



## Department of the Treasury's Open Government Highlights from First Year

The Department of the Treasury continues to move forward implementing initiatives and activities from our Open Government Plan first released in 2010. Following are some of the key highlights reflecting the Department's achievements during 2010.

### **Transparency**

The Department of the Treasury strongly supports increased transparency in government and has made great strides in advancing transparency and open government principles. Treasury has particularly increased proactive disclosure of information regarding the historic economic and financial stability activities undertaken over the past several years. An unprecedented amount of data and information is being made available via a number of websites such as Treasury.gov, Data.gov, FinancialStability.gov, MakingHomeAffordable.gov, USAspending.gov, Recovery.gov, and many others. Other examples include the proactive publication of senior officials' calendars, such as for the Secretary's and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) implementation team's activities.

One visible sign of successfully moving Treasury towards a culture of transparency and openness is the transparency of the Department's activities in standing up programs created by the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010. This comprehensive financial reform legislation is of significant interest to the public, and Treasury's policies and practices underscore a commitment to implementing Dodd-Frank in an open and transparent manner. Treasury proactively discloses meetings with private sector individuals or entities and nongovernmental organizations set up for the purpose of discussing policy implementation of the Dodd-Frank Act. This disclosure policy applies to in-person meetings with employees in the Treasury Departmental Offices at the level of Deputy Assistant Secretary or higher, including Counselors to the Secretary and Special Advisors to the Secretary. Meeting disclosures are posted to the Department's FOIA reading room and include information such as: the date of the meeting, names of all covered Treasury participants, names and affiliations of all non-Treasury participants, and a list of the primary topics of conversation related to Dodd-Frank implementation.

Treasury also hosted the first of several meetings of the Financial Stability Oversight Council. As established under the Dodd-Frank Act, the Council will provide comprehensive monitoring to ensure the stability of our nation's financial system. The Council is charged with identifying threats to the financial stability of the United States; promoting market discipline; and responding to emerging risks to the stability of the United States financial system. These meetings were streamed live on the Treasury website and documents such as the Council's bylaws were posted immediately after being adopted in the meetings.

The Department's approach to improve FOIA processing efficiencies while disclosing as much information as feasible is reflected in the 29% reduction of the Department's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests backlog in FY10. Measures to increase transparency include the IRS' launch of an external, public-facing IRS.gov website, which provides avenues for the public, tax practitioners and other stakeholders to participate in the IRS decision-making process and collaborate with IRS and its partners to improve operations. The IRS is making it easy for the public to take part in Open Government by providing more meaningful and easy-to-find information about how the IRS works,

soliciting ideas to help develop effective policy, and partnering with other government agencies and private institutions. The use of social media has also expanded: IRS runs four YouTube channels with over 300 videos posted on a wide variety of topics intended to inform the public about IRS and tax laws and procedures. These videos are produced in English, Spanish, and American Sign Language, and have received well over one million views.

In December, 2010, Treasury launched the redesigned Treasury.gov website and, for the first time, an official blog, "Treasury Notes." The goal was not just to make the site look better, but also to make improvements that citizens were looking for at Treasury.gov. Treasury used feedback from site visitors, usability tests, focus groups, and website traffic logs to figure out how to better serve users. For example, site visitors noted that the old site had a wealth of raw data but that it was unintelligible to citizens looking for answers, so we created [data visualizations](#) to increase accessibility. To make the site more cost-efficient, Treasury moved the hosting structure to the "cloud," which will save taxpayer money. To expand our dialogue with the public, Treasury also integrated its accounts on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [MySpace](#), [Flickr](#) and [YouTube](#). The new Treasury.gov allows users to easily find information published by the Department and its bureaus and to learn about Treasury programs. "Treasury Notes" was created as a place where senior officials and staff throughout the Department and bureaus will post news, announcements, and information so visitors to our website can learn more about the Department and the work done at Treasury – a key step forward in an ongoing effort to enhance the way Treasury communicates and interacts with the public.

### **Participation**

Treasury continues to elicit innovative ideas for promoting openness and transparency, including the launch of a "Road Show" on open government to communicate the plan, activities, and key principles of open government to all Treasury bureaus. These sessions are being conducted at various bureaus' senior leadership team meetings. The "Road Show" was also presented at the opening session for Records and Information Management Month (RIMM) activities at the Department and was well attended by representatives from Treasury bureaus and other government agencies.

The Bureau of the Public Debt (BPD) launched an Enterprise wiki on September 30, 2010, to increase collaboration within Public Debt by providing document sharing, blogs by senior executives, and information on the Bureau's history. The Public Debt History Center keeps track of items of historical significance and allows employees to add items. A blog by BPD's Commissioner helps keep employees informed about BPD events.

BPD also launched the TreasuryDirect KIDS website in August 2010 to engage children in grades 5 through 7 on the history and role of debt in America using an interactive approach with videos, games, quizzes, poster art, and narratives. BPD enhanced the TreasuryDirect application to add entity accounts and a new "payroll savings plan" module to make it easier for individuals to purchase securities using funds from their paychecks. BPD established two Twitter accounts in late September to communicate with a broader audience - one for TreasuryDirect and one for Public Debt. A YouTube account for TreasuryDirect was set up in January 2011 to provide videos on opening an account in TreasuryDirect, Treasury Hunt, and other subjects about Treasury securities.

