Price Search Dashboards FAQs

Access and Availability

a. **How can I access the dashboards? Is login required?**
    i. The DQE Unit Price Search dashboard does not require login. Click on the Unit Price Search tab to begin.
    ii. The Power BI Bid Price Search is publicly viewable. Internal features (e.g., downloads) require FDOT credentials.
b. **How often is the data updated?**
    i. Data for Long Range Estimates (LRE) and DQE (for District Estimators) is updated daily.
    ii. Power BI Bid Price Search and DQE Unit Price Search are updated daily with executed data (approximately 2-month lag from letting to execution).
    iii. Historical Cost Average Reports are updated monthly.
c. **When do new lettings/bids get added? Why is there a lag?**
    i. New data is added daily.
    ii. Only executed contract data is shown. Bids appear in the dashboards after execution when data is no longer confidential per Florida Statutes. There is typically a 2-month lag from contract letting to execution.
d. **What is the oldest data available?**
    i. Power BI Bid Price Search has 5 years of data on all reports, except Item Trends has 7 years of data.
    ii. DQE Unit Price Search has 10 years of data.
e. **Are these tools always available? Preferred browser?**
    i. Yes, available 24/7.
    ii. The webpages were tested in Edge and Chrome; however, there is no preferred browser.
f. **Links to the tools?**
    i. Forecasting & Project Cost: https://www.fdot.gov/fpo/fpc/home
    ii. DQE Unit Price Search: https://dqe.fdot.gov/#/unitpricesearch
    iii. Power BI Bid Price Search: https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiMDg5YTNhNjMtOGM3ZC00MjVkLTg2MDQtYjRjYjE3MWUxZDQyIiwidCI6ImRiMjFkZTVkLWJjOWMtNDIwYy04ZjNmLThmMDhmODViNWFkYSJ9

Differences Between Tools (Power BI vs. DQE Unit Price Search)

a. **What are the key differences? When should I use each?**

i. Both use the same underlying bid data.
ii. Power BI allows multi-pay-item searches, maps (in Basic Search), and advanced filtering but no inflation adjustment.
iii. DQE focuses on one pay item at a time, includes the FDOT Construction Cost Index (CCI) adjustment, and allows PDF and CSV exports.
iv. Recommendation: Use both tools. They complement each other. All sources and "results" should be used to find the best price your project.

b. Does Power BI adjust for inflation like DQE?

i. No, Power BI shows raw data only.
ii. DQE includes the FDOT CCI toggle to adjust to Present Day Costs (PDC).

c. Is this replacing the Historical Item Average Cost Report or LRE?

i. No, these tools enhance the data available to making pricing decisions.
ii. The creation of dashboards does not eliminate the use or need for the weighted averages currently posted on the website.
iii. Historical averages are posted monthly and only include winning bids and construction contracts.
iv. The dashboards provide more detailed and up to date data with broader filters and more insight into what data is included in the weighted averages and their applicability to your project or scenario.

Best Practices for Estimating Unit Prices

a. Which price should I use: Weighted Average (with/without outliers), LOESS, winning bid, or bids 1-3? What do the red and blue lines mean?

i. Pricing should be selected on a per-project basis using engineering judgment to identify the best price for your project. There is no requirement to use the dashboards or a specific "result". Document justification for your selections to defend the prices chosen.
ii. Consider project-specific factors (quantity, region, site conditions, constructability).
iii. For budgeting/early estimates, use Fair Market Value (bids ranked 1-3). Closer to letting, use winning bids (Bidder Rank 1).
iv. Outliers are automatically removed via weighted standard deviation. Both with/without outlier "results" are provided.
v. Locally Estimated Scatterplot Smoothing (LOESS) smooths the trend based on quantity. The red line includes outliers; the blue line excludes outliers (a bid is flagged as an outlier if its price deviates from the weighted average by more than the weighted standard deviation).

b. Where can I learn more?

i. The Statistics Details link provides details on DQE dashboard features like LOESS and inflation adjustment.

c. How many filters should I apply? What if data is limited or my project quantity is higher than the highest bid point?

i. Apply as many filters as needed to match your project (market area, letting date, quantity, work type, contract type). Use different filter selections to help select the price that best fits your scenario.

ii. Aim for sufficient bid points (e.g., at least 10). If too low, be skeptical and broaden filters (e.g., extend date range, reduce filters, or expand to nearby Market Areas/statewide).

iii. If your project quantity is higher than the highest bid point, use best judgment or reach out to vendors. When contacting vendors, do not disclose exact project data. Use generalized locations and quantities required.

d. Should I only use data from my District/Region?

i. It depends. Be aware of limited data; expand if needed.

e. Should I use closest similar quantity?

i. Quantity is a key factor. Higher quantities typically have lower unit prices. Lower quantities typically have higher unit prices.

ii. Select prices from projects with similar quantities and conditions. If limited data, a weighted average may produce a better result.

