



HOUSTON FINANCES STILL STRUGGLING

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THE FINANCIAL STATE OF HOUSTON

Truth in Accounting's (TIA) new city report ranks and grades the 75 most populous cities in the United States by their financial health. Houston ranks No. 59, earning it a "D" on TIA's grading scale.

Repeated decisions by city officials have left the city with a staggering debt burden of \$8 billion, according to TIA's analysis of its 2016 financial filings. That burden equates to \$12,100 for every Houston taxpayer.

Houston's financial problems are largely driven by runaway entitlement obligations in two categories: pensions and retiree healthcare benefits. The city has \$6.1 billion in unfunded pension promises and no funds have been set aside to pay \$2.1 billion in retiree healthcare benefits.

These statistics are jarring, but what's also alarming is that city government officials continue to hide significant amounts of retirement debt from their balance sheets, despite new rules to increase financial transparency. This skewed financial data gives residents a false impression of their city's overall financial health.

59

Rank

\$8

billion

Money needed
to pay bills

-\$12,100

Taxpayer
Burden™

D

Financial grade

HOUSTON FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN

FAST FACTS

- + Houston has \$4 billion available in assets to pay \$12 billion worth of bills.
- + The outcome is an \$8 billion shortfall and a \$12,100 Taxpayer Burden™.
- + In 2015 the city started to report all of its pension debt on its balance sheet, but it still hides \$376.4 million of retiree healthcare obligations.

THE CITY'S BILLS EXCEED ITS ASSETS

Assets	\$22,899,086,000
<i>Minus:</i> Capital assets	-\$17,550,948,000
Restricted assets	-\$1,359,264,000
Assets available to pay bills	\$3,988,874,000
<i>Minus:</i> Bills	-\$12,006,228,000
Money needed to pay bills	-\$8,017,354,000
Each taxpayer's share of this debt	-\$12,100

BILLS THE CITY HAS ACCUMULATED

Bonds	\$12,984,354,000
Other liabilities	\$3,150,442,000
<i>Minus:</i> Debt related to capital assets	-\$12,263,916,000
Unfunded pension benefits	\$6,075,181,000
Unfunded retiree healthcare	\$2,060,167,000
Bills	\$12,006,228,000

GRADE: D

Bottom line: Houston does not have enough money to pay its bills, so it has received a "D" for its finances from Truth in Accounting. A "D" grade is given to cities with a Taxpayer Burden™ between \$5,000 and \$20,000.

Truth in Accounting is 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.