



Memorandum

To: Members of the Joint Budget Committee
From: Andrew McLeer, JBC Staff (303-866-4959)
Date: November 12, 2025
Subject: Department Hearing Process and Common Questions

Goals of this discussion:

- Provide an overview of the hearing process;
- Determine common questions to ask all departments.

Hearing Purpose

1. Provide departments with the opportunity to speak with the Committee about their budget.
2. Provide the Committee with the opportunity to directly ask questions of departments.

Hearings are scheduled with each department following JBC Staff briefings in November and December. JBC Staff set an agenda for the hearing that groups all questions asked during the briefing by topic. The agenda serves as a reference for the Chair to provide the names of presenters and determine if the department is adhering to the timeline proposed by staff.

Questions are asked by the Committee during the briefings and may fall into two categories:

1. **Discussion questions** are questions the Committee wishes to discuss with the department at the hearing. These questions are meant to encourage conversation rather than provide data. Departments must provide responses two business days before the hearing.
2. **Written-only questions** are intended to address requests for additional information and data that may be needed, but do not necessitate a policy conversation at the hearing. Departments may provide responses at a later date at the discretion of the JBC analyst.

During briefings, JBC Staff may ask Committee members to clarify if a particular question is intended for discussion at the hearing, or if a written-only response is satisfactory.

Departments will submit a packet to the Committee two business days before the hearing, available to Committee members through Box by the end of the day. The packet consists of the agenda as a cover page, the department's PowerPoint presentation, and written responses to all discussion questions.

Common Questions

The Committee typically determines a set of "common questions" asked of all departments. The common questions are intended to address statewide issues or concerns that have been identified across a number of departments or requests. Common questions may be discussion or written-only questions. Once responses are received by all departments, JBC Staff collect responses and save them to Box for reference by the Committee.

Common questions from the last budget cycle are included below for the Committee's review, categorized by staff recommendations for questions to add, remove, or retain. There are a few points to consider in selecting the common questions for the upcoming cycle:

- Several questions have been carried forward from year to year. Are the questions still relevant?
- Will these questions and responses help to inform figure setting decisions?
- Common discussion questions decrease time available to address department specific questions.

Questions can identify problems that would not otherwise be addressed in the budget process.

QUESTIONS TO REMOVE

Discussion Questions

1. Please describe one-time state and federal stimulus funds that have been allocated to the Department but are not expended as of September, 30, 2023, by bill, budget action, executive action, or other source that allocated funds. The description should include but is not limited to funds that originate from one-time or term-limited General Fund or federal funds originating from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)/State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds/Revenue Loss Restoration Cash Fund. Please describe the Department's plan to obligate or expend all allocated funds that originate from ARPA by December 2024.

Please describe any budget requests that replace one-time General Fund or ARPA funded programs with ongoing appropriations, including the following information:

- a. Original fund source (General Fund, ARPA, other), amount, and FTE;
- b. Original program time frame;
- c. Original authorization (budget decision, legislation, other);
- d. Requested ongoing fund source, amount, and FTE; and
- e. Requested time frame (one-time extension or ongoing).

Comment: JBC staff, as a part of analyzing funding requests, will identify when a budget request is a continuation request originating as one-time General Fund or ARPA funds. Additionally, staff is tasked with identifying potential budget reduction options, which would include new programs initiated with these fund sources. Staff recommends that questions regarding the replacement of General Fund or ARPA funds with other fund sources be directed to the applicable Departments.

Written-Only Questions

2. Provide a list of any legislation with a fiscal impact that the Department has: (a) not implemented, (b) partially implemented, or (c) missed statutory deadlines. Please specifically describe the implementation of ongoing funding established through legislation in the last two legislative sessions. Explain why the Department has not implemented, has only partially implemented, or has missed deadlines for the legislation on this list. Please explain any problems the Department is having implementing any legislation and any suggestions you have to modify legislation.

Comment: Departments provided this information to staff. In almost all cases, Departments reported that they had not missed deadlines, with all partially implemented legislation being within the expected statutory timeframe. Furthermore, Departments typically identified when a recent budget request was made to meet an implementation deadline. Staff recommends removal of this question, as failing to implement legislation in a timely manner does not appear to be applicable to most Departments.

3. Describe General Fund appropriation reductions made in the Department for budget balancing purposes in 2020, and whether the appropriation has been restored with General Fund or another fund source through budget actions or legislation.

Comment: This information was provided to the JBC by Departments for FY 2025-26. As part of the briefing process, staff will have identified programs that have had an increase in General Fund appropriations since 2020 to provide a list of budget cut option to the Committee.

4. Please provide the most current information possible. For all line items with FTE, please show:
 - a the number of allocated FTE each job classification in that line item
 - b the number of active FTE for each of those job classifications
 - c the number of vacant FTE for each of those job classifications
 - d the vacancy rate for each of those job classifications

Use the attached Template C to populate these data. Please return the data in editable Excel format.

5. Please provide the same information as Question #3 for FYs 2022-23 and FY 2023-24. Use the attached Template C to populate these data. Please return the data in editable Excel.
6. For FYs 2022-23 and 2023-24, please provide, in editable Excel format, department-wide spending totals for each of the following object codes, by fund source.
 - a Object Code 1130: Statutory Personnel & Payroll System Overtime Wages
 - b Object Code 1131: Statutory Personnel & Payroll System Shift Diff. Wages
 - c Object Code 1140: Statutory Personnel & Payroll System Annual Leave Payments
 - d Object Code 1141: Statutory Personnel & Payroll System Sick Leave Payments
 - e Object Code 1340: Employee Cash Incentive Awards
 - f Object Code 1350: Employee Non-Cash Incentive Award
 - g Object Code 1370: Employee Commission Incentive Pay
 - h Object Codes 1510, 1511, 1512: Health, Life, and Dental Insurance
 - i Object Code 1524: PERA – AED
 - j Object Code 1525: PERA - SAED

k Object Code 1531: Higher Education Tuition reimbursement

7. For the latest month for which the data are available, please provide, in editable Excel format, department-wide FY 2024-25 year-to-date spending totals for each of the following object codes, by fund source.

