

MARCH 2017



IL ACTS
NEWSLETTER



IL ACTS ERP NEWSLETTER

Program Update, Volume 12, March 2017

Did you know?

SAP customers include 98% of the 100 most valued brands – SAP Corporate Fact Sheet

Kevin's Corner

Welcome to the IL ACTS March newsletter. I am pleased to write to you about the great progress we are making in the ERP program.



In February, we formally started working with Cluster 1B agencies. We had a great kickoff and have enjoyed getting to know a number of 1B agency attendees since the presentation. The atmosphere in the room was invigorating, and I personally enjoyed sharing my thoughts around the opportunities offered by the ERP program to the agencies and the State of Illinois.

Also, as we get closer to April 1 and July 1 go-live dates, we have revamped our training method to ensure users are prepared to operate the SAP system. These improvements are implemented based on the suggestions provided by agencies. We hear you and we are adapting to incorporate the changes that work. Thanks a lot for all your dedication!

Kevin

Cluster 1A Training

Training for Cluster 1A agencies started on January 23rd. Training was split into 3 groups. The first group included PPB and CSC. The second group, which wrapped up at the end of February, included HPA and CDB. The last group includes GOV, Lt Gov, and GOMB and will conclude in early March.

Training focused on commonly used transactions

Training and UAT are closely coordinated

Training includes State language

Key lessons learned applied during Cluster 1A training

Training for 1A design follows a new approach that incorporates key lessons learned during the pilot. Three consistent themes were derived from pilot agencies: training content needs to more closely reflect common agency transactions, training and user acceptance testing (UAT) must be closely coordinated, and training needs to include "State language".



Cluster 1A training is held at the Stratton Building. Trainers are functional experts with the ERP program.

Trainees receive practical courses interacting with real agency data

Training for Cluster 1A

Training focused on commonly used transactions

The ERP program used two major sources of information to define the Cluster 1A training curriculum: the ERP functional team’s understanding of the unique business requirements of each Cluster 1A agency combined with each agency’s Change Impact Assessment. Using these inputs, a customized training curriculum was created for each agency, with each agency’s participants learning a different combination of SAP functionality. For instance, if an agency processes receivables, that agency’s staff attends accounts receivable training. For each SAP “functional area” (e.g. procurement, accounts payable etc.), the training participants learn about the most relevant SAP processes for their specific agency; for example, if an agency uses non-purchase order invoices (e.g. for utility bills), the steps for processing that type of invoice in SAP are emphasized in training.

Training and User Acceptance Testing (UAT) are closely coordinated

Although training and User Acceptance Testing are two distinct activities for agencies to complete, the program designed a coordinated training and testing schedule to maximize knowledge retention for participants. During training and UAT for Cluster 1A, attendees learn specific functionality in a training session during the morning, and then work to apply their new knowledge to test the same functionality in SAP in the afternoon. The opportunity to reinforce content knowledge twice over a short period of time helps users to grasp the concepts quickly. This schedule has enabled participants to maximize the impact of their time spent in training and testing.

Example terminology – “Speak the State”

From State	To SAP
Fiscal Year	Budget Period
Agency	Business Area
Organization	Cost/Fund Center
Major Object	Superior commitment item
Detailed Object Code	Commitment Item

Training includes “State language”

One challenge in adopting SAP is that SAP uses concepts and terminology that may be unfamiliar to State agencies. To close this language gap, training courses for Cluster 1A agencies are being conducted by the ERP program’s State functional experts, who have had many years working at State agencies. Although the State functional experts will not train future clusters, they have been able to fold in more clarity around terminology into the training content that reflects State language for future roll-outs.

