PA355 Project Accounting Approvals (VDOT Only)

Project Accounting Approvals Overview

Project Accounting Approvals in Cardinal involve several sequential steps that ensure projects are accurately established before financial activity begins. Each project starts with the creation and approval of its accounting distribution, which sets the foundation for budgeting and determines when the project can progress to Open status. Because Cardinal does not provide automatic notifications for these approvals, coordination between project staff and approvers is essential to keep work moving.

Once a project reaches Budget status, it must be approved again before expenditure transactions can be posted, and additional approvals are required when processing FHWA Federal Billing. Temporary Billing Worksheets must be validated and approved to ensure error-free federal submissions before real bills are generated. Together, these approvals help maintain data accuracy, proper workflow, and reliable financial processing throughout the project lifecycle.

Navigation Note: Please note that there may be a **Notify** button at the bottom of various pages utilized while completing the process within this Job Aid. This “Notify” functionality is not currently turned on to send email notifications to specific users within Cardinal.

Table of Contents

Revision History

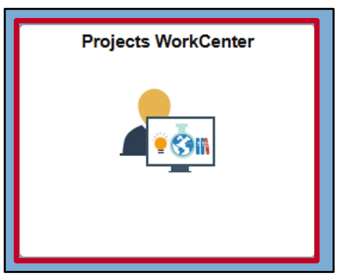
Revision Date	Summary of Changes
9/1/2026	Baseline.

Approving a Project Distribution

Before expenditures can be posted to a project, its distribution must be approved. The Accounting Distribution Specialist creates the project distribution, and once completed, the Accounting Distribution Approver reviews and approves it, and updates the project status to Budget. This status enables the creation of SpeedTypes, SpeedCharts, and funds distribution rules, and allows budgets—but not expenditures—to be posted.

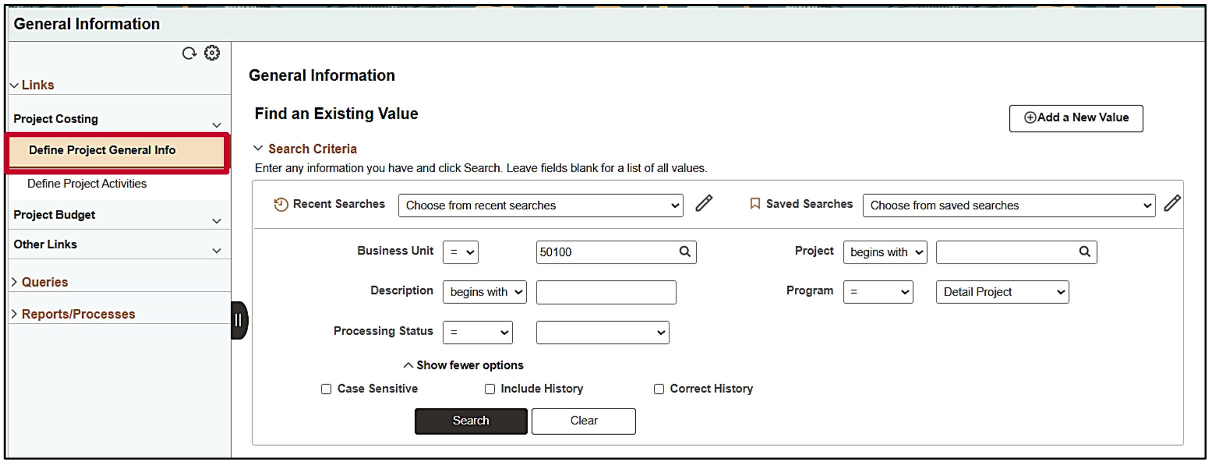
When the project later moves to Open status, both budget and expenditure transactions can be posted. Each time a new effective-dated row is added to the Project Distribution section, a fresh approval is required. If any Chart of Accounts values are invalid, the approver can reject the distribution simply by not selecting the Approval Status checkbox.

Because Cardinal does not send notifications or display pending distributions on the approver's worklist, the Accounting Distribution Specialist must manually alert the approver when a project distribution is ready for approval.

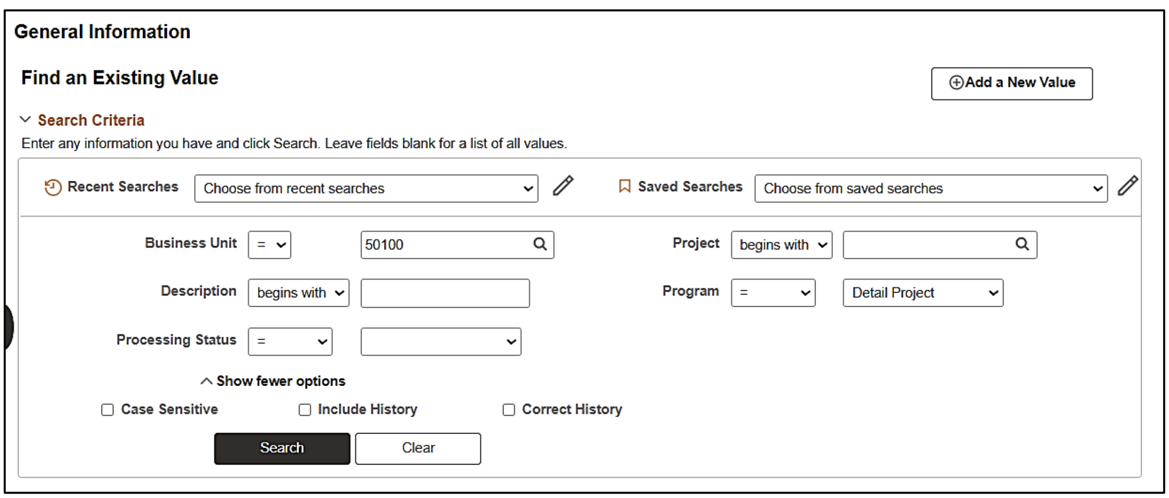
Step	Action
1.	Navigate to the **General Information** page by clicking the **Projects WorkCenter** tile. 
	For information about WorkCenters, see the Job Aid titled **Overview of the Cardinal Financials WorkCenters** located on the Cardinal website in **Job Aids** under **Learning**.

