

# ABEST Instructions for Base Reconciliation 2024–25 Biennium

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

**LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD STAFF** 

WWW.LBB.TEXAS.GOV

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# **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 2026–27 biennium.

The base for the LAR refers to estimated expenditures for fiscal year 2024 plus budgeted expenditures for fiscal year 2025 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.

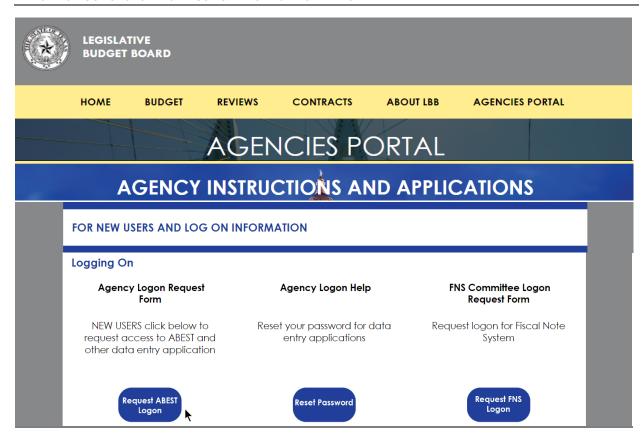
The recommended approach for entering your base reconciliation data is:

- Review the Base Reconciliation Instructions 2024–25 Biennium and the Base Reconciliation Example for Fiscal Years 2024–25. The instructions and example provide general guidelines about base reconciliation.
- Review your agency's reconciled fiscal year 2024 Operating Budget.
- Collect and enter your agency's data into ABEST.
- Refer to this ABEST manual, updated March 2024, for ABEST data entry instructions.
- Call your agency's assigned LBB analyst if you have questions on what data information is to be entered. A list of analyst assignments is available on the LBB website (<a href="www.lbb.texas.gov">www.lbb.texas.gov</a>). From the LBB home page, click **ABOUT LBB—Staff—Analyst Assignments**.
- If you have a technical problem with the ABEST application that you cannot resolve using these data entry instructions, send an email to **WebAppSupport@lbb.texas.gov** or call the LBB Help Desk at 512-463-3167.

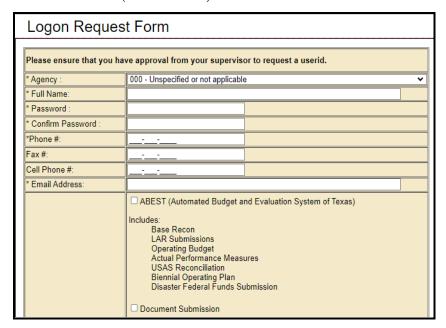
### **ACCESSING ABEST**

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

To request a user ID, click **AGENCIES PORTAL** from the LBB website (<u>www.lbb.texas.gov</u>). Under **AGENCY INSTRUCTIONS AND APPLICATIONS**, click **FOR NEW USERS AND LOG ON INFORMATION**, then click **Request ABEST Logon** (as shown in the following graphic).



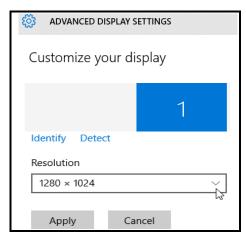
Fill out the form (shown below).



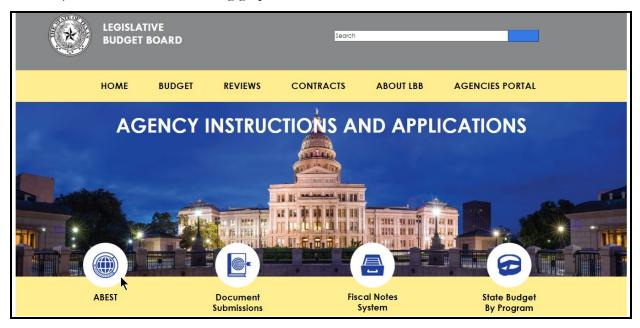
When complete, scroll down and click **Submit**. You should receive an email asking you to confirm the logon request. You must respond to this email; otherwise, your request will not be processed. If you do not receive a confirmation email, send an email request to **WebAppSupport@lbb.texas.gov** or 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 (<u>www.lbb.texas.gov</u>), click **AGENCIES PORTAL**. Under **AGENCY INSTRUCTIONS AND APPLICATIONS**, click **ABEST** (Automated Budget Evaluation System of Texas), as shown in the following graphic.



