



OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT & BUDGET

STATE BUDGET OFFICE

One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5890

Office: (401) 222-6300
Fax: (401) 222-6410

FY 2022 Budget: Frequently Asked Questions

Finding the Information I Need

Where can I find the FY 2022 budget instructions?

The FY 2022 budget instructions have been disseminated via email and are available [here](#) on the OMB website, in the Instructions and Communications section of the Budget Office page.



Where can I find other communications related to the FY 2022 budget?

Most communications about the FY 2022 budget are disseminated via email. Many are also available [here](#) on the OMB website, in the Instructions and Communications section of the Budget Office page. When looking for a specific item, you should check both the [Operating Budget section](#) (under both the Instructions and Forms, and the Examples and Training Resources headings) and the [Budget Communications and Memos section](#). If you're unable to find something that you need, you should reach out to your assigned Budget Analyst.

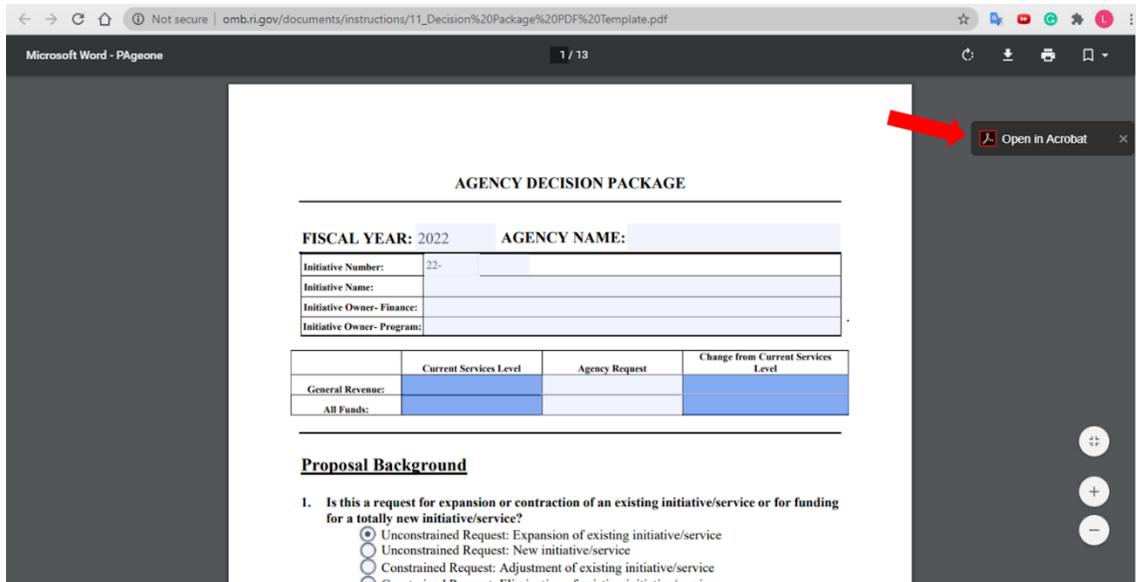


Using the New Templates

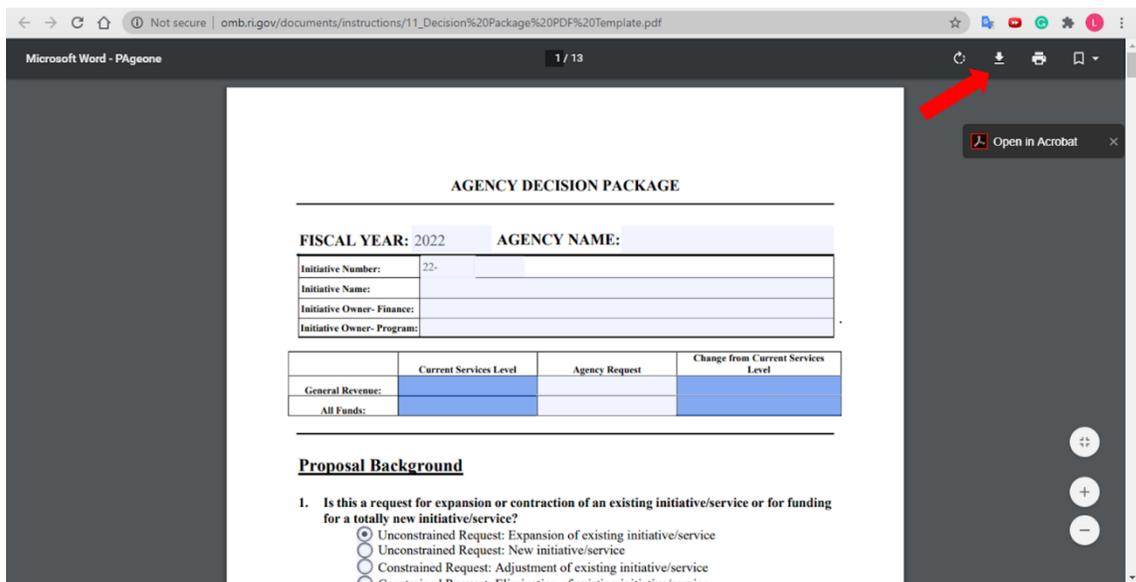
How do I open the Decision Package and Impact Statement templates? What software should I use to fill them out?

