LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

Finalizing Budget Structures and Defining Measures in ABEST

Instructions for State Agencies, Institutions of Higher Education, and Appellate Courts for the Eighty-fifth Legislature, Regular Session

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD STAFF

APRIL 2016

Contents

Document Conventions

This document may use the following symbolic conventions:

Caution: This symbol warns you of the possible loss of data.

Important: This symbol indicates information you need to know.

Tip: This symbol indicates information that may be useful.

Getting Started

The agency submissions portion of the Automated Budget and Evaluation System of Texas (ABEST) is a Web-based application. The Legislative Budget Board (LBB) uses ABEST to track agency requests for appropriations through the stages of the legislative appropriations process and agency performance through the biennial budget cycle.

Agencies are required to finalize their budget structures as well as define their performance measures in ABEST. The components of the Strategic Plan/Measure Definitions process are listed below.

- Review your budget structure
- Review and assign service categories
- Define measures (definitions, descriptions and cross references)

Important: You can simultaneously work in your Strategic Plan/Measure Definitions process as well as your Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR). However, you will not be able to set your LAR status to complete until your measure definitions are completed.

You may begin updating measure definitions after you receive an email from your LBB analyst informing you that your budget structure has been approved.

For more about strategic planning preparations and deadlines, see *Instructions for Preparing and Submitting Agency Strategic Plans, Fiscal Years 2017-2021*. From the LBB website, click **Agencies Portal** and under Instructions click **Strategic Plan Instructions**.

If you have a problem with the ABEST application that you cannot resolve using this document, call the LBB help desk at 512-463-3167 or email us by clicking Contact Us. For more information, see the Contact Information section below.

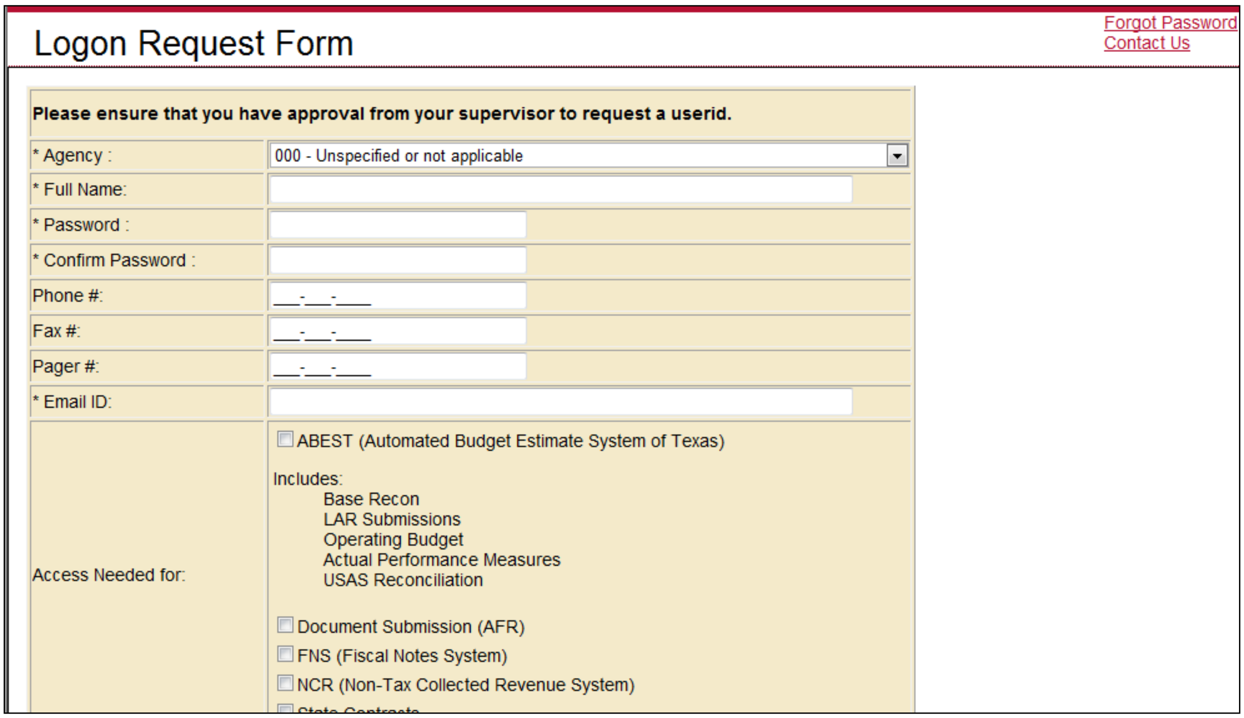
If you have any questions regarding your budget structure or defining the performance measures, contact your LBB analyst. Visit our website at www.lbb.state.tx.us to determine the analyst assigned to your agency. From the home page, select **About the LBB→Staff→Analyst Assignments.**

Accessing ABEST

Follow the steps below to request a user ID and password. If you have forgotten your user ID or password, see the Logging In section below.

1. To request a user ID, click **Agencies Portal** from the LBB website (www.lbb.state.tx.us). Under Logon Information, click **Agency Logon Request Form**.

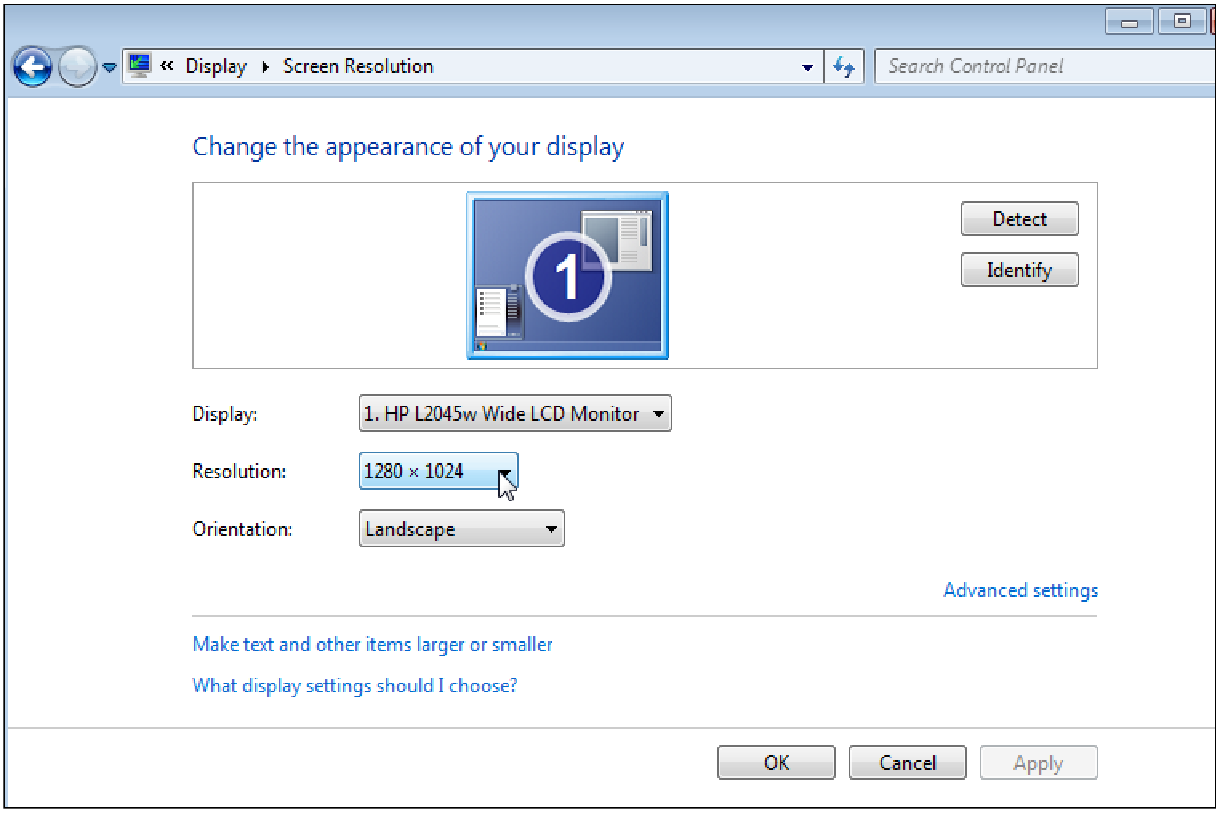
2. Fill out the form shown below.



3. When complete, scroll down and click **Submit**. You should receive an email asking you to confirm the logon request. You must respond to this email; otherwise, your request will not be processed. If you do not receive a confirmation email, call the ABEST help desk at 512-463-3167. The LBB will email you a user ID and password for ABEST within one business day.

Logging In

You **must** use Internet Explorer for ABEST data entry. Other browsers (i.e., Firefox and Google Chrome) will not work consistently and can create problems in the ABEST application. The recommended screen resolution is 1280 x 1024, as shown below.

