# Frequently Asked Questions for New York State Contract Search
## Open Book New York

1. **Which State contracts are included in this search?**
   All active State agency contracts are included in the contracts search. Additionally, State authority contracts that are subject to the Comptroller's oversight pursuant to Public Authorities Law §2879a, as well as certain other public authority contracts that were subject to OSC review prior to the passage of §2879a, are shown.

   State authority contracts subject to Public Authorities Law §2879a include those executed after October 2010 that exceed $1 million and are awarded without competition or are to be paid in whole or part with moneys appropriated by the State.

   Contract information is generally updated nightly, and includes contracts for a period of one year after their end date to reflect total spending against that contract. Contracts entered into by local governments are not available in *Open Book New York*. Information on local government contracts is available only from the appropriate local government.

2. **Once I have gotten my search results, can I sort the columns?**
   Yes. Left click on any column heading one time and the contents will be sorted in ascending order; left click the column heading again, and the contents will be sorted in descending order.

3. **Is a printer-friendly version of the search results available?**
   Yes. On the search results page, click the "Printer-Friendly (PDF)" link in the upper right-hand corner of the screen. The PDF version prints ONLY the search results displayed on the webpage you are viewing. If you wish to print ALL of your search results as a PDF, you must print each page individually. Alternatively, you can download your entire search results to Excel, which will allow you to print all the search results rather than only those displayed on the current page.

4. **How do I export this data?**
   The contract search results can be downloaded as an electronic file. On the search results page, click the "Download to an Excel Spreadsheet" link. Depending on your Internet browser configuration, you can choose to open the file or save it on your computer. The file can be opened in any spreadsheet software.

5. **How often is the data updated?**
   The data is generally updated each working day after the close of business. The date displayed as "Date Last Updated" represents the last business day for which data is displayed in this section. Certain public authority information is temporarily unavailable. Click here for more information.

6. **I see that the vendor name, agency or authority name, and contract number are highlighted; what happens if I click on them?**
   Clicking on the vendor name will give you all the active contracts which that vendor has with all State agencies, as well as all the State authority contracts with that vendor that have been approved by the Comptroller or that have been filed. Clicking on the agency or authority name will further refine your search to give you all records for that search result for that selected agency or authority. Clicking on the contract number will give you details regarding all transactions for that contract.

7. **I want to search by original date approved or filed. Can I enter a year and not enter a month, and get results for the year I selected?**
   You must enter a month and year in order to search by original date approved or date filed; otherwise the original date approved or filed criteria will be ignored and contracts for all years will be returned. Certain public authority information is temporarily unavailable. Click here for more information.

8. **What is meant by Execution Date?**
   This is the date that a State authority contract was signed by the State authority. Certain public authority information is temporarily unavailable. Click here for more information.

9. **What is meant by Filed Date?**
   This is the date that the Office of the State Comptroller determines that the State authority contract meets the criteria for filing and that all contract documentation has been submitted. Filed Date is only relevant for State authority contracts that have not been identified for prior approval, that will exceed $1 million, and that are awarded without competition or are paid in whole or part with moneys appropriated by the State. Certain public authority

information is temporarily unavailable. Click here for more information.

10. **Why are some State authority contracts "approved" and others are "filed"?**
Under Public Authorities Law §2879-a, the Comptroller may, at his or her discretion, require certain State authority contracts or categories of contracts to be approved in advance of becoming valid enforceable contracts. The Comptroller's discretion applies only to State authority contracts that will exceed $1 million, and which are awarded without competition or are to be paid in whole or part with moneys appropriated by the State. Additionally, Part 206 of Title 2 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations requires State authority contracts that meet these approval criteria, but which were not identified for prior approval, to be filed with the Office of the State Comptroller. Finally, Public Authorities Law §2879-a also specifies certain State authority contracts as being exempt from prior approval but are required to be filed with the Comptroller. Certain public authority information is temporarily unavailable. Click here for more information.