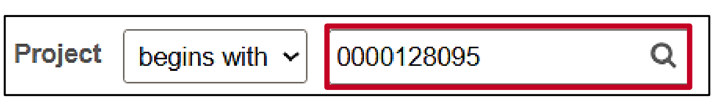
<table>
<tr><th>Step</th><th>Action</th></tr>
<tr><td>2.</td><td>Use the following navigation in the WorkCenter: Links > Project Costing > Define Project General Info

Note: WorkCenter sections, folders, and pages may vary based on the user’s Security roles.

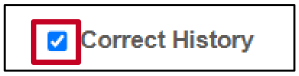

</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Users can also access the General Information page using the following navigation path:

NavBar > Menu > Project Costing > Project Definitions > Define Project General Info</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">The General Information Find an Existing Value Search page displays.

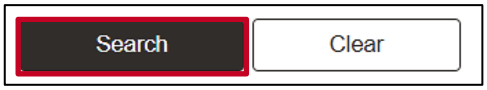

</td></tr>
<tr><td>3.</td><td>Enter the project number in the Project field.


</td></tr>
</table>

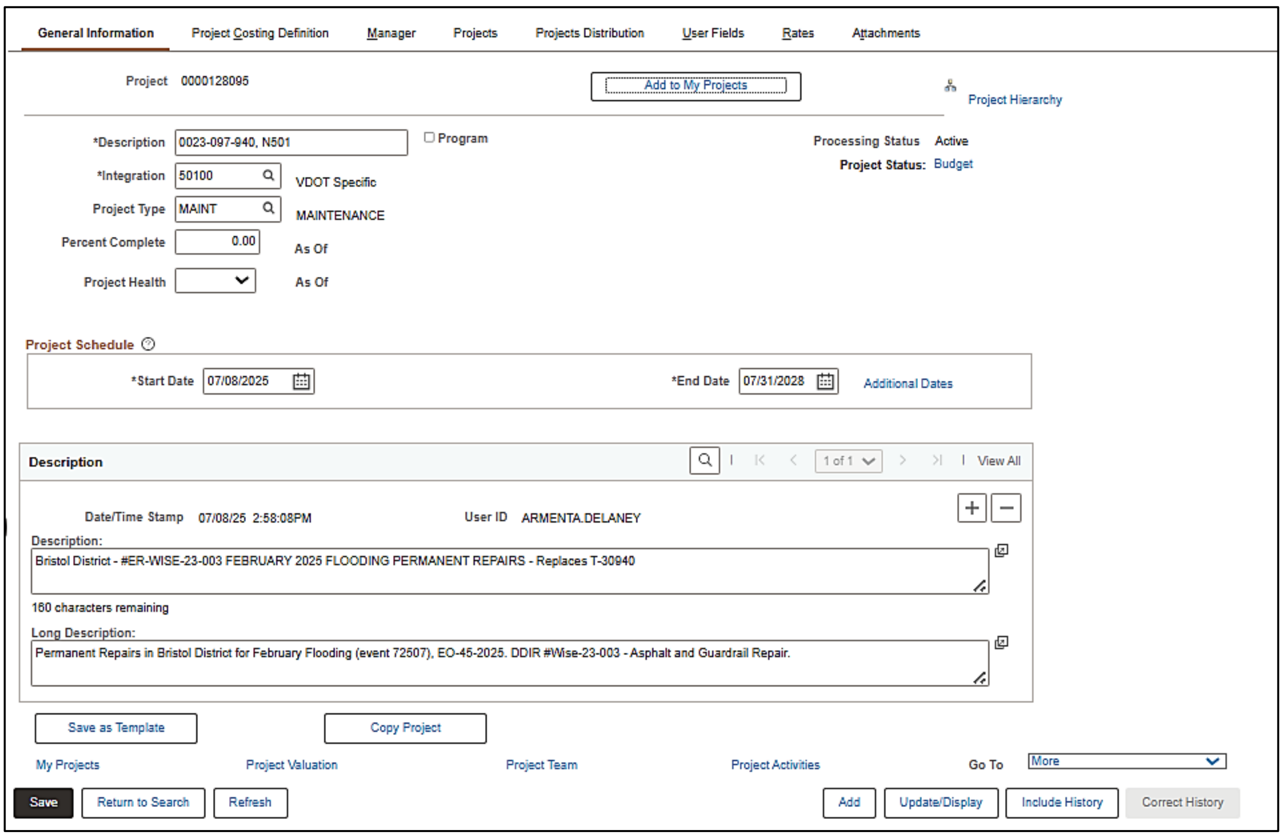
<table>
<tr><th>Step</th><th>Action</th></tr>
<tr><td>4.</td><td>Select the Correct History checkbox option.



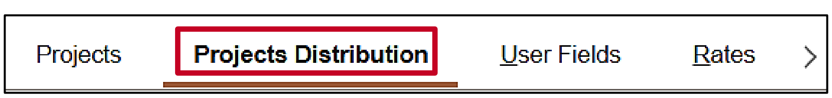
</td></tr>
<tr><td>5.</td><td>Click the Search button.