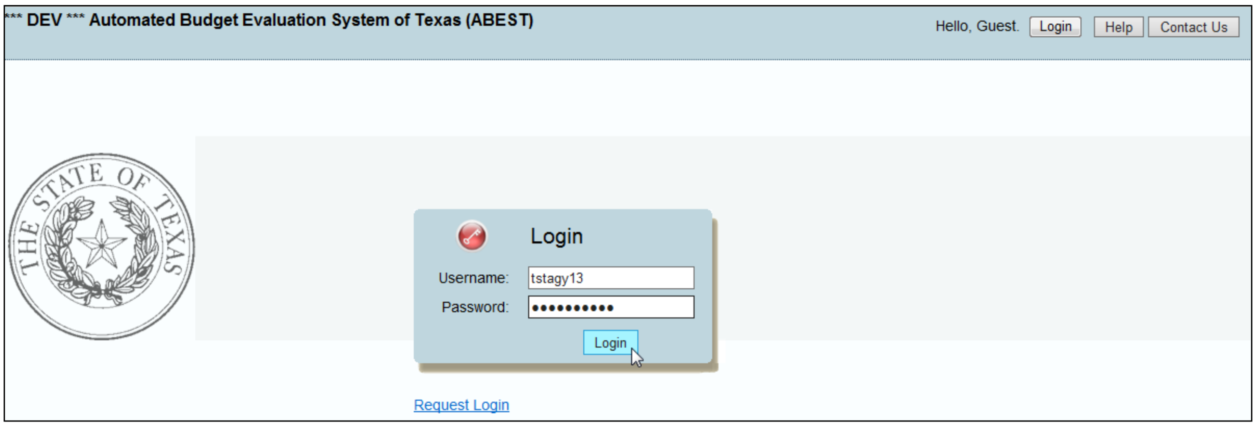


1. From the LBB website (www.lbb.state.tx.us), click **Agencies Portal**. Under Data Entry Applications, click **Strategic Plan/Measure Definitions** as shown below.

Important: Refer to one of the options below if you already have a user ID and have forgotten the user ID and password or if your user ID and password does not work.

- From the LBB website (www.lbb.state.tx.us), click **Agencies Portal**. Under Logon Information, click **Agency Logon Help**. Enter your user ID or email address and click **Remember Me**.
- Call the help desk at 512-463-3167.

2. Enter your username and password and click **Login**.



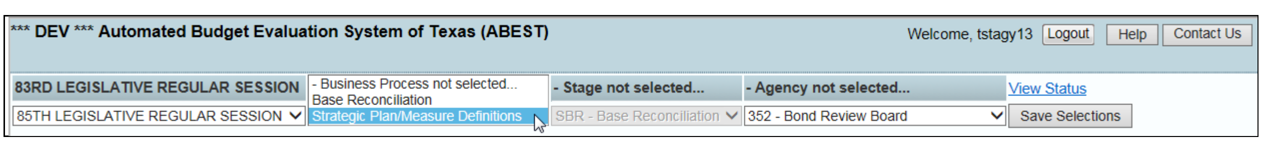
Profile Selection

The profile screen appears upon successfully logging into ABEST. The options you select on this screen determine the menu layout for a particular business process in ABEST (i.e., Base Reconciliation, Legislative Appropriations Request, Biennial Operating Plan, etc.).

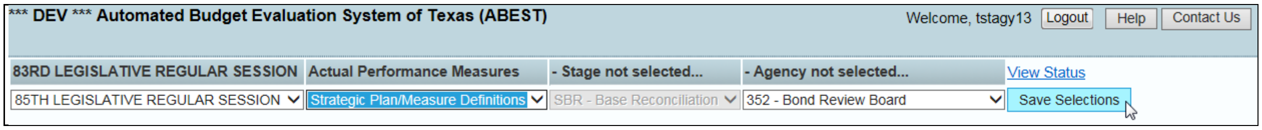
1. From the available drop-down boxes, select **85th Legislative Regular Session, Strategic Plan/Measure Definitions**, **SBR – Base Reconciliation**, and your **agency code**.

Important: The selection options for the stage field changes after the LAR process begins. Select SBR – Base initially. Later, if the stage drop-down box is not gray, select **S01 – Agency Submission**.

2. Click **Save Selections** to update your profile, as shown below.



The options selected here will display on the profile settings bar, which is at the top of each screen (shown below). The agency status associated with these settings is also included.



Important: Before you enter any data, verify that you are in the correct session, business process, stage, and agency. Note that you will not be able to access the data input or reports menus if your status is set to restricted or locked (status is located at the right top portion of the profile screen). The LBB uses these specific statuses to indicate that work is in progress. Other agencies will appear in your agency drop-down box when their status is set to complete in ABEST.

If the Current Profile/Settings are not correct, click in the drop-down boxes to select the appropriate settings and click **Save Selections.**

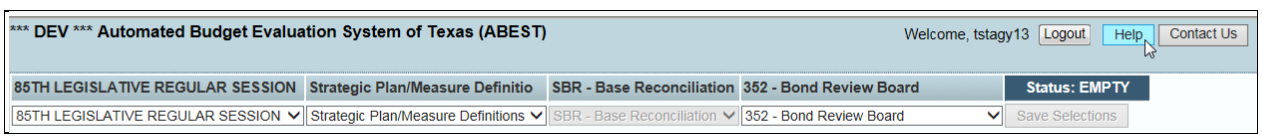
News Screen

The news screen provides important information and often conveys details about upcoming deadlines. ABEST may direct you to this screen if this is your first time to log into Strategic Plan/Measure Definitions or if the system has updated the news screen.

Help

You can view this manual online or get help based on your screen location.

1. Click the **Help** button to view the entire user manual, as shown below.

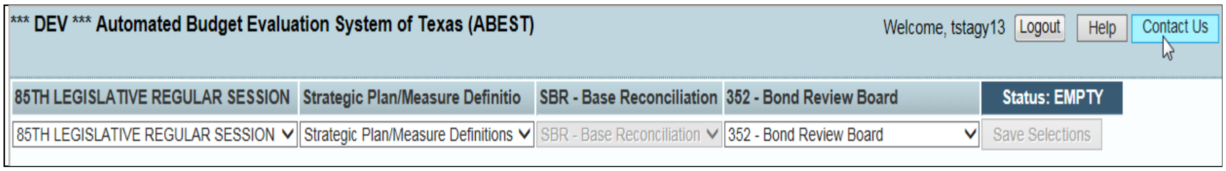


Important: If you are not logged in or have timed out and you click the Help button, an overview of ABEST will display instead of the user manual. To view the manual, log into ABEST and click the **Help** button again.

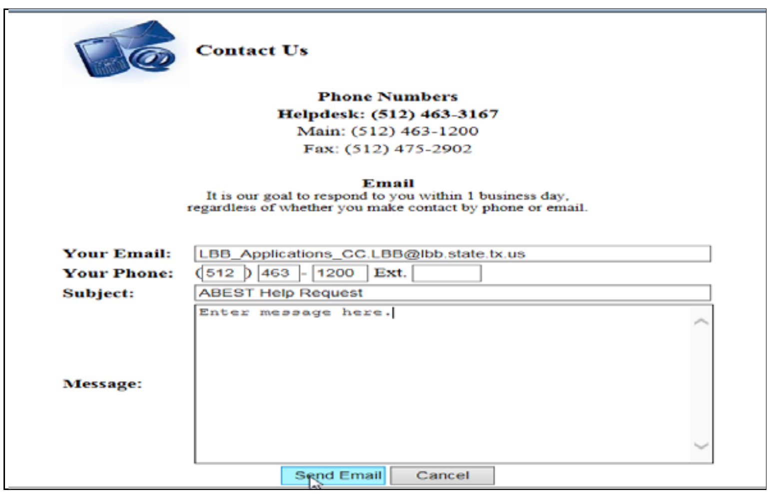
2. Click the **Help icon** located on each screen to get detailed information about the screen you are using. The user manual opens and links to the information based on your screen location.

Contact Information

Contact the LBB help desk by clicking **Contact Us**, as shown below.



You can contact the LBB by calling the help desk at 512-463-3167 or by clicking Contact Us. Be prepared to leave a message when calling the help desk. Your call goes directly to voicemail at all times. A typical call back response from the help desk is within 30 minutes. We will respond to email inquires as soon as possible; however, it can take as long as the end of the next business day in some cases.



Important: Application Support answers calls and emails in the order they are received. Do not call the help desk and send an email simultaneously for assistance. Using both options at the same time makes it hard for our team to determine who has been helped.

Changing Your Status to Incomplete

You can finalize your budget structure and define your performance measures after you have received an e-mail from your LBB analyst. Your analyst will let you know when your agency is available in ABEST for data entry. At that time, LBB Application Support will change your status from Locked to Empty.

To begin data entry, you must update your status from Empty to Incomplete.

1. Click the **Status** menu, as shown below.

2. Select the **Incomplete** radio button and click **Save**.

Important: ABEST will not allow you to enter data until you set the status to **Incomplete**.

Cautions and Important Information

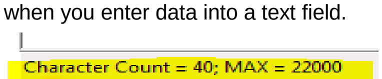
Caution: You will lose data if ABEST is inactive for 15 minutes or more. Always click **Save** if you leave your computer for more than a few minutes. If ABEST becomes inactive, you must close and reopen your browser and log back in. Any unsaved data must be re-entered.

Caution: You will lose data if you move to another grid without saving first. Save your work frequently by clicking **Save**. Make sure you click **Save** on the grid you are working with. The **Save** button works independently for each grid on the screen. Any unsaved data must be re-entered.

Data Entry Considerations

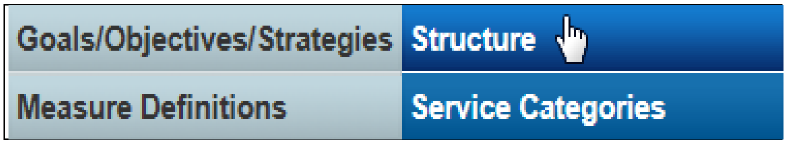
Refer to the following table for information regarding data entry.