11. **What if I can't find a vendor I'm looking for?**
You will only find a vendor if that vendor has at least one approved, active contract with a New York State agency, or if the vendor has a State authority contract that was approved or filed. Certain public authority information is temporarily unavailable. Click here for more information.

   Suggestions for searching by vendor name include:
   - Enter part of the vendor's name (e.g., "International" instead of "International Business Machines").
   - Try entering different spellings of the vendor's name (e.g., "Technology" instead of "Technologies").
   - Leave out punctuation (e.g., "ABCD" instead of "A.B.C.D.").

12. **Why isn't the contract I'm looking for listed?**
There could be several reasons why a contract is not listed:
   - The contract may be inactive, meaning, generally, that it ended over one year ago.
   - The contract may not yet have been received for review by the Office of the State Comptroller from the State agency or State authority.
   - The contract may be currently under review by the Comptroller's Office and, therefore, is not yet an active contract.
   - The contract may not be required to be submitted to the Office of the State Comptroller because it is with a State authority and does not meet the criteria for review and filing defined in the Public Authorities Law.

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13. **Why aren't all active State authority contracts listed?**
State authority contracts that are subject to the Comptroller's oversight pursuant to Public Authorities Law §2879a, as well as certain other public authority contracts that were subject to OSC review prior to the passage of §2879a, are listed. State authority contracts subject to Public Authorities Law §2879a include those executed after October 2010 that exceed $1 million and are awarded without competition or are to be paid in whole or part with moneys appropriated by the State.

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14. **Why isn't the agency or authority I'm looking for on the selection list?**
There are several ways to locate a specific agency or authority. If the agency you are looking for is a facility or a division, select the main agency (e.g., "State University of New York" for "SUNY Stony Brook" or "SUNY Albany") to search by. Also, if you know the agency/authority name or part of the agency/authority name, you can click on "Search for an Agency/Authority." Enter part of an agency/authority name. Click "Search." The search returns all agencies or authorities containing the agency/authority name entered, and indicates, in the column "Agency Group," the agency/authority name to use to search contracts for that specific agency or authority. You can also click on the "Agency Group" to get a list of all agencies/authorities included in that agency group. If you tried the options above and don't find the agency you are looking for, it is possible that the agency has no active, approved contracts. In the case of a State authority, it is possible that the authority has not submitted any contracts to the Comptroller.

   Certain public authority information is temporarily unavailable. Click here for more information.

15. **Why are there different contracts with the same contract number?**
Each State agency and State authority has its own contract numbering system, so different agencies and authorities may use the same contract number.

16. **What is an original contract?**
The initial agreement between an agency or authority and a vendor.

17. **What is an amendment?**
An amendment is a transaction that changes the terms of an existing contract, such as increasing or decreasing the scope of the contract or extending the term of the contract. This includes construction "change orders."

18. **What is a contract transaction?**
For purposes of this database, a contract "transaction" is the establishment of either an original contract, or an amendment to a contract. It does not necessarily imply an exchange of money.

19. **What is a public authority?**
Public authorities are organizations created by the Legislature for a public purpose, supported by their own revenues or State grants, and typically governed by boards of directors which have a degree of independence from government oversight. Public authorities generally do not follow the same contracting rules or approval processes that State agencies are required to undertake. The public authority contracts included in this database are limited to those entities that are required to submit contracts to the Office of the State Comptroller. Certain public authority information is temporarily unavailable. Click here for more information.

20. **What is a State authority?**
A State authority is a Public authority where at least one board member is appointed by the Governor. Certain public authority information is temporarily unavailable. Click here for more information.

21. **Why do some of the contracts listed show specific transactions and others don't?**
The contract search function includes all currently active State agency contracts and some State authority contracts. The contract transactions page includes State agency contract amendments approved on or after April 1, 2012. If a State agency contract has not been amended since April 1, 2012, it will not have any entries in the Contract Amendment Information section. If you need information about transactions prior to April 1, 2012, please contact us and we will assist you with the information you need.

22. **What does the letter mean in the beginning of a contract number?**
New York State contracts begin with a letter or letters, which help to describe the type of contract. View the list of contract prefixes.