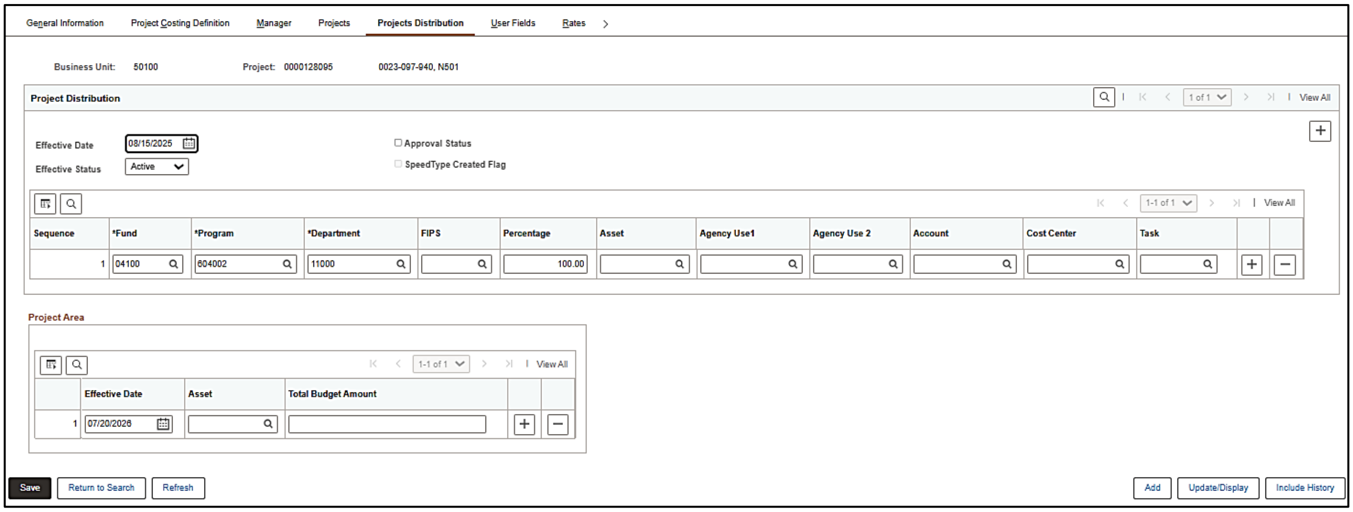
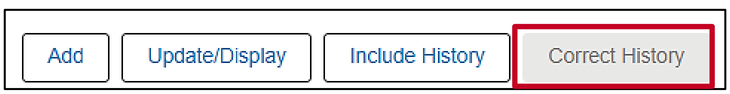
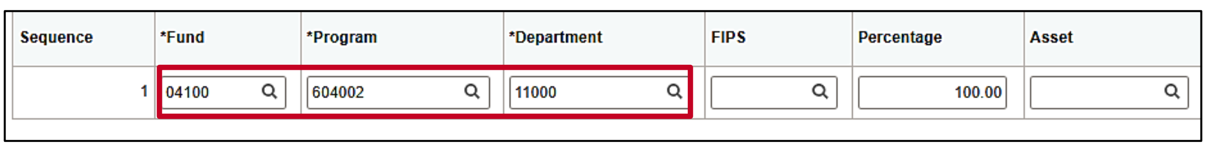
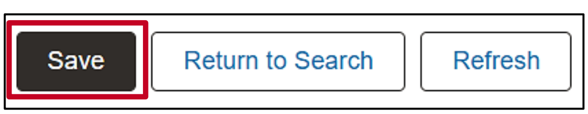
</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">The General Information page displays.



</td></tr>
<tr><td>6.</td><td>Click the Projects Distribution tab.



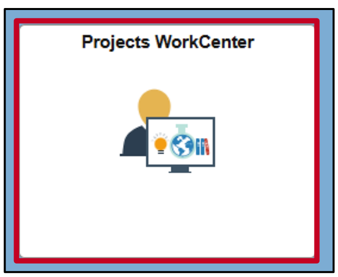
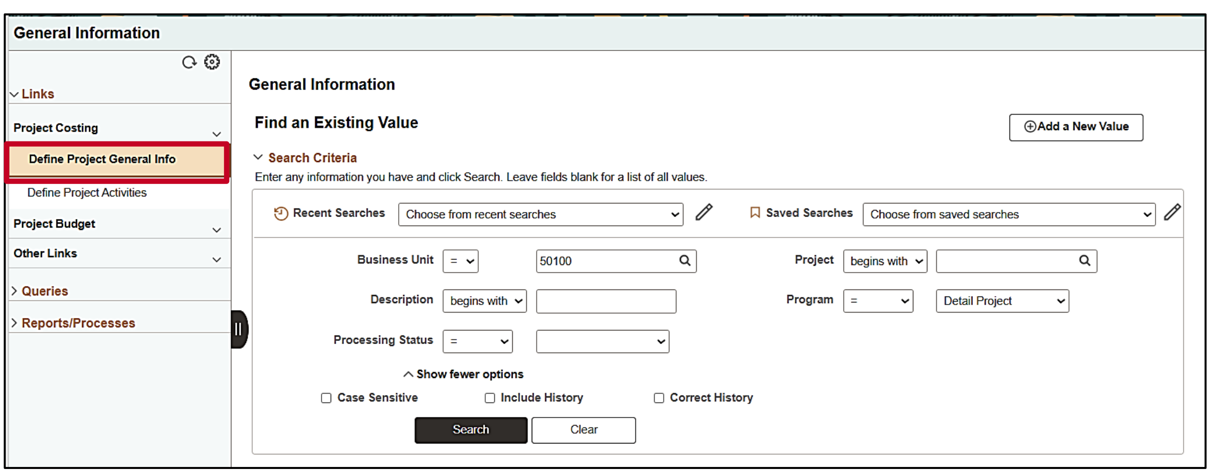
</td></tr>
</table>

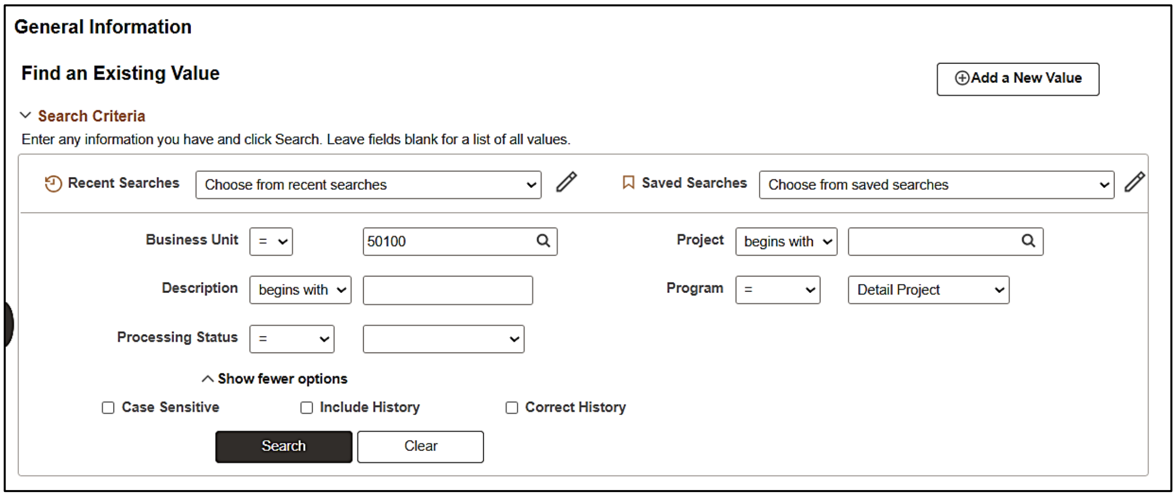
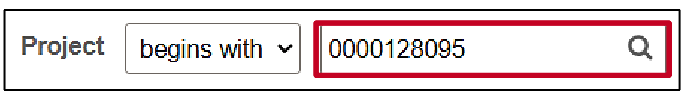
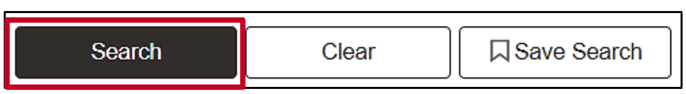
Step	Action
	The **Projects Distribution** tab displays. 
ℹ	If the **Correct History** button on the **Search** page was not selected, it can be selected here. If it was selected on the **Search** page, the button will be grayed out on this page. 
7.	Review the distribution values to ensure the Chart of Accounts combination entered is valid and matches the values entered on the project Budget, if one has been posted. 
8.	Validate the distribution and select the **Approval Status** checkbox. 
9.	Click the **Save** button. 
ℹ	Cardinal does not generate an automatic email to the Project Manager or Accounting Distribution Specialist when the project distribution is approved or denied. The approver must send a manual notification, if necessary. Users can also search for their project distribution in Cardinal and check on its approval status.