- a Object Code 1130: Statutory Personnel & Payroll System Overtime Wages
- b Object Code 1131: Statutory Personnel & Payroll System Shift Diff. Wages
- c Object Code 1140: Statutory Personnel & Payroll System Annual Leave Payments
- d Object Code 1141: Statutory Personnel & Payroll System Sick Leave Payments
- e Object Code 1340: Employee Cash Incentive Awards
- f Object Code 1350: Employee Non-Cash Incentive Award
- g Object Code 1370: Employee Commission Incentive Pay
- h Object Codes 1510, 1511, 1512: Health, Life, and Dental Insurance
- i Object Code 1524: PERA – AED
- j Object Code 1525: PERA-SAED
- k Object Code 1531: Higher Education Tuition reimbursement

8. For FYs 2022-23 and 2023-24, please provide department-wide spending totals for each of the following object codes, by fund source.

- a Object Code 1100: Total Contract Services (Purchased Personal Services)
- b Object Code 1210: Contractual Employee Regular Part-Time Wages
- c Object Code 1211: Contractual Employee Regular Full-Time Wages
- d Object Code 1131: Statutory Personnel & Payroll System Shift Diff. Wages
- e Object Code 1240: Contractual Employee Annual Leave Payments
- f Object Code 1622: Contractual Employee PERA
- g Object Code 1624: Contractual Employee Pera AED
- h Object Code 1625: Contractual Employee Pera - Supplemental AED
- i Object Code 1910: Personal Services – Temporary
- j Object Code 1920: Personal Services – Professional
- k Object Code 1940: Personal Services – Medical Services
- l Object Code 1950: Personal Services - Other State Departments
- m Object Code 1960: Personal Services – Information Technology

9. Please provide a table showing both allocated and actual FTE for each Division within the Department from FY 2018-19 through FY 2023-24.

Comment (Questions 4 through 9): These questions have been grouped together, as they are attempting to identify potential reductions for personal services appropriations. Staff recommends removal of these questions, as they did not provide usable information for the figure setting process. Department responses were inconsistent and, in some cases, did not provide the desired data.

Staff is working with Department's to identify budget reductions, including vacancy savings. Concerns around vacancy savings are best addressed through those conversations, rather than blanket data requests.

10. Please discuss how the Department would absorb base personal services reductions of the following amounts: 1.0 percent, 3.0 percent, and 5.0 percent. How would those reductions impact the departments operations and core mission?

Comment: Departments provided the following uniform response to this question, with no specific detail on how operations would be affected:

“The Department is willing to provide analysis of information around proposed program cuts and the associated FTE impact of those reductions. Across the Board cuts would require the Department to reduce services across all programs and fund sources. Reductions to personal services without corresponding reductions in statutory requirements would result in longer wait times, reduced abilities, or decrease in operational effectiveness. A 1% reduction would mean the reduction of (X.X) FTE, and 3% reduction would mean the reduction of (X.X) FTE and a 5% reduction would mean the reduction of (X.X) FTE.”

11. Describe steps the Department is taking to reduce operating expenditures for FY 2025-26.

Comment: Departments provided the following uniform response to this question:

“The Executive Branch’s plan for reducing operating expenditures is reflected in the November 1, 2024 budget request.”

12. For each operating expenses line item in FY 2023-24, provide a table showing the total appropriation for FY 2023-24 and the total actual expenditures at the end of the third quarter of FY 2023-24.

Comment: Departments submitted a response to this question. Staff did not find this data more useful than the actual expenditures data found in Schedule 3 submissions from each Department.

13. Please provide an overview of the department’s service efforts. In your response, describe the following:

- n Populations served by the Department
- o The target populations of the Department’s services
- p Number of people served by the Department
- q Outcomes measured by the Department
- r Present and future strategies for collecting customer experience data

Comment: Department’s submitted responses to these questions. Staff did not use this information, as they are already asking departments for population and outcomes data for budget requests, pursuant to evidence-based decision-making rules. In some cases, the breadth of Department services offered may make these questions more fruitful at a division or program level.

14. For each TABOR non-exempt cash fund, provide the following information

- a. The amount in the cash fund
- b. Total amount of revenue in the fund that would not be transferred
- c. Detailed explanation of why the fund should not be sunset
- d. Statutory reference of the fund creation, specific uses, and legislative history of changes to the fund
- e. Every program funded by the fund
- f. Explanation of how fees to the fund are set and a history of fee changes
- g. The number of people provided service by the programs funded through the cash fund
- h. Any additional information necessary to ensure the Joint Budget Committee can make an informed decision.

Comment: Departments provided the following uniform response to this question:

“Much of this information can be found in department submissions (Schedule 9). OSPB has provided staff with other tools to review cash funds to provide the committee with additional information.”

Questions to Continue or Add

None. Staff finds that responses are not informative to the figure setting process when they are not directed at Department-specific problems. Staff therefore recommends removing or limiting common hearing questions as much as possible.