

# Houston

## The Truth



Money Needed to Pay Bills  
**\$6.1 billion**



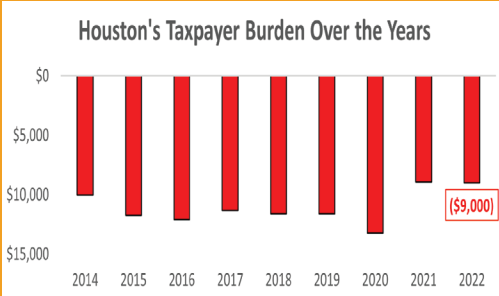
Taxpayer Burden™  
**\$9,000**



Financial Grade  
**D**



Ranking  
**61 out of 75**



## Financial State of Houston

Houston's financial condition continued to worsen by \$105 million, with a Taxpayer Burden™ of \$9,000, earning it a "D" grade from Truth in Accounting.

According to the city's 2022 financial report, the city continued to spend federal COVID-19 relief funds, and as the U.S. economy reopened, the city took in additional tax revenue. Such economic gains were offset by increases in the city's pension liability. Over the past few years, investment market values have swung dramatically. In 2022, this volatility negatively impacted the city's pension investments and its financial condition, which demonstrates the risk to taxpayers when their city offers defined pension benefits to its employees.

Houston had set aside only 88 cents for every dollar of promised pension benefits and only 1 cent for every dollar of promised retiree health care benefits.

It is important to note that continued market fluctuations, changing investment values, decreased COVID relief funds, and a stabilizing economy that may slow tax collections, could worsen Houston's financial health further. City officials should try to reduce the Taxpayer Burden by following the recommendations in our 2024 Financial State of the Cities report which would bring greater transparency and accountability to city finances.

# Houston's Financial Breakdown

## Fast Facts

- Houston had \$5.8 billion available to pay \$11.9 billion worth of bills.
- The outcome was a \$6.1 billion shortfall, an increase of \$105 million from the prior year, and a burden of \$9,000 per taxpayer.
- Houston spent COVID-19 relief funds and increased tax collections, but its unfunded pension promises increased significantly because of lower valuations on its pension investments.

## The City's Bills Exceeded Its Assets

Total Assets	\$31,439,616,000
Minus: Capital Assets	-\$21,989,823,000
Restricted Assets	-\$3,622,311,000
Assets Available to Pay Bills	\$5,827,482,000
Minus: Total Bills*	\$11,912,255,000
Money needed to pay bills	\$6,084,773,000
Each taxpayer's share of this burden	\$9,000

## \*Breakdown of Total Bills

Bonds	\$14,659,040,000
Other Liabilities	\$5,256,908,000
Minus: Debt Related to Capital Assets	-\$12,553,292,000
Unfunded Pension Benefits	\$2,203,243,000
Unfunded Retiree Health Care Benefits	\$2,346,356,000
Total Bills	\$11,912,255,000

### Grade:

**D**

Bottom line: Houston would need \$9,000 from each of its taxpayers to pay all of its outstanding bills and received a "D" grade for its finances. According to Truth in Accounting's grading scale, any government with a Taxpayer Burden between \$5,000 and \$20,000 is given a "D" grade.

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