ABEST Instructions for Base Reconciliation
2022–23 Biennium

Data Entry for State Agencies,
Appellate Courts,
and Institutions of Higher Education for the
Eighty-eighth Legislature, Regular Session
DOCUMENT CONVENTIONS

This document uses the following symbolic conventions:

* **Caution:** This symbol warns you of the possible loss of data.

* **Important:** This symbol indicates information you need to know.

* **Tip:** This symbol indicates information that may be useful.
GETTING STARTED

The agency submissions portion of the Automated Budget and Evaluation System of Texas (ABEST) is a web-based application. The Legislative Budget Board (LBB) uses ABEST to track agency requests for appropriations through the stages of the legislative appropriations process and agency performance through the biennial budget cycle.

Base reconciliation is an early step for state agencies, appellate courts, and institutions of higher education (all are referred to as “agencies” in these instructions) in developing Legislative Appropriations Requests (LARs) for the 2024–25 biennium.

The base for the LAR refers to estimated expenditures for fiscal year 2022 plus budgeted expenditures for fiscal year 2023 for General Revenue Funds and General Revenue–Dedicated Funds. The base comprises the historical data that must be reconciled with original appropriations, taking into consideration adjustments made through riders, transfers, unexpended balances, legislation, and so forth for the same period. It is critical to calculate the base as accurately as possible.

When entering data into ABEST for base reconciliation, standard descriptions of appropriation types appear in drop-down menu lists. If a standard description applies to a selected appropriation type, use it rather than entering a similar description yourself. Using a standard description helps LBB analysts gather information on the impact across all agencies of certain provisions in the General Appropriations Act and other legislation.

The recommended approach for entering your base reconciliation data is:

- Review the Base Reconciliation Instructions 2022–23 Biennium and the Base Reconciliation Example for Fiscal Years 2022–23. The instructions and example provide general guidelines about base reconciliation.
- Review your agency’s reconciled fiscal year 2022 Operating Budget.
- Collect and enter your agency’s data into ABEST.
- Refer to this ABEST manual, updated March 2022, for ABEST data entry instructions.
- Call the LBB Help Desk at 512-463-3167 if you have questions about ABEST.
- Call your LBB analyst if you have questions regarding data. A list of analyst assignments is available on the LBB website (www.lbb.texas.gov). From the LBB home page, click ABOUT LBB→Staff→Analyst Assignments.

ACCESSING ABEST

The following steps should be completed to request a user ID and password for ABEST. If you have forgotten your user ID or password, see the Logging In section of these instructions.

To request a user ID, click AGENCIES PORTAL from the LBB website (www.lbb.texas.gov). Under LOGON INFORMATION, click Agency Logon Request Form as shown in the following graphic.
Fill out the form (shown below).

When complete, scroll down and click **Submit**. You should receive an email asking you to confirm the logon request. You must respond to this email; otherwise, your request will not be processed. If you do not receive a confirmation email, call the ABEST Help Desk at 512-463-3167. The LBB will email you a user ID and password for ABEST within one business day.
LOGGING IN

Google Chrome can be used for ABEST data entry. Other browsers (e.g., Firefox, Safari, Microsoft Edge, etc.) will not work consistently and can create problems in the application. The recommended screen resolution is 1280 x 1024, as shown below.

From the LBB website (www.lbb.texas.gov), click AGENCIES PORTAL. Under DATA ENTRY APPLICATIONS click on Automated Budget and Evaluation System of Texas (ABEST) as shown below.

IMPORTANT

If you already have a user ID and have forgotten the user ID or password, or if your user ID or password does not work, do one of the following:

- Under Logon Information on the LBB’s website (www.lbb.texas.gov), click Agency Logon Help. Enter your user ID or email address and click Remember Me.
- Call the LBB Help Desk at 512-463-3167.

Enter your username and password and click Login, as shown in the following example.
PROFILE SELECTION

The profile screen appears upon successfully logging into ABEST. Options selected on this screen determine the menu layout for a particular business process in ABEST (e.g., Operating Budget, Base Reconciliation, Legislative Appropriations Request, etc.).

As shown below, from the available drop-down menu boxes, select **88TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION**, **Base Reconciliation**, **SBR – Base Reconciliation**, and your agency.