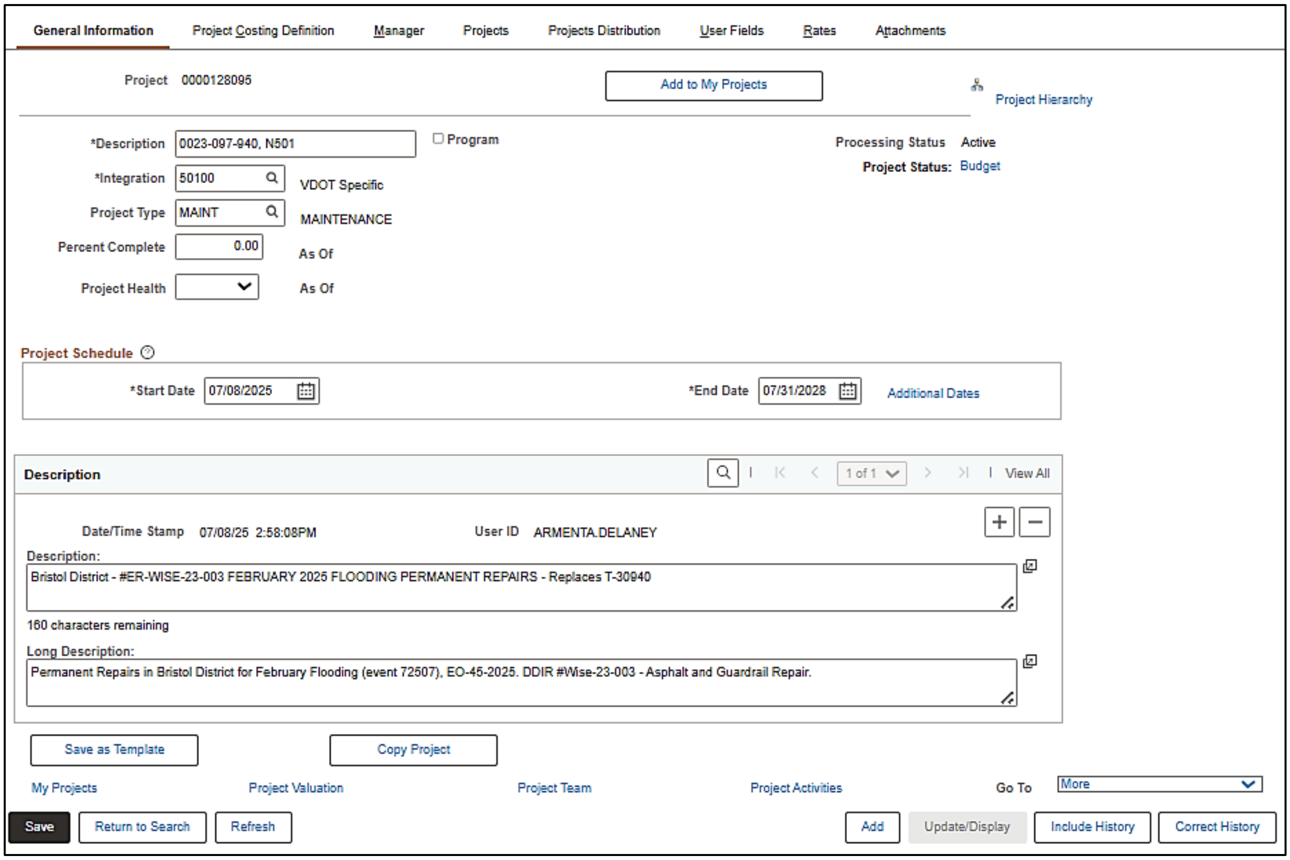
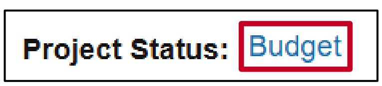
Approving a Project

A project is ready for approval when it is prepared to receive expenditure transactions, meaning its distribution has already been approved and its status is set to Budget. Once the project reaches this point, the Project Manager must notify the Project Status Approver, as Cardinal does not send alerts or display the project on the approver's worklist.

