

New Arkansas Site Reveals State Salaries

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Arkansas has entered the [financial transparency](#) game with a new website launched this month that shines a light on state revenues, expenses and contracts, among other things.

The Arkansas Financial Transparency Act, passed in 2011 by state lawmakers and signed by Gov. Mike Beebe, foretold the creation of the website. According to [CBS News](#), the project received a \$550,000 budget allocation for the initial creation of the site. That money paid for two staff positions. Expenses for ongoing site operations are estimated at \$250,000 annually.

"I believe this transparency will help eliminate wasteful spending and provide the accountability Arkansans deserve," said Lt. Gov. Mark A. Darr in a [statement](#). I look forward to seeing more transparency such as the online checkbook being put into action throughout all of state government."

[Transparency.Arkansas.gov](#) features several different types of financial data. According to the website, several categories of information are updated on a continuous basis.

- Expenditures (updated daily): Spending data for 48 agencies is provided. Users can drill down into the data for a breakdown of how monies are distributed.

- Revenues (updated daily): Site visitors can examine the amount of money coming into the state, organized in several different ways — by source, function, agency or type.
- Employee Salaries (updated monthly): State employees are listed by agency, along with salary information. Salary data and all other financial information also are available for download in a single Excel or text document.
- Bonded Indebtedness (will be updated quarterly): An announcement posted on the site says bond debt held by the state will be added in September 2012.
- Contracts: The contracts page offers details on contracts or individual purchase orders for more than \$25,000. Construction contracts with a value of greater than \$20,000 are also listed.
- Payments to Cities and Counties (updated daily): Money distributed to local government entities to help deliver constituent services is listed separately from other expenditures due to heightened interest in this data.

All the information featured on Arkansas' financial transparency website was available to the public before the site went live through open records laws. Officials are hopeful that proactively disclosing the data online may cut down on time-consuming responses to information requests.

