



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

BEXLEY & Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel stood today with City of Bexley officials and announced the launch of the City of Bexley 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.

Treasurer Mandel was joined at today's announcement by City of Bexley Mayor Ben Kessler and Finance Director Beecher Hale. With this launch, taxpayers in Bexley are now able to view over 18,000 individual checks representing more than \$25 million of total spending over the past fiscal year.

"I believe the people of Bexley 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."

"Bexley is excited to partner with Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel and his office in providing this tool to our residents," said City of Bexley Mayor Ben Kessler. "We're constantly looking for innovative ways to provide better and fuller information in a transparent way, and OhioCheckbook.com is an excellent tool for providing detailed financial information on the web in an intuitive and accessible format."

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
Buckeye Association of School Administrators
County Commissioner Association of Ohio
County Auditor Association of Ohio

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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 – 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 Bexley.OhioCheckbook.com.

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