

Program Title: Technology Acquisition Review Form Automation

Start/Launch Date of the Program: March 2022

Department: General Services Agency (GSA) and Information Technology Department (ITD)

Abstract of the Program

Before making technology purchases, departments submit technology initiatives to the Information Technology Department (ITD) for review and recommendations with the goal of eliminating the duplication of systems and services, increasing system availability while improving services throughout the County, and having a consistent approach to implementing, maintaining, and enhancing cybersecurity capabilities. Requesting submissions, approvals, and other communication has been through emails. To increase transparency and accountability in the process of acquiring technology needed by county departments, an online system was built for county departments to initiate requests that get automatically routed to ITD for review and approval via DocuSign. The review form asks questions about the purchase as deemed appropriate to provide a technical recommendation which is reviewed by ITD and is processed through an approval workflow. The approved document can now be used as part of the purchase request that will be submitted to the General Services Agency (GSA) and Auditor's office.

The Problem or Need Addressed by the Program

Prior to the automation of the Technology Acquisition review request, a review of the purchase by a department was submitted to ITD via email. The email was reviewed, and if there were questions, they were communicated with back-and-forth email messages. Each request through email was manually entered and tracked in a spreadsheet. This process becomes tedious when there were many requests to be reviewed and tracked. To address this problem, ITD came up with a solution to automate the process of requesting a technology acquisition review through an online system that integrates with DocuSign to get a form filled and routed for review and approval. The information on the form needed to be saved and reports needed to be generated automatically in real time.

Description of the Program

The objective of the program is to automate the process of request submission and reporting to make the process of Technology Acquisition Review transparent, fast, and easy to report. The solution was planned to be developed in late 2021/ early 2022 and go live by March 2022. Prior to acquiring the technology Software, Hardware, or Service, General Services Agency (GSA) requires that the department reaches out to the county's Information Technology Department (ITD) to have the Technology Acquisition reviewed and approved before purchasing it. Centralized Technology Policy and County Cybersecurity Policy govern the process of acquiring technology to make sure there is no unnecessary funding of systems, and services that are already available, to increase the availability of systems, to improve services throughout the county, to secure information assets, and to help prevent cybersecurity attacks.

County's Information Technology Department built an internal online form that integrates with DocuSign for departments to request a review.

The Process

The new system (web page) asks for the requester's name, email, phone, department, and product name to be purchased. Every county department has an assigned IT account manager who is contacted for any technical needs. Based on the requester's selected department on the web page, when the request is submitted, a respective account manager is added to the workflow to know what the department needs are and to add comments, if any as part of the request. Once the request is initiated from the web page, a form is opened in DocuSign to fill in other details related to the acquisition. The requester can choose to fill in and complete it right away or, they can click on the link in the email sent by the system to continue with the document at a later time and finish it. On completing it in DocuSign, the request gets routed to their account manager for review. When the IT account manager finishes reviewing the request, the final IT authorizer of the request reviews, adds comments and makes a decision. When this step is completed, emails are sent to all the people in the workflow with the form attached, and information on the form is saved to a database to help generate reports. The completed form can now be attached to the purchase request that is submitted to GSA for further processing.

County's IT and GSA departments were involved in drafting the request form to be filled by the requester. The questions on the form will help to know if a solution is already available or not, can be built in-house, if any other county system integration is required, satisfies the county's security framework, and if data can be stored securely. ITD created and set up the different form fields to be filled in by the request and the workflow to route the form to reviewers and IT approvers. A web page form was built by ITD and integrated with the DocuSign form to automatically trigger the process of completing the technology acquisition review form. A backend process was designed and developed to save the information on the form to the database that resides within the county's network. This information is pushed to salesforces to generate and show a monthly summary view and request a detailed view within the county's financials website.

The Cost of the Program

The online TAR form was implemented by the Alameda County Information Technology Department using the low code platform built in-house that integrates with the DocuSign APIs. The project took approximately three months to complete. The team consisted of two developers and two staff members for testing. The total cost of the implementation was \$45,000, with \$4,500 of ongoing maintenance costs. The online application was configured in the platform and in DocuSign Cloud using existing staff and budget.

