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Transparency Stars

Debt Obligations Guidelines

Follow the guidelines below and add the required documentation to your entity's website to qualify for a Debt Obligations Transparency Star.

House Bill 1378, passed in the 84th Legislative session, requires public entities to post certain debt information online. The Transparency Stars program recognizes local governments who go beyond legislative requirements in this area by providing debt information in a variety of formats.

Debt Information Summary

Post a summary table or listing separately from audits and financial reports that includes the following items for the most recently completed fiscal year, as well as a narrative overview with explanations of terminology, if applicable, for each:

- Total outstanding debt obligations.
- Tax-supported debt obligations expressed as total and per capita amounts.
- Total revenue-supported debt obligations.
- Total lease-purchase or lease-revenue obligations.
- Historical bond election information that includes date of election, purpose and amount.

You may want to include additional pieces of data that provide context reflective of standards or conventions particular to your entity type. You may use the optional Debt Obligations Summary Form [comptroller.texas.gov/transparency/local/stars/docs/debt-summary.pdf] to complete this section.

Visualizations

Post data visualizations to your website with the following:

- Time trend for last five years showing total outstanding tax-supported and revenue-supported debt.
- Time trend for last five years showing inflation adjusted tax-supported debt per capita or per student.

You may wish to include explanations or subsets of these trends in the visualizations, or post additional visualizations that provide context reflective of standards or conventions particular to your

entity type. See the sidebar for templates you may use to complete required visualizations. The visualizations must be posted on the page itself or linked directly and must be — like all the required information on the transparency page or section — easy to view and to interpret.

Documents

Post the following documents separately from audits and annual financial reports:

- The entity's most recently submitted Local Annual Debt Report, or a document created in compliance with Local Government Code Section 140.0048. If your report has been submitted to and approved by the Comptroller's office via the Local Government reporting database you can include the link instead.
- Document containing tax rates for current fiscal year. (This information can also be posted directly to the page.)
- Link(s) to debt information in previous years' adopted budgets dating back five fiscal years.

Downloadable Data

Make the following data available for download in a spreadsheet or other machine-readable format to aid in researching your entity:

- Time trend for total outstanding tax-supported and revenue-supported debt going back at least five complete fiscal years.
- Issue-by-issue listing including principal amount of each outstanding debt obligation.

Other Information

Your transparency site should also include the following:

- Link to Bond Review Board local government debt data.
- Post a statement regarding any upcoming bond elections that includes date, purpose and amount. If there are no scheduled bond elections, please post language to that effect on the page.