Memorandum

To: Members of the Joint Budget Committee
From: Sam Rickman, JBC Staff (303-866-4959)
Date: November 12, 2026
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 the Committee with the opportunity to directly ask questions of departments.
2. Provide departments with the opportunity to speak with the Committee about their budget.

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, identifying scheduled presenters and providing a structured guide to facilitate the meeting.

The Committee may ask JBC staff analysts questions during briefing presentations that should be answered by departments during hearings.

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 whether a question requires discussion at the hearing or if a written response is sufficient. Clarifying this distinction helps focus hearing time and ensures departments can deliver thorough answers given the tight turnaround between briefing and hearing. Staff analysts are required to review written responses to flag key findings for the Committee's attention, and the full responses are also published with the other hearing materials and delivered directly to members' inboxes for

their own reference. For early hearings, departments are encouraged to submit written responses prior to the holiday break, with all remaining responses due just after the final day of scheduled hearings.

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.

Staff are directed to combine all hearing and question responses once all materials are submitted, and then the administration team will publish everything.

Common Questions

The Committee sometimes determines a set of "common questions" asked of all departments. Common questions are not a requirement, but should be utilized 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. JBC Staff have been to collect responses, send them to members via email, combine them with other hearing questions and publish them for reference by the Committee.

During the FY 2026-27 cycle, the Committee eliminated all common questions except for the one detailed below in the "Questions to Remove" section.

Questions to Remove

After office-wide review, staff recommends discontinuing the only remaining common question, as analysts generally did not use the department responses to inform figure-setting recommendations. However, staff notes that multiple committee members initiated this question last year, and they may have found value in the information. Staff therefore recommends removing the question unless the Committee still finds it beneficial for informational purposes. See the question below:

1. *Please provide a breakdown of your department's total advertising budget for the current and prior fiscal year.*
    a. *What is the total amount budgeted and expended on advertising and media placement type?*
    b. *How are those advertising dollars allocated across different media types (e.g., television (national/local/cable), radio (terrestrial vs streaming), SEM, digital (display, YouTube), connected TV, social media, print, outdoor, etc.)?*
    c. *How much of that spending is directed to Colorado-based or local media outlets? How is the media currently purchased?*
    d. *What performance metrics or evaluation tools does the department use to measure the effectiveness of these advertising campaigns? What are the goals of the campaigns, and what key performance indicators are measured for success?*
    e. *If any portion of advertising is managed through third-party vendors (or 'partners';) or media buying firms, please provide any available data or reporting from those companies on campaign performance and spending. How often do the departments discuss media placements with these vendors?*
    f. *Monthly or quarterly reporting - how is reporting delivered?*

Questions to Continue or Add

None.

Staff generally do not find standard common questions useful for figure-setting analysis, as they are either too broad to address department-specific issues, or prompt generic agency responses which fail to yield the intended detail.

However, staff recognizes these questions can serve an important purpose for the Committee—such as probing a targeted inquiry (as was done last cycle) or ensuring all agencies speak to cross-cutting, statewide issue. Staff supports the Committee utilizing common questions for informational and oversight priorities, while acknowledging the difficulty in yielding information which informs figure-setting recommendations.

Moving forward, staff will incorporate any common questions identified by the Committee today and continue tracking additional questions the committee identifies as briefings progress.