DATA ENTRY REFERENCE

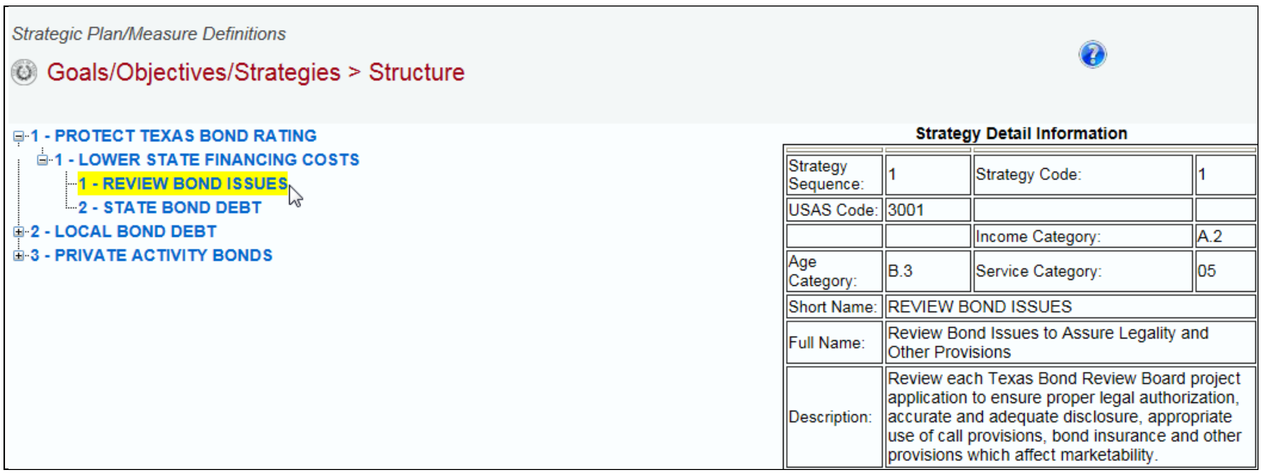
TEXT LIMITATIONS	ENTERING DATA	SAVING DATA
• You may copy text from a word processing application and paste it into ABEST, but you should review it and correct formatting problems if necessary. Bulleted lists may not copy properly. Avoid outline styles that combine numbers and bullets. • Numeric fields allow 12 digits maximum. Enter only whole dollar amounts, not decimal places. You do not need to enter commas in numeric fields. • Use the steps below to activate the character count in Internet Explorer (versions10 or 11). o Open Internet Explorer o Press the Alt key to display a menu at the top of the screen. o Click View/Toolbar. Verify that the status bar is checked. If it is not checked, click on the status bar to activate the counter. • The character counter will display in the bottom left portion of the screen when you enter data into a text field. 	• Click in the data cell and enter your data. • Press Tab to move across to the next cell. • At the end of a row, manually click your cursor in a cell on a new row to enter more data. • You can expand some multi-line text fields by double clicking in the field. Use the Enter key to start a new line of text in a multi-line text field. Click your cursor outside the field or press Tab to move out of the field. Save your work by clicking the **Save** button. • Use the built-in calculator by double-clicking in any active data entry cell. After making your calculation and clicking the = button, click **Send to Grid**. The number you calculated transfers to the cell in which the cursor appears.	• Save data by clicking **Save** on the screen. • Use the blue section to add new information to a corresponding grid and click **Save**.
COLOR CONVENTIONS	**IF THE EXPLORER STATUS BAR DOES NOT APPEAR**	**NAVIGATION**
• Unsaved numbers appear blue in color. Saved numbers are black. • Grayed out data cells are "read only" and may not be changed. Contact your analyst to request any changes.	• Open the Tools menu in Internet Explorer and choose Internet Options. Click the Security tab and select Trusted Sites. Click the **Sites button** and enter ***.lbb.state.tx.us**.	• To move to the top of a long screen, click the Top hyperlink at the bottom of the screen. • To move to the bottom of the screen, click the Bottom hyperlink at the top of the screen.

Budget Structure

1. Review your agency's budget structure by clicking the **Goals/Objectives/Strategies** menu and the **Structure** submenu.



2. The goals for your agency display on the screen. Drill down to each level by clicking on the **+ icon** located to the left of each goal and objective. Click on each item listed, as shown below. Detailed information displays on the right portion of the screen for each level.



3. Review the detailed information for each goal, objective, and strategy.

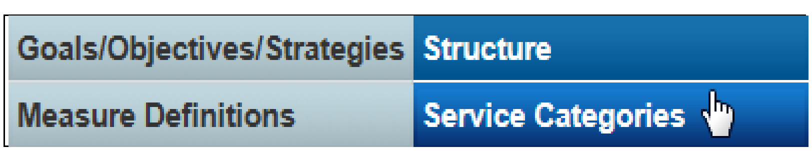
Contact your LBB analyst with any questions regarding your agency's budget structure.

Service Categories

Article IV (The Judiciary) agencies are exempt from service category requirements. Skip this section if you are an Article IV agency.

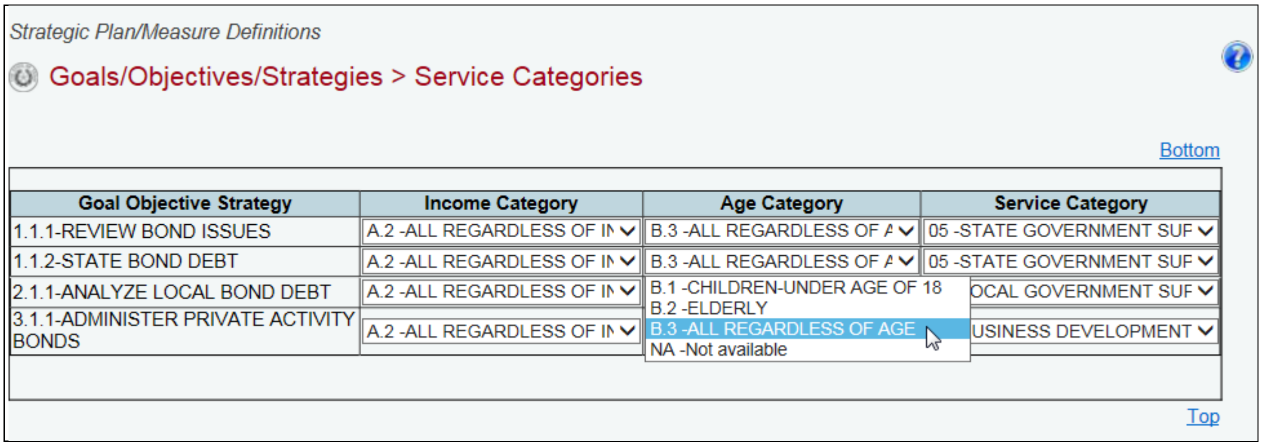
Each strategy must have an income, age, and service category assigned. The service categories your agency used for 84-R have been copied forward for 85-R. You will need to assign service categories for new strategies and revise any that have changed.

1. Click the **Goals/Objectives/Strategies** menu and the **Service Categories** submenu, as shown below.



2. The goal, objective, strategy and strategy short name appear in the leftmost column on the grid. The category codes used last session will appear in each drop-down box for Income, Age and Service. Review the service categories assigned for each strategy and revise any that have changed. Assign service categories for any new strategies by selecting a category from each drop-down box and click **Save**.

Tip: Hover your cursor over the names to show the items listed in the drop-down box.



Important: To minimize closing edits, select a category for each strategy listed. For more information, see Resolving Closing Edits on page 23.

Defining Measures

The state of Texas uses a performance-based budgeting system. In the biennial budget cycle, agencies complete strategic plans in the spring/summer before the Legislature meets to determine the state's budget for the following biennium. Agencies are required to review and/or modify the following items in ABEST as they pertain to the budget structure for performance measures.

- Measure Definitions
- Measure Descriptions
- Cross References

In these instructions, we use outcome measures for the primary example of working with measures. Working with output, explanatory, and efficiency measure definitions are nearly identical processes.

Measure Definitions

Measure definitions typically remain the same from session to session and for that reason definitions are copied forward from the previous biennium.

If your agency's budget structure for 85-R has new goals, objectives, strategies, and measures, you will need to enter new definitions for the measures.

If redefining your agency's budget structure for 85-R includes deleting goals, objectives, and/or strategies, the related measure definitions will not appear in ABEST for 85-R.

Your budget structure may include measures that have changed by type (for example, from outcome to output). A measure that has changed by type will appear as new, and you will need to re-enter the measure definition. If you cannot copy from a source document and paste into ABEST, you can go into ABEST for a previous session, print a report of the previous measure definitions, and manually re-enter the information for the changed measure.

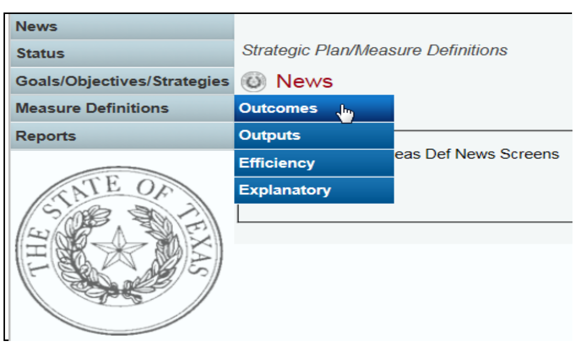
If a measure has changed significantly, it may be considered new. Your agency, the LBB analyst, and the budget analyst with the Governor's office will make this determination for your agency.