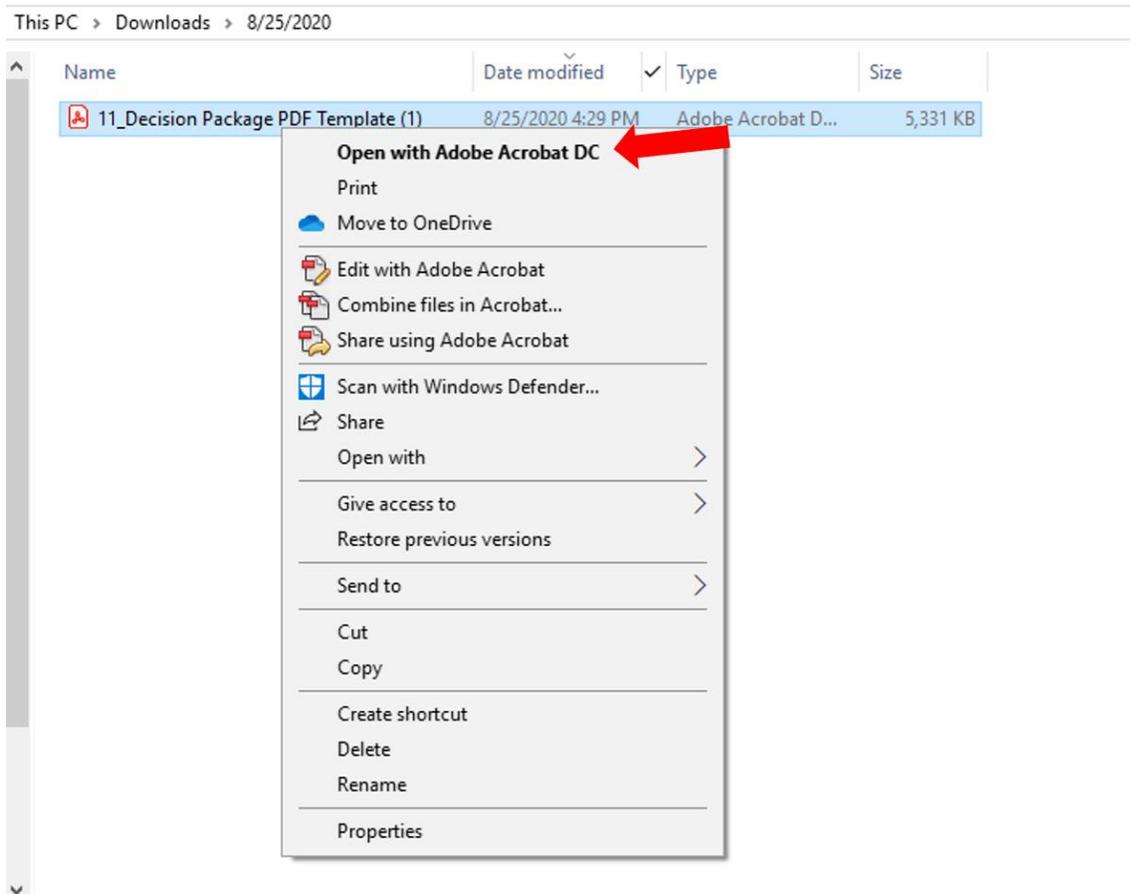
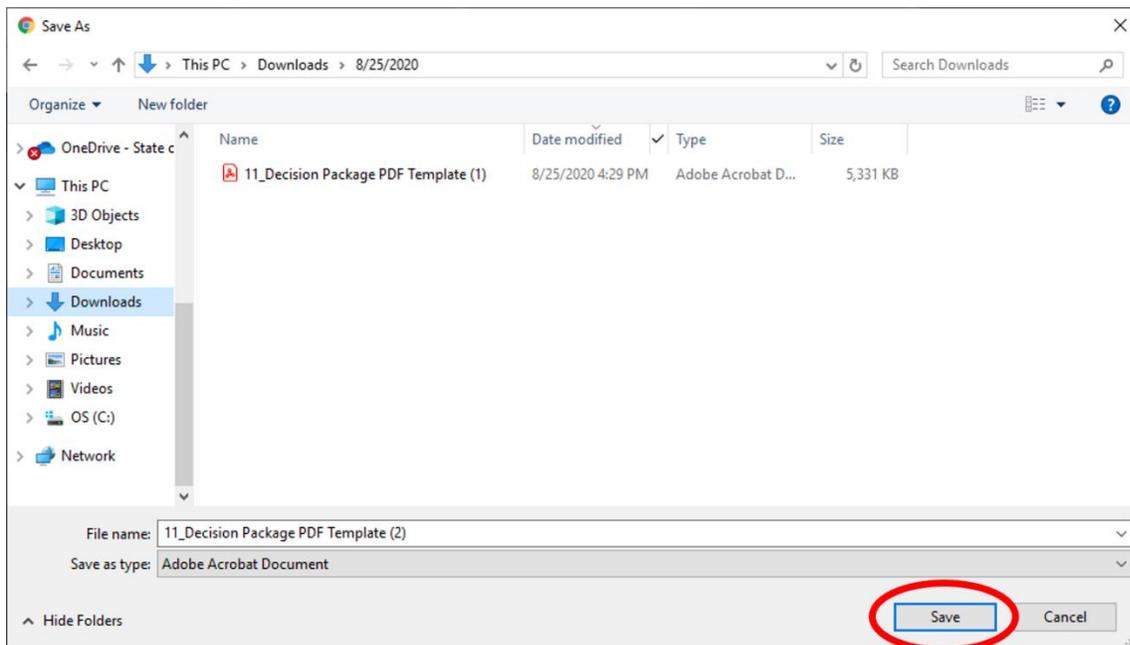
When you open the Decision Package and Impact Statement templates from the OMB website, they will likely default to opening in whatever Internet browser you are using. However, the PDFs should not be filled out in the Internet browser, as they utilize scrollable text fields and conditional logic that won't work properly in a browser. Instead, you should open them in Adobe Reader. If they don't automatically open in Adobe Reader, you have two options for opening them in that software.

First, if the option is available in the browser you're using, click "Open in Acrobat" when the PDF opens in your browser, and the PDF will automatically open in Adobe, as such:



If that option doesn't work or isn't available, you can click download on the PDF, save it, and then right-click on the downloaded PDF and select "Open with Adobe Acrobat," as such:





If you don't have Acrobat yet, don't worry - it's free to download and use, and approved for installation on state devices. You can download it [here](#).

My text doesn't all fit in the fillable PDF box. What should I do?

The fillable PDF is designed with text boxes that scroll, so that you can put as much information as you'd like in every text box, regardless of size. Feel free to input as much text as you'd like in every text box. When OMB, the Governor's Office, and legislative staff open your narratives in Adobe Reader, they'll be able to scroll through the text in each field. It's important to note that if you'd like to scroll down in a particular field, you must first click into that field with your cursor.