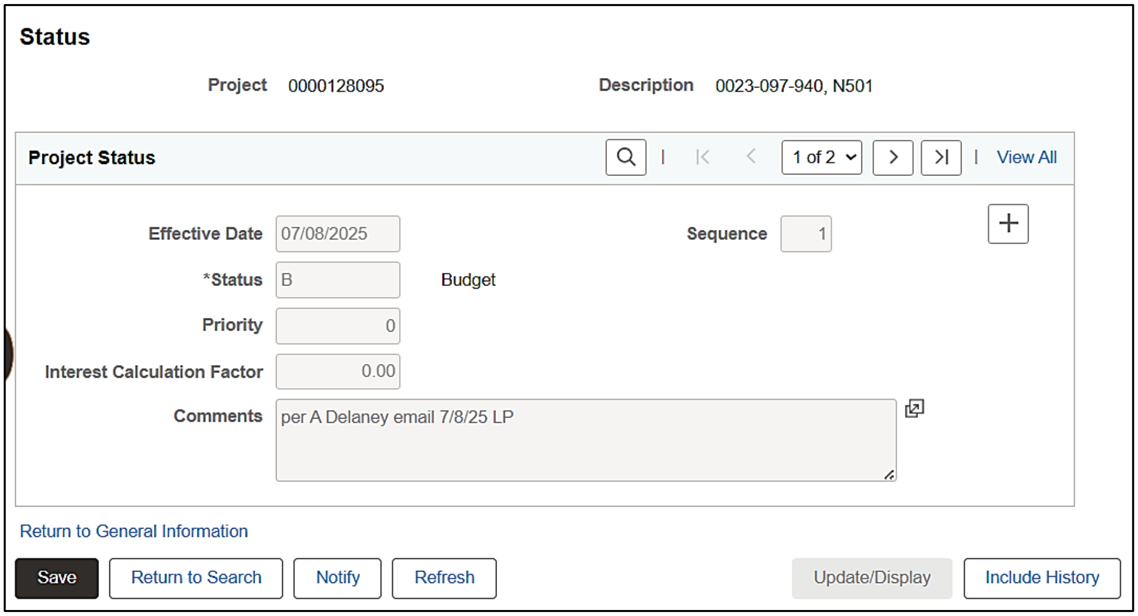
The approver updates the project status from Budget to Open on the General Information page, enabling transactions and budgets from other modules to post against it. Because there is no deny function, the status should only be changed to Open when expenditure transactions are appropriate. Approving a project simply involves updating its status from Budget to Open, allowing it to be fully processed in Cardinal.

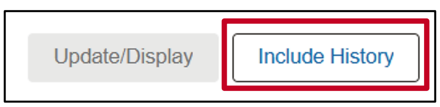
Step	Action
1.	Navigate to the **General Information** page by clicking the **Projects WorkCenter** tile. 
	For information about WorkCenters, see the Job Aid titled **Overview of the Cardinal Financials WorkCenters** located on the Cardinal website in **Job Aids** under **Learning**.
2.	Use the following navigation in the WorkCenter: **Links > Project Costing > Define Project General Info** **Note**: WorkCenter sections, folders, and pages may vary based on the user's Security roles. 

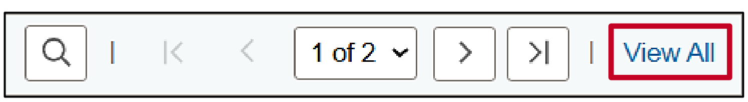
<table>
<tr><th>Step</th><th>Action</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Users can also access the General Information page using the following navigation path:
NavBar > Menu > Project Costing > Project Definitions > Define Project General Info</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">The General Information Find an Existing Value Search page displays.

</td></tr>
<tr><td>3.</td><td>Enter the Project ID in the Project field.

</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.</td><td>Click the Search button.

</td></tr>
</table>

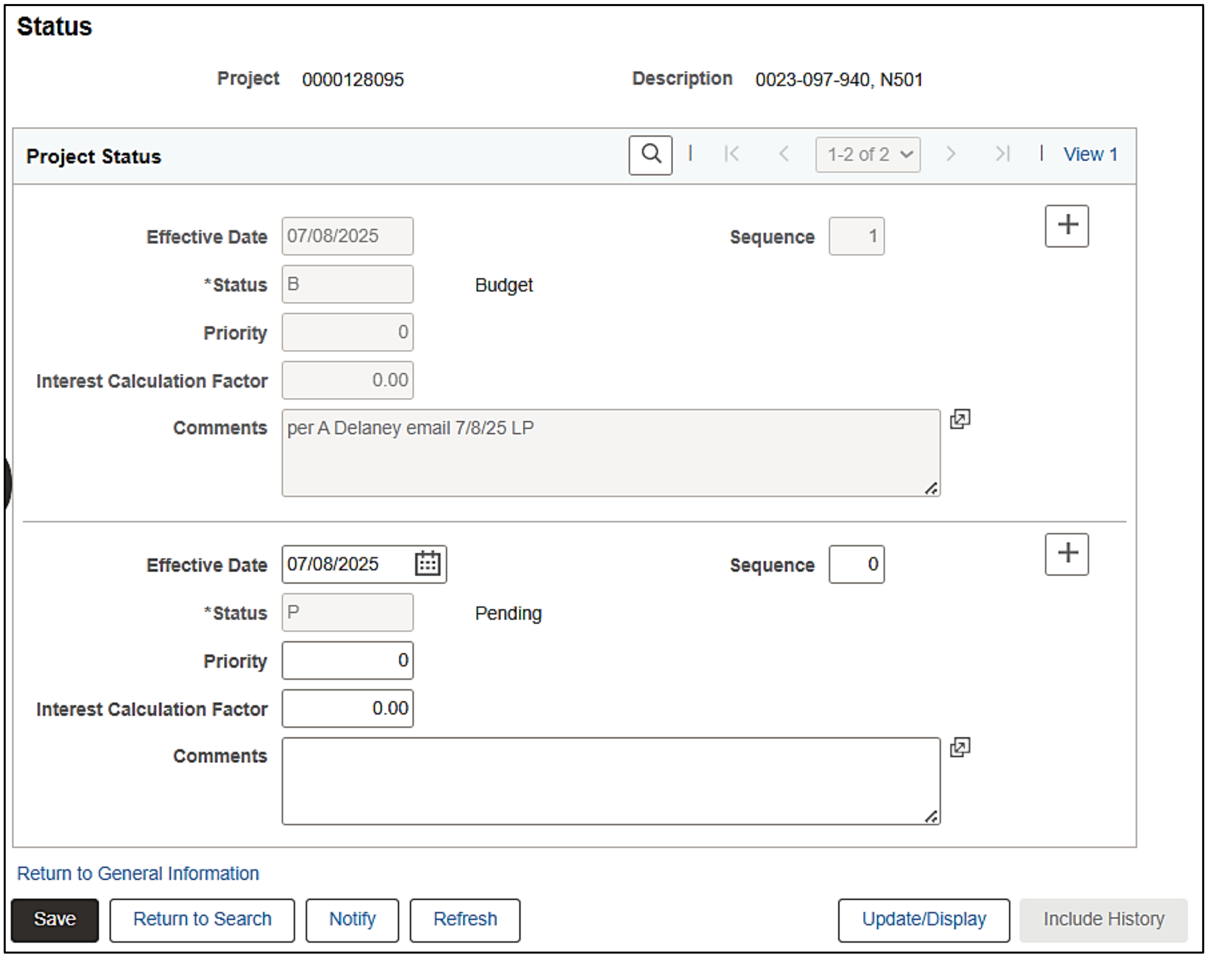
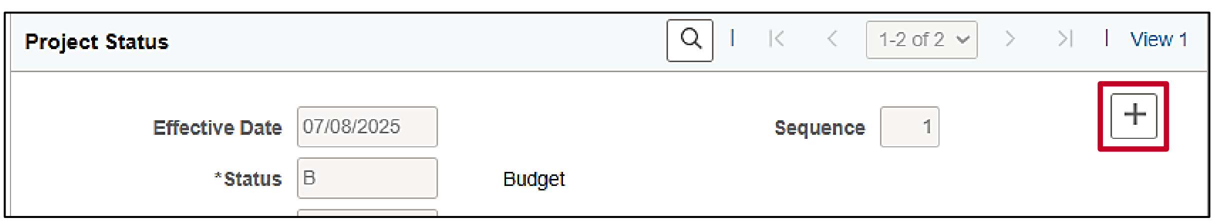
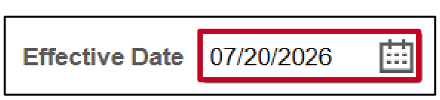
Step	Action
	The **General Information** tab for the project displays. 
5.	In the **Project Status** field, click the **Budget** link. 

