



# Exemption Announcement

March 17, 2020

On March 13, 2020, the Governor declared a state of disaster for all Texas counties to help mitigate the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), suspending any state procurement and contracting statute or administrative rule to the extent it would impede any state agency's emergency response that is necessary to cope with the declared disaster.

As agencies contemplate purchasing laptops, mobile devices, or any other IT product or service necessary to meet demands associated with COVID-19 response, they should consider the DIR contracts their first option. These contracts are pre-negotiated, contain state-required terms and conditions, offer secure and accessible solutions, and provide a proven, fast, and easy-to-use procurement method.

Agencies may use the [Emergency Procurement Blanket Exemption](#) throughout the duration of the declared disaster to purchase IT commodities that may otherwise be purchased through the DIR Cooperative Contract Program if using the DIR Cooperative Contracts Program would impede any state agency's emergency response that is necessary to cope with this declared disaster. This exemption allows state agencies the latitude to either use an existing DIR cooperative contract or make their own procurement. Further, agencies may purchase products and services from a DIR contract, without conforming to procedural requirements and prescribed limitations, that otherwise would be required under such procurements.

DIR is currently working with manufacturers and resellers to offer [bulk purchase discounts](#) on laptops and other portable devices to facilitate teleworking. Manufacturers are indicating that laptops, which appear to be the critical need at present for agencies, are in short supply. DIR is working with vendors to identify inventories of various brands and models that can be made available to state agencies. Computer availability and discounts will be posted on the DIR [COVID-19 Preparedness for Information Technology](#) page as information is available.

[Agencies considering the use of free trials](#) to support this declared emergency should be diligent in their review and acceptance of terms, including those related to trial period, security, accessibility, transition support, and price. At some point the trial period will end, and without the appropriate review prior to accepting the terms, the agency may find itself liable for additional products or services beyond the trial period. Consider alternatively, issuing a purchase order under a DIR contract to include an initial term at no cost, with optional renewals based on DIR cooperative contract pricing. This provides for continuity of services – without additional procurements – and the ability for the agency to terminate the agreement by not exercising the renewal.

Additionally, DIR has compiled and will continue to update a list of digital and remote work products and services that are currently available under DIR's Cooperative Contracts Program so that agencies can easily purchase these items.

Please direct any questions to [AskDIR@DIR.Texas.gov](mailto:AskDIR@DIR.Texas.gov).