



Memorandum

To: Finance Committee
From: Director of Finance, John J. Potts
cc: Mayor, David E. Weiss
Chief Administrative Officer, Matt Carroll
Date: February 17, 2026
Re: Additional Cooperative (Co-op) Purchasing Program – Sourcwell

Background

City Council has previously authorized the Administration, through a Codified Ordinance, Section 141.10, to make purchases through certain governmental purchasing programs, where the contractors in such programs have been selected through a competitive bidding process and selected as the lowest and best bidders.

The specific programs that Council has pre-authorized in this manner are:

- Ohio Department of Administrative Services (ODAS)
- Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT)
- Ohio Schools Council Cooperative Purchasing Program
- Cuyahoga County Department of Public Works
- United States General Services Administration (GSA).

The City can, through these ordinances, make purchases over \$50,000 without approval by Council (except as to appropriation), and without the City having to conduct its own competitive bidding process. Through these programs, the City can purchase supplies, services, equipment and certain materials for any City department that needs to make such a purchase, as long as there is a State awarded contract that allows municipalities to contract with the particular vendor or contractor.

Various City Departments, including Police, Fire, Public Works, IT, and Recreation are proposing that the City enact a codified ordinance authorizing any City department to utilize another Cooperative Purchasing Program called Sourcwell as an option to procure goods and services for the City.

Sourcwell is a government agency with over 40 years of service helping state and local government and education entities with procurement activities. Sourcwell is a primary resource for local government purchasing because it functions as a government agency itself, providing pre-vetted, competitively solicited contracts that allow public entities to bypass the long and costly Request for Proposal (RFP) process.

Utilizing Sourcewell, like other Cooperative Purchasing Programs, allows us to leverage buying power in order to negotiate streamlined contracts with commercial businesses, much like we currently do with our other Cooperative Programs.

Some of the key reasons to use Sourcewell, like our other Co-op programs are:

- Time and Efficiency – Local governments can forego the traditional multi-month solicitation process. By using pre-negotiated contracts, we can obtain quotes and finalize purchases in weeks rather than months.
- National Buying Power – Sourcewell leverages the collective purchasing volume of over 50,000 participating agencies to secure competitive pricing that individual local governments may not achieve alone.
- Compliance and Accountability: Because Sourcewell is a local unit of government (established under Minnesota statute), its solicitation process is designed to meet or exceed local and national public procurement requirements, ensuring "audit-ready" documentation.
- No Cost to Join: Membership is free for all government, education, and nonprofit entities. There are no participation fees, minimum purchase commitments, or obligations.
- Local Support: While contracts are awarded at the manufacturer level, they are often delivered and serviced by local dealers, keeping taxpayer dollars in the community while benefiting from national pricing.

The Police Department believes it can make good use of this program for purchases such as ballistic vests, office furniture, electronic speed radar signs, tasers, and Police vehicle equipment (lights, sirens, and other upfitting). The Fire Department also believes that Sourcewell would be a welcome addition as a new Co-op for purchases from ambulance manufacturers, fire truck manufacturers, firefighting gear, medical equipment, and other firefighting equipment. Both Police and Fire have stated that adding Sourcewell as a Co-op option will provide significant financial and operational advantages. Sourcewell offers competitively solicited contracts that allow us to procure high-quality equipment, vehicles, and services at pre-negotiated rates. By leveraging these contracts, they can streamline procurement, eliminate the time-consuming bidding process, and ensure that we are getting the best possible pricing.

Public Works noted that most construction related services can be utilized with the Sourcewell Co-op buying program and that there are multiple municipalities in our region that utilize Sourcewell (Pepper Pike, Cle Heights, Lakewood, Rocky River, etc.). Here is a sample of current Public Works vendors that are on Sourcewell:

- Elgin (street sweepers) / Bobcat (sidewalk plows) / Kubota (scooters) / Komatsu (loaders) / Goodyear (tires) / Old Dominion Brush (sweeper brooms) / John Deere / Caterpillar / Heil (refuse trucks) / New Way (refuse trucks) / Bonnell (plows) / Ventrac (grounds and sidewalks).

The IT Department noted that there are three copier companies on the Sourcewell program, Sharp, Xerox and Ricoh.

Some of our larger City departments agree that in addition to cost savings, Co-ops simplify the purchasing process, reducing some of their administrative burden on purchasing. These efficiencies translate to quicker acquisition of essential gear, vehicles, and technology, ensuring our safety and non-safety forces have what they need to perform their duties effectively.

The Finance Department believes that with Sourcewell's access to a broad network of reputable vendors and industry-leading suppliers, our departments can procure top-tier products without compromising on quality. By utilizing contracts that have already been vetted through a rigorous, transparent process, they can be confident in the reliability and performance of the equipment they acquire.

This request was presented to the Administration Committee on February 10, 2026 and it was passed unanimously. Chief of Fire Pat Sweeney, Public Works Building Superintendent Shannon Marlin, and Director of Information Technology Frank Miozzi spoke to some of the benefits to using Sourcewell as an additional Cooperative Purchasing Program.

Director of Law, Bill Gruber reminded the Committee members that the city charter that's approved by the voters and our codified ordinances require competitive bidding for contracts over an amount set by Council, which is \$50,000. So, when competitive bidding is performed, Council approval is not required. Council has recognized that certain entities (Cooperative Purchasing Programs) do competitive bidding separately, and so the city does not need to repeat that process. Effectively we are not bypassing competitive bidding, but using another entity's competitive bidding process.

The Administration Committee inquired if other municipalities in Northeast Ohio have had a good experience with Sourcewell. Director Potts stated that he would speak with other Finance Directors in his network. There was also a question as to when we found out about Sourcewell as a CoOp and why we hadn't decided to include them in our city ordinances sooner. Director Potts stated that the CoOps we currently use were sufficient and only recently many departments had begun to mention the Sourcewell program and asked Finance to look into it. Director Potts committed to surveying other local municipalities to measure up the number of CoOps we use compared to others.

Citizen Member Matt Aumann stated that he has heard of Sourcewell but also spoke highly of the overall RFP process outside of using a Cooperative Purchasing Program as a means to have more Council and public involvement.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Finance Committee recommend to City Council the utilization of the Sourcewell Cooperative Purchasing Program as an option for purchasing goods and services for many of the City's departments and that our current ordinances be amended to reflect this change.