NEW YORK CITY

HOW MUCH WOULD IT COST FOR NEW YORK NEED TO BE DEBT-FREE?

$160.3 BILLION
NEEDED TO PAY BILLS

$59,000
TAXPAYER BURDEN

2015 TRUTH IN ACCOUNTING
New York City has $150 billion in assets, but most of these assets are not available to pay city bills.

The $90 billion of capital assets, such as roads, buildings, and land should not be sold to pay bills. The use of $7.2 billion of the assets is restricted by law or contract.

That leaves $52.8 billion of city's assets available to pay $213 billion of bills as they come due.

The -$160.3 billion shortfall represents compensation and other costs incurred in prior years that should have been paid in those prior years. Instead these costs have been shifted to future taxpayers.

Each Taxpayer's Share of New York City's Debt: -$59,000

Despite the balanced budget requirement, the city has accumulated bonds of $125.5 billion and other liabilities of $53.4 billion. The calculation of assets available to pay bills does not include capital assets, so $89.7 billion of related debt is removed from the calculation of city bills.

Unfunded employees' retirement benefits represent 58% of city bills. These unfunded liabilities have accumulated because city employees have been promised $50.1 billion of pension benefits and $73.8 billion of retirees' health care benefits, but the city has not adequately funded them.

Unless these pension and retirees' health care benefits are renegotiated, future taxpayers will be burdened with paying for these benefits without receiving any corresponding government services or benefits.

Breakdown of the City's Bills

Data is derived from the city of New York City's June 30, 2014 audited Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and retirement plans' actuarial reports.

Number of taxpayers is based on an estimation of the city's population with a federal tax liability.