



New York City Comptroller
John C. Liu

NEWS RELEASE

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LIU OPENS UP GOVERNMENT BOOKS, BARES ALL NEW YORK CITY EXPENDITURES ONLINE

Unprecedented Public Scrutiny of Billions in Government Spending

NEW YORK, NY – New York City Comptroller John C. Liu today launched a powerful new tool that provides unprecedented access to view and track how New York City government spends money. Over \$35 billion in City expenditures since January 1 are now accessible at the public's fingertips at www.checkbooknyc.com.

"This has already raised the bar on the way things are done in government," **Comptroller Liu** said. "The more information we make available to the public, the more built-in incentives all of us in city government have to save taxpayers money, which has really become more important than ever before."

One of the most comprehensive initiatives of its kind in the nation, "Checkbook NYC" is an easy-to-use online database of the City's expenditures, allowing users to search and download by agency, vendor/payee name, purpose and amount.

"It's about open government," Comptroller Liu continued. "It's about intrinsic accountability. It's about creating strong incentives to save taxpayer money. And it's how we are determined to start the new fiscal year."

Comptroller Liu first announced the Checkbook NYC initiative on March 18, setting forth an ambitious launch date of July 1, the start of Fiscal Year 2011. "Placing billions of dollars in spending in one easy-to-access database was no small feat," Comptroller Liu said, crediting Simcha Felder, Deputy Comptroller for Accountancy & Budget, and his team for propelling this substantial undertaking. Comptroller Liu also expressed gratitude for the cooperation from city commissioners and their agencies, in particular the Financial Information Services Agency (FISA) and the Mayor's Office of Contract Services (MOCS).

Councilmember Gale Brewer, Chairperson of the City Council Committee on Governmental Operations, stated: "It is fitting that as we celebrate our freedom on this 4th of July that a new era of openness has arrived, and as of today every person interested in policy and every skeptical New Yorker can answer the age-old question: What are they doing with my money? Checkbook NYC is a powerful tool, created by Comptroller Liu and his extraordinarily talented staff. As someone who has spent many years working in government and the same

number of years trying to open up government data, I applaud this one-of-a-kind single location website that is updated daily to show New Yorkers how their tax dollars are being spent.

"My Money NYC has broken new ground in making government agencies and entities more transparent," said **Dick Dadey, Executive Director of Citizens Union**. "This software allows nearly all city spending to be disclosed in virtual real time disaggregated to a degree not seen before in a manner so easily accessed by the public. At a time when New Yorkers are taking a closer look at their own checkbooks, New York City government should reflect the same level of scrutiny. Comptroller Liu's My Money NYC will draw closer attention to every dollar spent."

"It is this kind of model that will bring more transparency and accountability to New York and help to create a best practices paradigm in expenditure reporting in City government," said **Susan Lerner, Executive Director of Common Cause**. "We look forward to working with Comptroller Liu on this exciting endeavor."

Checkbook NYC will be updated daily and uses the City's Financial Management System (FMS) to identify and chronicle all City expenditures. In addition to a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section, there is a dedicated team of individuals in Comptroller Liu's office to update and correct any detectable glitches while in its beta stage.

Due to privacy and security issues still under review, some transactions in Checkbook NYC do not include the associated payee name. These include but are not limited to payments made by the New York City Police Department, the Department of Investigation, the District Attorneys' Offices, as well as certain payments made to individuals, employees and for health and social services.

Checkbook NYC is part of Comptroller Liu's broader "My Money NYC" transparency initiative (www.mymoneynyc.com) that gives New Yorkers unparalleled access to information about the City's finances, encourages community-government collaboration on fiscal matters and provides user-friendly performance measures. "Ultimately, this level of heightened transparency compels more judicious expenditures of taxpayer money," Comptroller Liu said.

- Open Audit - An interactive webpage where New Yorkers can submit ideas for audits to save the City money, increase revenue and improve the efficiency of agencies. STATUS: LIVE
- ClearView - An initiative started by former Comptroller William C. Thompson, Jr. which allows users to search for City contracts registered with the Comptroller's Office. STATUS: LIVE
- MWBE Report Card - Measures the performance of City agencies in achieving their MWBE goals, especially in light of Local Law 129 of 2005, which set out hard targets, agency-by-agency, of government contracting opportunities for minority- and women-owned business enterprises. STATUS: TBA DECEMBER 2010.

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