



# JOSH MANDEL

## STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 490 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

CHARDON &dash; Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel announced today the launch of the City of Chardon and Chester Township online checkbooks 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 ranking in the country for government transparency.

The Ohio Treasurer's office was joined at today's announcement by Chardon Mayor Nancy McArthur, City Manager Randy Sharpe, Vice President of Chardon City Council Jeff Smok, Finance Director Mate Rogonjic and Chester Township Fiscal Officer Craig Richter. The City of Chardon and Chester Township are the third and fourth local governments in Geauga County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com.

The following is a breakdown of today's local government sites:

Chardon's online checkbook includes over 24,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$15 million of total spending over Fiscal Year 2015.

Chester Township's online checkbook includes over 19,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$15 million of total spending over the past three years.

"I believe the people of Geauga County 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."

"The City of Chardon is proud to partner with the Ohio Treasurer's office on OhioCheckbook.com to take our transparency to another level," said Chardon City Manager Randy Sharpe. "The site provides information in an easily navigated format that will help our citizens know where their tax dollars are being spent. This initiative is a great avenue to improve public trust and allows citizens to see the good job their officials are doing in managing taxpayer dollars."

"I am committed, along with the Trustees, in creating an environment of openness and transparency in our Township," said Chester Township Fiscal Officer Craig Richter. "We believe that by posting the Chester Townships finances on OhioCheckbook.com it will help lead to increased public trust and public participation. If the public is engaged it should lead to a more effective government and better decisions. Also, OhioCheckbook.com gets this financial information out to the community at no direct cost to the Township showing the taxpayers that we are sound fiscal stewards of their hard-earned dollars. I encourage other Fiscal Officers throughout Geauga County and Ohio to participate in this easy to implement transparency program."

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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
- 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 February 2, 2016 there have been more than 451,000 total searches on the site.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$506 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 137 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.

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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 or to view your local government website, visit the Local Government option on [OhioCheckbook.com](http://OhioCheckbook.com) or click on:

[Chardon.OhioCheckbook.com](http://Chardon.OhioCheckbook.com);  
[ChesterTownshipGeauga.OhioCheckbook.com](http://ChesterTownshipGeauga.OhioCheckbook.com).

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