23. **I'm looking for a contract that was from a year or two ago. Why can't I find it?**
A State agency or State authority contract that is more than a year past its end date is considered inactive, and is not included in the contract search database. Also, not all State authority contracts have to be submitted for approval or filing, and before March 1, 2010, most authorities were not required to submit any contracts to OSC. Certain public authority information is temporarily unavailable. Click here for more information.

24. **Why are there zeroes for some Contract Amounts?**

There are some contracts where the Contract Amount is too difficult to estimate at the time of approval by the Office of the State Comptroller, and therefore the contract amount shows a zero dollar value. Common examples of types of contracts where the Contract Amount shows as zero include rebate contracts where a manufacturer is paying the State money based on an unknown quantity of sales, and backdrop contracts where a master contract is set up for later use and the true contract amount is determined if and when an authorized user makes a purchase under the contract.

25. **Why are some transactions for $0?**
An amendment may change any of a number of contract terms and conditions. For example, if an amendment changes the end date and does not change the value of a contract, then the transaction amount would be $0.

26. **Why do some contracts have $0 spending-to-date?**
There could be a number of reasons why spending-to-date will be zero:
   - The vendor has not earned any money yet.
   - Payments have not yet been processed by the State agency.
   - If the contract is for a public authority, the expenditures generally would not be captured on the State's central accounting system.

27. **Why do some contracts show "N/A" in the Spending-to-Date column?**
N/A displays in the Spending-to-Date column for State authority contracts because those expenditures are not reported in the State's central accounting system.

28. **Why is the spending-to-date much lower than the current contract amount, even though the contract is expired?**
There are a variety of reasons why spending-to-date may be lower than the current contract amount, such as:
   - The contract amount represents the maximum amount payable to a vendor.
   - The vendor likely did not earn the maximum amount.
   - Payments have not been processed yet by the State agency.

29. **Why is the spending-to-date higher than the current contract amount on an expired contract?**
For some contracts, the contract amount is not known at inception and must be estimated. The estimate may have been too low. For example, it is not always practical to have a firm maximum amount payable in a contract for the purchase of commodities by all State agencies.

30. **Why does a contract have a negative number for the transaction amount?**
A negative number for the transaction amount indicates that the agency is reducing a previously approved contract amount. This can happen for numerous reasons, including a change in the scope of the contract or a change in the estimated amount versus the actual amount.

31. **Why does an approved/filed date come after the contract start date?**
The contract start date is determined by the contracting State agency or authority. The contract approval date is the date that the Office of the State Comptroller approved or filed a contract, which can occur only after the State agency or authority submits the contract to the Comptroller's Office for review. The Comptroller's Office may approve the contract retroactively. However, agencies, authorities and vendors are advised that no work should be done on a contract until it has been approved by the Office of the State Comptroller.

32. **Why are some amended end dates blank?**
An amendment may change the contract amount but not the contract end date. If the amendment is not changing the contract end date, the amended end date is left blank.

33. **What's the difference between "Execution Date" and "Transaction Approved/Filed Date"?**
Execution date is the date that a State authority signs a contract that is subject to filing requirements of the Office of the State Comptroller. Transaction Approved/Filed Date is the date that the Comptroller's Office takes final action on a submitted contract. Certain public authority information is temporarily unavailable. Click here for more information.

34. **Can I see the status of a contract which has not yet been approved by or filed with the Office of the State Comptroller?**
Contracts that require the approval of the Office of the State Comptroller will not appear on this database until they are approved. State agencies, authorities or vendors who seek information on the status of their pending contracts should enroll in the VendRep System: https://www.osc.state.ny.us/vendrep/.

35. **How do I find a list of all member initiatives?**
There is no comprehensive list of member initiatives. In the contracts search, member initiatives may be categorized as Grants or Community Projects Fund contracts. However, not all Grant contracts are member initiatives and it can be difficult to distinguish among them.

36. **Who can I contact if I have questions related to the contract search?**

Please contact us with your questions.