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Accounting

## MONTANA'S FINANCES ON THE MEND

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### THE FINANCIAL STATE OF MONTANA

A new analysis of the latest available audited financial reports found Montana has a Taxpayer Burden™ of \$2,100, earning it a “C” grade based on Truth in Accounting’s grading scale. Montana’s overall financial condition improved by 34 percent from the previous fiscal year.

Montana’s elected officials have made repeated financial decisions that have left the state with a debt burden of \$752.1 million. That burden equates to \$2,100 for every state taxpayer. Montana’s financial problems stem mostly from unfunded retirement obligations that have accumulated over the years. Of the \$9 billion in retirement benefits promised, the state has not funded \$2.4 billion in pension and \$85.9 million in retiree health care benefits.

Montana and other states have become more transparent over the last few years, thanks to the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) set by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), which now require governments to disclose pension (GASB 68) and other post-employment (GASB 75) benefits on their balance sheets.

### THE TRUTH:



# MONTANA FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN

### FAST FACTS

- Montana has \$5.1 billion available to pay \$5.8 billion worth of bills.
- The outcome is a \$752.1 million shortfall, which breaks down to a burden of \$2,100 per taxpayer.
- This means that each taxpayer would pay \$2,100 in future taxes without receiving any related services or benefits.

### THE STATE'S BILLS EXCEED ITS ASSETS

Total assets	\$16,400,822,000
<i>Minus:</i> Capital assets	-\$7,140,436,000
Restricted assets	-\$4,192,568,000
Assets available to pay bills	\$5,067,818,000
<i>Minus:</i> Total bills	-\$5,819,951,000
Money available (needed) to pay future bills	-\$752,133,000
Each taxpayer's share of this debt	-\$2,100

### BILLS THE STATE HAS ACCUMULATED

Bonds	\$905,834,000
Other liabilities	\$2,810,590,000
<i>Minus:</i> Debt related to capital assets	-\$379,986,000
Unfunded pension benefits	\$2,397,616,000
Unfunded retiree health care benefits	\$85,897,000
Total bills	\$5,819,951,000

### GRADE: C

Bottom line: Montana would need \$2,100 from each of its taxpayers to pay all of its bills, so it has received a “C” for its finances. According to Truth in Accounting’s grading scale, any government with a Taxpayer Burden between \$0 and \$4,900 receives a “C.”

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