My PDF application won't let me fill in some of the questions on the Decision Package template. What should I do?

Don't panic - the new template includes conditional logic that makes some questions unavailable, depending on the type of request you're submitting. Questions #5 and 22-27 all have conditional logic associated with them that will make narrative fields available (or not) depending on your response to an initial yes/no question. Questions #8-19, 29, and 30 also have conditional logic associated with them; some of these questions, but not others, will be made available for you to respond to based on the type of request you're submitting. If you're unable to input data into one of these questions, it's purposeful and related to the type of request you're submitting. Feel free to simply move on to the next question into which you're able to enter data. If you think the logic isn't working correctly, or you're unable to input information into another question that doesn't have logic associated with it, feel free to reach out to your assigned Budget Development Analyst for assistance.

When I print out my Decision Package, you can't read all of my narrative. What should I do?

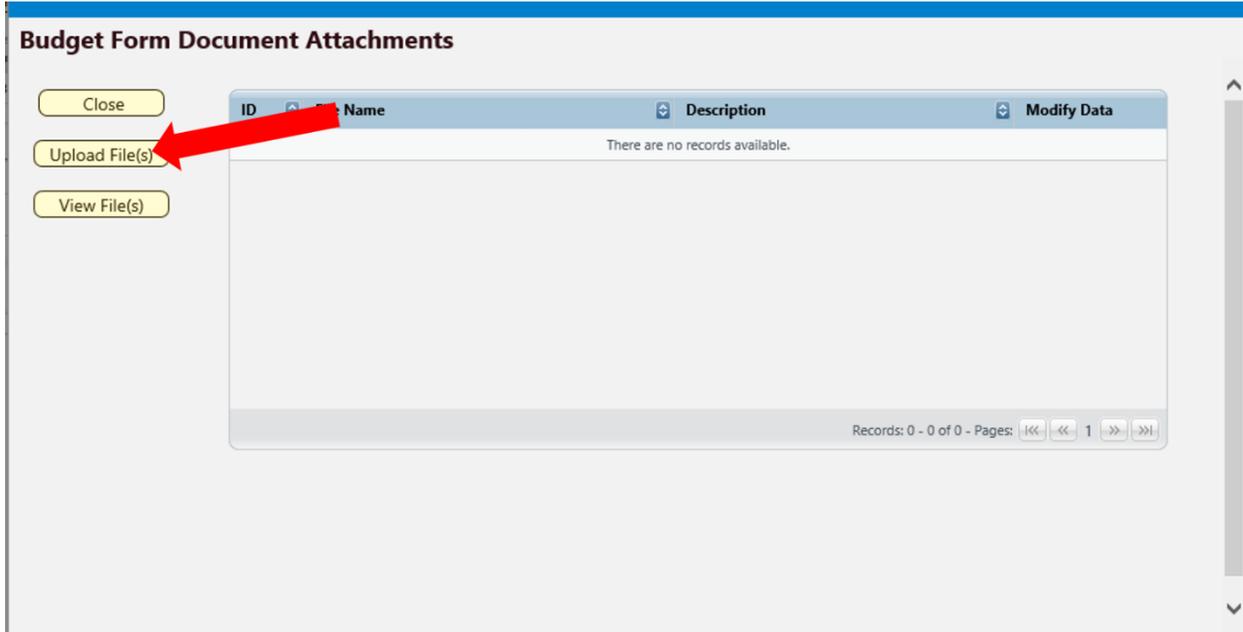
Don't worry about it! OMB and the Governor's Office are aware that, because the new form uses scrolling text boxes, the information will need to be reviewed online rather than in print. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the reality that many State employees are continuing to work remotely, we'll be asking all agencies to submit electronic copies of their budgets this year, so OMB and the Governor's Office will have access to the PDF versions of your submissions via both BFM and your electronic submission. If you like to review printed versions, you can always pull your narrative into Word and print from there, but our team is prepared to review the scrollable PDFs directly in Adobe and is aware that they won't print properly.

