



# JOSH MANDEL

## STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 410 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

COLUMBUS &ndash; Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel today announced the launch of the Village of Bethel checkbook 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.

With this launch, taxpayers in Bethel are now able to view over 5,000 transactions that equal to more than \$4.9 million of total spending over the past fiscal year. The Village of Bethel is the fourth local government in Clermont County to partner with the Treasurer's office to post their spending online on OhioCheckbook.com.

"I believe the people of Bethel have a right to know how their tax money is being spent and I applaud local leaders here for partnering with the Treasurer's office to post their finances on OhioCheckbook.com," said Treasurer Mandel. "By partnering and posting local government checkbooks, taxpayers across Ohio are empowered with a powerful tool to hold public officials accountable within their communities."

"I am very excited," said Village of Bethel Mayor Alan Ausman. "This is another step toward transparency in our village. This online checkbook platform provides a perfect outlet, through which, to communicate to the village's taxpayers about how their money is being spent and that we have nothing to hide."

"The information available on the OhioCheckbook.com site will be able to assist the village with public records requests, allowing the village to direct some requests to the site and fulfill the record request without additional time and expense incurred by the village," said Village of Bethel Fiscal Officer Bill Gilpin.

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  
Ohio Association of School Business Officials

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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 December 7, 2015 there have been more than 401,000 total searches on the site.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$490 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 134 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 &ndash; 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 or click on Bethel.OhioCheckbook.com.

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