



## APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2016.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Prince William County  
Program Title: Interactive Budget Application  
Program Category: Communication/Public Relations

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Jason D. Grant  
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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: Christopher E. Martino  
Title: Acting County Executive  
Signature:

## VaCO Award Nomination

Program Title: Interactive Budget Application

Program Category: Communication/Public Relations & Information Technology

Budget season is the time, arguably, when residents are most engaged with their local government. They follow each meeting keenly to get an understanding of how the elected body's decisions will impact their tax bill and to understand what programs and services will be available to them moving forward. However, in Prince William County, with over 430,000 residents and an all funds budget of approximately \$2.1 billion, it can be extremely difficult to provide residents the information they need to have a firm grasp of specific budget implications.

Success in any organization requires teamwork and the ability to work across divisions toward a shared vision. To have a successful program, the Budget Office, Finance Department, Department of Information Technology and Office of Communication came together around a shared vision of providing immediate information to our residents and elected officials about the budget. They identified the need for a more transparent and easy-to-use tool that would allow staff, elected leaders and the general public to see immediately what the potential budget impacts would be based on the multiple scenarios one could consider. They also sought a better way to display all the items in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and to help the public better understand what was funded in our capital projects and infrastructure.

Historically, in order to analyze the budget, one would have to wade through a number of online PDF pages. The CIP was a static document with a listing of each project. Budget scenarios required the Finance Department to run revenue models based on identified changes. The Budget Office would use that data and provide budget scenarios based on revenue forecasts and expenses of desired additions/cuts to the budget. Then, the Budget Office would project the impact to the Five Year Plan based on the identified scenario. All of this took time and prevented the public from being able to view immediately how potential decisions might affect the budget.

As a result of the efforts of the interdepartmental workgroup, the CIP now exist online (<http://www.pwcgov.org/government/dept/budget/Pages/pFY2017->

[FY2022\\_Capital\\_Improvement\\_Program.aspx](#)) and can be updated and amended in real-time for the public. The GIS capabilities allow the public to view the type of project, timeline, expected cost, and location of every project in the CIP. No longer does one have to read through a PDF to find the information they are seeking.

The other key result of the workgroup is was the development of the Interactive Budget Application ([www.pwcgov.org/budgetapp](http://www.pwcgov.org/budgetapp)), which streamlines the process of calculating budget impacts. By working together with the Finance Department and Budget Office, the multiple spreadsheets and formulas that were used to determine budget scenarios have been synthesized and brought together in one online application to allow the public to see immediately how changes to the tax bill, tax rate and/or revenue will impact the current fiscal year budget and Five Year Plan. The tool also allows the public to understand how specific line-item cuts/additions identified through the budget process will impact the current fiscal year budget and five year plan.

These tools were developed under extremely tight deadlines, and had to be modified and adjusted throughout the budget process as the needs of the Board continued to evolve throughout the discussions. They could not have been developed if not for the willingness of every member of the team to step outside of the silos of their individual agencies and to work collaboratively toward the shared goal of finding a solution that would allow the public greater access and understanding of the budget process.

These interactive budget applications provide a framework not only for Prince William County, but for all localities seeking to engage residents in the actions of the Board, and to provide a transparent and interactive budget process for our elected officials, staff and residents.