



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Launch of 114 Local Government Sites on OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

COLUMBUS – Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel stood today with leaders representing Ohio cities, schools, townships and other entities and announced the launch of 114 local government spending sites on OhioCheckbook.com. Last year, Treasurer Mandel launched OhioCheckbook.com, which sets a new national standard for government transparency and for the first time in Ohio history puts all state spending information on the internet. OhioCheckbook.com recently earned Ohio the number one ranking in the country for government transparency.

Treasurer Mandel was joined at today's announcement by dozens of local government leaders from across Ohio who have partnered with the Treasurer's office to post their spending information online. These local governments and school districts are among the first wave to launch their checkbooks live on OhioCheckbook.com.

These local government and school district checkbook sites include more than 6 million individual checks that equate to more than \$14.2 billion worth of total spending.

"I believe the people of Ohio have a right to know how their tax money is being spent at the state and local level," said Treasurer Mandel. "By partnering and posting local government checkbooks on OhioCheckbook.com, taxpayers across Ohio are empowered with a powerful tool to hold public officials accountable within their communities."

"OhioCheckbook.com is the most important transparency initiative in Ohio since the public records act," Ohio Auditor Dave Yost said. "Today's announcement is putting the meat on the bones."

"I believe increased transparency in government promotes accountability and efficiency, and helps build and maintain the public's trust in our work," stated State Representative Kevin Boyce. "This new online resource will help show citizens across the state that their local municipalities are using their taxpayer dollars in a way that matches their goals and priorities."

On April 7th, Treasurer Mandel sent a letter to 18,062 local government and school officials representing 3,962 local governments throughout the state calling on them to place their checkbook level data on OhioCheckbook.com and extending an invitation to partner with his office at no cost to local governments. These local governments include cities, counties, townships, schools, library districts and other special districts.

A large coalition of statewide and local government organizations have expressed support for OhioCheckbook.com and local government transparency, including:

Ohio Municipal League
Ohio Township Association

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Ohio Association of School Business Officials
Buckeye Association of School Administrators
County Commissioner Association of Ohio
County Auditor Association of Ohio
Ohio Newspaper Association
Ohio Society of CPAs
Buckeye Institute
Common Cause Ohio

OhioCheckbook.com was launched on December 2, 2014, marking the first time in Ohio history when citizens could actually see every expenditure in state government. Since its launch, OhioCheckbook.com has received overwhelming support from newspapers and groups across the state and, as of September 23, 2015 there have been more than 325,000 total searches on the site.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$473 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 130 million transactions. The website includes cutting-edge features such as:

- “Google-style” contextual search capabilities, to allow users to sort by keyword, department, category or vendor;
- Fully dynamic interactive charts to drill down on state spending;
- Functionality to compare state spending year-over-year or among agencies; and,
- Capability to share charts or checks with social media networks, and direct contact for agency fiscal offices.

In March, the U.S. Public Interest Research Group (U.S. PIRG) released their annual “Following the Money 2015” report and Treasurer Mandel earned Ohio the number one transparency ranking in the country for providing online access to government spending data. Ohio was prominently featured in the report after climbing from 46th to 1st in spending transparency as a result of Treasurer Mandel’s release of OhioCheckbook.com. Due to the launch of OhioCheckbook.com, Ohio received a perfect score of 100 points this year – the highest score in the history of the U.S. PIRG transparency rankings.

The Treasurer’s office is partnering with OpenGov, a leading Silicon Valley government technology company, to provide residents of Ohio the ability to view and search local government expenditures in a user-friendly, digital format. “Ohio is setting the standard for financial transparency on an unprecedented scale. We are excited to partner with the Treasurer’s office to bring world-class technology to communities large and small across the state,” said Zachary Bookman, CEO of OpenGov.

For more information or to view your local government website, visit the Local Government option on OhioCheckbook.com.

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