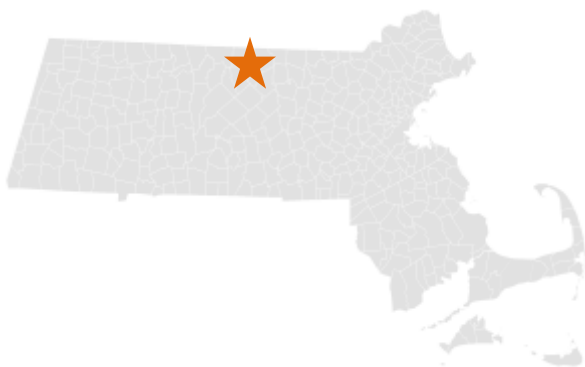


CITY OF GARDNER

TRANSPARENCY BEST PRACTICE | APRIL 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Gardner, Massachusetts adopted the Transparency best practice as part of a Community Compact agreement signed with the Baker-Polito Administration in June of 2015. The City developed a comprehensive Transparency section on their website – which now contains numerous City documents, including bid results, election results, financial reports, and public meeting records – along with the deployment of an instance of OpenCheck, an open checkbook solution which allows residents to see the City’s financial expenditure information for the current fiscal year and historical years.



COMMUNITY PROFILE

The City of Gardner is located in the north-central part of Massachusetts in Worcester County. Gardner - known as “The Chair City” - at one point was home to ten factories producing 4 million chains per year. Today, Gardner is home to Mount Wachusett Community College along with two state parks and a wildlife sanctuary.

Population is 20,228 residents*
Annual Budget is \$62.2M (FY 2017)
Median Household Income is \$37,334*

**As of 2010 census*

In partnership with:





THE CHALLENGE

Transparency allows for trust in local government. As municipalities around the Commonwealth try to stretch every dollar further, transparency around that spending has become even more important in building trust.

THE SOLUTION

In 2015, Gardner became the second city in Massachusetts to sign a Community Compact and the first to choose the Transparency best practice. The City has chosen to be proactive by adopting this best practice while sharing many documents and providing an open checkbook tool, with a stated goal of a “one-stop location” for information about city business.

THE RESULTS

Gardner’s transparency portal pledges “clear and honest communication” and backs this statement up with the proactive publication of numerous city records along with the Open Check platform. Spending is broken down by fiscal year and department type. Searches can be run by vendor name and by time period. It allows a resident to understand where funds are going, when they are being spent, and what they are being spent on. It’s a helpful way to understand city finances and is a vehicle by which Gardner’s government can break down costs.

GARDNER OPEN CHECK

Fiscal Year: 2017 [X] [Clear Filters]

Category: General Government [X] Department: Select a Department

Start Date: End Date:

Vendor: Select a Vendor Description: Select a Description

Spending by Department (Total: \$575,254.92)

Department	Vendor	Description	Date	Amount	Check Number
City Treasurer	W.b. Mason Company Inc.	Office Supplies	Mar 30, 2017	199.96	1642
Mayor	Gardner Square Two, Inc.	Professional Dev & Travel	Mar 30, 2017	100.00	205318
Cable Commission	Verizon	Telecommunications	Mar 30, 2017	74.87	205286

Source: Gardner Open Checkbook - <http://gardner.opencheck.net> and <http://www.gardner-ma.gov/446/Transparency>

“Furthering transparency in government is crucial to an informed and engaged citizenry.”

-Mark P. Hawke, Mayor of Gardner