



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

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By Jackie Borchart
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COLUMBUS, Ohio -- Townships, libraries and other smaller Ohio governments now can make their spending publicly available online with the click of a button.

The more than 1,900 entities that use the state's Uniform Accounting Network can log into their online account and opt in to OhioCheckbook.com, a database of state and local government spending housed in Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel's office. About 400 local governments have signed on to the database since last year.

The small governments won't have to pay for the service. Ohio Auditor Dave Yost, whose office operates the accounting network, said Thursday that his staff members will transmit annual data on behalf of governments that opt in.

Mandel intends to expand a program that put the state government's checkbook online to include all local governments, allowing residents to see how their communities and schools are spending money with just a few clicks.

"If you're not on the treasurer's checkbook at this point, you really need to be able to tell your voters and taxpayers why not because there's really no good reason," Yost said at a Thursday news conference with Mandel.

Mandel said another 376 entities are moving their data to the database and the partnership with Yost's office will speed up the process.

"Now it's like flipping a switch," Mandel said.

OhioCheckbook.com launched in December 2014 with seven years of state agency expenditures. Mandel's office opened the database to cities, counties, school districts and other local government entities in April 2015.

The checkbook cost about \$814,000 to set up, and Mandel's office requested \$1.3 million to offer the service to local governments. The actual annual cost will depend on the number and size of the entities that sign up.

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