How should I put my Decision Package submission together in BFM? Where should I add my PDF form?

This year, you will only have to input your Decision Package name, financial information, and FTE information into BFM directly. There won't be any narrative fields for you to fill out in BFM. Instead, you should attach your completed PDF to your BFM submission by first clicking on the attachments tab in the Decision Package details, as such:



In the attachments tab, all you have to do is upload your PDF by clicking on Upload File(s), as such:



Putting Together Strong Decision Packages and Impact Statements

What is the dollar amount threshold for submitting a Decision Package? What about an Impact Statement?

Generally, any change less than \$10,000 can be included as a simple base budget adjustment, while any change greater than \$10,000 should, at the very least, be explained in an Impact Statement. While there is not a specific dollar amount threshold that triggers a Decision Package in all cases, generally, any change request greater than \$200,000 should likely be included in a Decision Package.

The more important quality than dollar amount that agencies should use to determine whether a proposed change belongs in an Impact Statement versus a Decision Package is the level of complexity. Proposals that are highly complex with many moving parts and political considerations; proposals that are intimately related to Governor and/or agency priorities; proposals that would fundamentally change the way an agency operates; and constrained proposals that would have a negative impact on agency operations should all, generally, be analyzed through a Decision Package. Some high-dollar-value change requests (e.g., a \$1 million salary and benefits increase to annualize a COLA) are not complex enough to require the level of detail included in a Decision Package; conversely, some low-dollar-value change requests (e.g., a \$50,000 proposal to deliver a brand new program related to a Governor priority) would benefit from further expansion through a Decision Package.

Agencies should feel free to contact their assigned Budget Development Analyst with questions about whether an initiative is most appropriate for Decision Package or Impact Statement-level

analysis. More information is available in the [Budget Instructions](#) on pages 14-15 and in Appendix 2.

My Decision Package request doesn't have any evidence supporting it at this time. Should I bother to submit it?

Yes! OMB and the Governor's Office are fully aware that many, or even most, of the Decision Packages submitted this year won't have robust evidentiary support. The fact that we're now asking you to report information about a proposal's evidence base doesn't mean that we're looking to only fund evidence-based initiatives. Rather, what we're hoping to do is kick off an ongoing process of improving the amount and quality of information made available during the budget process and gradually increase the percentage of our programs that have been rigorously evaluated. We understand that not every Decision Package will be evidence-based, and we expect that most won't. You should still feel free to submit any proposal that you're interested in funding - but we do expect you to do some strategic thinking about how you might increase the evidence available about the initiative if your request is granted.

I'm submitting a reduction item. Do I still need to fill out the evidence base and performance measurement sections of the Decision Package template?

Yes, you must fill out the evidence base and performance measurement sections of the Decision Package template, even when submitting a reduction item. Ideally, your reduction proposals should be based on evidence about program efficacy or lack thereof - that's why the evidence scale includes an option for "Evidence of Insufficient Impact or Unintended Effects." While we know that it won't be possible for every reduction proposal to be evidence-based, all proposals are at least based on some theory of the case that led your agency to select a certain reduction item over other potential options. You should use the evidence base section to describe what evidence, data, or theory led you to put forward the particular reduction item that you're proposing. In the performance measurement section, you should report information about program performance (when available) that supports your decision to put the reduction forward. This section provides you with an opportunity to explain why the initiative you're proposing to curtail or eliminate is lower-performing or lower-priority than other initiatives at your agency.

Accessing Training and Support Resources

How do I sign up for office hours with OMB?

Contact Melanie Oxley at melanie.oxley@omb.ri.gov to register for OMB's regularly-offered group training sessions. Contact your assigned Budget Analyst directly to sign up for a 1:1 meeting or reserve time outside of scheduled training hours.

How do I sign up for office hours with The Policy Lab?

Sign up using [Google Calendar](#) if you'd like to schedule time during the Lab's regular Monday - Thursday, 3-4 p.m. office hours. If you'd like to schedule time outside of the standard offering, or have any other questions, contact Christopher Calley at christopher_calley@brown.edu.