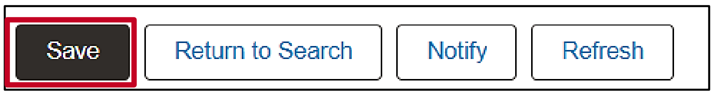
<table>
<tr><th>Step</th><th>Action</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">The Status page displays.


</td></tr>
<tr><td>6.</td><td>Click the Include History button.

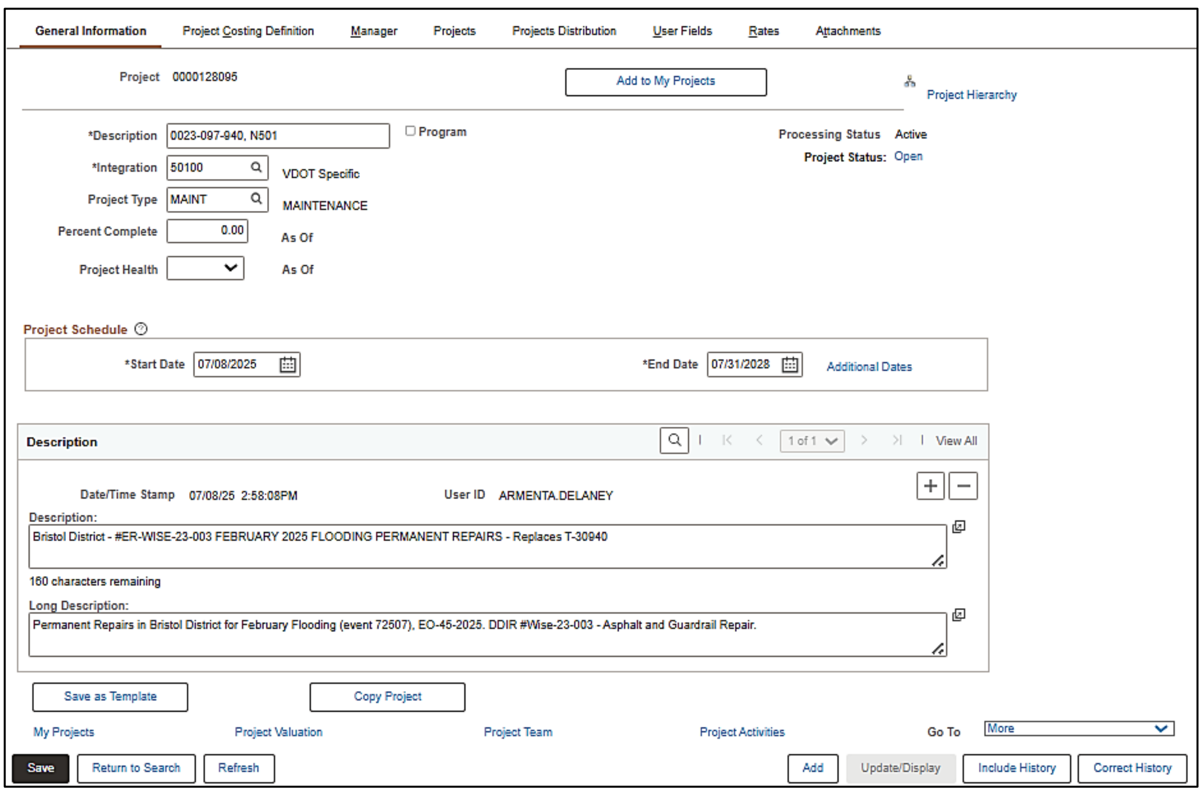

</td></tr>
<tr><td>7.</td><td>Click the View All link (changes to View 1).


</td></tr>
</table>

Step	Action
	All **Project Status** records display. 
8.	Click the **Add Row** button (**+**) to add a new effective-dated row. 
9.	Enter the Effective Date in the **Effective Date** field. This effective date must be prior to the date the first expenditure can be posted to the project. If a future-effective date is added, the project status is not effective until this date is reached. 

Step	Action
10.	Enter or select “O” (Open) in the **Status** field. 
11.	Click the **Save** button. 
12.	Click the **Return to General Information** link. 

The **General Information** page displays.



The **Processing Status** field changes from Budget to Active once the “Open” Project Status is saved.