f. How do I handle rare/new/specialty pay items or inadequate history? Are there items I should not use this dashboard for?

i. Try extending the letting date range.

ii. For new/changed pay items, look up previously used items with similar requirements.

iii. If no similar data exists, coordinate with district or vendors (keep project specifics out of discussions).

iv. Dashboards may not be best for specialty/project-specific pay items or specialty projects. Use due diligence.

g. How do I find/handle Lump Sum (LS) or hybrid unit items (e.g., Clearing & Grubbing, Mobilization 101-1, MOT 102-1)?

i. Both dashboards calculate per-unit costs for hybrid/LS items using designer-estimated quantities (e.g., hybrid acre units for clearing & grubbing).

ii. Power BI has a page for average MOB and MOT costs.

iii. Clearing & grubbing varies greatly by project. It is not always best for evaluation, but useful for comparison/gut-checks.

h. When should we use the price dashboards?

i. For many purposes: every phase of project development, special projects/reports, construction (work orders/supplemental agreements), understanding pricing, etc.

i. Is there an easier way to determine cost drivers?

i. Identify the 20% of items making up 80% of cost
ii. Cost drivers are typically self-performed: Aggregate, Asphalt, Concrete, Earthwork, Steel.

j. Do we have to use the dashboard-suggested price? Can I round or adjust?

i. There is no requirement to select the suggested price.
ii. Use data for confidence, then document/defend your chosen price
iii. Consider rounding up/down to avoid overly specific values when estimating.

k. How do we save/document data for the selected price?

i. Print PDF report, screenshot, or download (DQE CSV) for point-in-time documentation (doesn't prove "right," but documents pricing decisions).

Inflation and Present-Day Costs

a. Should I use the FDOT CCI inflation adjustment?

i. Yes, for FDOT projects. Use Present Day Costs (PDC) by toggling CCI on (brings historical prices to current quarter as listed).
ii. Work Program handles future projections. For short date ranges (e.g., 6 months), raw data may suffice.
iii. For non-FDOT projects, consider applying inflation to the midpoint of construction, especially for local programs applications.

b. Does the Department/FHWA forecast inflation? Have dashboards been tested for real-time predictions?

i. FDOT CCI uses historical bid data (no AI/forecasting is applied).
ii. The Forecasting & Performance office projects strategic material pricing and needs. Review the Strategic Resource Evaluation Study (SRES) reports for more information.
iii. FHWA NHCCI lags several quarters and is not predictive.
iv. Dashboards undergo extensive internal testing/analysis. Accuracy of weighted averages to contractor's bids tends to depend on current economic conditions.

Filtering and Features

a. What are recommended filters for specific project types (e.g., resurfacing, widening, maintenance, safety)? Urban/rural separation or small segments?

i. Use specific Work Type (e.g., Resurfacing, Widening) or Contract Type (Maintenance vs. Construction).
ii. If data is sparse, broaden to all work types.
iii. There is no direct urban/rural link (bid data aggregated by contract, not Roadway Characteristics Inventory (RCI). Contracts may span multiple types).
iv. Filter Work Type (Widening); reduce contract amount/quantity for smaller projects.
v. Manually adjust for constructability/site conditions or filter similar contracts in Power BI using the contract filter.

b. Winning vs. Low Bid? Bidder Status W vs. Rank 1?

i. Winning bids aren't always the low bid.
ii. Use Bidder Rank 1 for winning bids (more reliable since Status W can return nulls).

c. Can I export/download data or generate reports/OPCC?

i. DQE: CSV export + PDF for basics/reports.
ii. Power BI: Downloads require FDOT login.
iii. No full/automatic OPCC or project upload/pricing. Use LRE or Designer Interface for pay-item and quantity lists.

d. Multiple pay items at once? Import schedule of values?

i. It is recommended to search by individual pay items
ii. Indicators are inaccurate when dissimilar pay items are selected.
iii. No bulk import/full schedule comparison or public automatic pricing currently.

e. Map vs. Chart views?

i. Report views are fixed per tab.
ii. The Power BI Basic Search has map; Advanced has a chart.

Other Specific Topics

a. BABA requirements or tariffs impact?

i. Data reflects actual bids, so effects during those periods are included.

b. Data source: Only Design-Bid-Build?

i. Currently only conventional Design-Bid-Build. Efforts are underway for limited alternative delivery items.

c. Utility work (water/sewer)?

i. Some utility items are included in FDOT projects and searchable.

d. Development of dashboards?

i. Developed in-house by FDOT.

e. **Can AI help price a project?**
    i. Human review is required for accuracy/applicability.
f. **Will Scope of Services change? Enhancements (e.g., AADT, rural/urban, maps, supplier locations)?**
    i. Yes. The Scope of Services is under review and updates to require project costs at every milestone.
    ii. Send in any enhancement requests for consideration. Not all requests will be prioritized.