



THE TRUTH

Money Available to Pay
Future Bills

\$21.4 Million

Taxpayer Surplus™

\$100

Financial Grade

B

Ranking

19 out of 50

Montana's Financial Condition Improves Due to Federal Funds



October 2022

truthinaccounting.org | data-z.org

Financial State of Montana

While it appeared that Montana bettered its standing from 2020, moving from a Sinkhole State to a Sunshine State, the data can be deceiving. Based upon the state's latest audited financial report for fiscal year 2021, Montana had \$21.4 million available to pay future bills. The resulting surplus of \$100 for each Montana taxpayer, earns it a "B" grade from Truth in Accounting. Notably, this surplus includes increases in the market value of public employees' retirement plan assets, which are not considered as spendable except to pay pension benefits.

The \$21.4 million surplus available to pay Montana's bills is an upgrade over last year's report. Montana's fiscal improvement occurred primarily due to federal Covid stimulus money and pension plan stock market gains. Investment values should be considered temporary as financial markets are volatile. Recorded gains may not have been realized through the actual sale of the investments. Covid funds are also temporary and most likely will not be renewed.

It is expected this report will look different next year when the investment markets decrease and discontinued federal funds are reflected in Montana's annual statements. The situation could worsen further if the Montana legislature assumes there are extra funds available and spends money based on transitory increases. If that happens, then most likely the state will become a Sinkhole State again.

The data included in this report is derived from the State of Montana's 2021 audited Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and retirement plans' reports. To compare state financial, demographic and economic information go to Data-Z.org.



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Montana's Financial Breakdown

Fast Facts

- Montana had \$6.2 billion available to pay \$6.60 billion worth of bills.
- The outcome was a \$21.4 million surplus, which breaks down to \$100 per taxpayer.
- Montana's overall financial condition improved considerably, but much of the improvement came from temporary federal Covid-related funds and unrealized gains in pension system's investments.

THE STATE'S ASSETS EXCEEDED ITS BILLS

Total assets	\$20,495,553,000
Minus: Capital assets	-\$8,108,809,000
Restricted assets	-\$5,764,432,000
Assets available to pay bills	\$6,622,312,000
Minus: Total bills*	-\$6,600,890,000
Money available to pay future bills	\$21,422,000
Each taxpayer's share of this surplus	\$100

* BREAKDOWN OF TOTAL BILLS

Bonds	\$994,301,000
Other liabilities	\$3,632,338,000
Minus: Debt related to capital assets	-\$412,545,000
Unfunded pension benefits	\$2,181,970,000
Unfunded retiree health care benefits	\$204,826,000
Total bills	\$6,600,890,000

Grade:

B

Bottom line: Montana had enough money to pay all of its bills, so it received a "B" for its finances. A "B" grade is given to states with a Taxpayer Surplus between \$100 and \$10,000.

Truth in Accounting is a 501(c)(3) organization committed to educating and empowering citizens with understandable, reliable and transparent government financial information. To be knowledgeable participants in their government and its budget process, citizens need truthful and transparent financial information.