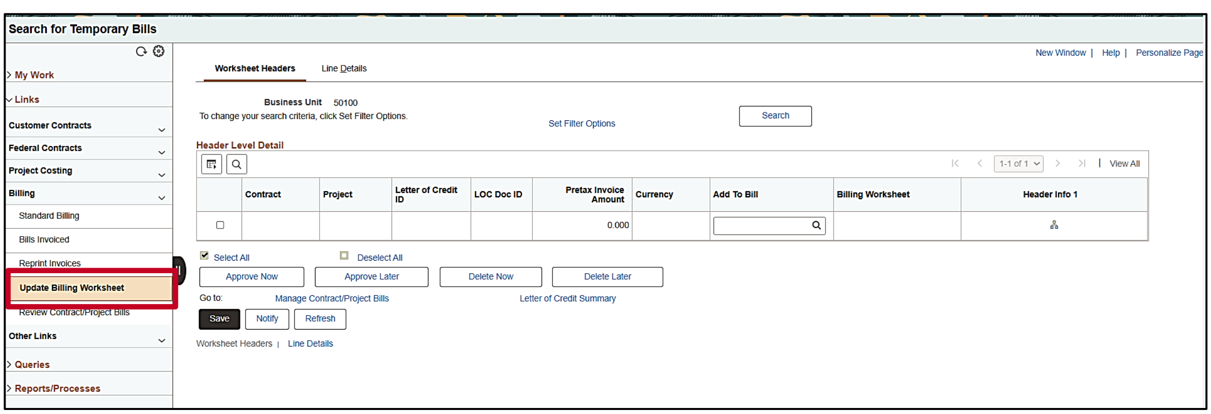
Step	Action
	Cardinal does not generate an automatic email to the Projects Manager when the project is approved. The approver must do so manually, if necessary. Users can also search for their project in Cardinal and check on its approval status.
	If the project is closed and needs to be temporarily opened, a new sequence should be added to the current Effective Date instead of adding a new effective dated row. Temporary changes to a project's status should be made by adding a new sequence to the current Effective Date. For example: If a project status is closed effective 10/21/19, sequence 1, but payroll charges need to be processed on 10/25/19, add sequence 2 to the 10/21/19 row with a Status of "O". To close the project after payroll has finished processing, add sequence 3 to the 10/21/19 row with a Status of "C".

Approving a Billing Worksheet

Before temporary bills become real bills, the Billing Worksheet must be approved. For FHWA Federal Bills, the worksheet is created to identify any errors in the federal system and must be submitted to FHWA at least once in temporary status to confirm it is error-free before final submission.

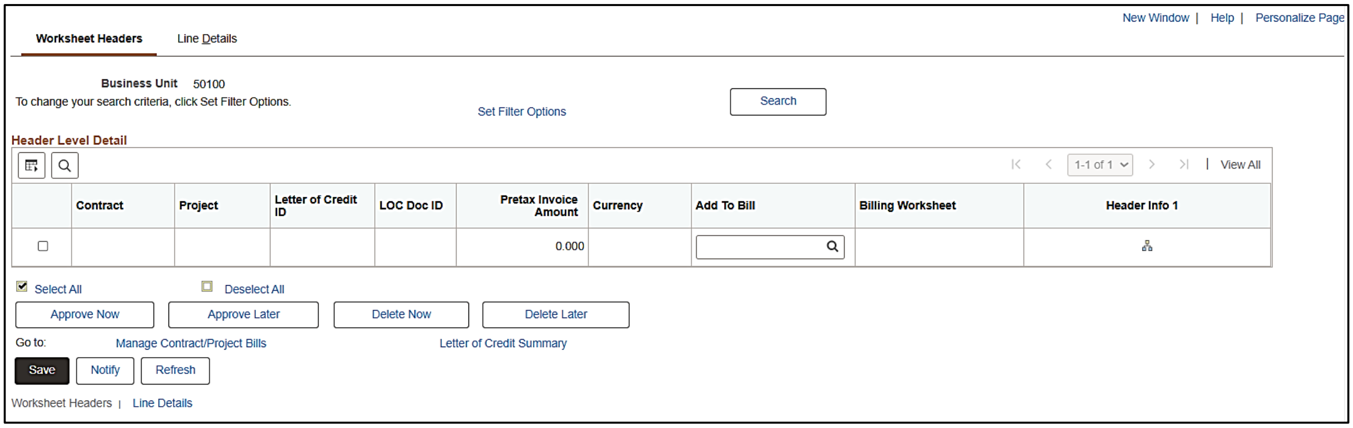
Because Cardinal does not send notifications or display the worksheet on the approver's worklist, the Billing Worksheet Approver must manually review temporary bills daily to determine which are ready for approval. The worksheet is approved on the Update Billing Worksheet page, where the approver can review and defer lines as needed.

Once approved and processed, the Billing Worksheet generates a real bill, and the approver's review ensures all data is accurate.

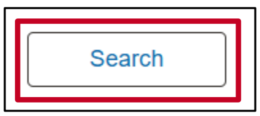
Step	Action
1.	Navigate to the **Update Billing Worksheet** page by clicking the **Contracts WorkCenter** tile. 
	For information about WorkCenters, see the Job Aid titled **Overview of the Cardinal Financials WorkCenters** located on the Cardinal website in **Job Aids** under **Learning**.
2.	Use the following navigation in the WorkCenter: **Links > Billing > Update Billing Worksheet** **Note**: WorkCenter sections, folders, and pages may vary based on the user's Security roles. 
	Users can also access the **Update Billing Worksheet** page using the following navigation path: **NavBar > Menu > Billing > Manage Billing Worksheet > Update Billing Worksheet**

Step	Action

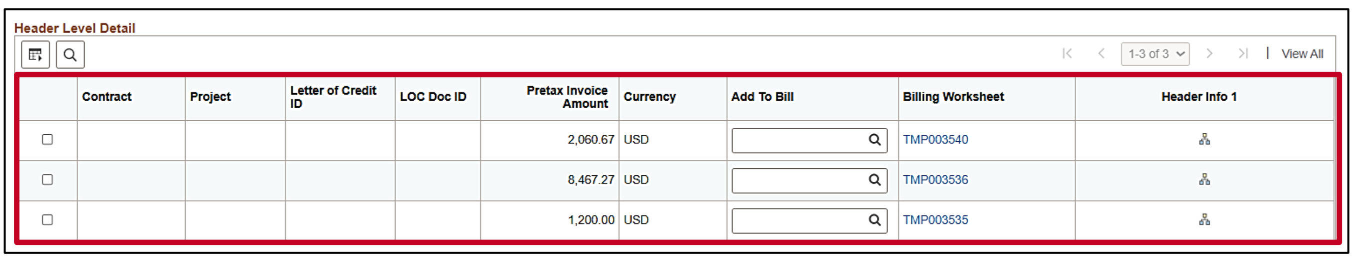
The **Update Billing Worksheet** page displays.



3. Click the **Search** button.

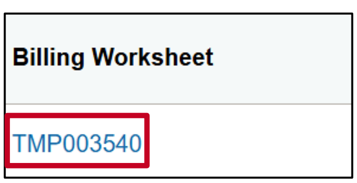


Temporary Bills to be approved display in the **Header Level Detail** section.