Other efforts to increase participation include the implementation of a series of open work sessions with various stakeholder segments and the public to share information with the public regarding their concerns and areas of interest. In this regard, representatives from the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) attended the Josephine L. Taylor Leadership Institute Conference in Seattle, Washington

(March 11 – 12, 2011), and the International Technology & Persons with Disabilities Conference in San Diego, CA, (March 14 – 19, 2011). These events provided the opportunity to learn about technologies and issues relating to the blind and visually impaired, and created a forum for public input on how to make U.S. currency more accessible to this audience. During the conference, BEP representatives listened to speakers and attended panel discussions on assistive technology solutions, accessible technology policies, innovation and outreach, accessible technologies in retail environments, and the use of social networks and apps by those who are blind and visually impaired. BEP also shared test samples of potential currency features with conference attendees, who were given the opportunity to voice their preferences and ask questions. Representatives from several government agencies participated at the conference, including Special Assistant to the President on Disability Policy Kareem Dale, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy Kathy Martinez, and representatives from the Social Security Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, Federal Communications Commission, Department of State, and the U.S. Access Board.

### **Collaboration**

Treasury conducted a number of activities throughout the year to increase collaboration with various stakeholders. On August 17, 2010, the Obama Administration held a *Conference on the Future of Housing Finance* at the Treasury Department in Washington, D.C. This event provided a forum for public input as the Administration continued its work developing a comprehensive housing finance reform proposal for delivery to Congress. During the conference, Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner and HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan moderated panel discussions with a diverse group of experts about the critical issues surrounding housing finance reform. These panelists represented a cross-section of stakeholder groups with interests in the outcome of this reform process, including citizen advocacy groups, economists, investors, market researchers, originators, securitizers, servicers, and private mortgage insurers. The conference was also webcast live at Treasury.gov.

On March 29, 2010, the U.S. Department of the Treasury, in partnership with The White House Council on Women and Girls, convened a *Women in Finance Symposium* in celebration of Women's History Month. The symposium brought together senior administration officials, private sector leaders, university presidents, and women entering the field for a series of panel discussions to recognize the contributions of women and to discuss the best means to foster success among future generations of women in the public and private finance sectors. The Administration also offered the opportunity for students around the country to engage in the symposium via webcast. In addition to providing insight about how each achieved success in the world of finance, symposium panelists answered questions submitted in advance from the next generation of women leaders. Students and young professionals could submit questions ahead of time to [WomenInFinance@do.treas.gov](mailto:WomenInFinance@do.treas.gov) and gathered for “watch parties” to see their questions answered live throughout the symposium.

Continuing a series of outreach meetings with a variety of stakeholders on financial reform, Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner hosted a roundtable discussion at the Treasury Department on March 25, 2010, to hear from military advocacy groups and Department of Defense personnel about the core consumer protection issues facing service members and their families. The group discussed how the Administration's financial reform and consumer protection priorities will benefit military families.

On September 21, 2010, Secretary Geithner and Elizabeth Warren, Assistant to the President and Special Advisor to the Treasury Secretary, hosted a Mortgage Disclosure Forum at the Department of the Treasury. This forum brought together a broad range of stakeholders and experts, including consumer advocacy groups, housing counselors, financial literacy experts, mortgage company representatives, and

other stakeholders, to seek their input on the steps that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) can take to simplify mortgage disclosure forms to provide consumers with the clear and easy-to-understand information they need to make the financial choices that are best for themselves and their families.

Treasury continues working on identifying current datasets and information to make available to the public, and possibilities for partnerships with other agencies to provide and/or create complementary datasets to help drive economic change. The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) derivatives dataset was one of the earlier Treasury datasets made available on Data.gov beginning with the 4th quarter of FY08 data. OCC recently made additional historic quarterly derivatives report information available back through 1998 in XML format. This provides the public the ability to do additional historic trend analysis of that data and is available at <http://www.occ.gov/deriv/deriv.htm>. The Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) has begun making its Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) data available on Data.gov. Bureau of the Public Debt datasets include a variety of items such as Debt Position and Activity Report, Federal Borrowings Program Reports, Interest Cost on the Debt Outstanding, and Marketable Securities and Savings Bonds, to name a few.

Treasury has also contributed datasets of value to legal professionals, researchers, the business community, as well as the general public. Datasets posted to date include IRS Written Determinations, Internal Revenue Bulletins, and IRS Actions on Decisions. Treasury's recently redesigned public website at [www.treasury.gov](http://www.treasury.gov) also includes a Data Center which offers visitors raw data, graphs, and charts on topics ranging from Treasury interest rates to the Recovery Act to the International Capital System.

### **Flagship Initiative**

Treasury has made progress on a number of activities that support our Flagship Initiative, *Moving to a Paperless Treasury*, which is designed to improve the public's experience interacting with Treasury while effecting operational efficiencies of several key Treasury activities. These activities range from disbursement and collection of select federal government payments and receipts to improving electronic tax return filing capabilities.

On September 30, 2010, the Bureau of the Public Debt (BPD) ended issuance of paper savings bonds through employer-sponsored payroll savings plans for federal employees and on December 31, 2010 for all others. Payroll savers have been encouraged to open a TreasuryDirect account through the new "Payroll Savings Plan" module to buy electronic savings bonds. BPD carried out a comprehensive public awareness campaign to raise awareness about TreasuryDirect using ads in publications, radio PSAs, online web banners and search engine marketing targeting HR and payroll administrators, federal, state and local government employees, military and labor unions, and the general public. BPD will conduct additional efforts to make investors aware of TreasuryDirect for purchasing electronic Treasury securities.

Treasury is moving forward with implementing Enterprise (Electronic) Content Management (ECM) at the Department to facilitate the use of newer collaboration technologies to support more paperless workflows and implement electronic recordkeeping capability in key areas. One such example is the development of on-line capability to file FOIA requests, which is expected to launch by May 2011.