



News from:
COMPTROLLER KEVIN LEMBO

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COMPTROLLER LEMBO CALLS ON NON-PARTICIPATING QUASI-PUBLIC AGENCIES TO PROVIDE CHECKBOOK-LEVEL FINANCIAL DATA FOR TRANSPARENCY PORTAL

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

Lembo reached agreements last year with the vast majority of Connecticut's quasi-public agencies in which those agencies will annually provide his office with checkbook-level data to include on OpenConnecticut. Lembo praised those agencies for their participation, which he said is necessary for Connecticut to maintain its national leadership ranking on open government, transparency and accountability.

While most of 13 quasi-public agencies that Lembo contacted provided full checkbook-level financial data beginning last year, one (Access Health CT) provided only a list of vendors with no payment information, while two others (CT Lottery Corporation and Connecticut Housing Finance Authority) declined to provide any of the information requested. The Connecticut Port Authority was newly formed at that time, and so it was premature for them to participate.

Lembo, in letters sent this week, once again called on those four quasi-public agencies to reconsider and provide checkbook-level financial data.

"Quasi-public agencies were formed to meet a public purpose and many rely in some way on state funds or resources to accomplish their missions," Lembo said. "The operations of quasi-public institutions should therefore be as transparent as possible."

“The vast majority of Connecticut’s quasi-public agencies have recognized the importance of transparency and the confidence that it provides to the public. I am hopeful that all quasi-public agencies will embrace that view.”

Lembo launched OpenConnecticut approximately five years ago as a central hub for all of the state’s financial data and is ranked among the top five in the nation for its transparency efforts as a result. OpenConnecticut includes statewide checkbook-level financial data, payroll data, budget and revenue data, and will soon be expanded to include real-time pension data.

Quasi-public agencies are independent government corporations created through legislation to perform particular public functions. Lembo said their inclusion in OpenConnecticut is essential not only to maintain Connecticut’s ranking as a national leader on transparency, but for the sake of public confidence in its government.

“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.

“The availability of this 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. “If not all quasi-public agencies agree to provide checkbook-level data for OpenConnecticut, then legislative clarification may be necessary.”

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

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