The Results/Success of the Program

Since the implementation of the new TAR request system, ~500 requests have been submitted by various county departments. ~400 requests have been processed with 90% being approved for purchase. The requests are processed in about 3.5 days. With the email method of submissions before, it was always difficult to go back to emails to look at all the related communications, track the current status, forward the email for review, and make a decision. With the new system, the processing time is much faster than foolproof. The reporting counts are more reliable without manual intervention. Reports are run monthly to see different numbers to know the number of requests by department, category of request, and the procurement amount.

With the development of a configurable online system, the TAR request form was quickly set up to go live. The system asks basic questions to make it easier for the departmental requester to enter information and start the process. The questions on the form are also straightforward to understand the request better and take decisions quickly. The system integrates seamlessly with DocuSign which takes care of the workflow and sends reminders at regular intervals to aid in completing the review process without further delay.

Worthiness of Award

TAR program has been set up to address the following policies in the county:

- a) Centralized Technology Policy: Encompass new technologies and encourage agencies to partner with ITD for the management of common technologies to achieve greater efficiencies and enhanced security protection.
- b) Cybersecurity Policy: To protect the county's technology and information assets by promoting consistent behavior across agencies, as well as providing guidelines to information owners on how their technology and informational assets can and should be managed and secured.

With the use of technology to automate the process of reviewing the request from a department, the tedious manual process has been greatly simplified by asking the right questions needed to decide if a technology purchase is needed or not. This new automation has made the process transparent and accountable with the automatic routing of approvals. The streamlined process is also accessible across departments and is mandated as part of a procurement request thereby making it possible to know all the technology needs in the county.

Supplemental Materials

Page to initiate/ submit a TAR form:



ITD TAR
Technology Acquisition Review

Requestor Name *

Requestor Email *

Phone *

Requesting Department *

Account Manager

Product Name *

*By clicking the "Submit" button, you will be redirected to DocuSign.
In DocuSign, click the "Continue" button to begin. Click "Finish" when done.*

DocuSign Form to fill and sign:

DocuSign Envelope ID: BB625B6C-A5E3-4047-9579-214FE3F282B9

Technology Acquisition Review (TAR)
Complete prior to acquiring of the technology Software, Hardware or Service.
This form is for the approval of the Technological Choice **ONLY**.

Requestor's Contact Details

Full Name:
Email:
Phone:
Requesting Department:
Request Date:

Request Details:

Request Type:

What is the business need?

What is the product name?

Please answer the following questions:

For Software requests:

- Does ITD have any product that can help achieve this?
- Can ITD build a solution to fulfill this need?
- Are there any integration issues to be considered with other County systems?
- Does this product fulfill County's security framework?
- Do you see any challenges in storing the county data on the proposed solution?
- Can ITD help with development of the system?

For Hardware requests:

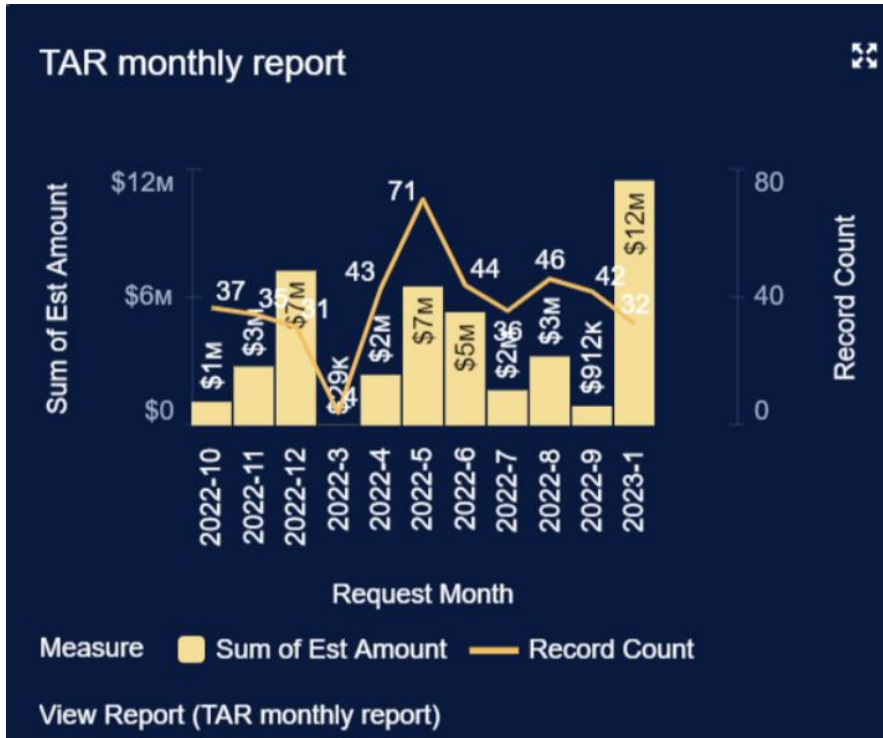
- Does the hardware reside or connect to County network?
- Does this product fulfill County's security framework?

