



News from:
COMPTROLLER KEVIN LEMBO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2015

Contact: Tara Downes
860-702-3308
Tara.Downes@ct.gov

**COMPTROLLER LEMBO LAUNCHES
“OpenCheckbook”
WITH REAL-TIME STATE PAYMENT INFORMATION**

Comptroller Kevin Lembo today launched “OpenCheckbook,” a feature that allows the public to search real-time information about who received payments from the State of Connecticut for goods or services and how much they received.

“OpenCheckbook” is the latest upgrade to “Open Connecticut” – an online hub of state financial information that Lembo first launched two years ago in an ongoing effort to simplify and centralize public access to important information about state revenue and spending.

Before today, state payment information available online was only updated once annually – and therefore became outdated, and sometimes inaccurate, shortly after becoming available, Lembo said. The new OpenCheckbook application will be updated nightly, reflecting all payments made through the state’s centralized accounting system up to 24 to 48 hours prior to view.

“OpenCheckbook builds on our promise that open government is always a work in progress, with no finish line,” Lembo said. “This site now delivers great detail on state payment information more accurately and quickly than any other available source.

“We want academics, researchers, policymakers, journalists and the general public to view this information – and use it to make data-driven judgments and decisions.”

OpenCheckbook data can be explored by searching for specific payee names – whether it be

a business, individual, municipality or non-profit – or by browsing by government function. The application allows the user to drill down from aggregated spending accounts all the way down to each individual payment to a payee, Lembo said.

It's important to note that not all payments are processed through this centralized financial system and are therefore not reflected in the information listed. More information about what is, and is not, included on OpenCheckbook is explained in the "About" section of the feature.

"Once again, this improvement is an important step – but not an end point," Lembo said. "Connecticut recently celebrated an improved grade – earning an A – in a report by the Connecticut Public Interest Research Group for our collaborative transparency efforts. We're happy to receive an A, but look forward to achieving an A+ next time – and maintaining that grade in perpetuity."

Lembo said improvements to the site will continue, including a new feature expected to be complete sometime next month called "OpenBudget." That new feature will allow users to compare actual expenditures to the budgeted amounts throughout the fiscal year. The site will also provide information on revenues and capital projects.

OpenCheckbook can be accessed directly at opencheckbook.ct.gov – or by navigating to the state expenditures section through Open Connecticut's main page at www.osc.ct.gov/openct.

*****END*****