



# JOSH MANDEL

## STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Willoughby News Herald  
Editorial  
December 18, 2015

OhioCheckbook.com has added numerous entries from cities, townships and school districts since it was launched a little more than a year ago by Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel.

There are currently 149 local government entities with information live on the website, and as of Dec. 10, 421 local governments have committed to partnering with OhioCheckbook.com, according to information from the state Treasurer's Office

Last week, OhioCheckbook.com — the online, publicly accessible checkbook that's maintained by the state Treasurer's Office — began to bulge a bit more after welcoming a handful of new government entities from Lake County.

Mandel visited The News-Herald on Dec. 14 to announce that Perry Township, Painesville Township, and the Perry, Mentor and Riverside school districts all placed their financial data onto OhioCheckbook.com.

In addition, the Kirtland and Fairport Harbor schools districts announced intentions to put their finances on the site.

Mentor, Perry and Riverside are the first three school districts in Lake County to go live on OhioCheckbook.com. Painesville Township and Perry Township are the first townships in Lake County to go live. The city of Eastlake began posting its financial information earlier this year.

We believe all of these local government entities have made a sound decision to place their individual checkbooks on OhioCheckbook.com.

It's a move that demonstrates their commitment to giving residents a convenient way of seeing how their tax dollars are being spent.

That convenience stems from the fact that any resident with a personal computer and an Internet connection can take an in-depth look at a local government entity's finances by visiting OhioCheckbook.com. Having this kind of easy access will benefit taxpayers who might otherwise have been intimidated or discouraged by the need to visit a government office or call an elected official to request financial records.

The website also provides user-friendly features that allow visitors to sort government financial data by keyword, titles of funds, accounts and budget units, and vendors.

In addition, OhioCheckbook.com offers visitors the means to share charts or copies of checks through social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter, and provides a method of emailing questions to a participating agency's fiscal office.

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



# JOSH MANDEL

## STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

"My ultimate vision here is to create an army of citizen watchdogs who have the power to hold public officials accountable," Mandel said on Dec. 14 at The News-Herald.

OhioCheckbook.com initially started with finance information from the state budget, but has since partnered with local government entities across the state to provide their finance information as well.

Another attractive feature of OhioCheckbook.com for local governments is the cost to participate: It's free. The program is funded by the state Treasurer's Office.

The initial cost to launch the site was \$814,000, Mandel said. The ongoing cost will be determined by how many local governments sign on along the way, but Mandel did not give an estimated dollar amount.

"The legislators already gave us permission to sign up as many as we can," he said. "Over the past five years, I've voluntarily cut my budget every year in office, so we've saved about \$6 million from voluntarily cutting our budget, so we're using a portion of those cost savings to pay for this."

One local government entity that Mandel is still seeking to add to OhioCheckbook.com is Lake County.

"We have cities, school districts and townships throughout Lake County that are showing leadership in regard to transparency, and it's about time the Lake County officials do the same thing," Mandel said on Dec. 14.

Lake County Auditor Edward Zupancic said they are looking into whether or not to partner with the site. He said they've received some information from the state Treasurer's Office and have been getting periodic updates from them as well. He said he would like to know what kind of costs are involved and how much work is involved with providing the information. Zupancic knows that some counties have recently gone online with their finances and he would like to see what kind of experience they have had.

We're sure that Mandel would be glad to provide Lake County officials with answers to their specific questions about OhioCheckbook.com, as well as connect these leaders with officials from the nine counties in Ohio that already have posted their financial data on the website.

Hopefully Lake County and other local cities, townships and school districts will follow the lead of the area government entities who already have signed on to OhioCheckbook.com. By posting financial information on the website, local government entities can go the extra mile to prove that they are good stewards of taxpayers' money.

####