A performance measure's definition describes the measure, provides the methodology for its calculation, and gives additional information about the measure. Definitions submitted with the agency's strategic plan must include the following elements:

- Definition
- Data Limitations
- Data Source
- Methodology
- Purpose

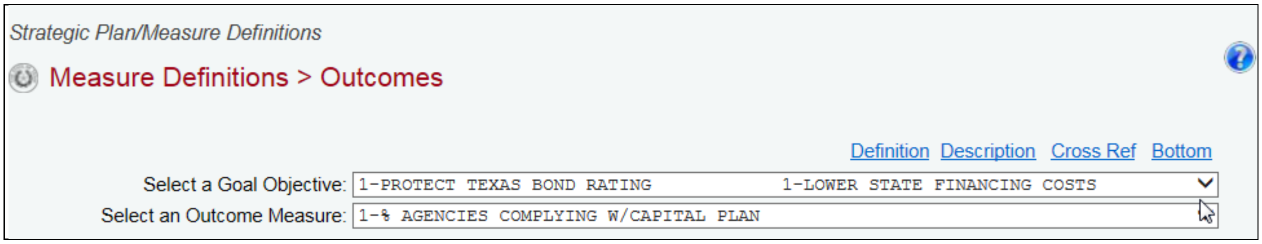
The definition should provide a brief explanation of what the measure is and give enough detail to provide a general understanding of the measure.

1. Click the **Measure Definitions** menu and the **Outcomes** submenu.

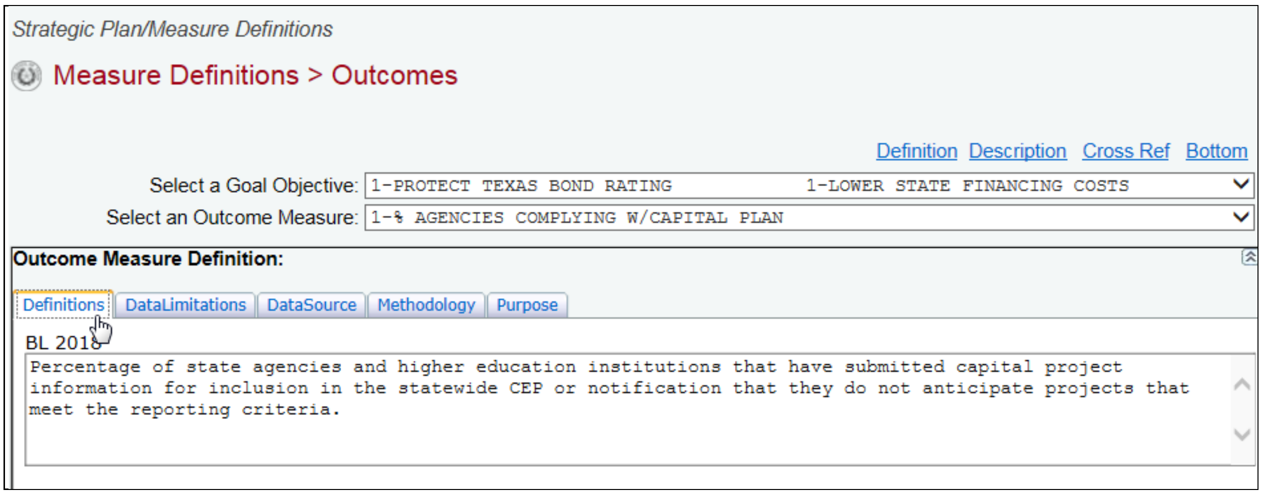


2. The first outcome measure displays on the screen. If necessary, select a different **Goal/Objective** from the first drop-down box and **Outcome Measure** from the second drop-down box (shown below).

Tip: Hover your cursor over the names to show the items listed in the drop-down box.



3. Verify that the **Definitions** tab is selected on the Outcome Measure Definitions grid, as shown below.



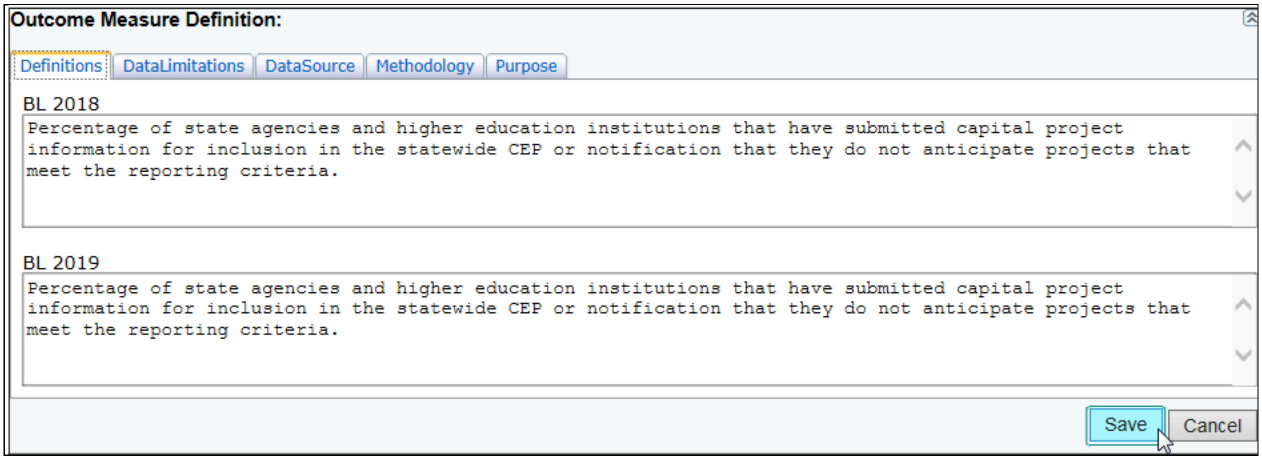
The screen displays the baseline years associated with the current session. If the measure is new, these fields will be empty. If it is an existing measure, the previous measure definition will appear.

4. Enter or revise the measure's definition for BL 2018 (required).

You only need to enter BL 2019 information if it differs from BL 2018. There is a maximum of 1,000 characters for each definition field. Use the character counter described on page 10, if needed.

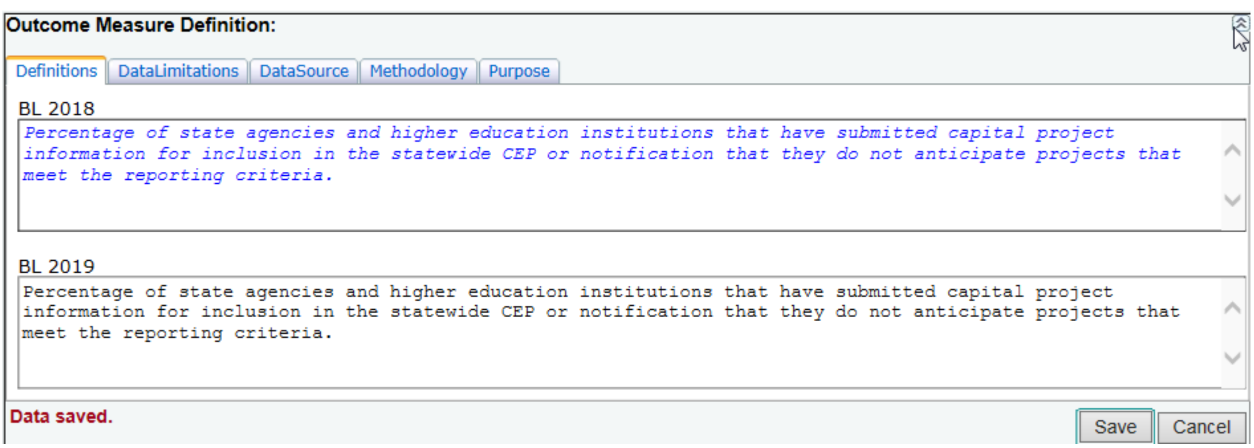
Important: To minimize closing edits, enter data in the first year for each tab listed on the Outcome Measure Definition grid.

