



## Cincinnati receives higher tax revenues faster through Civica's Authority Tax

Consolidating three separate applications for processing tax returns into one has reaped many benefits for the City of Cincinnati.

**With a view to streamline services to tax payers and collect revenues more efficiently, the City of Cincinnati tax department embarked on a complete transformation involving the migration of 40 years of data while integrating disparate applications under one vendor and maintenance contract.**

The City of Cincinnati's Tax Commissioner, Ted Nussman joined the municipality in 1990 and became Tax Commissioner in 2013. After working for years with three separate software vendors and utilizing the expertise of the City's IT team to help make these systems work, Mr Nussman realized that these complicated out-of-date systems would not serve the city moving forward. Mr Nussman said, "It made financial sense to combine all three systems under one maintenance contract and I knew it would also be much easier to manage."

Deciding which software to select for this purpose involved a robust process that initially included six software companies giving demonstrations at the RFQ stage of the project. The decision to finally choose Civica was influenced by the fact that the City of Toledo had the same legacy system and had recently successfully moved all their tax processes under Civica's Authority Tax. "We knew other cities that used Authority Tax and had only heard positive feedback", Mr Nussman said.

Parts of the implementation stage went smoothly while other sections of the roll-out took longer than expected. "The implementation team from Civica completed the billing process really well because of the way they documented the desired process and clearly communicated to us how it would work", Mr Nussman observed. "But other areas of the implementation required us to be more patient."



### Benefits and outcomes

- ▶ **House Bill 5 (HB5) compliant**
- ▶ **Faster W-2 processing**
- ▶ **Lower operating costs**
- ▶ **Migration of all legacy data to Authority Tax**
- ▶ **Integrates State Tape Discovery Program, making it easy to discover new tax payers**

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**Ted Nussman**  
Tax Commissioner  
City of Cincinnati

Keeping up with State regulatory requirements such as the complex House Bill 5 (HB5) tax law changes is a constant and important part of the tax department's KPIs. A critical mandate in HB5 required municipalities to issue assessments via certified mail before pursuing collection by legal action.

Authority Tax's ability to automate the mailing of the third assessment notice, via registered mail, conveying the serious nature of their non-compliance has given tax employees a welcome relief from this unpleasant function. "Civica did a really good job, we are finding a significant increase in payments which translates to the revenue coming in much faster than before. We did not have this ability with our previous system", Mr Nussman said.

Tax payers have also seen a significant improvement in customer service when they require help from the Cincinnati tax department with preparing their tax returns. Previously, separate visits were required to meet with an

examiner, complete an assessment and finally pay their tax bill or organize a payment plan. "Now when tax payers come into our office to ask us to help them generate a return we can do it on the spot, while before it would take several trips into the office to finalize their tax return. The easy access to electronically filed employee Forms W-2 is a benefit.", Mr Nussman said.

Another critical function of the Income Tax Division is to discover new taxpayers and educate them on their filing requirements. For example, the State Tape Discovery Program, needs to be done in a timely fashion and with Authority Tax this is another burden that has been alleviated under the new system. "With Authority Tax this activity is automated, alerting existing tax payers while uncovering thousands of new tax payers of their filing requirements. This automated procedure also gives us control of how many letters are sent out giving us better inventory management. We couldn't do that with the old system", Mr Nussman said.

Through consolidating all the previous applications into one streamlined system The City of Cincinnati's tax office team of 32 employees can now focus on providing the best service possible to their 300,000 taxpayers while

Authority Tax takes care of the automated billing/ payment processes and other state regulatory requirements. "Authority Tax has helped us streamline our delinquent tax collection process resulting in a significant decrease in our accounts receivables and increasing revenues from delinquent tax accounts by more than \$500,000 this year alone. And all this at a much lower cost than the previous system", Mr Nussman concluded.

**Going forward, the Tax Commissioner expects to work closely with the Civica's Authority Tax programmers and the City's third-party lockbox provider to further streamline the posting of transactions and implementing a more selective audit program.**

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