



# CLARK COUNTY TREASURER'S OFFICE

REPORT TO CITIZENS

# 2014



## ROLE OF THE TREASURER

- Receipting & accounting of revenue
- Billing & collection of taxes
- Disbursement of funds
- Cash & Investment Management
- Debt Management

## BY THE NUMBERS

TAXES BILLED	\$534,542,855
TAX PAYMENTS	310,552
TAX PARCELS	178,447
EXCISE REVENUES	\$50,178,475
EMPLOYEES	25.75
OFFICE BUDGET 2013/2014	\$4,613,568

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## COLLABORATION IMPROVES SERVICE

At Clark County, we are identifying and implementing creative solutions to provide seamless one-stop service for our customers.

On the 2nd floor of the Clark County Public Service Center, customers will find a joint service lobby staffed by employees from the Auditor, Assessor, and Treasurer Offices. Employees are cross-trained to conduct business and process transactions for all three business units. This provides cus-

tomers with improved service, consistent information and shorter wait times in our lobby.

The cross-training program requires each lobby employee to spend up to 12 weeks working in the other two offices. Employees that have successfully completed the program have also experienced the benefits of this partnership. They feel better prepared to serve all the customers doing business at Clark County.

## PAYMENT EXPRESS LANE

If you came in to pay your property taxes on April 30 or October 31 this year, you may have seen our new checks-only express lane. Citizens that had their checks written and came prepared with their payment coupons were invited into the express lane. Most payments were processed in less than a minute. Our biggest complaint about the express lane this past year was:

*"I plugged the parking meter for an hour and I was done in less than five minutes."*

- Mr. Dan McMurry - Vancouver, WA



**WHERE DOES MY CHECK PAYMENT GO?**

When a check payment is mailed to the Treasurer, it goes through a payment processing center that is owned and operated in partnership with Clark Public Utilities. This low-cost payment service is utilized by several public agencies in both Washington

and Oregon. Reinvestment in hardware and software have allowed the center to lower costs and improve service. Checks for tax payments are scanned and transmitted to the bank for deposit. Physical checks are securely stored and shredded within ten days of first deposit.

**FRAUD PREVENTION-101**

An additional fraud prevention service was implemented for the County and taxing districts. Positive Pay service, an industry best practice, requires an issuance file containing the check number, payment date, amount, and payee name (for Payee service) to be transmitted to the bank when checks are issued and are matched against this information as they clear. Unmatched items default to return as fraud unless approved to pay.



Manage and pay property taxes



Find your tax statement



Research your property



Change your address

**ONLINE SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS**

In 2014, there were 14,400 payments for \$24.3 million dollars made through a variety of online payment channels, such as the Treasurer's web page, electronic billing, and bank bill payer services. Compared to 2013, this year

represents a 31% increase in transactions and 35% increase in dollars. We used commonly asked questions and feedback to redesign our website making it easier for citizens to conduct business online.

Visit us online at:

[www.clark.wa.gov/treasurer](http://www.clark.wa.gov/treasurer)

**Q&A CORNER — TAX FORECLOSURE AUCTIONS**

The Clark County Treasurer is required by state law to foreclose on properties in which taxes are a full three years delinquent, regardless of their usability. The County Treasurer conducts a tax foreclosure auction annually in February, which was held online for the first time in 2014. Here are a few commonly asked questions:

**Q:** What message would you like to share with property owners?

**A:** Get an early start, don't wait until the foreclosure process starts in order to avoid foreclosure. Contact us to review all possible options.

**Q:** What is your primary focus with foreclosure?

**A:** To work to avoid foreclosure if at all possible.

**Q:** What services and options might be available for property owners with delinquent taxes owing?

**A:** There are programs and options available to help property owners:

- Exemption or deferral for senior and disabled citizens
- Request your mortgage lender to make payment
- Request a payment plan

**Q:** The County conducted its first online foreclosure auction in 2014. How did that go?

**A:** Very well. The online auction allowed for more active bidding which resulted in a higher sales price for the foreclosed owner.

**Q:** Any advice for someone hoping to bid on a foreclosed tax parcel?

**A:** It's important to do your homework, and research the tax parcel you intend to bid on. Parcels are sold "as-is".

For more information on tax foreclosure sales, visit us at:

<http://www.clark.wa.gov/treasurer/salesinfo.html>



Public funds are managed with a focus on **safety**. Activities ranging from tax collection to managing debt and investments are performed, reconciled, and reported according to state law. With over \$5 billion dollars flowing in and out of the County's bank accounts annually, cash is balanced and reconciled daily.

