



THE TRUTH

Money Available to Pay
Future Bills

\$1.1 Billion

Taxpayer Surplus™

\$1,300

Financial Grade

B

Ranking

17 out of 50

Arkansas Finances Improved with Federal Funds



October 2022

truthinaccounting.org | data-z.org

Financial State of Arkansas

While it appeared that Arkansas 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, Arkansas had \$1.1 billion surplus available to pay bills. The resulting surplus of \$1,300 for each Arkansas taxpayer, earned it a "B" grade from Truth in Accounting. Notably, this surplus included increases in the market value of public employees' retirement plan assets, which are not considered as spendable except to pay pension benefits.

The \$1.1 billion surplus available to pay Arkansas' bills is an upgrade over last year's report. Arkansas' 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 Arkansas' annual statements. The situation could worsen further if the Arkansas 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 Arkansas' 2021 audited Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and retirement plans' reports. To compare state financial, demographic and economic information go to Data-Z.org.



UNIVERSITY of
DENVER

DANIELS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
School of Accountancy

Arkansas' Financial Breakdown

Fast Facts

- Arkansas had \$10.5 billion available to pay \$9.4 billion worth of bills.
- The outcome was a \$1.1 billion surplus, which breaks down to \$1,300 per taxpayer.
- Arkansas' financial condition improved primarily due to a decrease in pension liabilities of \$9.5 billion and federal Covid-related grants.

THE STATE'S ASSETS EXCEEDED ITS BILLS

Total assets	\$34,008,651,000
Minus: Capital assets	-\$17,992,798,000
Restricted assets	-\$5,546,219,000
Assets available to pay bills	\$10,469,634,000
Minus: Total bills*	-\$9,418,031,000
Money available to pay bills	\$1,051,603,000
Each taxpayer's share of this surplus	\$1,300

* BREAKDOWN OF TOTAL BILLS

Bonds	\$3,842,033,000
Other liabilities	\$4,979,058,000
Minus: Debt related to capital assets	-\$3,047,425,000
Unfunded pension benefits	\$682,464,000
Unfunded retiree health care benefits	\$2,961,901,000
Total bills	\$9,418,031,000

Grade:

B

Bottom line: Arkansas had more than 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.