Training Update

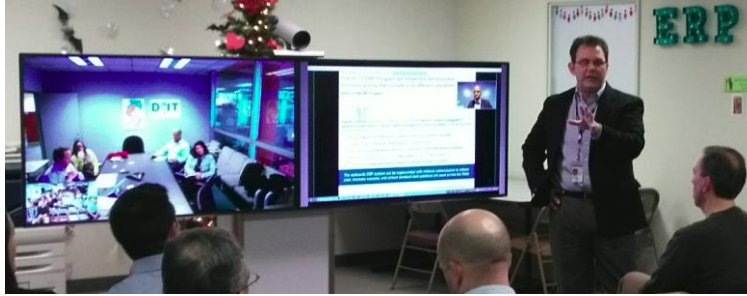
So far, the Cluster 1A training has received positive feedback. After the training, attendees expressed pleasure at “how automated and integrated the system is, especially when one transaction automatically updates multiple areas like Assets, Accounts Payable, or Budget; it brings everything full circle and we can see the benefits of an enterprise system like this.” The State functional experts who served as instructors also mentioned how much they enjoyed working with the 1A agencies in the training sessions. As one instructor said, it is “really satisfying seeing how proactive these agencies are: getting into the system, experimenting with the functionality, and translating their current processes into the SAP processes. From their questions and interactions, we can already see a transformation within the agency staff that they are becoming an ‘SAP agency.’” Overall, these are good signs and agencies are excited to begin applying their new knowledge into the live system.

Next stop for Cluster 1A: Go live!!!

Cluster 1B kickoff

On February 8, the ERP program kicked off the implementation phase for Cluster 1B agencies. About forty representatives from the seven agencies included in the cluster (DCFS, DHS, HFS, AGE, ITT, EEC, CDD) attended the formal start of the new rollout, which is planned to go live in January 2018.

The presentation leveraged recently added telepresence technology to connect Springfield with Chicago attendees and presenters.



The presentation was conducted by the ERP Program Director, Kevin O’Toole, along with Christoph Schrey from McKinsey and Kevin Lewis from Deloitte.

The ERP program leadership was excited to address a highly engaged audience about all the critical elements of the project, including the vision, plan, and key milestones. Towards the end of the meeting, Brad Long, Cluster CIO, reiterated his excitement for the program and emphasized that he welcomes any questions from the agencies.

A consistent theme throughout the kick-off was the benefit Cluster 1B agencies will receive from the prior rollouts. Thirteen agencies will have gone live before Cluster 1B and provided valuable lessons learned, including ways to improve training and testing. With nearly 350 users live on SAP by the time the 1B agencies go-live, 1B agency users will receive a well-designed and comprehensively tested SAP system for the State.

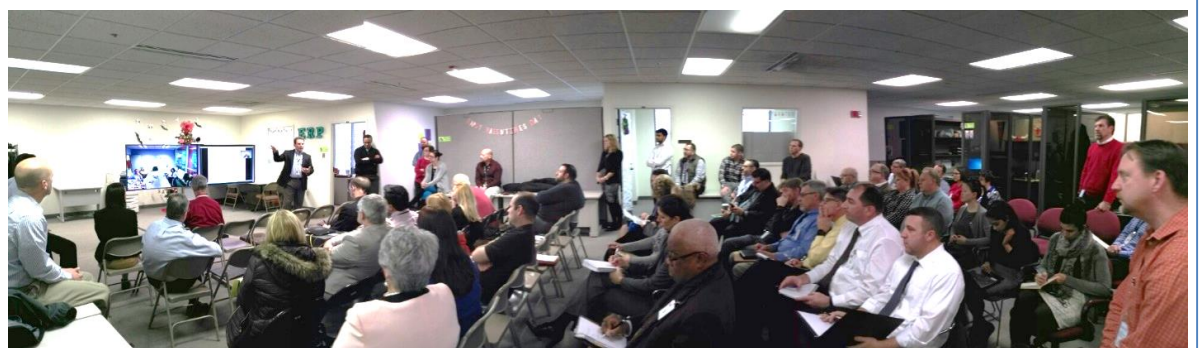
The next activities for the 1B agencies include site visits to the agencies to see their processes in person, as well as a series of functional deep dive sessions to gain a greater understanding of SAP functionality. These sessions will span 8 weeks from mid-February to beginning of April, and they are run by a fully dedicated team that is excited to collaborate with business process experts at each agency. After the meeting, Bob Blinn reflected that “it was great hearing the agencies’ interest in getting visibility into the system” which has translated into successful site visits.



