



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 910 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

PARMA – Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel announced today the launch of the City of Parma's online checkbook on OhioCheckbook.com. In December 2014, 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 government transparency ranking in the country for a second year in a row.

Treasurer Mandel was joined at today's announcement by City of Parma Auditor Brian Day. Parma is the third city in Cuyahoga County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com.

Parma's online checkbook includes over 177,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$346 million of total spending over the past five years.

"I believe the people of Parma have a right to know how their tax money is being spent, and I applaud local leaders here for partnering with my office to post the finances on OhioCheckbook.com," said Treasurer Mandel. "By posting local government spending online, we are empowering taxpayers across Ohio to hold public officials accountable."

"Anytime the government can be more transparent to its taxpayers is positive for both the taxpayers and the government," said Parma Auditor Brian Day. "I appreciate the State Treasurer's Office for making this tool available and I'm pleased to partner with them in this endeavor."

"Auditor Day's work on this project with the Treasurer of State's office is a continuation of his efforts to make the city's finances as transparent as possible for our taxpayers," said Parma Mayor Tim DeGeeter. "I support and applaud this endeavor on behalf of our residents."

On April 7, 2015 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

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Ohio Township Association
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 October 11, 2016 there have been more than 642,000 total searches on the site.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$540 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 148 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 2015, 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.

In April 2016, U.S. PIRG announced that Treasurer Mandel earned Ohio the number one government transparency ranking in the country for the second consecutive year in a row. Due to the launch of OhioCheckbook.com, Ohio again received the highest perfect score of 100 points this year – marking the second time in two years Ohio received the highest possible 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.

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

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