



Texas Taxpayer Tools: Government Debt

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

What does my city owe? How does my county compare? Which bond propositions did Texas voters approve?

These questions might seem daunting, but answering them is actually easier than you think! Texans have a variety of online transparency tools made available to them through various state agencies, like the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts and the Bond Review Board (BRB). By using these tools effectively, Texas taxpayers can get a firm grasp on government debt and hold their elected officials accountable.

Below are four easy-to-use tools that Texans can use to find out how much their state and local governments owe, compare their governments to others like it, review the results of the last few election cycles, and stay informed on key data and measures.



FIND: [Texas Bond Review Board's Searchable Debt Database](#)

The BRB's searchable debt database gives taxpayers insight into how much money is owed by their state, city, county, school district, and special districts. The database provides 10 years' worth of data and includes informational items like outstanding principal, interest, and total repayment.

Link: http://www.brb.state.tx.us/local_debt_search.aspx



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

This tool provides a wealth of information on state and local governments, including population growth in the area, debt trends, tax rates, and annual financial reports. It also compares the entity's tax-supported debt levels with other similarly sized governments.

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



REVIEW: [Texas Comptroller's Bond Election Round-Up](#)

The Texas Comptroller'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://comptroller.texas.gov/transparency/local/bond-elections/>



STAY INFORMED: [Texas Comptroller's Local Entity Debt Lookup](#)

Most local governments are required to post online an annual financial report that discloses key debt data. This tool allows users to easily find and access those reports, giving taxpayers access to information like total principal and interest outstanding, unspent bond proceeds, interest rates on specific bond issuances, maturity dates, per capita debt levels, and more!

Link: <https://comptroller.texas.gov/transparency/local/hb1378/approved.php>

Need help? Contact the Texas Public Policy Foundation's [James Quintero](#) or [Shelby Sterling](#) at (512) 472-2700.