ERP program team had the opportunity to socialize and share experiences with the agencies’ attendees.

Welcome Cluster 1B agencies to the IL ACTS family!

During the presentation, ERP program leadership committed to continue to work collaboratively with agencies to ensure business needs and processes are well articulated in the solution



What is a Mock Conversion?

ERP systems need agency data to work properly. Agencies and ERP program experts work together to extract data from agency legacy systems or sources, clean the data to avoid redundancies and errors, and convert it into a format that the ERP can upload.

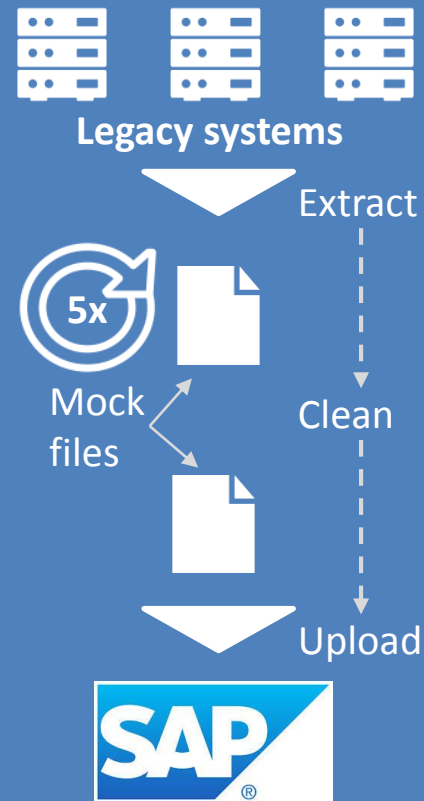
Mock conversions of data into SAP can occur up to five times for some agencies. In addition to testing the process of extracting and loading data into SAP, the data may also be used for testing the SAP system with “real” agency data.

There are two main types of data that are part of mock conversions:

- **Master Data:** centralized data that may be used across SAP, such as data about vendors or customers. Master data may not change significantly in each cycle.
- **Transactional Data:** data about an agency’s day-to-day business transactions, such as open receivables or purchase orders.

For agencies to run correctly and efficiently, SAP needs to be loaded with accurate and complete data. Remember, the data you provide to the program is the data you will see in SAP!

Conversion Process:



ERP Spotlight:



Joel Rapaport, ERP State functional expert focused on Asset Management and Accounts Payable

Coming from a public accounting and State agency background, Joel Rapaport understands the benefits of implementing an ERP system at the State. Joel joined the ERP team in May, 2016, and has been a strong advocate for the ERP program since the beginning. He says that “if agencies transition to a single system, then the processes of transferring knowledge, training, and implementing changes becomes vastly more efficient.”

The integrated nature of SAP is not the only thing that excites Joel about being on the team. He believes that learning agency procedures and designing a solution for the entire State has been a great learning experience. “It’s also a great opportunity to potentially revamp State processes to ensure they are effective and in compliance with applicable rules and regulations,” he says.

With the start of the new rollout, we encourage those of you in Cluster 1B to become familiar with the training portal, to access training materials, and to learn more about system functionality through videos, course handouts, and job aids.



Click above to access all newsletters on the website





IL ACTS NEWSLETTER

We would love to hear from you!

- ★ Has anyone done anything particularly great or helpful recently? Give them a shout-out!
- ★ Is going above and beyond to adopt SAP and use it well? Nominate them to be the “ERP Super User of the Month!”
- ★ Have you discovered any especially helpful features of SAP? Share them with the rest of your colleagues!
- ★ Contact us about these or any other questions by e-mailing us at Statewide.ERP@Illinois.gov

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