Click **Save Selections** to update your profile, as shown below. The options selected will display on the profile settings bar, which is at the top of each screen. The agency **Status** associated with these settings is also included.
IMPORTANT

Before you enter data, verify that you are in the correct session, business process, and agency. Note that you will not be able to access the menus if your agency Status is set to RESTRICTED or LOCKED (Status is located at the right top portion of the profile screen). The LBB uses these specific statuses to indicate that work is in progress. Other agencies will appear in your agency drop-down menu box when their Status is set to COMPLETE in ABEST. If the Current Profile/Settings are not correct, click in the drop-down menu boxes to select the appropriate settings and click Save Selections.

NEWS SCREEN

The ABEST News screen provides important information and often conveys details about upcoming deadlines. ABEST may direct you to this screen if this is your first time to log in or if the News screen has been updated.

HELP

You can view a user instructions manual online or get help based on your screen location. Click the Help button to view the entire user manual, as shown below.

Click the Help icon to get detailed information about the screen you are using. The user manual opens and links to the information based on your screen location.

HELP DESK CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact the LBB Help Desk by clicking on Contact Us, as shown below.
The Help Desk will respond to email inquiries as soon as possible; however, it can take as long as the end of the next business day in some cases.

You can also contact the LBB by calling the Help Desk at 512-463-3167. Be prepared to leave a message when calling the Help Desk. Your call goes directly to voicemail at all times. A typical call back response from the Help Desk is within 30 minutes.

**CHANGING YOUR AGENCY STATUS TO INCOMPLETE**

ABEST will not allow you to enter data until you set the agency Status to **INCOMPLETE**. To accomplish that, click the Status menu, as shown below.

Select the **INCOMPLETE** radio button and click **Save**, as shown below.

**CAUTIONS AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**CAUTION**

You will lose data if ABEST is inactive for 30 minutes or more. Always click **Save** if you leave your computer for more than a few minutes. If ABEST becomes inactive, you must close and reopen your browser and log back in. Any unsaved data must be re-entered.

**CAUTION**

You will lose data if you move to another grid without saving first. Save your work frequently by clicking **Save**. Any unsaved data must be re-entered.

**IMPORTANT**

Read the **News** screen when ABEST directs you to it. It often conveys important information regarding changes and upcoming deadlines.

**DATA ENTRY CONSIDERATIONS**

Refer to the following table for information regarding data entry.
ENTERING BASE RECONCILIATION DATA

Base reconciliation is the first phase for entering data for the 88th legislative session in the budgeting process. During this phase, you will enter all values; no values will be preloaded on the screen.

ADDING METHOD OF FINANCE (MOFS)

Click the MOFs menu (shown in the following graphic) to enter your agency’s method of finance.
A list of available MOF codes, Appropriation Types (Appr. Type), and Summary Descriptions are pre-loaded into each of the drop-down menu boxes listed.

**TIP**
Hover your cursor over the names in the drop-down menu box to show the full name of each item listed for selection.

Select a MOF, Appr. Type, and Summary Description from each of the drop-down menu boxes. Some appropriation types have a drop-down list of standard descriptions. As shown in the following two graphics, select a standard description or you can enter a unique description. To enter a unique description, double click in the input box, remove any default text and begin typing, then click **OK**.

**IMPORTANT**
If a standard description applies to the selected appropriation type, use it rather than entering your own description. Using a standard description helps LBB analysts gather information on the impact across all agencies of certain provisions in the General Appropriations Act and other legislation.

**TIP**
You can expand the Summary Description and Comments fields by double clicking in the input text field. The character limits are 150 and 2,500 respectively. Use your keyboard’s Enter key to start a new line of text in the text field. Within the text field, click **OK** or **Cancel** to move out of the text field. Save your work by clicking **Save**. Each of those text fields provides a character counter and identifies the character limit.
Enter **Comments** (as shown in the below example) and click the OK button. Then enter the dollar amounts associated with each fiscal year listed on the screen.

After selecting a **MOF**, **Appr. Type**, and **Summary Description**, and entering **Comments** and dollar amounts, click **Save**. After clicking **Save**, the MOF appears at the top of the screen under **Existing MOFs**. The corresponding data for that MOF displays in the grid as shown in the below example.