5. After entering the definition, click **Save** at the bottom of the grid.

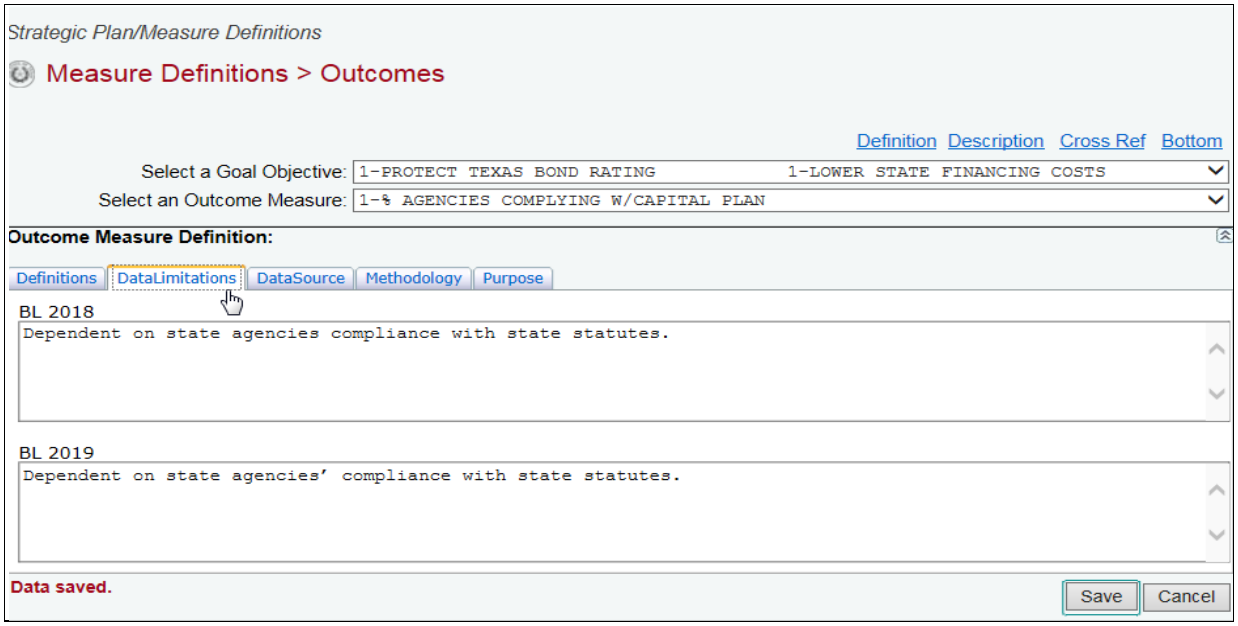


Review the navigation options below. These options will help you navigate easily within the application and are helpful when you have a large amount of data displayed on the screen.

NAVIGATION OPTIONS REFERENCE	
White Arrow (top right of grid)	Use this toggle switch to collapse or expand a particular grid. It will enable you to view the details above/below a particular grid (shown below).
Definition	Hyperlink directs you to the Outcome Measure Definition grid.
Description	Hyperlink directs you to the Outcome Measure Description grid.
Cross Ref	Hyperlink directs you to the Cross Reference Information grid.
Top and **Bottom**	Hyperlink positions your cursor at the top or bottom of the screen.



6. Click on the remaining tabs displayed on the Outcome Measure Definitions grid, as shown below.
7. Enter or revise BL 2018 data and BL 2019 (if necessary) for the data source, methodology, and purpose tabs.



Measure Description

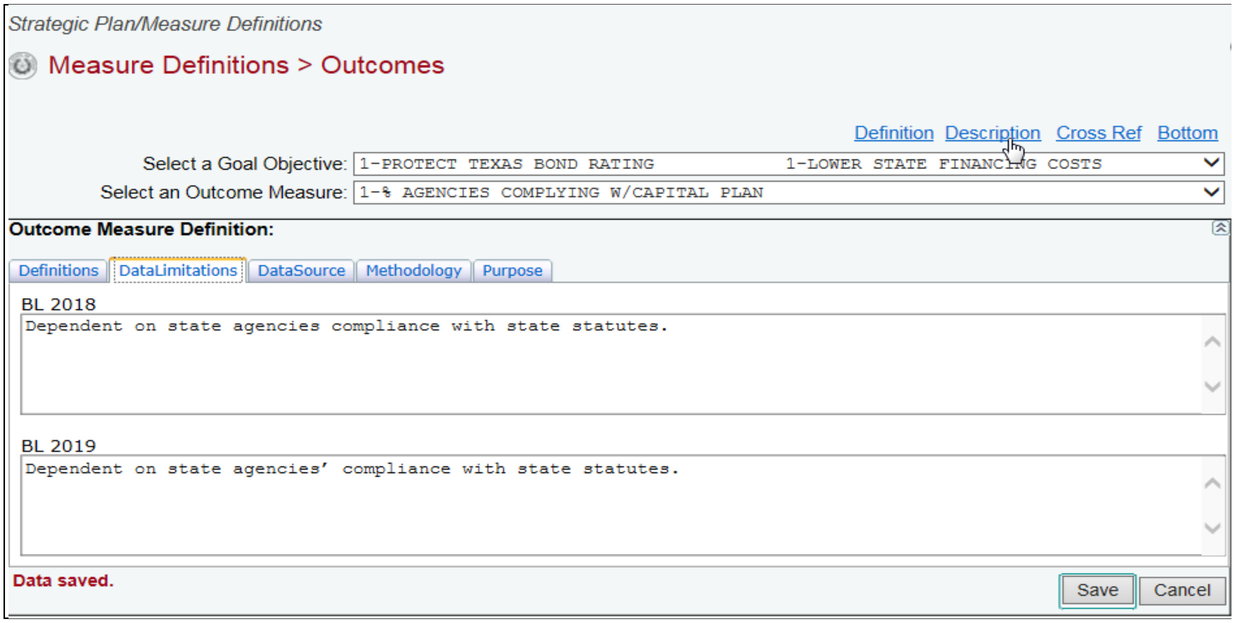
The measure description includes important details about the measure. You must review and or update the following items on the measure description grid:

- New Measure
- Target Attainment
- Priority

The measure description is located on the Measure Definitions screen and displays as the second grid on the screen.

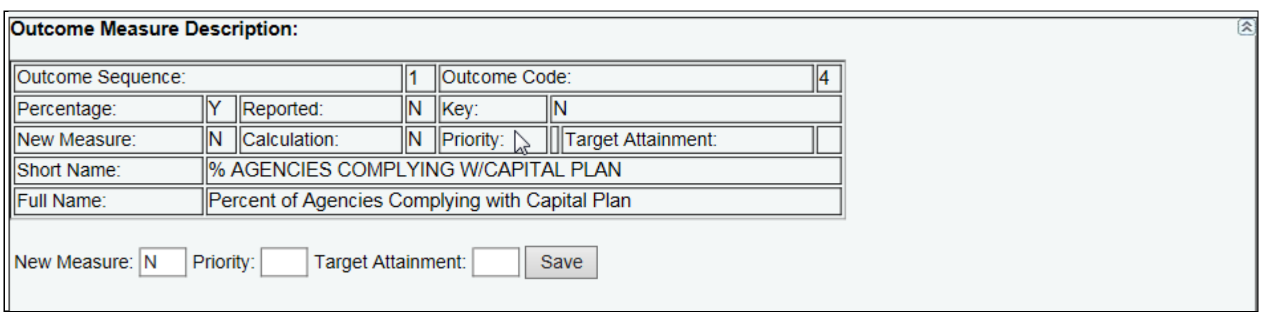
1. Click the **Measure Definitions** menu and the **Outcomes** submenu if you have timed out or are no longer on the outcome measure definitions screen.

   Select a **Goal/Objective** from the first drop-down box and an **Outcome Measure** from the second drop-down box.
2. Click on the **Description** hyperlink, as shown below or scroll down to the second grid labeled Outcome Measure Description.



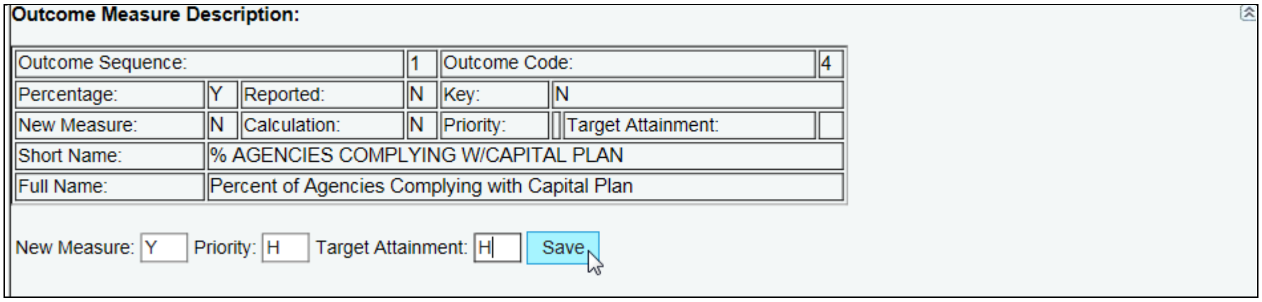
The top portion of the grid displays the measure description that is associated with outcome measure selected, as shown below. Review the items displayed and contact your LBB analyst if you have any questions regarding the information listed. Any changes to this information must go through your LBB analyst.

If the measure is new, the new measure field defaults to N and the priority and target attainment fields are blank, as shown below. If it is an existing measure, the entries copied from 84-R will display.



Important: All outcome and explanatory measures are non-cumulative and reported only once a year.

3. Click in the appropriate input boxes to enter or revise the **New Measure**, **Priority** and **Target Attainment** fields and click **Save**. Your changes will load into the top portion of the grid after you click Save.



