



News from:
COMPTROLLER KEVIN LEMBO

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**COMPTROLLER LEMBO CALLS ON ALL QUASI-PUBLIC
AGENCIES TO PROVIDE CHECKBOOK-LEVEL FINANCIAL DATA
FOR STATE'S ONLINE TRANSPARENCY PORTAL**

Comptroller Kevin Lembo announced today that he has called on all of Connecticut's quasi-public agencies to voluntarily provide his office with checkbook-level financial data annually to incorporate in OpenConnecticut, the state's comprehensive financial transparency website.

In a letter sent this week to the heads of all quasi-public agencies, Lembo said this step is necessary for Connecticut to maintain its leadership -- or even keep up with neighboring states -- on open government, transparency and accountability.

"Quasi-public agencies are set apart from other state government agencies by design, relieving them of some -- though not all -- requirements that apply to other agencies in order to allow them to respond to challenges and opportunities more expediently and efficiently than traditional government entities," Lembo said. "All quasi-public agencies were formed to meet a public purpose with significant ramifications on the general public, and many rely in some way on state funds or resources to accomplish their stated purpose. The operations of quasi-public institutions should therefore be as transparent as possible.

"It is now considered best practice to provide checkbook level transparency data for quasi-public institutions on state transparency websites -- and doing so will allow Connecticut to retain its position as a leader in government transparency efforts and will help to maintain the public's confidence in government operations," Lembo said.

Lembo launched OpenConnecticut three years ago as a central hub for all of the state's financial data and reports that had historically been scattered across agencies and websites. Since launching the site, Connecticut has improved its grade in financial transparency from a B- to an A in U.S. PIRG's annual "Follow the Money" financial transparency survey.

Connecticut was one of only eight states last year to receive an A grade from U.S. PIRG. Since then, however, several states – including neighboring Massachusetts – have moved to incorporate data from all government entities, including quasi-publics, into their transparency websites.

Quasi-public agencies are independent government corporations created through legislation to perform particular public functions.

“The services that quasi-public agencies provide are essential public services that directly impact the lives of residents and businesses in the state,” Lembo said. “Quasi-public agencies are responsible for running the state’s health care exchange, operating our state-owned airports, incentivizing clean energy solutions, promoting economic development, maintaining waste disposal, providing financing for low-income housing and health and education institutions and distributing loans.”

Lembo has requested that each quasi-public agency voluntarily provide his office with an annual data feed of checkbook-level financial data to be posted on the state’s OpenCheckbook application within the OpenConnecticut site.

“The data will improve public confidence in the operations of quasi-public institutions and help to move Connecticut forward as one of the most transparent state governments in the country,” Lembo said.

Lembo noted that he is not requesting that any agency provide any un-disclosable, protected or proprietary information.

Connecticut’s quasi-public agencies include Connecticut Innovations, Inc., Connecticut Health and Education Facilities Authority (CHEFA), Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA), Connecticut Student Loan Foundation (CSLF), Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA), Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority (MIRA), Capital Region Development Authority, Connecticut Lottery Corporation, Connecticut Airport Authority, Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange, Connecticut Green Bank, State Education Resource Center and Connecticut Port Authority.

OpenConnecticut can be accessed at <http://www.osc.ct.gov/openCT.html>

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