

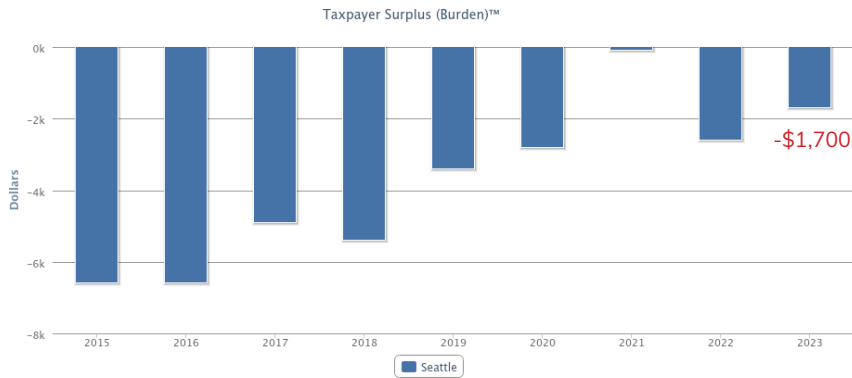
FINANCIAL STATE OF SEATTLE



\$518.5 million
MONEY NEEDED TO PAY BILLS

\$1,700
TAXPAYER BURDEN™

Seattle’s financial condition showed some improvement. But based on our analysis of its audited financial report for fiscal year 2023, the city still needed \$518.5 million to cover its bills, resulting in a Taxpayer Burden™ of \$1,700. This earned the city a “C” grade from Truth in Accounting, marking it as a Sinkhole City.



Seattle’s financial performance showed some positive results, with reported revenues exceeding expenses and the Seattle City Employees’ Retirement System experiencing unrealized gains of 12.30%, reducing its unfunded pension liability by \$171.2 million. These gains, however, were small in comparison to the \$684 million loss (10.8%) from 2022. Despite this, the city continues to face significant challenges in managing its pension liabilities.

Public safety is Seattle’s largest expense, totaling \$790.7 million in 2023 (15.2% of citywide expenses), reflecting the city’s commitment to essential services. However, rising costs, driven by higher regional inflation due to strong income growth and rapidly rising housing costs, are creating additional financial pressures. These challenges highlight the need for the city to implement careful financial management to ensure long-term fiscal health and service sustainability.

The data included in this report is derived from Seattle’s 2023 audited Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and retirement plans’ reports. To compare prior years and other states’ and cities’ financial, demographic, and economic information, go to Data-Z.org.

FINANCIAL STATE OF SEATTLE

C
FINANCIAL GRADE

35 out of 75
RANKING

FINANCIAL FACTS

- Seattle had \$4.4 billion available to pay \$4.9 billion worth of bills.
- The outcome was a \$518.5 million shortfall, which breaks down to a burden of \$1,700 per taxpayer.
- Seattle’s finances showed growth with higher revenues and reduced pension liabilities, but public safety costs and inflation pressures remained challenges.

The City’s Bills Exceeded Its Assets

Total Assets	\$18,972,270,000
Minus: Capital Assets	-\$13,218,724,000
Restricted Assets	-\$1,371,857,000
Assets Available to Pay Bills	\$4,381,689,000
Minus: Total Bills*	-\$4,900,183,000
Money needed to pay bills	\$518,494,000
Each taxpayer’s share of this burden	\$1,700

*Breakdown of Total Bills

Bonds	\$5,784,376,000
Other Liabilities	\$2,693,465,000
Minus: Debt Related to Capital Assets	-\$5,336,504,000
Unfunded Pension Benefits	\$1,217,793,000
Unfunded Retiree Health Care Benefits	\$541,053,000
Total Bills	\$4,900,183,000

Grade:	Bottom line:
C	Seattle would need \$1,700 from each of its taxpayers to pay all of its outstanding bills and received a “C” grade for its finances. According to Truth in Accounting’s grading scale, any government with a Taxpayer Burden between \$0 and \$4,999 is given a “C” grade.

Truth in Accounting is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit committed to educating and empowering you with understandable, reliable, and transparent government financial information so you can be a knowledgeable participant in your government and its budget process.