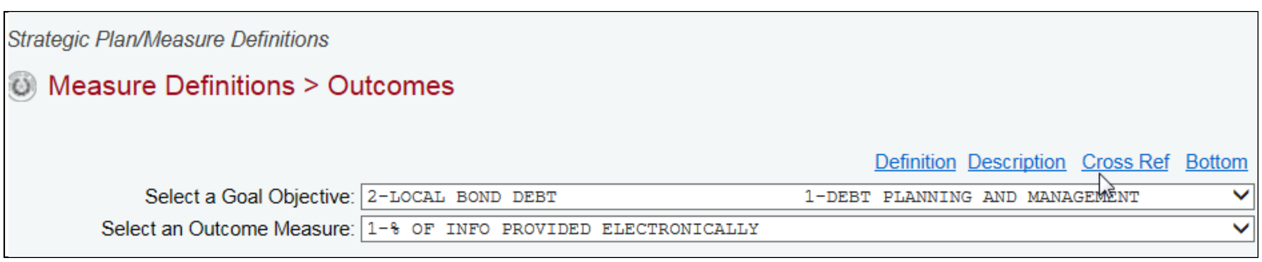
Cross References

A cross reference is required for all existing measures that are not new measures. The cross reference for each measure is copied forward from the previous session. This information assists the legislature and budget analysts with tracking performance measures from one biennium to the next.

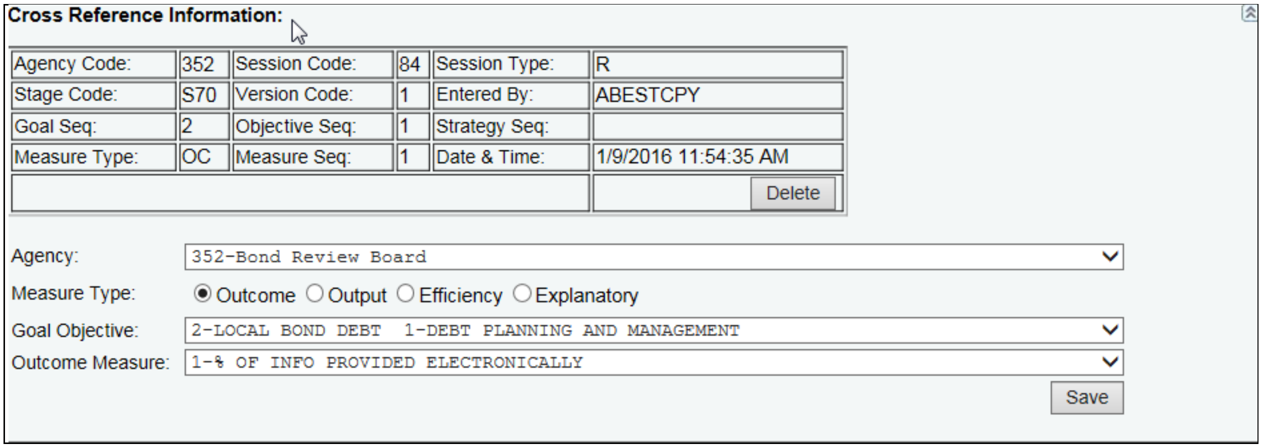
Measures transferred from one agency to another need to refer back to the transferring agency with a cross-reference. You will not be able to change your measure definition status to complete if existing measures lack a cross-reference. The only exception is new measures.

Review the cross reference for each measure for accuracy and make any changes here. Include any measures that were transferred from another agency or program as well.

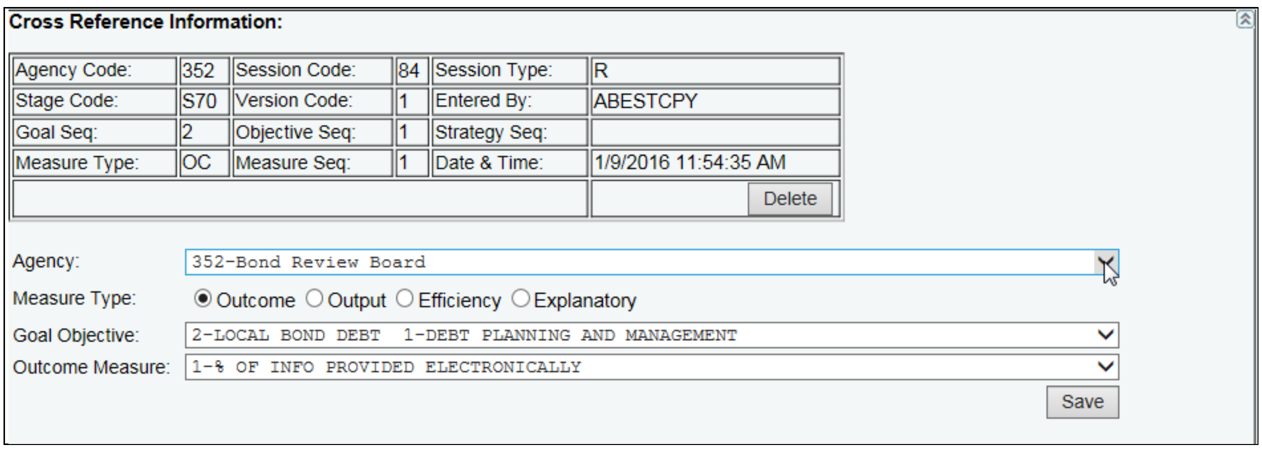
1. Click the **Measure Definitions** menu and the **Outcomes** submenu if you have timed out or are no longer on the outcome measure definitions screen.
2. Select a **Goal/Objective** from the first drop-down box and an **Outcome Measure** from the second drop-down box.
3. Click on the **Cross Ref** hyperlink, as shown below or scroll down to the third grid labeled Cross Reference Information.



The Cross Reference Information grid displays detailed information for the outcome selected. The top portion of the screen displays the cross reference copied from 84R. The options at the bottom of the grid enable you to enter or revise the cross reference.

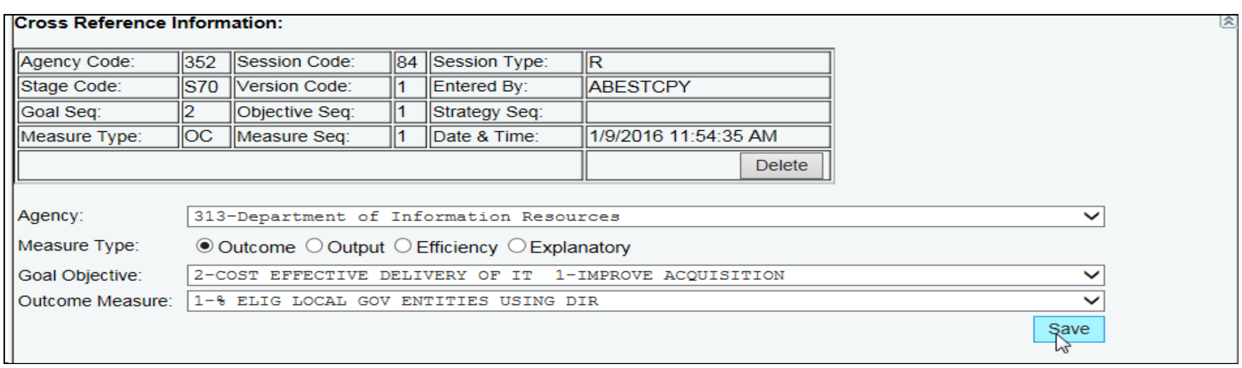


4. To enter or revise the cross reference, begin by clicking in the drop-down box labeled **Agency** to enter the appropriate agency code. If the measure was transferred from another agency for 85-R, select the transferring agency here.



Important: You cannot assign a cross reference to a new measure. The Cross Reference Information grid will display "No cross reference for new measures" at the bottom of the grid.

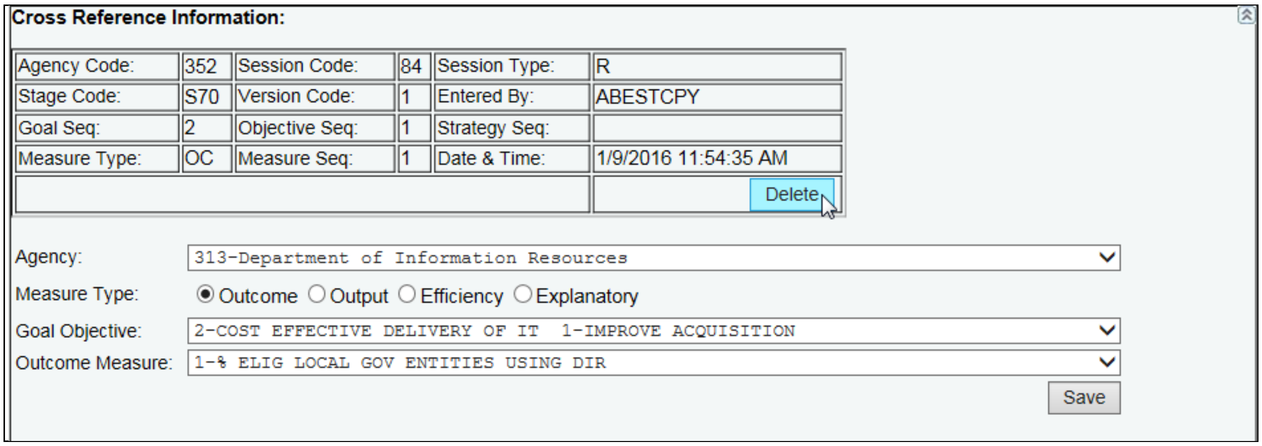
5. Select the **Measure Type**, **Goal/Objective** and **Outcome Measure** for the cross reference and click **Save**. Your changes will load into the top portion of the grid after you click Save.



