



Texas Taxpayer Tools 2023: Government Debt

To preserve our independence, we must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt. ~ Thomas Jefferson

How much has my city borrowed? How does my county's debt compare? Which bonds passed and which ones failed? Questions like these can be difficult to answer if you don't know where to begin or what to look for. Fortunately, the Texas Public Policy Foundation has catalogued some of the state's most prominent online transparency tools to help Texans get educated and engaged. By learning to use these tools effectively, Texans can develop a better understanding of their local governments' appetite for public debt, both in the past and into the future. Below are four easy-to-use tools that Texans can use to *look* at how much governmental entities owe, *learn* about broader borrowing trends, *compare* debt trends among different governments, and *review* past and future bond elections in your area and beyond. Plus, learn whom to *ask* for answers to any debt-related questions.



LOOK: [Bond Review Board's Database Search](#)

This searchable database allows Texans to find out how much a particular local governmental entity owes in principal, in interest, and in total. This information is available for cities, counties, school districts, and special districts from fiscal years 2013 through 2022. This tool also enables interested parties to learn key details about specific issuances, like maturity dates and the source of revenue pledged.

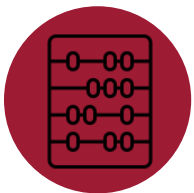
Link: https://debtsearch.brb.texas.gov/local_debt_search.aspx



LEARN: [Bond Review Board's Data Center](#)

This comprehensive debt database tracks state and local government borrowing in Texas. The information showcased on this website covers debt issued by state agencies and institutions of higher education as well as cities, counties, school districts, and special districts. A wide range of aggregate and per capita measures are available as well as comparative data.

Link: <https://data.brb.texas.gov/>



COMPARE: [Texas Comptroller's Debt-at-a-Glance](#)

This user-friendly tool lets Texans explore fiscal trends in state and local governments as well as see comparative data among similarly sized peers. With this tool, interested parties can learn about population growth, general obligation (GO) bonds, certificates of obligation (COs), tax rates, and authorized but unissued debt. The data available for all jurisdictions spans from 2011 to 2020.

Link: <https://comptroller.texas.gov/transparency/local/debt/texas.php>



REVIEW: [Bond Review Board's Bond Election Database](#)

The Bond Review Board's bond election website compiles high-level information on past and future debt propositions pitched all around the state. It includes important information that identifies which entities are asking for more public debt, in what amount, and for what purpose.

Link: https://debtsearch.brb.texas.gov/bond_elections_search.aspx



ASK: [Bond Review Board's Public Information Act Team](#)

Do you have a debt-related question, but don't know which document to review or even who to ask for an answer? Try sending an email to the Bond Review Board's public information act team requesting data or documents that already exist. Even if they don't have the requested information, their helpful team can very often point you in the direction where it can be found. Email: openrecords@brb.texas.gov