

# Memorandum



**Date:** August 29, 2011

**To:** Honorable Chairman Joe A. Martinez  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

**From:** Carlos A. Gimenez,   
Mayor

**Subject:** Financial Transparency and the County's Online Check Register

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On September 21, 2010 the Miami Dade County Board of County Commissioners (Board) adopted Resolution R-952-10 directing the County to establish a check register website of disbursement/payments; and requiring that all data added to the website remain accessible to the public for at least ten years.

This Resolution is similar to Senate Bill 1796 (the Bill) which required the State of Florida (the State) to establish a website for public access to government financial information in Florida. The State has appointed a Joint Legislative Working Group to investigate and assess the extent to which jurisdictions were able to comply by March 2010. The Working Group drafted and distributed a preliminary survey to counties, municipalities, special districts, and other non-educational governmental entities for comments. The intent of the draft was to solicit comments regarding the the questions to jurisdictional issues, cost of implementation, data management and other jurisdictional challenges and concerns. Following the preliminary investigations and a review of the scope of the program, the Working Group determined that implementation would take longer than initially contemplated. Consequently, the rollout would be conducted in phases beginning with public schools and eventually transitioning to community colleges, universities, cities and counties.

In response to Resolution R-952-10 and the anticipated State Transparency requirements the County's Enterprise Technology Services, Aviation, Finance, Miami-Dade Public Housing Agency, and Water and Sewer departments have been working on the implementation of the County's transparency website providing disbursements/payment information in the form of a check register accessible by constituents, and providing links to existing documents such as budget, financial audits, and strategic plans.

There are three key sources of County check register information: 1) the County's Financial Accounting and Management Information System (FAMIS), which supports the majority of County departments; 2) PeopleSoft Financials of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) application, which supports the Aviation, and Water and Sewer Departments; and 3) Emphasys Core Financials, used by the Miami-Dade Public Housing Agency. Information from FAMIS and Emphasys is available for five years starting with FY 2006-07. Information from the ERP application is available for four years starting with FY 2007-08, representing all available history in the ERP system.

The disbursement/payment register is searchable by date, disbursement/payment number, vendor name and disbursement amount. All necessary data from the various sources will be collected and posted each month to the online check register website no more than 30 days following the last calendar day of the month.

Information considered confidential by state or federal law shall be exempted from disclosure. Under Florida Statutes disbursements for the Miami-Dade Police Department and the Office of the Inspector General are exempted from disclosure under the following Florida Statutes:

- F.S. 112.3188(2) Whistleblower active investigation,
- F.S. 112.3188(1) Whistleblower identity of complainant,
- F.S. 119.071(2)(c) Active criminal investigative and intelligence information,
- F.S. 119.071(2)(d) Information on surveillance techniques, procedures or personnel, and F.S. 119.0713(2) Audits.

However, the website permits the user to request allowable payment information for the Police Department or the Office of the Inspector General via a public records request.

It is important to note that the website was launched to the public on August 1, 2011 and it is still a work in progress. In the coming months, our goal is to continue enhancing the website to incorporate salary information and more detail vendor payment information such as budget and expenditure account codes, purchase order information and brief descriptions of the expenditure. The capacity to provide some of the additional information will depend on the acquisition and implementation of a new Enterprise Content Management System with accounts payable invoice imaging. Our desire is to increase fiscal transparency by providing citizens with a useful tool for understanding how their tax dollars are being spent.

The fiscal impact for the system's development and start-up utilizing existing resources is approximately \$53,300 and funded through the County's information-technology funding model, with annual recurring costs estimated at \$20,100 for administrative support and maintenance, which will be included in the annual operating budget. The additional programming costs to include salary and detail payment information to the website will cost \$77,000 with additional annual recurring costs of \$21,000.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Deputy Mayor Edward Marquez at 305-375-1451.

c: Robert A. Cuevas, Jr., County Attorney  
Office of the Mayor Senior Staff  
Department Directors  
Christopher Mazzella, Inspector General  
Charles Anderson, Commission Auditor