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Kentucky's Ranking on Tracking Federal Recovery Spending Improved Dramatically

State moves from 47th to 2nd in National Rankings

Jeffersontown, KY - A Good Jobs First report released today finds Kentucky's ranking improved dramatically in comparison with other states in how well it tracks federal recovery spending and promotes government accountability. Kentucky's website for general recovery spending information, Kentucky at Work, ranks 2nd out of all 50 states. This is marked improvement since August 2009, when the initial report was released and Kentucky ranked 47th in the country.

"A debate about the effectiveness of recovery money continues throughout the country and within the Commonwealth. The transparency of Kentucky's website enables us to have an open and honest conversation," said Terry Brooks, executive director of Kentucky Youth Advocates. "It's clear that the recovery act has greatly helped Kentuckians. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the Recovery Act is keeping over 100,000 Kentuckians out of poverty."

The report, entitled *Show Us the Stimulus (Again): An Evaluation of State Government Recovery Act Websites*, updates a similar study released last July. The original report considered how well state websites track information about the categories of recovery spending, how spending is distributed in different parts of the state, and outlines specific projects being carried out by private contractors, including the number of jobs they create. Kentucky stands out in the report for soaring 45 places, from 47th to 2nd. While there was some change to methodology contributing to Kentucky's dramatic increase, the report cites substantial enhancements to the website as the primary reason for the rankings improvement.

The average score out of 100 is 44 and the median score is 42 in the country. Last summer, Kentucky scored 10 out of 100. In the updated report, Kentucky received a score of 85. Kentucky was also recognized for the following:

- being only one of five states providing full texts of at least some of ARRA contracts awarded
- for juxtaposing the geographic distribution of spending with patterns of economic need within the state
- for providing all five elements of details on projects funded through ARRA grants and contracts: description, dollar amount, recipient name, status, and the text of the contract or grant award.

"We are pleased to see such an improvement in Kentucky's ranking. Governor Beshear and his leadership team are to be commended for responding to the ARRA transparency challenge," said

Brooks. “However, we still have a long way to go in creating a fully accountable state government. Hopefully policymakers can work to extend this transparency to other areas of state spending like corporate tax exemptions and the whole process of creating the state’s budget, which is currently done behind closed doors.”

Kentucky’s improved website for tracking federal recovery dollars, “Kentucky at Work” can be found at <http://kentuckyatwork.ky.gov/Pages/default.aspx>. The report by Good Jobs First can be found at: <http://www.goodjobsfirst.org/pdf/ARRAwebreportjan2010.pdf>.

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Kentucky Youth Advocates is the home of Kentucky’s Tax and Budget Initiative, a member of the nationwide State Fiscal Analysis Initiative.