



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 825 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

WILLIAMSBURG – Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel announced today the launch of the Williamsburg Local School District and the Washington 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 government transparency ranking in the country for a second year in a row.

The Ohio Treasurer's office was joined at the announcement by Williamsburg Local Schools Superintendent Matt Earley, Board of Education Members Charlie Maklem and Greg Wells, and Treasurer Julie Kamphaus.

Williamsburg Local Schools is the first school district in Clermont County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com, and Washington Township is the sixth township in Clermont County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com.

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

Williamsburg Local Schools' online checkbook includes over 14,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$12 million of total spending over the past year.

Washington Township's online checkbook includes over 14,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$8.8 million of total spending over the past four years.

"I believe the people of Clermont 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."

"Our district takes pride in serving the students and families of Williamsburg," said Superintendent Matt Earley. "Part of our service to this district, is to efficiently and effectively use taxpayer dollars that our community has entrusted us with and to make sure those dollars are spent on great experiences for students. As a resident, parent, taxpayer, and Superintendent, I am proud that we are the first district in Clermont County to participate in Ohio Checkbook and I encourage our stakeholders to look at how we are spending our dollars in support of our first-class school district!"

"Williamsburg Schools are thrilled to participate in OhioCheckbook.com," said Board of Education President Greg Wells.

"Transparency and accountability are core values of our organization. The people of Williamsburg work hard for a living, so we welcome the opportunity to open the books and let our community see how the school district squeezes value out of every dollar entrusted to us."

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"Williamsburg Local Schools are proud to be working with Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel on his highly regarded OhioCheckbook.com initiative," said Treasurer Julie Kamphaus. "We appreciate the no cost platform to provide true transparency in public finance to our taxpayers."

"The Washington Township Board of Trustees is pleased to announce their participation in the OhioCheckbook.com," said Fiscal Officer Sheila G. Dufau on behalf of the Township. "The program will enable the Board to make township financial records more readily available to the residents of Washington Township as well as the general public. We would like to encourage our residents to utilize this valuable resource."

"The ability to see what's taken place (financially) takes away any question about improprieties or fiscal responsibility," said State Representative Doug Green.

"Thanks to the Internet, we are used to accessing information instantaneously," said State Senator Joe Uecker. "I am proud to see that Washington Township and Williamsburg Local School are participating in OhioCheckbook.com and hope that everyone will take advantage of this resource to help gain a better understanding as to where tax dollars are being spent."

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 September 13, 2016 there have been more than 620,000 total searches on

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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.

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

WilliamsburgLocalSchools.OhioCheckbook.com;
WashingtonTownshipClermont.OhioCheckbook.com.

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