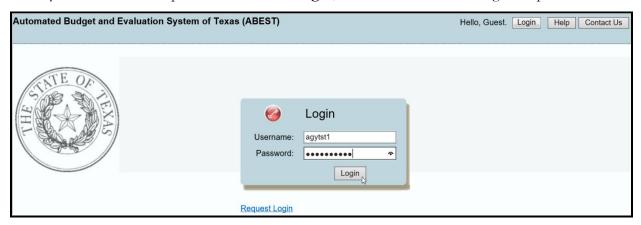
#### **IMPORTANT**



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 AGENCY INSTRUCTIONS AND APPLICATIONS on the LBB's website (<u>www.lbb.texas.gov</u>), click on FOR NEW USERS AND LOG ON INFORMATION, then click on Reset Password under Agency Logon Help. Enter your User ID or email address and click Send User Info.
- Send an email to WebAppSupport@lbb.texas.gov or call the LBB Help Desk at 512-463-3167,

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





You can also access the Logon Request Form mentioned earlier by clicking Request Login (see above 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.).

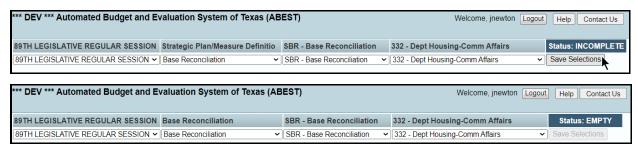
As shown below, from the available drop-down menu boxes, select **89TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION**, **Base Reconciliation**, **SBR – Base Reconciliation**, and your agency.



**IMPORTANT** 

Many of the screenshot examples used throughout these *ABEST Instructions* include a notation (\*\*\***DEV**\*\*\*) in the upper left corner of the graphic. This notation (\*\*\***DEV**\*\*\*) will not appear on your ABEST screens because it only displays in the test version of ABEST which was used to create the screenshot examples.

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.

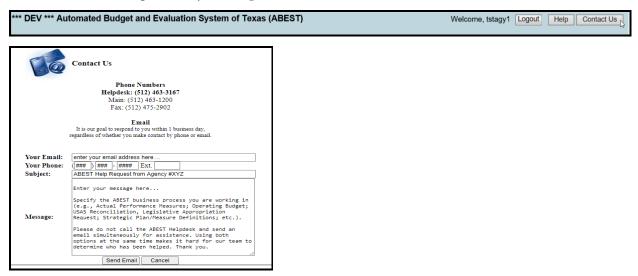


Click the **Help icon (** to get detailed information about the screen you are using. The user manual opens and links to the information based on your screen location.



# 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 sending an email to **WebAppSupport@lbb.texas.gov** or 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.



#### **IMPORTANT**



ABEST will not allow you to enter data until you set the agency **Status** to **INCOMPLETE**. As you enter data, closing edits will appear on the **Status** screen. You must clear the edits before you can submit your agency's base reconciliation. You must set your agency **Status** to **COMPLETE** when you have completed your data entry. Refer to the <u>Changing Your Agency Status</u> to <u>Complete</u> section of these instructions for details.