For Service requests:

- Can ITD help with development of the system?

Additional information to support your request:

TAR Monthly summary report tile on Financials site:



TAR monthly detail report:

Report: ITD TAR
TAR monthly report
 TAR monthly report

Total Records: 43 Total Est Amount: \$2,382,810.05

Request Month	Account Manager	ITD Decision	Requestor Name	BU	Est Amount	Request Type	Product Name	ITD TAR: TAR Name
2022-4 (43)	John Wang	APPROVED	William Haggan	AUDTR	\$20,100.00	Service	EM Imaging Systems	AUDTR-2022-04-29 09:09:44.033 View History
	John Wang	APPROVED	William Haggan	SHERF	\$5,628.00	Software	Celityx	SHERF-2022-04-11 14:47:52.467 View History
	John Wang	APPROVED	John Chen	SHERF	\$202,500.00	Software	Mass Notification System	SHERF-2022-04-04 14:02:11.750 View History
	John Wang	APPROVED	William Haggan	SHERF	\$5,628.00	Service	Celityx	SHERF-2022-04-12 12:55:41.780 View History
	John Wang	APPROVED	John Chen	PROBT	\$3,187.50	Service	Intrado Groupcast	PROBT-2022-04-19 16:13:21.680 View History
	John Wang	APPROVED	John Chen	PROBT	\$120.00	Software	TechSmith Snagit	PROBT-2022-04-19 15:18:02.210 View History
	John Wang	APPROVED	William Haggan	SHERF	\$43,365.63	Software	VitalStream-OM-6	SHERF-2022-04-29 08:51:23.577 View History
	John Wang	APPROVED	John Chen	PROBT	\$239.88	Software	Zapier.com	PROBT-2022-04-22 17:26:10.663 View History
	John Wang	APPROVED	William Haggan	SHERF	\$316,737.91	Hardware	OES Video Wall System	SHERF-2022-04-29 12:22:03.607 View History
	John Wang	APPROVED	John Chen	PROBT	\$22,698.24	Software	Adobe Acrobat PRO and Adobe Creative Cloud License subscription	PROBT-2022-04-04 12:47:19.433 View History
	John Wang	APPROVED	John Wang	SHERF	\$886,419.00	Software	Guardian RFID	SHERF-2022-04-25 14:54:29.723 View History
	John Wang	APPROVED	William Haggan	SHERF	\$9,588.00	Service	Vetra	SHERF-2022-04-28 12:14:20.850 View History
	John Wang	APPROVED	John Chen	PROBT	\$1,946.00	Software	TH3270 Plus	PROBT-2022-04-22 11:40:30.247 View History
	John Wang	APPROVED	William Haggan	SHERF	\$24,254.00	Service	Forensic Logic	SHERF-2022-04-21 12:26:09.380 View History
	William Haggan	APPROVED	John Chen	HCSVC	\$164,975.00	Software	ESD Solutions, Inc	HCSVC-2022-04-11 20:29:39.510 View History
	William Haggan	APPROVED	William Haggan	PHSVC	\$150,000.00	Service	Common Cents	PHSVC-2022-04-25 13:34:59.403 View History