



THE TRUTH

Money Needed to Pay Bills

- **\$5.8 billion**

Taxpayer Burden™

- **\$14,700**

Financial Grade

D

Ranking

36 out of 50

Rhode Island Received ‘D’ Grade for its Fiscal Health



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Financial State of Rhode Island

This report shows that Rhode Island went into the coronavirus pandemic in poor fiscal health, and it will probably come out of the crisis even worse. Based upon the state’s latest audited financial report, which is dated before the crisis began, Rhode Island had a Taxpayer Burden™ of \$14,700, earning it a “D” grade from Truth in Accounting.

Rhode Island’s elected officials have made repeated financial decisions that left the state with a debt burden of \$5.8 billion. That burden equates to \$14,700 for every state taxpayer. Rhode Island’s financial problems stem mostly from unfunded retirement obligations that have accumulated over the years. Of the \$9 billion in retirement benefits promised, the state did not fund \$3.9 billion in pension and \$632.5 million in retiree health care benefits.

Rhode Island did not have enough money set aside to weather the current pandemic and fluctuations in the market. According to rough estimates by Truth in Accounting, Rhode Island is projected to lose \$1 billion in revenue as a result of this crisis. The uncertainty surrounding this crisis makes it impossible to determine how much will be needed to maintain government services and benefits, but Rhode Island’s overall debt will most likely increase.

The data included in this report is derived from the state of Rhode Island’s 2019 audited Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and retirement plans’ reports. To compare states’ financial information go to Data-Z.org.

Rhode Island Financial Breakdown

Fast Facts

- Rhode Island had \$5.4 billion available to pay \$11.2 billion worth of bills.
- The outcome was a \$5.8 billion shortfall, which breaks down to a burden of \$14,700 per taxpayer.
- This means that each taxpayer would have to pay \$14,700 in future taxes for which they would receive no related services or benefits.

THE STATE’S BILLS EXCEEDED ITS ASSETS

Total assets	\$15,138,183,000
Minus: Capital assets	-\$6,936,783,000
Restricted assets	-\$2,843,460,000
Assets available to pay bills	\$5,357,940,000
Minus: Total bills	-\$11,203,037,000
Money available (needed) to pay bills	-\$5,845,097,000
Each taxpayer’s share of this debt	-\$14,700

BILLS THE STATE ACCUMULATED

Bonds	\$5,853,600,000
Other liabilities	\$2,724,984,000
Minus: Debt related to capital assets	-\$1,928,830,000
Unfunded pension benefits	\$3,920,784,000
Unfunded retiree health care benefits	\$632,499,000
Total bills	\$11,203,037,000

Grade:

D

Bottom line: Rhode Island needed \$14,700 from each of its taxpayers to pay all of its bills, so it received a “D” for its finances. According to Truth in Accounting’s grading scale, any government with a Taxpayer Burden between \$5,000 and \$20,000 receives a “D.”

Truth in Accounting is a 501(c)(3) 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.