#### **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.

#### **DATA ENTRY REFERENCE TEXT LIMITATIONS ENTERING DATA SAVING DATA** You may copy text from a word Click in the data cell and enter Save data by processing application and the data pressing Enter on paste it into ABEST, but you Press the Tab key to move your keyboard or by clicking should review it and correct across to the next cell. Save on the screen. formatting problems if At the end of a row, manually Use the gray section necessary. Bulleted lists may click the cursor in a cell on a to add new information to a not copy properly. Avoid outline new row to enter more data. corresponding grid styles that combine numbers You can expand some multi-line and click Save. and bullets. text fields by double clicking in Numeric fields allow 12 digits the field. Use the Enter key to maximum. Enter only whole start a new line of text in a dollar amounts, not decimal multi-line text field. Click the places. You do not need to enter cursor outside the field or press commas in numeric fields. the Tab key to move out of the field. Save your work by clicking Save. Each expandable multiline text field provides a character counter and identifies the character limit for that field. In any active data entry cell for numbers, use the built-in calculator by double-clicking in it. After making a calculation and clicking the "=" button, click Send to Grid. The calculated number transfers to the cell. IF THE EXPLORER STATUS BAR **COLOR CONVENTIONS DOES NOT APPEAR NAVIGATION** Open the Tools menu in To move to the top of a long Unsaved numbers appear blue in color. Saved numbers are Internet Explorer and choose screen, click the Top Internet options. Click the hyperlink at the bottom of the Grayed out data cells are "read Security tab and select screen. only" and cannot be changed on Trusted Sites. Click the Sites To move to the bottom of a the grid you are working on. button and enter: long screen, click the Bottom Those cells were entered \*.lbb.texas.gov. hyperlink. previously by your agency on a different grid or by LBB/ABEST.

# **ENTERING BASE RECONCILIATION DATA**

Base reconciliation is the first phase for entering data for the 89th 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.



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

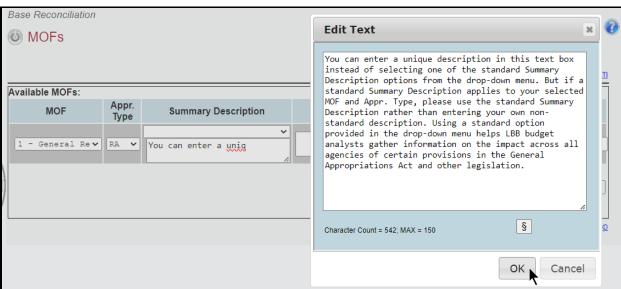
Select a MOF, Appr. Type, and Summary Description from each of the drop-down menu boxes.

Some appropriation types have a drop-down list of standard descriptions. As shown in the following two examples, 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**.



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.



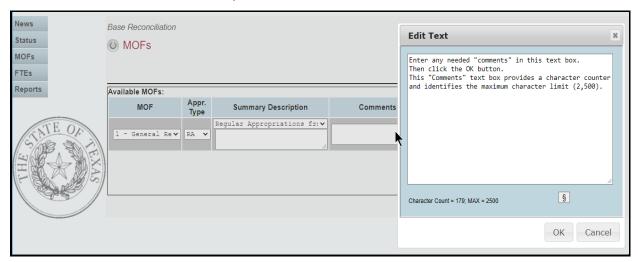




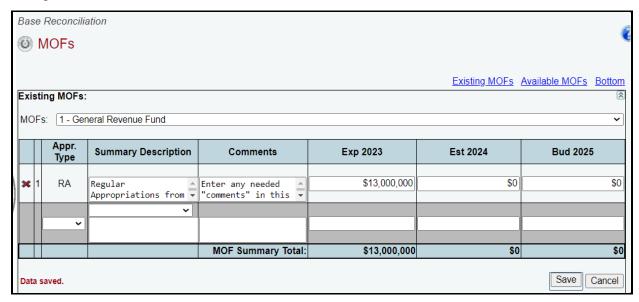


You can expand the **Summary Description** and **Comments** fields by double clicking in the input text field. The character limits are 150 and 2,500 respectively. Use your keyboard's **Enter** key to start a new line of text in the text field. Within the text field, click **OK** or **Cancel** to move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

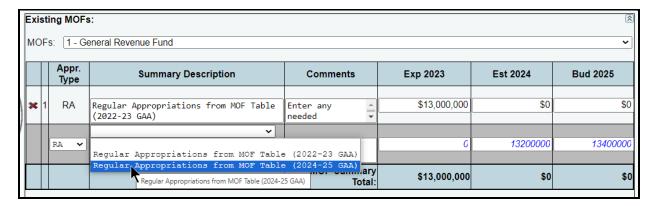
Enter **Comments** (as shown in the below example) and click the OK button. Then enter the dollar amounts associated with each fiscal year listed on the screen.