Important: To minimize closing edits, enter a cross reference for each measure. If the measure is marked new, a cross reference is not required.

You will need to flag measures as new in ABEST if your agency, the LBB, and the Governor's office determine a measure has changed considerably.

6. To delete a cross reference, navigate to the Cross Reference Information grid as described previously and click **Delete**, as shown below.



Repeat these steps to enter measure definitions, descriptions and cross references for each measure for your agency. This may include outcome, output, efficiency, and explanatory measures.

Generating Reports

You may generate reports at any time, regardless of the budget status for your agency. However, before printing copies of your final submission, it is essential that you change your status to Complete. See Changing Status to Complete.

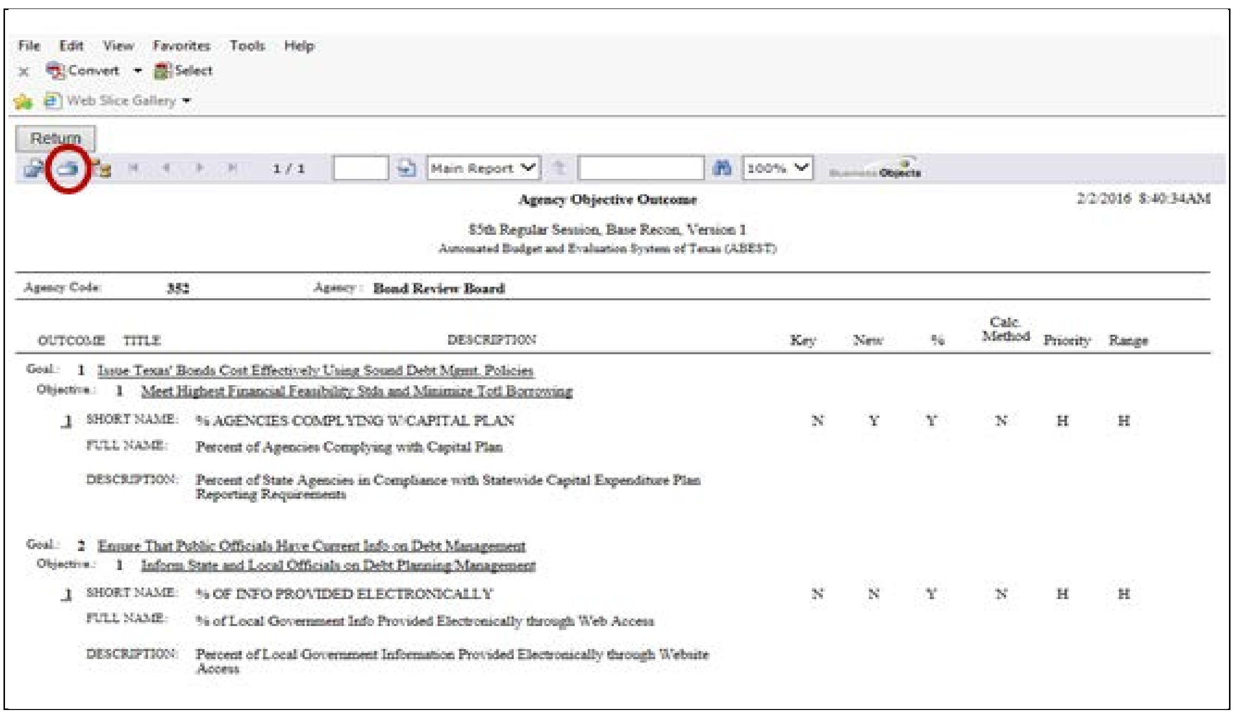
1. To generate a report, click the **Reports** menu, shown in the example below.

2. Click on a **report hyperlink**.

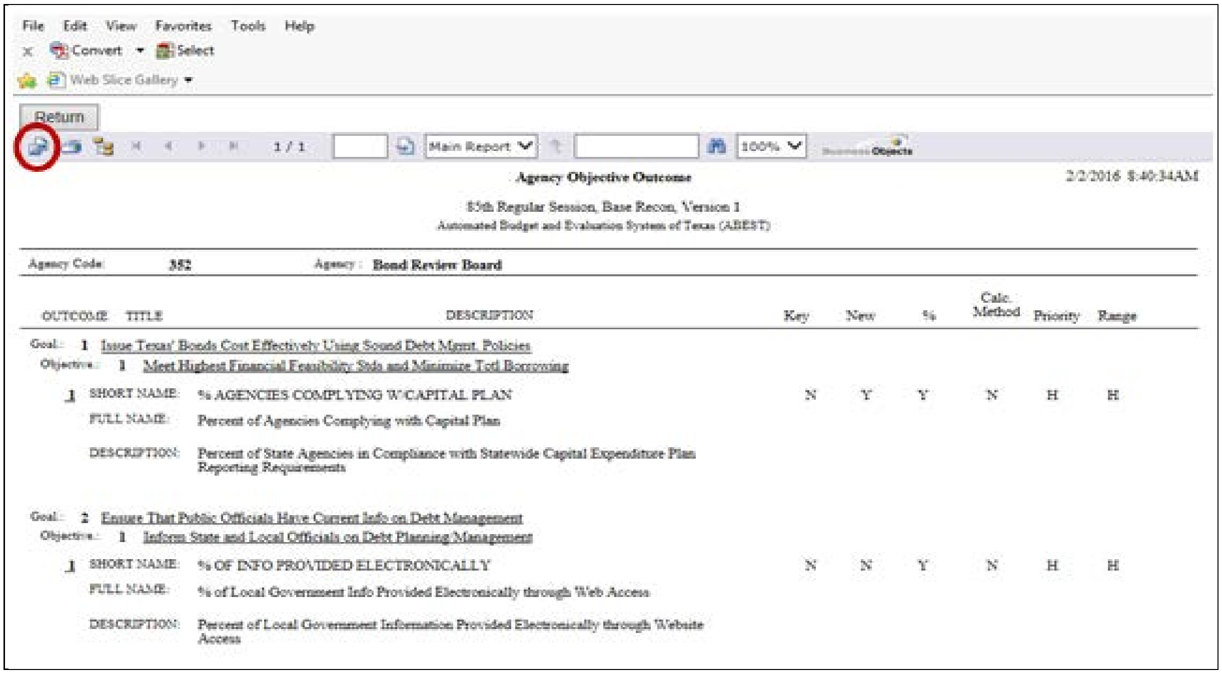
Important: You will need Crystal Smart Viewer to run reports from ABEST. Click **Yes**, the system prompts you to install Crystal Smart Viewer on your computer. If you already have Crystal Reports ActiveX Viewer and cannot view reports, you will need to download a current version. Call the LBB help desk at 512-463-3167 for additional instructions.

Use the arrow keys at the top to navigate through multi-page reports. To use the search feature, click on the **binoculars icon** at the top of the screen.

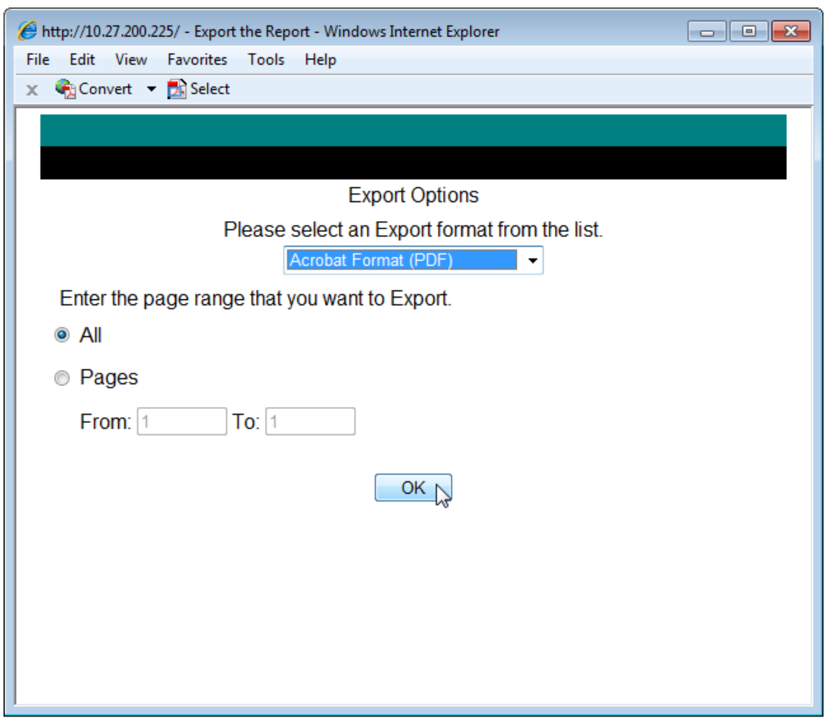
3. To print, click the **second icon** in the upper left corner on the ABEST screen, as shown below.