Use the gray section (shown below) to add additional rows (**Appr. Type**, **Summary Description**, etc.) for the MOF listed and click **Save**. Repeat this step to add as many appropriation types as needed.
As you save the data, notice the **MOF Summary Total** at the bottom of the table updates.

To add a new MOF, click the **Available MOFs** hyperlink (above the **Existing MOFs** grid) or click in the **Available MOFs** grid (as shown below). The MOFs listed here include all of the MOFs that are available, but have not already been used for your agency.

Select a **MOF**, **Appr. Type**, and **Summary Description** from each of the drop-down menu boxes. Enter **Comments** and the dollar amounts associated with each fiscal year listed and click **Save**.
The selected MOF now appears at the top of a new screen under **Existing MOFs**. The corresponding data for the selected MOF displays in the grid, as shown in the below example.

Add additional rows to the listed MOF as needed. Use the gray section to enter additional rows (**Appropriation Type**, **Summary Description**, etc.) for the MOF listed and click **Save**.

**IMPORTANT**

Each MOF you enter has its own data entry screen with appropriation types and descriptions. You may add as many appropriation types and descriptions as needed for each MOF.

Review the navigation options below. These options will help you navigate easily within the application and are helpful when you have a large amount of data displayed on the screen.

**NAVIGATION OPTIONS REFERENCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hyperlink</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Existing MOFs</strong></td>
<td>Hyperlink directs you to the top portion of the screen and displays the MOFs you have currently entered into ABEST for base reconciliation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Available MOFs</strong></td>
<td>Hyperlink directs you to the bottom portion of the screen and displays the MOFs that have not been used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Top and Bottom</strong></td>
<td>Hyperlink positions the cursor at the top or bottom of the screen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Double Arrow</strong> (top right of grid)</td>
<td>Use this toggle switch (Double Arrow) to collapse or expand a particular grid. It will enable you to view the details above or below a particular grid (as shown in the below example).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IMPORTANT COVID-19 Appropriations. Use MOF code 0325 (not MOF 0555) for all federal awards and expenditures for the six federal bills related to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, which include the following legislation: Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act (2020); Families First Coronavirus Response Act; Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act; Paycheck Protection Program and Healthcare Enhancement Act; Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act; and American Recovery Plan Act of 2021, and any other federal funding that was used for COVID-related expenditures, even if not from the six previously mentioned bills.

REVISING MOF DATA

If you have moved away from the MOFs screen, click the MOFs menu. Select an existing MOF from the Existing MOFs drop-down menu box, as shown below. Each appropriation type and the corresponding data you entered for the selected MOF will then display in the grid. You can revise summary descriptions, comments, and dollar amounts. Enter any necessary changes and click Save.

IMPORTANT You cannot modify the appropriation type (Appr. Type) from the MOF screen. If you need to change an appropriation type you have already entered, delete the existing row by clicking the red X to the left of the Appr. Type (see the below example). Confirm your request by clicking OK in the pop-up message box.

If necessary, add the data again with the revised appropriation type. Refer to the Adding Method of Finance (MOFs) section of these instructions for details.
**ADDING FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS (FTES)**

To enter the base reconciliation FTE data for your agency, click the **FTEs** menu as shown in the following graphic.

Select an **Appr. Type** and **Summary Description** from each of the drop-down menu boxes. Enter **Comments** and the dollar amounts associated with each fiscal year listed on the screen and click **Save**.

**TIP**

You can expand the **Summary Description** and **Comments** fields by double clicking in the input text field. The character limits are 150 and 2,500 respectively. Use your keyboard’s **Enter** key to start a new line of text in the text field. Within the text field, click **OK** or **Cancel** to move out of the text field. Save your work by clicking **Save**. Each of those text fields provides a character counter and identifies the character limit.

Some appropriation types (**Appr. Type**) have a drop-down list of standard descriptions. Select a standard description or enter a unique description.

**IMPORTANT**

If a standard description applies to the selected appropriation type, use it rather than entering your own description. Using a standard description helps LBB analysts gather information on the impact across all agencies of certain provisions in the General Appropriations Act and other legislation.
Enter the **Number (#) of 100 Percent Federally Funded FTEs** in the bottom grid and click **Save**, as shown in the following example.

