OVERVIEW

The Emergency Response Tracking (ERT) program tracks all Coronavirus (COVID-19) costs and provides County management the capability to quickly assess the financial impact of the emergency.

CHALLENGE

In the early stages of the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Los Angeles County's (County) Office of Emergency Management (OEM) did an assessment and quickly learned that the County did not have the capability to swiftly assess the full financial impact of the emergency. County leadership needed a method for better tracking and monitoring of all COVID-19 related costs. One of the biggest challenges was sourcing, extracting, and consolidating data maintained in different complex systems of the County.

SOLUTION

OEM collaborated with the Auditor-Controller (AC), Human Resources (DHR), and Internal Services Departments (ISD) to develop a broad solution improving the County's comprehensive ERT program. The ERT is a series of central and departmental data analytics dashboards that monitor COVID-19 financial, payroll and human resources costs from various data sources, including the digitalization of over 35,000 employee timesheets and over 18,000 wage statements for 33 departments generated every pay period. Departmental detailed files consisting of over 400,000 transactions are produced every pay period and provided to departments to verify costs are being captured and reported accurately. These files significantly reduce the time spent managing and reconciling department costs for recovery purposes. Through charts, graphs, and reports, the dashboard can assist County leadership in managing and monitoring costs, facilitating emergency response and recovery operations.

INNOVATION

Several County staff, especially from the OEM, AC, ISD and DHR, effectively collaborated and played a critical role in the development of the first-ever central and departmental ERT dashboard, including a

central repository for detailed transaction files, digital timesheets and wage statements. Their unique talents allowed for its creation giving County departments an increased capability to not only track their costs but also strategically assess cost recovery methods from various private, federal or state funding sources.

RESULTS

The ERT program provides County decision makers the ability to quickly determine any financial shortfalls or assess possible cost recoveries as a result of the pandemic. Access to a central repository derived from various financial and personnel systems promotes efficiency giving County leadership ready access to vital operational and financial information. Departments are not just able to view high level summaries but also filter, export and analyze detailed data files, facilitating executive decisions, and enhancing cost reconciliation and financial/budgetary planning capabilities.

REPLICABILITY

While Counties may have different financial and labor tracking systems in place, the ERT dashboards can easily be replicated through a series of efforts. Counties will need to first develop a standardized/uniform way of coding all their costs. One of the reasons the County was able to develop the dashboards was because it completely re-designed its cost coding structures used for its disasters/emergencies. Counties would then need to closely collaborate with key shareholders, i.e. systems, human resources, financial, program and operational staff, to devise a comprehensive method/solution to aggregate all data and ensure uniformity and applicability of all efforts and initiatives. Departments and users will all need to be onboard, and clear instructions and guidelines will need to be effectively communicated.

PROJECT OR PROGRAM CONTACT

Ivan Masayon - Associate Director - Finance and Administration, IMasayon@ceooem.lacounty.gov, M: 213-503-7563, 1275 North Eastern Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90063

ISSUE AREA AND POPULATION CATEGORY

Disaster/Emergency Response & Management, Urban