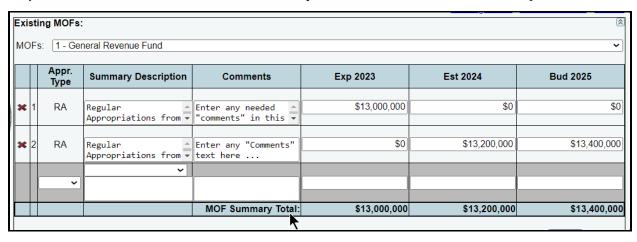
After selecting a MOF, Appr. Type, and Summary Description, and entering Comments and dollar amounts, click Save. After clicking Save, the MOF appears at the top of the screen under Existing MOFs. The corresponding data for that MOF displays in the grid as shown in the below example.



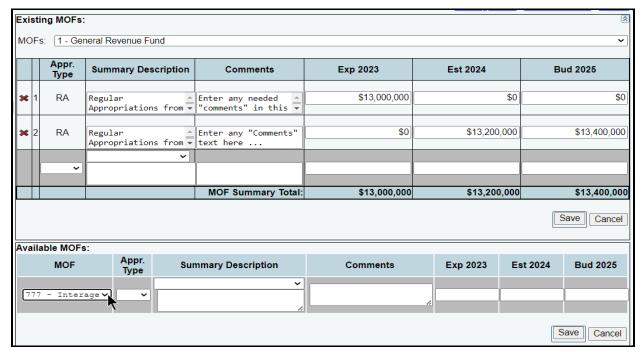
Use the gray section (shown in the following example) to add additional rows (**Appr. Type**, **Summary Description**, etc.) for the MOF listed and click **Save.** Repeat this step to add as many appropriation types as needed.



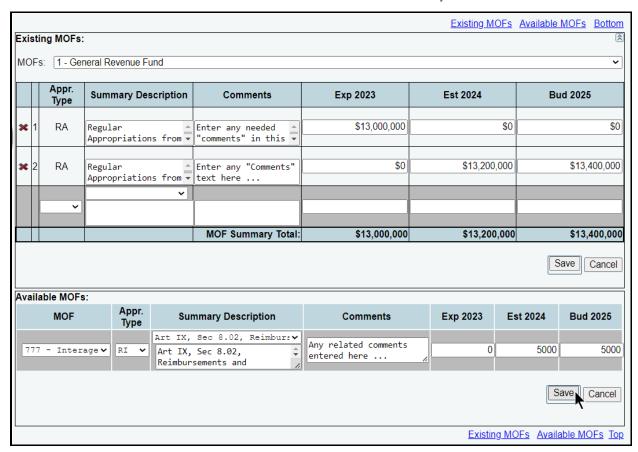
As you save the data, notice the MOF Summary Total at the bottom of the table updates.



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**.

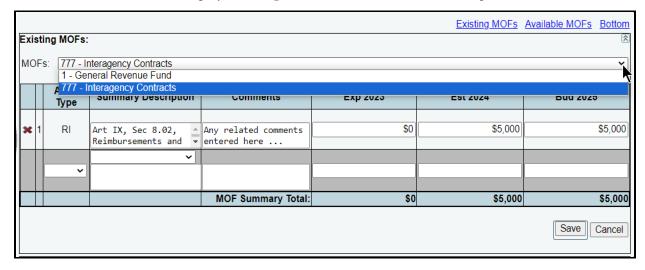


#### **IMPORTANT**



Make sure you click **Save** on the grid you are entering data, as shown in the previous examples. The **Save** button works independently for each grid on the screen.

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**.

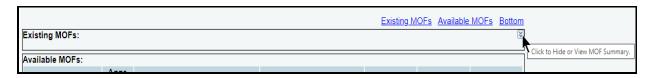
#### **IMPORTANT**



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.

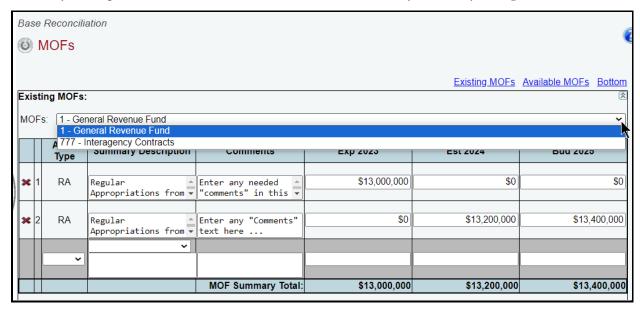
Review the navigation options below. These options will help you navigate easily within the application and are helpful when you have a large amount of data displayed on the screen.