**YOUR TAX DOLLARS**

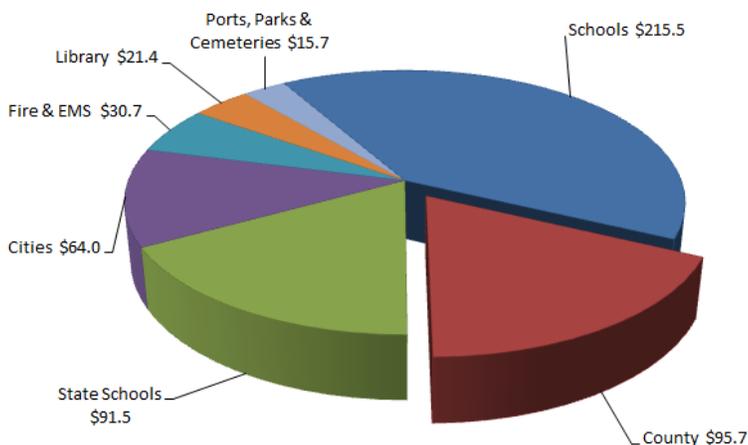
**\$534.5 MILLION** in local property taxes were billed by the Treasurer's Office in 2014 to nearly 180,000 accounts. Tax payments are distributed to 62 unique accounts that are invested, disbursed, or earmarked to pay for debt issued by the County and other taxing districts. The collection rate was 98.6 percent of current taxes billed.

**FAST FACT**

**98.6 %**

Percent of current taxes collected

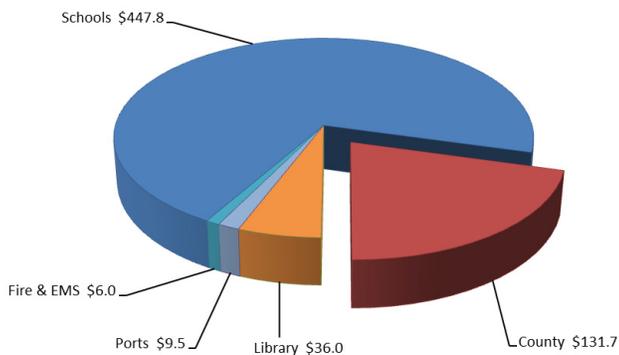
**TAXES BY DISTRICT  
(IN MILLIONS)**



**OUTSTANDING DEBT ISSUED**

**\$631 MILLION** is the amount of debt outstanding for Clark County plus fifteen districts it serves. Debt is issued to finance infrastructure needs such as to build new schools, refurbish existing ones, update school grounds, acquire new equipment such as fire trucks and other transportation-related projects to name just a few.

**DEBT BY DISTRICT  
(IN MILLIONS)**



**TOP 5 DEBT ISSUERS  
(IN MILLIONS)**

Evergreen School District	\$ 158.7
Clark County, WA	\$ 131.7
Camas School District	\$ 95.2
Vancouver School District	\$ 68.7
Battle Ground School District	\$ 52.1

**INVESTING PUBLIC FUNDS**

**\$531.3 MILLION** was the average monthly balance of Clark County's investment pool. The pool generated nearly \$2.5 million in interest during the year, earning \$1.9 million more than if invested solely in the Washington State Local Government Pool. The Treasurer invests public funds focused predominantly on the **Safety** of the principal, then on **Liquidity** (the ability for participants to access and withdraw funds), and finally on the **Return** on the investments.

**FAST FACT**

**\$ 2.5 M**

Investment interest earned in 2014

**INTEGRITY - ACCURACY - RELIABILITY - ACCOUNTABILITY****THE PLAN**

Each year the Treasurer's Office reviews its strategic plan to enhance core business functions by identifying opportunities to add value, eliminate waste, and improve customer service. The following projects are scheduled for 2015:

- Point of Sale – RFP\* issuance and vendor selection
- Banking Services – RFP\* issuance and vendor selection
- Electronic billing presentation and payments
- Electronic excise tax automation

\* Request for proposal (RFP) is a formal process to solicit proposals from vendors to provide the services requested.

**CORRECTION TO 2013 REPORT**

Vancouver City Treasurer James P. Goeghegan was incorrectly listed as the County Treasurer from 1912-1913. W.R. Fletcher was County Treasurer from 1911-1914. To learn more about the history of Clark County treasurers go to:

[http://www.clark.wa.gov/treasurer/documents/HISTORYOFCLARKCOUNTYTREASURER\\_April7.pdf](http://www.clark.wa.gov/treasurer/documents/HISTORYOFCLARKCOUNTYTREASURER_April7.pdf)

**ABOUT THIS REPORT**

This report was developed under Advancing Government Accountability (AGA) guidelines to provide meaningful and understandable information about the financial condition and performance of the government to its citizens.

Visit AGA on the web

[www.agacgfm.org](http://www.agacgfm.org)

**OUR MISSION**

The Clark County Treasurer's Office is committed to ensuring effective treasury management of the public's resources by mutually respecting the needs of each of its customers.

**THE GOALS**

- Continue responsible stewardship of public funds
- Enhance customer experience, forming partnerships, fostering an engaged and informed community
- Make the Treasurer's Office a great place to work
- Continually review and identify operational improvements and efficiencies
- Continue to leverage diversity within our workgroup



*"Treasury professionals from Office Workers Local 11 are part of the team that helped produce this report and are instrumental in providing excellence in treasury services for the citizens of Clark County"*

- Doug Lasher - County Treasurer

**CONTACT US**

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