How to Get Military Prime Contract Data

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Aggregated prime military contract data by state is available from the replication files we have posted on the *AER* website.

However, more detailed microdata are also available from the original source. While the original link that we used to access the Military Prime Contract Data no longer exists, Christoph Boehm has kindly provided us with the following updated information on how to access the microdata on prime military contracts.

The military prime contract files can be downloaded from the U.S. National Archives, https://research.archives.gov/. After entering the website, search for the key words "military prime contracts" and "defense contract action data system". There is a separate set of files, i.e. the dataset and documentation, for each fiscal year from 1966 to 2003. There is also a separate file for the 3-month period between the old and the new fiscal year in 1975.

The remaining data on military spending can be obtained from www.usaspending.gov. More precisely, the data can be downloaded from https://www.usaspending.gov/download_center/custom_award_data for the years from 2000 onwards.[1] When downloading the data be sure to select "prime award" as type of data and "contracts" as spending type. The agency is the Department of Defense.

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[1] We thank Fabian Wassmann for providing us with this updated link.