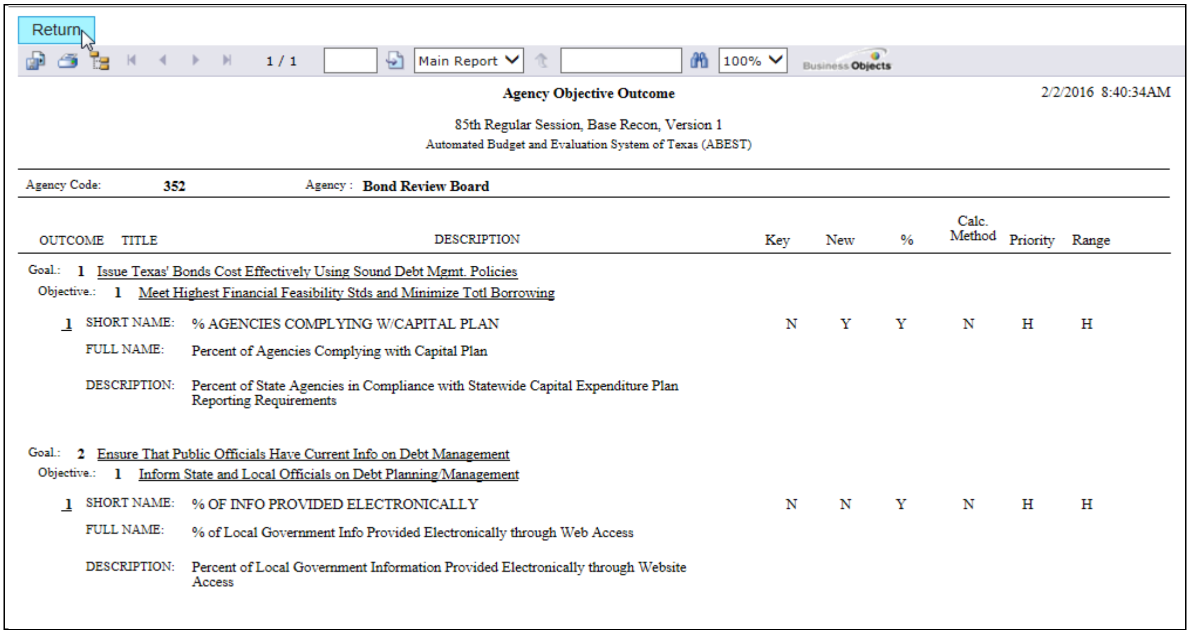
4. To export, click the **first icon** in the upper left corner of the ABEST screen.



5. Select the appropriate export format from the drop-down list and click **OK**. The report will download into the appropriate application. Save your file.



6. Click **Return** to go back to the Reports menu.



Return

Main Report 100%

Agency Objective Outcome 2/2/2016 8:40:34AM

85th Regular Session, Base Recon, Version 1

Automated Budget and Evaluation System of Texas (ABEST)

Agency Code: **352** Agency : **Bond Review Board**

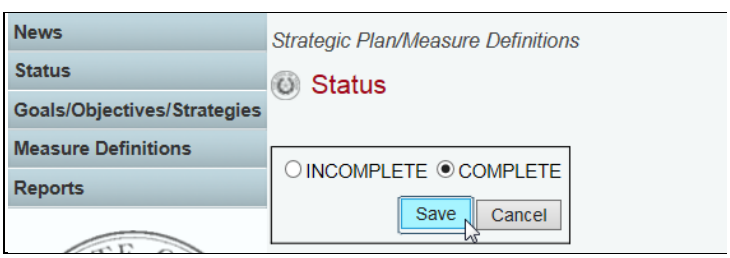
OUTCOME	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	Key	New	%	Calc. Method	Priority	Range
Goal.: 1	Issue Texas' Bonds Cost Effectively Using Sound Debt Mgmt. Policies							
Objective.: 1	Meet Highest Financial Feasibility Stds and Minimize Totl Borrowing							
1	SHORT NAME:	% AGENCIES COMPLYING W/CAPITAL PLAN	N	Y	Y	N	H	H
	FULL NAME:	Percent of Agencies Complying with Capital Plan						
	DESCRIPTION:	Percent of State Agencies in Compliance with Statewide Capital Expenditure Plan Reporting Requirements						
Goal.: 2	Ensure That Public Officials Have Current Info on Debt Management							
Objective.: 1	Inform State and Local Officials on Debt Planning/Management							
1	SHORT NAME:	% OF INFO PROVIDED ELECTRONICALLY	N	N	Y	N	H	H
	FULL NAME:	% of Local Government Info Provided Electronically through Web Access						
	DESCRIPTION:	Percent of Local Government Information Provided Electronically through Website Access						

Changing Status to Complete

You must change the strategic plan/measure definition status for your agency from incomplete to complete to submit your measure definitions and complete your strategic plan.

1. Click the **Status** menu.
2. If you have **no** closing edits, select the **Complete** radio button and click **Save**, as shown below.

If closing edits display on your status screen, see the Resolving Closing Edits section below.



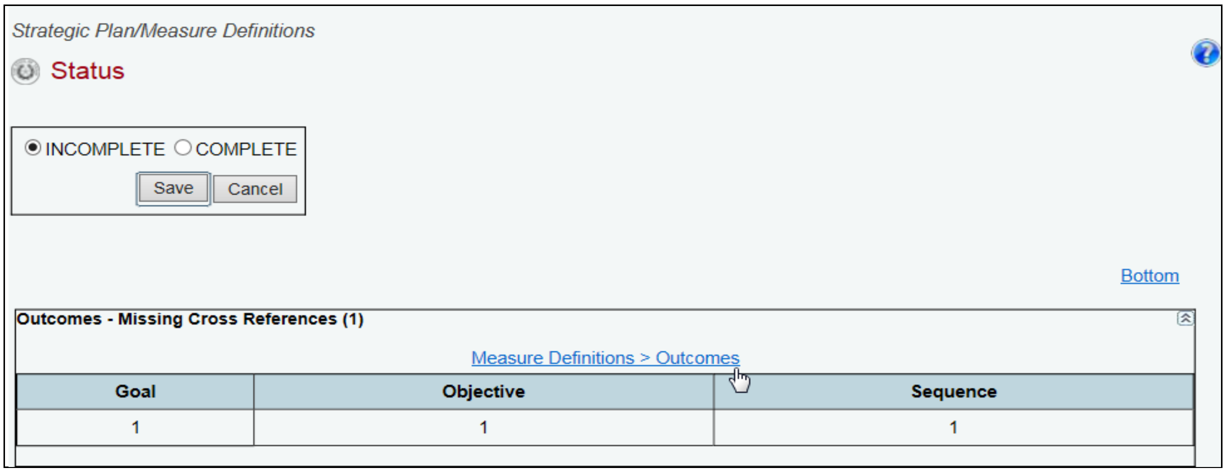
Important: If you set the status to Complete but subsequently need to revise your data, call your agency's LBB analyst to get approval to change your status back to Incomplete. The LBB help desk cannot change your status without analyst approval.

Resolving Closing Edits

Closing edits will appear on the Status menu when you have failed to enter data or you entered the data incorrectly. The closing edits display important information (i.e.; year, goal, objective, strategy, sequence, etc.) about the item.

1. If necessary, print the screen for reference by clicking **File** and **Print** from the browser menu.
2. Click the **hyperlink** displayed above each section. The hyperlink will direct you to the screen location in question.

Important: The hyperlink will take you to the screen location affected, but will not take you to the specific item in question.



3. Resolve the items listed in each section on the status screen. Use the hyperlink displayed on the status screen to direct you to each grid or click on each menu item as indicated in the table below. The closing edit will disappear from the status screen once the issue is resolved.

Table: Resolutions for Closing Edits

CLOSING EDIT	RESOLUTION
Outcomes - Missing 1st Year Definitions	The edit indicates that data elements are missing for the 1st year. Data elements include the measure definition, data limitations, data source, methodology, and purpose. Click the **Measures Definition** menu and the **Outcomes** submenu. Select the **Goal Objective** from the first drop-down box and the **Outcome** from the second drop-down box. Click the **Definition** hyperlink to enter the missing data and click **Save**.
Outcomes - Missing Cross References	The edit indicates that no cross reference exists for the measure. If the measure is marked new, a cross reference is not required. Click the **Measures Definition** menu and the **Outcomes** submenu. Select the **Goal Objective** from the first drop-down box and the **Outcome** from the second drop-down box. Click the **Cross Ref** hyperlink to enter the cross reference and click **Save**. Note that the top section of the grid displays your cross reference. Use the bottom portion of the grid to select or change your cross reference.
Strategy Measures - Missing 1st Year Definitions (Outputs, Efficiency, and Explanatory Measures)	The edit indicates that data elements are missing for the 1st year. Data elements include the measure definition, data limitations, data source, methodology, and purpose. Click the **Measures Definition** menu and the **Outputs, Efficiency or Explanatory** submenu. Select the goal, objective, and strategy from the **Strategy** drop-down box and the **Measure** from the second drop-down box. Click the **Definition** hyperlink to enter the missing data and click **Save**.
Strategy Measures - Missing Cross References (Outputs, Efficiency, and Explanatory Measures)	The edit indicates that no cross reference exists for the measure. If the measure is not marked new, a cross reference is required. Click the **Measures Definition** menu and the **Outputs, Efficiency or Explanatory** submenu. Select the goal, objective, and strategy from the **Strategy** drop-down box and the **Measure** from the second drop-down box. Click the **Cross Ref** hyperlink to enter the cross reference and click **Save**. Note that the top section of the grid displays your cross reference. Use the bottom portion of the grid to select or change your cross reference.
Service Categories	The edit indicates that no service category is selected for a given strategy. Click the **Goals/Objectives/Strategies** menu and the **Service Categories** submenu. Select an **Income, Age, and Service** category from drop-down boxes for the strategy in question and click **Save**.