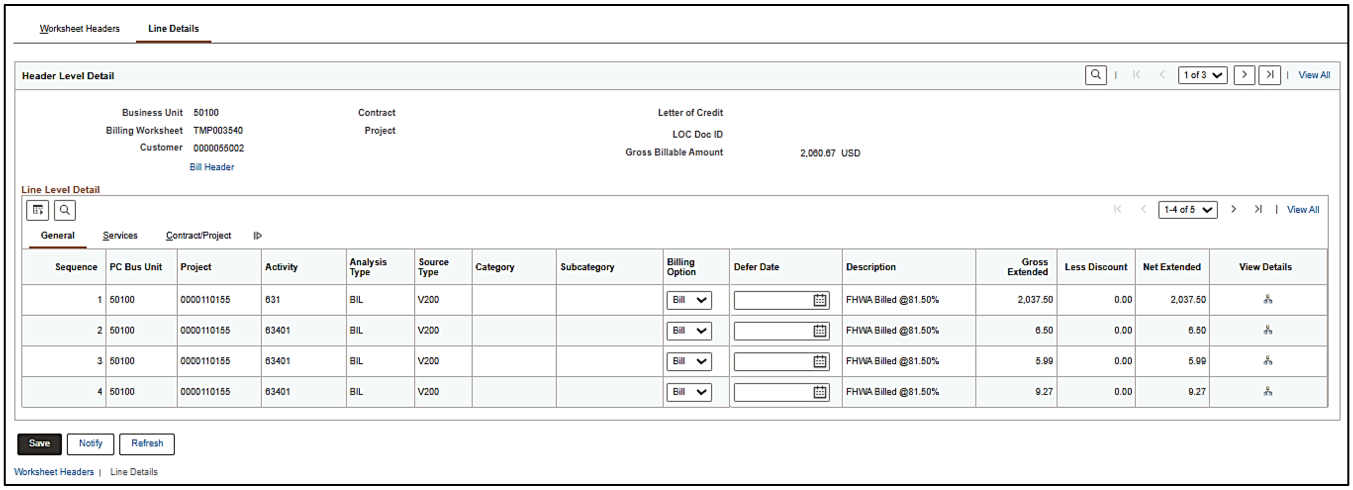


Do not approve the billing worksheet unless it has been submitted to the Rapid Approval and State Payment System (RASPS) at least one time.

4. Click the **Billing Worksheet** link.

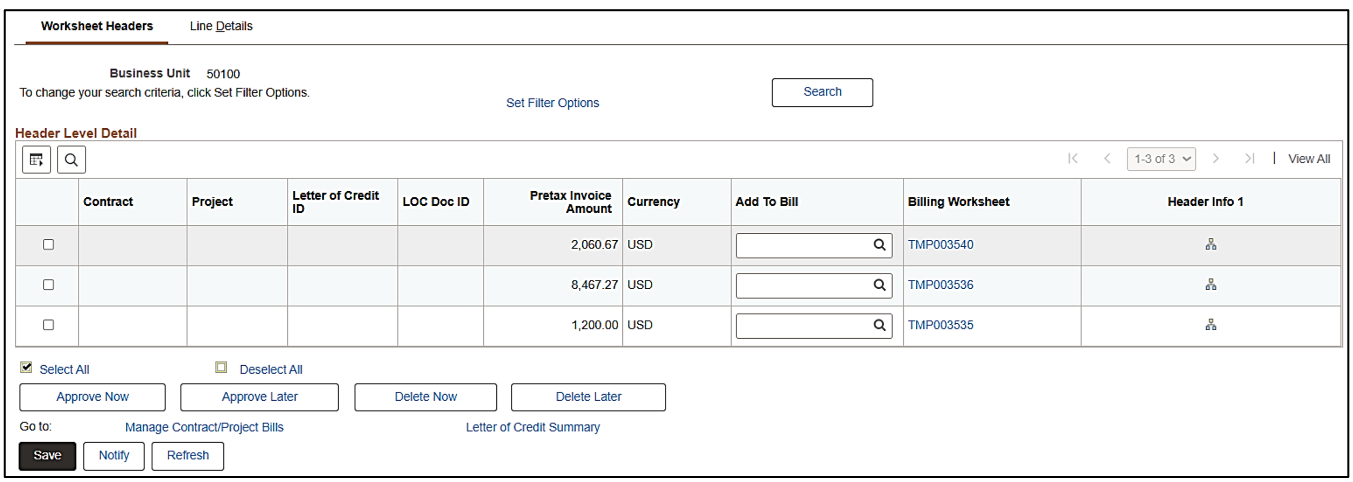


Step	Action
The **Line Details** tab displays.	

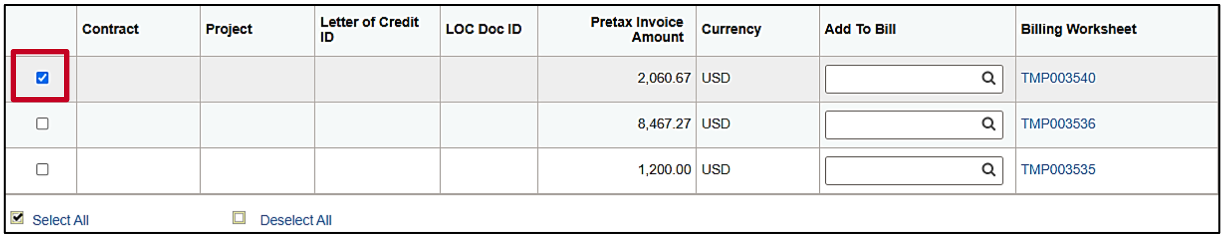


Step	Action
5.	Review all details based on relevant policies.
6.	After reviewing the Line Details, click the **Worksheet Headers** tab.

The **Worksheet Headers** tab redisplays.



Step	Action
7.	Select the checkbox next to the line items to be approved (or select the **Select All** checkbox).



Step	Action
8.	Click the **Approve Later** button which allows the Billing Worksheet to be approved in an automatic batch process later in time.

Or click the **Delete Later** button which allows the Billing Worksheet to be deleted in an automatic batch process later in time.

The **Approve Now** and **Delete Now** buttons are not used in Cardinal. Do not click them.

The Approved or Deleted Billing Worksheet is removed from the **Update Billing Worksheet** page.