Dear Procurement Officer,

The Legislative Budget Board's (LBB) Contracts Oversight Team (COT) sends out periodic emails to keep Contracts Database users apprised of new developments.

Team Changes
As of September 1, 2016, the Contracts Oversight Team (COT) will be undergoing a name change, to the Contracts Oversight and Technology Team (COT2) as it merges with the former Major Information Systems (MIS) Team in order to provide a greater level of support and oversight on larger IT projects.
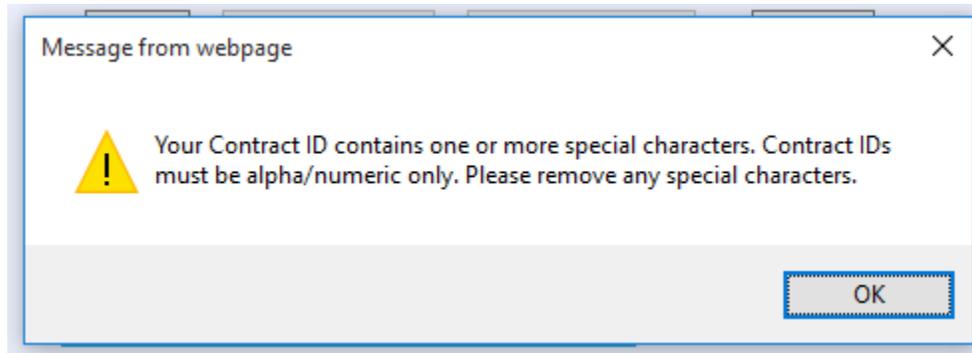
Changes to the Database
In response to user feedback, COT2 has implemented several improvements to the Contracts Database:

- There is a new option for the question asking if the contract was competitively bid. A fifth choice, *No, provider enrollment*, has been added to assist the health agencies in reporting heath care provider enrollment contracts and is unlikely to apply other agencies. We have updated the data dictionary with more information on this response.

- The "Contract ID#" field has been amended so that special characters including, but not limited to- pound signs, dollar signs, parentheses, slashes, parenthesis, and brackets can no longer be used when naming contract entries. This change was implemented due to numerous errors caused when trying to view and edit entries that had been named with an ID that included a special character. Going forward, you will receive an error message when trying to enter a contract ID that includes one of these characters and will not be able to submit the contract until the ID is corrected. If this change will affect your reporting, please contact us through the contract.manager@lbb.state.tx.us email.

Message from webpage

⚠ Your Contract ID contains one or more special characters. Contract IDs must be alpha/numeric only. Please remove any special characters.

OK

Centralized Accounting and Payroll/Personnel System (CAPPS) is Live:

The following only applies to agencies and Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) that report to the LBB Contracts Database and utilize the CAPPS central system. LBB and the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA) have successfully interfaced CAPPS with the LBB Contracts Database. **This new interface went live on August 8th, 2016 for all agencies and IHEs using CAPPS Central.**

This interface automatically sends select contract information from CAPPS to the LBB database. The data that is transferred to the LBB will need to be verified and then submitted by each agency and IHE. The only additional step beyond verifying the data is the requirement to load supplementary documents, such as the contract or solicitation documents. These will need to be added after CAPPS import but prior to finalizing the contract. **A guidance document for the new CAPPS interface can be accessed by clicking here.** For further information, please visit http://cappstraining.cpa.texas.gov/courses/FIN/index.php to view all available CAPPS courses and training materials.

COT2 is expanding compliance reviews to identify contracts that have not yet been reported to the LBB Contracts Database.
Several database users recently received letters from COT2 regarding contract reporting. We are contacting agencies that have yet to report any contracts into the LBB Contracts Database, and those who have reported vendor payments through the statewide accounting system but not yet reported contracts for the associated vendor. COT2 wants to emphasize that any list of payments we provide you is not necessarily a checklist of contracts that need to be reported. Instead, our team is trying to help agencies catch any contracts they might have missed before the end of the fiscal year by using payment data to highlight any vendors that have received payments but are not in our database.

Agencies and IHEs should report their highest value contracts to the LBB as soon as possible. COT2 has assisted numerous agencies with prioritization of reporting and will work with you on establishing timetables for reporting if compliance remains an issue. **COT2 recommends reporting contracts to the LBB Contracts Database along these broad priorities:**

#1 All Contracts Subject to the 84th General Appropriations Act (GAA) Article IX Section 7.12
Report all contracts valued over $10 million as soon as possible, starting with the highest values
Next, include emergency and non-competitive contracts over $1 million in value
Attach Attestation Letters to each database entry before submission

#2 IT, Consulting, and Strategic Fiscal Review* (SFR) Contracts under GAA Article IX Section 7.04 for fiscal years 2015 and 2016
Focus on contracts that are material to the operation of your agency programs, and IT/consulting contracts
Focus on contracts over $50,000 that are not inter-agency contracts and inter-local agreements

#3 All Remaining Reportable fiscal year 2015 and 2016 Contracts
Report all other contracts valued over $50,000 subject to GAA, Article IX, Section 7.04 and all construction, professional services, and consulting contracts valued over $14,000 subject to Government Code, Sections 2054, 2166, and 2254.

*IF APPLICABLE

As the Contracts Database is the primary source of agency contract information used by the LBB in preparing for the upcoming legislative session, it is important for agencies to report contracts as soon as possible and to keep the information in the database current in order to present the most accurate picture of contracting activity to the Legislature. As always, COT2 encourages state agencies and institutions of higher education to reach out and establish timetables for reporting if compliance remains an issue.

On-Site Training:
LBB continues to work with agencies and institutions of higher education on interpreting the reporting requirements and using the Contracts Database. While we strive to provide robust support through documentation and customer service, the COT2 understands that a site visit can often make a big difference in supporting contract reporting compliance. At your request, the COT2 is happy to perform on-site training for procurement and contracting staff. This service is available to all database users, and can vary from general overviews of database use to specific issues with reporting. Please contact us through email in order to arrange an on-site training session with COT2 staff.

Legislative Interest in Contracting:
The Senate Finance Committee will meet Thursday, September 15th, 2016 at 10:00 am to hear invited and public testimony related to the implementation of required changes to state agency contracting, monitoring, purchasing, and accounting procedures. We anticipate further interest in contract reporting compliance as the 85th Legislative Session approaches.

COT2 appreciates your efforts to keep the Contracts Database up-to-date, and welcomes your continued input. We understand that this is a new process, and want to ensure that we communicate changes in a clear and understandable way.

Please feel free to contact the COT2 at Contract.Manager@lbb.state.tx.us with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Jacob Pugh
Manager, Contracts Oversight and Technology Team
Texas Legislative Budget Board
jacob.pugh@lbb.state.tx.us