



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

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By Bowdeya Tweh
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The city of Cincinnati has joined a statewide online network that shares information about government spending.

Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel and City Councilwoman Amy Murray said Tuesday that the city joined OhioCheckbook.com.

Mandel launched OhioCheckbook.com in December 2014 and since that time, the state has reached out to the 3,962 local governments and school districts to share information about their expenditures online. So far, 738 cities, counties, townships, schools, library districts and other special districts have signed up. Mandel said more are joining in the next few months.

Cincinnati is the second city in Hamilton County to post its spending on OhioCheckbook.com. Cincinnati's online checkbook includes more than 232,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$1.3 billion of total spending over the past 12 years.

"I believe the people of Cincinnati 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," Mandel said. "By posting local government spending online, we are empowering taxpayers across Ohio to hold public officials accountable."

Murray said City Council approved a motion in 2015 to push the city's administration to study how it could be a partner with OhioCheckbook.com.

"This is a powerful tool for Cincinnati's taxpayers," she said.

The site offers users the ability to search for information by keyword, department, category or vendor, interactive charts, and the ability to share charts or checks with social media networks as well as contact information for agency fiscal officials.

OhioCheckbook.com has gained support from a wide range of groups such as the Ohio Municipal League, Ohio Township Association, Ohio Newspaper Association, Buckeye Institute and Common Cause Ohio.

Southwest Ohio entities that have signed on include Butler, Clermont, Hamilton and Warren counties; the cities of Hamilton, Milford and Woodlawn; Colerain and Fairfield townships; and the Lockland and Norwood school districts. Miami University soon will be part of a pilot program among five state universities. A full list of local governments and school districts using the platform can be found here.

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30 EAST BROAD STREET · 9TH FLOOR · COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215
PHONE: (614) 466-2160 · WWW.OHIOTREASURER.GOV · FAX: (614) 644-7313