



THE TRUTH

Money Needed to Pay Bills

\$578 Million

Taxpayer Burden™

\$300

Financial Grade

C

Ranking

21 out of 50

Colorado Slightly Down In Rankings Despite Improving Fiscally



October 2022

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Financial State of Colorado

Colorado's latest financial report indicated the state's financial position improved in 2021 due to a great deal of federal aid and dramatic increases in the value of pension system assets. The state still needed \$578 million to pay the bills it had accumulated. The resulting Taxpayer Burden™ was \$300, which represents each taxpayer's share of the state's debt. Therefore, the state earned a "C" grade from Truth in Accounting.

Colorado's financial problems stem mostly from unfunded retirement obligations. Record gains in the stock market in 2021 made funding levels of the state's pension system appear healthier than in 2020, but much of that improvement is fading. Markets have lost an average of 14% value in 2022. Although pension liabilities decreased by \$339 million in 2021 due to the increase in investment value, much of the value increase is only on paper. Until the pension investments are sold, these liability decreases are not real. Given these facts, the state's overall debt situation will likely further deteriorate over the coming year.

Even with these reported increases in pension assets, Colorado had only set aside 67 cents for every dollar of promised pension benefits and 17 cents for every dollar of promised retiree health care benefits. If benefits and funding are not changed, future taxpayers will be burdened with paying the under-funded retirement promises.

The data included in this report is derived from the State of Colorado'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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Colorado's Financial Breakdown

Fast Facts

- Colorado had \$28.9 billion available to pay \$29.5 billion worth of bills.
- The outcome was a \$578 million shortfall, which breaks down to a burden of \$300 per taxpayer.
- Colorado's overall financial condition improved by \$3 billion in 2021. This was predominately due to an increase in multiple types of Covid-related funding, only moderate increases in expenditures, and increases in taxes.

THE STATE'S BILLS EXCEEDED ITS ASSETS

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Total assets | \$61,612,730,000 |
| Minus: Capital assets | -\$24,480,873,000 |
| Restricted assets | -\$8,228,498,000 |
| Assets available to pay bills | \$28,903,359,000 |
| Minus: Total bills* | -\$29,481,398,000 |
| Money needed to pay bills | \$578,039,000 |
| Each taxpayer's share of this burden | \$300 |

* BREAKDOWN OF TOTAL BILLS

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Bonds | \$5,293,129,000 |
| Other liabilities | \$21,064,210,000 |
| Minus: Debt related to capital assets | -\$9,160,732,000 |
| Unfunded pension benefits | \$11,041,145,000 |
| Unfunded retiree health care benefits | \$1,243,646,000 |
| Total bills | \$29,481,398,000 |

Grade:

C

Bottom line: Colorado needed \$300 from each of its taxpayers to pay all of its bills, so it 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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