NAVIGATION OPTIONS REFERENCE		
Existing MOFs	Hyperlink directs you to the top portion of the screen and displays the MOFs you have currently entered into ABEST for base reconciliation.	
Available MOFs	Hyperlink directs you to the bottom portion of the screen and displays the MOFs that have not been used.	
Top and Bottom	Hyperlink positions the cursor at the top or bottom of the screen.	
Double Arrow (top right of grid)	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).	



#### **REVISING MOF DATA**

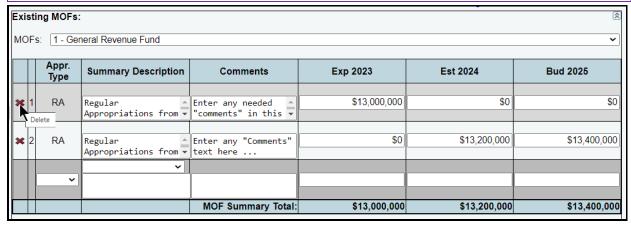
If you have moved away from the **MOFs** screen, click the **MOFs** menu. Select an existing MOF from the **Existing MOFs** drop-down menu box (example shown below). Each appropriation type and the corresponding data you entered for the selected MOF will then display in the grid. You can revise summary 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.





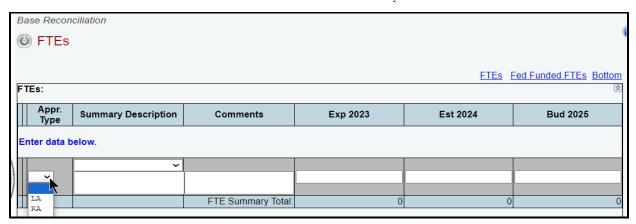
If necessary, add the data again with the revised appropriation type. Refer to the <u>Adding Method of Finance (MOFs)</u> section of these instructions for details.

# **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.

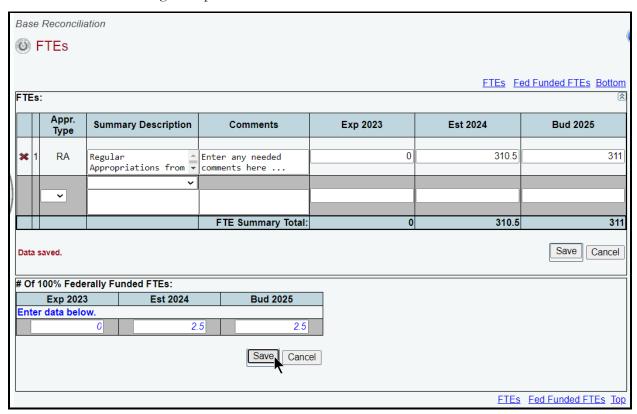
Some appropriation types (**Appr. Type**) have a drop-down list of standard descriptions. Select a standard description or enter a unique description.

#### **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.



#### **IMPORTANT**



Make sure you click **Save** on the grid you are entering data, as shown in the above example. The **Save** button works independently for each grid on the screen.

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 shown in the following table. 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.

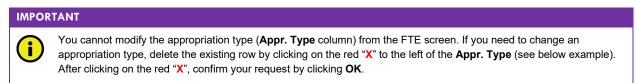
NAVIGATION OPTIONS REFERENCE		
FTEs	Hyperlink directs you to the top portion of the screen and displays the FTEs you have currently entered into ABEST for base reconciliation.	
Fed Funded FTEs	Hyperlink directs you to the bottom portion of the screen and displays the FTEs that have been entered for 100% Federally Funded FTEs.	
Top and Bottom	Hyperlink positions the cursor at the top or bottom of the screen.	
Double Arrow (top right of grid)	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 following example).	

