**Questions about the city’s payment data and process**

**Data questions**

**Payments data set (2003-present)**

1) We notice a lot of vendors are inside actors of the City of Chicago (for example, City of Chicago Department of Revenue and Office of the City Treasurer). Do you maintain a comprehensive list of vendors who are inside actors of the city that we could review?

2) In 2010 there are eight negative payments in the payments data set (see below). What do negative payments represent generally and specifically in these eight instances? Note that all negative payments were direct vouchers, occurred in 2010, and had no department listed.

pmt.amt pmt.date cntrct.num vendor.name

-2251.20 2010 DV GFS FENCE, GUARDRAIL& SIGNAGE

-371964.79 2010 DV ELECTRONIC KNOWLEDGE INTERCHANGE -371964.79 2010 DV ELECTRONIC KNOWLEDGE INTERCHANGE -2096.92 2010 DV UNISOURCE

-38525.81 2010 DV CERNER CORPORATION

-4365.60 2010 DV MORTON SALT CO

-9950.39 2010 DV OAKK CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, INC

-1450.51 2010 DV ENGLEWOOD ELECTRIC SUPPLY

3) No direct voucher payments appear in the payments data set before 2010. Why is this?

4) There was a significant spike in the total amount paid out in direct vouchers in 2014—from $2.35 billion in 2013 to $4.92 billion in 2014. Similarly, the number of direct voucher payments jumps from 4606 in 2013 to 317,373 in 2014. Was there a known reason for these significant increases?

5) We know that payments between 2003 and 2013 are rolled up by contract by year. Is there any roll up of direct voucher payments as well?

6) We notice that there are 1860 payments prior to 2014 that—unlike other rolled up payments—have a complete payment date (day, month, and year rather than just year). Most are from 2010, but some are from 2011 and 2012. Is there a reason why these particular payments are not rolled up? Here is a sample:

pmt.amt pmt.date cntrct.num vendor.name

1000.00 12/30/2010 DV WORLD BUSINESS CHICAGO

3293.32 12/30/2010 21326 NORTH RIVER COMMISSION

8.50 12/30/2010 DV HAYES & ASSOCIATES

938.02 12/30/2010 DV RICHARD MONOCCHIO

5967.85 12/30/2010 12997 IL MASONIC MEDICAL CENTER EMERGENCY

**Unrolled payments data set (2014-present)**

7) We noticed some very large direct voucher payments to banks in this subset of the data, including, for example, a payment for $34,241,241 to U.S. Bank on June 13, 2014 and a payment for $31,251,700 to Bank of New York Trust on March 17, 2014. Why are these large payments made through direct voucher, and why are they almost exclusively to banks?

8) We see a large spike in the ***total amount paid*** out in direct vouchers dated in January. Is there a policy that would drive such a result?

9) At the same time, we see a large spike in the ***total number*** of direct voucher payments in December. Again, is there a policy that is driving such a result?

10) Are there “check cutting” days when most payments are made? We ask because we see a very significant spike in the total number of direct voucher payments made on the 30th day of each month.

**Payments data set (2003-present), restricted to contract payments, joined with contract data set**

11) What do the Revision Number and Specification Number columns in the contracts data set refer to?

12) Looking just at recent payments (2014-present), when we sum up the total payment amount by contract number and compare it to the sum of the contract award amount by contract number, we find 2,715 instances where the payment amount exceeds the award amount. What might account for this?

**Process/procedure questions**

**Contracts, procurement types**

13) Each contract on the complete contracts data set is classified under one of the following procurement types:

BID

CM

CONTRACT ASSIGNMENT/TRANS

EMERGENCY

JOINT PURCHASE

MASTER AGREEMENT

REFERENCE CONTRACT

RFI

RFP

RFQ

SOLE SOURCE

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However, the information on the procurement process available through the Department of Procurement Services on the City of Chicago’s web page does not make reference to all of the types used in the data set.

(See The City of Chicago’s Guide to Procurement Fundamentals:[http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dps.htm](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cityofchicago.org%2Fcity%2Fen%2Fdepts%2Fdps.html&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNFYIG-iRbbZPtRDp7vfj4akpNJseQ)l, and the video Doing Business with the City of Chicago<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtBY-nYWezw&feature=youtu.be>).

a) What is the definition of each of the procurement types listed above?

b) Are there caps for the value of contracts according to their type?

c) Which of the types correspond to competitive procurement?

d) What is the process for a contract on each procurement type?

e) Is there a comprehensive document available that does make reference to the universe of categories used in the contracts data set?

f) Is there a ruled procedure for registering the contracts’ information that feeds the data set?

14) More than 70% of the entries of the complete contracts data set have a “blank” on the procurement type field. What does it mean for a contract to have a blank as its procurement type? (This happens for old as well as for recent contracts.) Is it a problem from source to publishing? Is there a way to get a hold of the transactional information that is likely there but not making it to the portal?

**Payments, process and Direct Vouchers**

15) What is the City’s procedure for issuing payments within contracts?

16) Is there a validation system or procedure that aligns payments with contracts’ dates and amounts? (e.g. avoiding payments over the contracted amounts, verifying that every contract is honored, and within proper dates.)

17) What is the regulatory framework for out-of-contract payments? That is, for payments through Direct Vouchers (DVs). Are there caps? Who can be payed through a DV? etc.

18) What is the internal procedure for issuing payments through DVs? E.g. Does someone have to authorize this type of payments?

19) Are there any differences in the process of payments inside and outside the City? (e.g. “CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF WATER” vs “ESI CONSULTANTS LIMITED”).

20) Under documented cases of fraud, a number of FOIA requests were submitted to different city departments. Is there a way to access these FOIA documents, or must we contact the requester directly?