



# JOSH MANDEL

## STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 600 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

SEAMAN &ndash; Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel announced today the launch of the Scott Township, Franklin Township, Meigs Township, Winchester Township and Bratton 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 Scott Township Fiscal Officer Charles Newman, Scott Township Trustees Samuel Bolender, Homer Holsted and Marty Sonner, and Franklin Township Fiscal Officer Diane Ward.

Scott Township, Franklin Township, Meigs Township, Winchester Township and Bratton Township are the first local governments in Adams County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com.

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

Scott Township's online checkbook includes over 2,400 individual transactions that represent more than \$800,000 of total spending over the past three years.

Franklin Township's online checkbook includes over 1,500 individual transactions that represent more than \$740,000 of total spending over the past three years.

Meigs Township's online checkbook includes over 1,900 individual transactions that represent more than \$1 million of total spending over the past three years.

Winchester Township's online checkbook includes over 2,300 individual transactions that represent more than \$700,000 of total spending over the past three years.

Bratton Township's online checkbook includes over 1,200 individual transactions that represent more than \$500,000 of total spending over the past three years.

"I believe the people of Adams 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 Elected Officials in Scott Township are proud to partner with the Treasurer of State's office and participate in the OhioCheckbook.com transparency website," said Scott Township Fiscal Officer Charles Newman. "We are always happy to share public financial information with the tax paying citizens of Adams County. This program will allow easier access to financial records for anyone who desires to see how their tax dollars are being received and how they are spent."

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"I really believe this information belongs to the people," said Franklin Township Fiscal Officer Diane Ward. "I say let the sunshine in by opening the books and putting the information online. I really do want to be open and upfront with the taxpayers who trust us to spend their money wisely."

"Adopting OhioCheckbook.com in the township simplifies the measures we should be taking as government officials to be transparent," said Meigs Township Fiscal Officer Carla Wesley. "To me, this is an important voluntary step in honoring the current mandates that hold government accountable."

"This is public information and we wanted people to be able to easily access it," said Winchester Township Fiscal Officer Rae Jean Maddox.

"OhioCheckbook.com provides ease of information to the public," said Bratton Township Fiscal Officer Angela McCoy. "I already take time to report this information to the state. Why not in turn make it available to the people I am dedicated to serve as an official of the township?"

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 March 21, 2016 there have been more than 486,000 total searches on the site.

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OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$512 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 139 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 &ndash; the highest 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:

- ScottTownshipAdams.OhioCheckbook.com;
- FranklinTownshipAdams.OhioCheckbook.com;
- MeigsTownshipAdams.OhioCheckbook.com;
- WinchesterTownshipAdams.OhioCheckbook.com;
- BrattonTownshipAdams.OhioCheckbook.com.

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