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MMARS INTERFACE APPROVAL

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Introduction

The CTR Interface Authorization policy provides guidance to Departments on the business conditions and operational requirements that a department must meet in order to receive Comptroller authorization to develop, maintain, and operate an electronic interface with MMARS. This procedure will describe the process and documentation requirements needed to submit a request to the Office of the Comptroller for this authorization.

Procedure

Request Process

Departments requesting an Interface must fill out a MMARS Interface Request Form. Interface requests submitted to the Office of the Comptroller will be reviewed for completeness. Incomplete requests will be returned to the Department without any substantive review. Requests, supported by the data outlined in section 4.3 (below), will be reviewed by a Comptroller team to assess compliance with the Interface policy, feasibility of developing the interface and the scope of intended documents and tables, as well as ranking within the state-wide priorities. The review committee will make a recommendation regarding approval of the requests. In cases where the recommendation is to authorize the request, the review committee will develop a high level work plan for development of the interface capability and establish a target implementation date. It is possible that Department-specific interfaces will be authorized but will not be scheduled for implementation until appropriate Comptroller and Departmental resources can be made available.

A formal response to the Department's request will be sent within 30 days of receipt of the complete package. Departments needing information as to the status of an interface request may contact the Enterprise System Services (ESS) Bureau at the Office of the Comptroller.

Informal Consultation Prior to a Request

The Office of the Comptroller encourages departments considering an interface to MMARS to discuss the potential request with us prior to submitting an official interface request letter. Staff resources from CTR are available to provide informal consultations to department staff in order to clarify items such as interface policy, procedure, feasibility, resources, costs and timing. Requests for informal interface consultation should be made to the Enterprise System Services Bureau. Informal interface consultation is in addition to, not a replacement for, a completed MMARS Interface Request Form as specified in the preceding paragraph.

Content of Request for Interface Authorization

Interface requests require submission of a completed MMARS Interface Request Form that specifies detailed information to be used by the Comptroller and MassIT to ascertain whether the interface merits further consideration. Both CTR and MassIT will review the proposal before meeting with Department personnel to discuss building the interface. A Department interface proposal should include, but is not limited to, the following items:

- A MMARS Interface Request Form
- Statement of purpose for the interface including the Departmental business the interface will support
- Assessment of the benefits to be realized by the department and Office of the Comptroller
- Description of the departmental application that the interface will be created from including, software architecture, hardware platform, and database product
- Description of Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity plans to include a contingency plan in the event that the MMARS interface becomes inoperable
- Description of Departmental technical resources committed to the development and maintenance of the interface
- Declaration of Department's long-term commitment to Financial support for the costs associated with development and on-going maintenance of the interface

The request for an Interface Authorization should be sent to:

**Deputy Comptroller, CIO
Office of the Comptroller
1 Ashburton Place, Room 901
Boston, MA 02108**

Copies of the Interface Authorization should be sent to:

**ESS - Interface Team
Office of the Comptroller
Enterprise System Services Office of the Comptroller
1 Ashburton Place, Room 901
Boston, MA 02108**

Initial Development and Installation

After receipt of the authority to implement an interface with MMARS has been granted, a work group consisting of Departmental and Comptroller business and technical staff will convene to guide the development, certification, and implementation activities.

CTR will monitor the progress of the interface development effort with the Department. When programming is completed, the Department will be required to submit "test" files through Interchange processing. CTR subject matter experts will provide functionality information to assist the department staff to organize the interface data in a manner that meets their intended processing objectives in MMARS. Staff from the ESS Bureau will provide information related to the proper formatting of

transactional and table data according to published standards and coordinate certification and testing activities with the department. CTR security administrators will assist departmental security officers to establish departmental Interface Control security capability for functional and technical interface administrators within the department.

