



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency as Local Governments and Schools Shine Sunlight on Spending with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

COLUMBUS – Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel announced today that over 1,000 local government and schools have partnered with the Treasurer's office to post their checkbook-level spending information on OhioCheckbook.com. Treasurer Mandel made the announcement at a meeting of the Ohio National Federation of Independent Business today in Columbus where he was joined by Marion City Schools Treasurer Veronica Rinehart.

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 earned Ohio the number one government transparency ranking in the country for the second year in a row.

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 extended 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.

Since that invitation, over 1,000 local governments and schools across Ohio have joined Treasurer Mandel's movement for greater transparency by committing to post their spending information online. This includes local governments and schools in all 88 counties in Ohio, from large counties to small villages, and everything in between.

Bringing the total number to over 1,000 were the launches today of Berlin Township (Delaware County), Berkshire Township (Delaware County), Concord Township (Delaware County), Oxford Township (Delaware County), the Village of Morral (Marion County) and Marion City Schools' (Marion County) online checkbooks on OhioCheckbook.com.

"I believe the people of Ohio have a right to know how their tax money is being spent, and I applaud local leaders 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."

"Small businesses support and appreciate the work that the Treasurer's office has done to promote transparency in government spending," said Roger Geiger, Vice President and Ohio Executive Director for NFIB. "The NFIB applauds those local governments who have opened their books to the public and encourages others to join this effort."

"Marion City Schools is proud to join OhioCheckbook.com," said Treasurer Veronica Reinhart. "A goal of the district is to be as transparent as possible to our taxpayers. By displaying our spending information in this new and exciting format, it is one more method of accomplishing that goal. Thank you to the Treasurer's office for providing this innovative tool for free!"

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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
- 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 January 10, 2017 there have been more than 690,000 total searches on the site.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$564 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 153 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.

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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 visit OhioCheckbook.com.

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