in Florida PALM? If not, your agency can enter a summary balance through the GL module. If your agency is considering using the detailed functionality, we ask you to think of unique requirements for these activities which may currently be in an agency business system and not in FLAIR.

Customers:

- What information is important to capture about a customer? Are there statutory requirements?
- Is there data needed by a supporting agency business system? Is any of this data considered sensitive?
- Does your agency need to secure confidential customers within the agency?

Billing/Accounts Receivable:

- What information is important to capture for billing or receivable posting? Are there statutory requirements?
- Is there data needed by a supporting agency business system?
- Are multiple bill formats needed for billing customers?
- What unique accounting events does your agency have when billing or creating an AR? (e.g., prepaid services, deferred revenue)

Collections:

- What type of calculations are needed for late fees? Are there statutory requirements?
- Are multiple formats/templates needed for customer statements or delinquent notices
- Does your agency use external collection agents outside of the statewide collection agencies (e.g., MSB, TSI, UCB, NES)?
- Does your agency participate in the Treasury Offset Program (TOP)?

Disbursements

Suppliers:

- Do you have confidential suppliers? Is the entire supplier confidential or only some pieces of information?
- Are there fields that your agency would want to be included on the supplier record that are not currently in the SWVF?
- What specific field(s) and what would the field(s) be used for?

Vouchers and Encumbrances:

- What cost redistributions do you perform today due to limitation in FLAIR?
- Do you use the Agency Document Number? How is it used today, and will you need it in the future?
- What does your agency encumber today in FLAIR?
- Does your agency have a need to use single pay vouchers?
- How are you storing back-up information for your transactions today?
- Does your agency require multiple level of approvals for vouchers?
- Does your agency require multiple level of approvals for encumbrances?
- Do you have any unique processes for managing your voucher payments?
- Do you have unique processes for journal transfers between agencies or within your agency, i.e. record encumbrances, statutory requirements, etc.

Payments:

- Does your agency print remittance advices upon supplier requests and mail them a hard copy? If yes, if Florida PALM provides the ability to submit the remittance advice to the supplier electronically would there still be a need to print a hard copy of the remittance advice for the supplier?
- Does your agency use Payment Messages today? Can your current Payment Messages be cleaned up? What information needs to be included in your Payment Messages in the future?
- How does your agency use site codes today? Does it have a single use or multiple?
- What is your escheatment process? Are there any payments not escheated to unclaimed property? If so, why?

Payroll

- If your agency has a payroll agency business system, what are you using it for today and why?
- Does your agency have any payroll related business processes that are unique to your agency?

- For your agency business system, other than posting payroll transactions in departmental FLAIR, what else is the agency business system doing for payroll?
- Does your payroll agency business system interact with People First or Highline or only Central FLAIR?
- Are you sending special files to BOSP for payroll? If yes, why?
- Do you have payroll redistribution struggles?
- What are some of your payroll processes that require the most workload?

Projects and Grants

- What type of grants (Federal, State, Private) are you tracking?
- What are the data elements in FLAIR that you use to track grant and project information (e.g., Grant ID, Project ID, ODN, Org Code)? Is the information financial or programmatic? Why are you tracking in this manner (i.e., data element, level of detail, frequency)?
- Is there smart coding in your data value? If so, what does it mean or what are the elements?
- Besides a single Grant, what do you track with a Grant ID in FLAIR? Do you use multiple Grant IDs for a single grant?
- Do you use the Master Balance File for reporting?
- Do you have Grants (i.e., Grant IDs) that are not in FACTS? If so, what are they and why are they not?
- What do you track with a Project ID in FLAIR?
- Do you use the OCA field today in FLAIR? If so, what for?
- What business systems or processes outside of FLAIR support your grant and project management functions? Is information fed from the system or into the system from FLAIR? Can you provide a data flow diagram?
- What types of costs are you reallocating? (Reallocating is when you do not know the final funding source at the time of payment.) How frequently and through what method?
- What types of costs are you redistributing? (Redistributing is when you do know the final funding source at the time of payment but are constrained by the ability to pay from multiple sources initially.) How frequently and through what method?
- Do you track your subrecipient contracts in another mechanism besides a contract?