Once the interface is certified, MMARS interface controls will be set up to allow departmental interface processing to begin. The interface will be placed into production status. Once the interface is placed in production, interface activity will be administered by ESS staff and maintained by the department. Any changes to the departmental interface profile will require a change request and re-certification of the interface. Examples of changes that would require re-certification are: upgrades or enhancements to the departmental system that creates the interface data, MMARS changes to functionality supported by the interface or Interchange network architecture.

Interface Production Requirements

Department Interface Contact

In the MMARS Interface Request form the Department must provide a business, technical, and approver contact information for the interface to the CTR Enterprise System Services Bureau (contact name, phone, address, and email) before the interface is placed into MMARS production. This contact information should be updated when personnel changes occur.

Scheduling Interface Activity

There are no restrictions on the frequency that a Department will be allowed to submit interface files for processing. During the initial development effort, a Department will be asked to provide an anticipated schedule of interface activity with associated volume estimates. ESS will coordinate any schedule changes with the department if MMARS processing events will conflict with departmental interface schedules.

Interface Problem Reporting and Resolution

ESS will monitor all interface activity from the time the interface file is received in the MMARS Load Service Interchange queue. MassIT, Integration Services Group will monitor Interchange traffic and notify both CTR and the department of issues with the Interchange service should they occur. Departments are responsible for daily interface control table review for their files and the monitoring of the status of documents processed in MMARS.

Monitoring the Performance of the Interface

The Departmental interface administrator(s) should monitor the Interface Event table in MMARS to determine the status of interface files processed. Department fiscal staff should monitor the status of all documents processed by the Department by reviewing the document catalogue. The review of this document table is a key procedure in fundamental internal control procedures.

In addition to on-line interface control tables and document catalogue reviews, the Transaction Status Return file created during the MMARS processing cycle will be transmitted via Interchange to Departments each morning. This return file data will provide the current status of all documents interfaced to MMARS that have passed the interface control validations and have been loaded to the MMARS document catalogue. A status will be returned for all interface documents that have not reached a final status (reject, pending, approval or held) until they have either reached a final status or

have been discarded by the Department. The status return file will assist Department staff to monitor the document processing status of all interfaced documents.

Modifications to Accommodate MMARS Changes

MMARS is a dynamic system that will be enhanced to meet the evolving needs of state government. Some of the enhancements will inevitably impact Departmental interfaces. CTR personnel will be responsible for notifying Departments of any required change. Notification will include a description of the change, the appropriate technical information needed to make the change, the target implementation date, and the name of the CTR contact. Before the Department's interface modifications are put into production, the interface must be re-certified. It is the on-going responsibility of the Department to update their interfaces to keep pace with MMARS. Interfaces that are not modified will be suspended until they have been recertified.

Process for Discounting an Interface

If for any reason a Department wishes to discontinue an interface, whether incoming Department data or a MMARS extract (outgoing MMARS interface), the Department must communicate its intention and reasons to CTR soon as the decision is made, via the generic interface request letter referenced above.

If the Department wishes to discontinue an interface due to operational or system problems, CTR will review the problems to ascertain if and how they can be resolved so that the interface can operate successfully.

CTR may request that the Department discontinue an interface if a Department cannot modify, in a timely manner, its interfaces as MMARS changes are implemented. This relates to interfaces that provide transaction and table updates to MMARS. The Comptroller reserves the right, following conversations with the Department, to suspend, revoke or terminate departmental interfaces or take other remedial actions as relevant if the department is unable or unwilling to correct continual interface errors.

Information Sources

- Related Policy – [MMARS Interim Interface Policy](#)
- Legal Authority - [M.G.L. c. 7A](#); [M.G.L. c. 29](#)
- Attachments – [MMARS Interface Request Form](#)
- Links – None
- Contacts – [Solution Desk](#)

Revisions

- **November 1, 2006** – Removed language referencing Knowledge Center and updated relevant links to Mass.gov/osc portal site.
- **April 4, 2016** – Added references to the Intercept Request form and updated ESS Interface contact information.