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Division of Administration

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 14, 2016

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LATRAC UPDATE PROVIDES MORE TRANSPARENCY

Louisiana government’s central clearinghouse for information dealing with state contracts is undergoing an update to provide more transparency and improved search capabilities.

Information about the universe of state contracts—all 14,868 of them as of the end of June—is available through the LATRAC portal found at doa.la.gov. Most of the data people want to find is in the system, Commissioner of Administration Jay Dardenne said.

“It just is not as easy to navigate as it should be. The search capacity is not up to speed and we are working on improvements to make it more user friendly,” Commissioner Dardenne said. “We’re committed to continuing to add fields and features to it to improve visibility into all aspects of state government.”

For instance, as new contracts are added or existing ones are modified, more information will be disclosed about them such as detailed descriptions and the means of financing.

Also recently added to the website is the annual contracts report as well as monthly reports provided to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget regarding new contracts.

“We recognize the interest and need for enhanced public visibility into the state’s contracts, and we’re committed to not only upholding high standards in how our contracts are developed, but also in how we make information about such contracts and expenditures available for public review and feedback,” Commissioner Dardenne said.

The contracts include professional, personal, consulting and social services agreements as well as cooperative endeavor agreements, memorandums of understanding, purchasing, construction-related expenditures, building leases and more. They range in value from Medicaid managed care contracts worth hundreds of millions of dollars to contracts for less than \$10,000 for goods and services.

The LATRAC portal contains information on all state contracts through either the “Contracts” or “Expenditures” links provided. A summary page giving data on each contract approved through the Division of Administration’s Office of State Procurement or Facilities Planning and Control (as well as smaller contracts approved internally by other agencies) is under the “Contracts” link. Some entities have a degree of autonomy so their contracts may not show up under the contracts link. However, users can use the “Expenditure” link and find contract vendors, the type of contract and payments made under it. Those entities which the Legislature has partially or entirely exempted from DOA oversight include the LSU System, the 10 regional human services districts, the Recovery School District, the Patients Compensation Fund, the Louisiana School for the Deaf and Visually Impaired, the Louisiana Special Education Center and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Louisiana had one of the first transparency websites in the U.S. It was launched nearly eight years ago and initially only had expenditure information. It has routinely received national recognition as one of the best in the nation. This year the website received a grade of “A” in the ranking of state transparency websites—ranking in the top 10. The changes Commissioner Dardenne is overseeing will make it even more transparent and easier for the public to use.

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