Repeat the FTE data entry steps to add as many appropriation types as needed. As you save the data, notice that the **FTE Summary Total** at the bottom of the table automatically updates.

Review the navigation options below. These options will help you navigate easily within the application and are helpful when you have a large amount of data displayed on the screen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAVIGATION OPTIONS REFERENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FTEs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fed Funded FTEs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Top and Bottom</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Double Arrow</strong> (top right of grid)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REVISING FTE DATA

If you have moved away from the FTEs screen, click the FTEs menu, as mentioned previously. Each appropriation type and the corresponding data you entered for the FTEs displays in the grid.

On this screen, you can revise summary descriptions, comments, and the FTE amounts. Enter any necessary changes and click Save.

**IMPORTANT**

You cannot modify the appropriation type (Appr. Type column) from the FTE screen. If you need to change an appropriation type, delete the existing row by clicking on the red “X” to the left of the Appr. Type (see below example). After clicking on the red “X”, confirm your request by clicking OK.

If necessary, add the data again with the revised appropriation type. Refer to the Adding FTEs section of these instructions for details.

ADDING SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTS (APPLIES TO ARTICLE 2 AGENCIES ONLY)

Click the Supplementals menu (as shown in the following example) to submit/upload supplemental documents for Article 2 agencies only. The Supplementals menu will not display for non-Article 2 agencies.

While Article 2 agencies may enter any supplemental documents they deem useful to assist with Base Reconciliation, Article 2 agencies must submit/upload all supplemental documents required by their agency’s assigned LBB budget analyst(s).
After clicking the **Supplementals** menu, the following **Supplementals** screen will display.

![Supplementals Screen](image)

To submit/upload a PDF, Word, or Excel document, click **Choose File**, as shown below.

![Choose File](image)

Select the desired document (example shown below). Then click **Open**.

![Select Document](image)

The selected document will upload into the **Upload Supplemental** grid, as shown in the below example. Enter a description of the document (limited to 50 characters) and click **Save**.

![Upload Supplemental](image)
To delete a document that has been previously saved, click on the red “X” to the left of the Document Name (see below example). After clicking on the red “X”, confirm your request by clicking OK.

To view an uploaded document, click the magnifying glass to the left of the Document Name (see below example).

**GENERATING A REPORT**

ABEST produces a report based on the base reconciliation data you submit. You may generate the report at any time, regardless of the agency’s Status.

**IMPORTANT**

Before printing your agency’s final base reconciliation report, it is essential that you change your agency Status to COMPLETE. Refer to the Changing Your Agency Status to Complete section of these instructions for details.

To generate the base reconciliation report, click the Reports menu, as shown in the following graphic.
Click the **Summary of Base Reconciliation by Method of Finance** hyperlink to generate the report, as shown in the following graphic.

A report preview appears in the ABEST window. Use the arrow keys at the top to navigate through multi-pages. The **binoculars icon** can be used to search the report, but before clicking on that icon, enter your search criteria in the text box (example shown below) to the left of the **binoculars icon**.

Then click the **binoculars icon** as shown below.
To **print**, click the **second icon** in the upper left corner of the ABEST screen, as shown below.

To **export**, click the **first icon** in the upper left corner of the ABEST screen.

After clicking the first icon to export, select the appropriate **export format** from the drop-down menu list (shown below) and click **OK**. The report will download into the appropriate application. Save your downloaded report file.

Click **Return** to go back to the **Reports** menu.
CHANGING YOUR AGENCY STATUS TO COMPLETE

Change the base reconciliation Status for your agency from INCOMPLETE to COMPLETE to submit your agency’s base reconciliation. Click the Status menu.

Click the COMPLETE radio button and click Save, as shown below.

Once your agency Status is set to COMPLETE, your LBB analyst and the Office of the Governor, Budget and Policy Division can view your base reconciliation data.

If you need to make changes to your agency’s base reconciliation data after changing your agency Status to COMPLETE, call your agency’s LBB analyst to approve reopening ABEST for your agency. You must change your agency Status back to COMPLETE after making your revisions.