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## Gov't spending database: Westchester top county spender in state

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ALBANY - Westchester County spends more than any other large county in the state on a per-person basis, and Rochester the most of any large city outside New York City, according to a report released today.

The findings are part of a new "benchmarking" database compiled by a business group and a conservative think tank that allows the public to see what the tax and spending rates are of where they live, and to compare them with other counties, cities, towns and villages.

"We created this as a tool for citizens to ask questions," said E.J. McMahon of the Empire Center for New York State Policy, a conservative think tank.

The head of the state Business Council said the database could force more efficiencies in government, as citizens see how their communities compare with others.

"This information will give people a better handle on value" they get for their taxes, said Kenneth Adams. He said the figures might suggest service consolidations or other ways to save money, and also noted that property taxes in the state are 79 percent above the national average.

Among the findings from such comparisons:

— Westchester had the highest spending per capita (\$2,479), but was not the leader in per-capita taxes, where Nassau County came out on top at \$1,150.

— While Rochester had the highest per-capita spending of the large cities, \$2,141, Albany had the highest per-capita tax burden (\$1,131) and Buffalo the highest effective tax rate (1.54 percent of property value.)

The numbers are all from 2007 and were compiled initially by Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, who praised the new database.

"The more New Yorkers know about how their government works, the better and more accountable their government will be," he said.

The data doesn't include education spending, which the groups hope to add within a few weeks.

**The information is available** at [www.seethroughny.net](http://www.seethroughny.net). Click the "benchmarks".