Asset Management

- Does your agency require multi-step approval of asset transfers within the agency (example: simply changing department or fund on the asset record)?
- Does your agency encounter 'Escrow balances recorded on a contract that should be included in asset purchase price (e.g., land and buildings)'? If yes, how does your agency record the balance?
- Does your agency report Material Safety Data Sheet information? If yes, how does your agency determine relevant code when asset is entered the system for the first time (Federal Hazardous Material codes)?
- Does your agency own/manage assets that have License Numbers? If yes, does your agency record License Numbers (if applicable, i.e., vehicle license plate or software license number)?
- Does your agency categorize some assets as 'sensitive'? If yes, what type of assets are categorized as 'sensitive' by your agency? What element(s) of a 'sensitive' asset record would need to be protected in Florida PALM?

- Does your agency loan assets to other agencies? What are the requirements that need to be tracked for these assets?
- Does your agency manage leased assets? What role does DMS perform in acquisition/recording of leased assets managed by your agency?
- Does your agency manage 'Unique' assets? What makes the asset 'Unique'? Does the 'Unique' asset have special recording criteria? Does the 'Unique' asset require special reporting treatment (AFCR, State, or Federal)?

Contracts

- How does your agency manage contracts? Do you have an agency business system?
- Does your agency have confidential or sensitive contracts?
- How do you use memo contracts today?
- Does your agency have a contract management system that integrates with FACTS currently?
- Are there contract instances that are unique to your agency?

Reporting/Data

Florida PALM data will be available to agencies via outbound interfaces, online inquiries, standard reports, or ad-hoc queries¹. The information collected for each business process will be similar to the types of information collected and created in FLAIR, but the data structure and values will be different.

General:

- What are your agency's key business processes and business events? How will your agency use Florida PALM?
- What data is kept in agency business systems? How will the agency business system information be used with Florida PALM?
- What volume of data is sent via interfaces? Are there specific dates that have higher volumes of data?

Reference Identifiers:

- What are the key documents or records (inputs or outputs) used by your agency business systems or users?
- Is smart coding² used to designate variations or other key pieces of information in the reference identifier(s)? If so, what are the objectives of the smart coding?

Event Variations & Classifications:

- What are the variations of the records, transactions or activities that require separate internal controls or tracking?
 - What are the objectives of these controls?
 - What are the requirements or objectives for the separate tracking?

¹ More information will be provided about the specific reporting solution and expectations for the data warehouse upon the conclusion of the Information Warehouse Assessment. The Information Warehouse will be replaced with a data warehouse and business intelligence tools. Implementation is planned to coincide with Financials Wave and Payroll Wave launch.

² Smart coding refers to the practice of using specific data values within a data element to represent more than the labeled concept or purpose of the data element.

Lifecycle Stages:

- What are the lifecycle stages for the agency's transactions or business activities?
 - When is intervention required?
- What dates are relevant during the lifecycle?
 - Are these dates the "actual" dates the transaction or activity occurred?
 - Are these dates "assigned" for past, current, or future dates or periods?
- What transaction or record statuses are used and what are the relevant activities, controls, or reporting?
- What changes in transaction amounts or balances occur during the transaction lifecycle?
- What types of errors are expected and what is the user intervention?
- What types of monitoring is performed for agency transactions and activities?

Reports:

- What are the agency-specific reporting or data needs for the business process, transactions or activities (not identified in the Reports Catalog)?
 - What are the relevant laws, rules, or other requirements for the agency unique report needs?
 - Who are the report stakeholders or data users?
- What historical information³ is used for reporting or queries?
 - Which reports use historical information?
 - When and how often is historical information used?
- What are your agency's top reporting needs or concerns?
- What reports are prepared outside of FLAIR (e.g., ACFR, SEFA, other)?
- What are the current data limitations in FLAIR that should be considered for Florida PALM reports and data?

Data Management:

- What does the agency do to manage the quality of FLAIR records and data?
- What is the condition of agency records and data?
- What are the common errors, deficiencies or issues in the agency records and data (e.g., duplicate records, incomplete records, other)?
- What does the agency do to manage inactive records or obsolete data elements or values?
- Which FLAIR data elements are used for objectives other than the original purpose?
- Does your agency have data security needs other than those identified in Section 119.07, Florida Statutes?
- What are your agency's unique record retention requirements?

³ Historical information is used to describe information applicable to years prior to the current fiscal year.