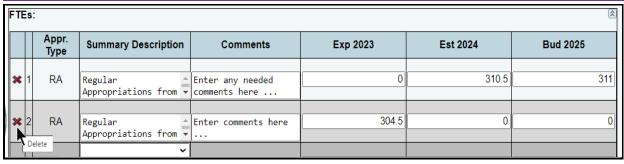


#### **REVISING FTE DATA**

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**.







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

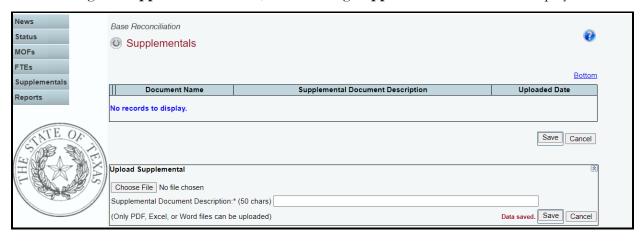
# ADDING SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTS (APPLIES TO ARTICLE 2 AGENCIES ONLY)

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).



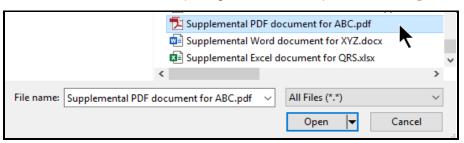
After clicking the **Supplementals** menu, the following **Supplementals** screen will display.



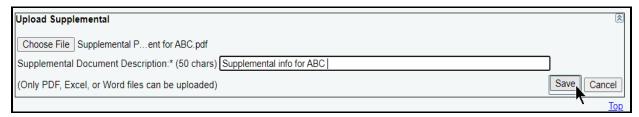
To submit/upload a PDF, Word, or Excel document, click Choose File, as shown below.



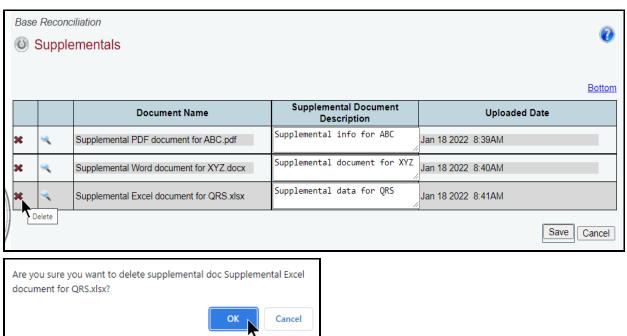
Select the desired document (example shown below). Then click **Open**.



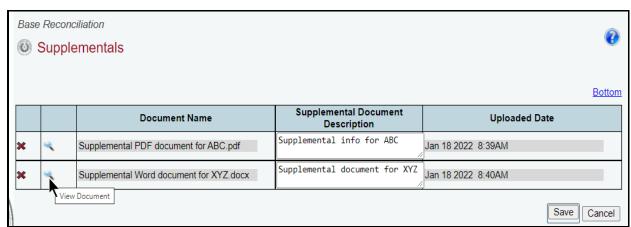
The selected document will upload into the **Upload Supplemental** grid, as shown in the below example. Enter a description of the document (limited to 50 characters) and click **Save**.



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  $\stackrel{\triangleleft}{\sim}$  to the left of the **Document Name** (see below example).



# **GENERATING A REPORT**

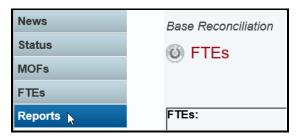
ABEST produces a report based on the base reconciliation data you submit. You may generate the report at any time, regardless of the agency's **Status**.

# IMPORTANT



Before printing your agency's final base reconciliation report, it is essential that you change your agency **Status** to **COMPLETE**. Refer to the <u>Changing Your Agency Status to Complete</u> 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.



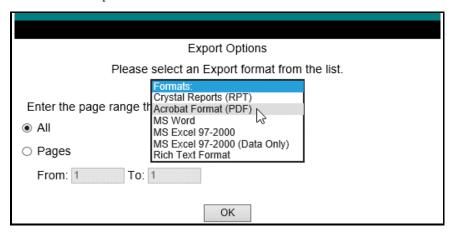
To print, click the **second icon** in the upper left corner of the ABEST screen, as shown below.



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 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.