

RANK
22

COLORADO

SUMMARY

On the basis of its fiscal solvency in five separate categories, Colorado ranks 22nd among the US states and Puerto Rico for its fiscal health. On a cash basis, Colorado has between 1.25 and 2.01 times the cash needed to cover short-term liabilities. Revenues exceed expenses by 5 percent, producing a surplus of \$250 per capita. Colorado's long-term position is strong. Net assets are 27 percent of total assets, and total liabilities are 21 percent of total assets. Total debt is \$6.32 billion, and unfunded pension liabilities are \$81.05 billion on a guaranteed-to-be-paid basis, with other postemployment benefits (OPEB) adding a further \$1.24 billion to total unfunded liabilities. Together, these three liabilities are equal to 33 percent of total state personal income.

2014 TOTAL LONG-TERM OBLIGATIONS

STATE DEBT

	General obligation bonds	Total primary government debt	State personal income	Ratio of debt to state personal income	Total primary debt per capita
Colorado	\$0.00 billion	\$6.32 billion	\$261.74 billion	2.4%	\$1,180
National average	\$6.60 billion	\$13.76 billion	\$288.25 billion	6.0%	\$2,144

PENSION LIABILITY

	Unfunded pension liability	Funded ratio	Market value of unfunded liability	Market value of funded liability ratio
Colorado	\$25.19 billion	62%	\$81.05 billion	34%
National average	\$20.46 billion	74%	\$86.85 billion	40%

OTHER POSTEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS (OPEB)

	Total unfunded OPEB	Funded ratio
Colorado	\$1.24 billion	19%
National average	\$11.14 billion	12%

1. Alaska
2. Nebraska
3. Wyoming
4. North Dakota
5. South Dakota
6. Florida
7. Utah
8. Oklahoma
9. Tennessee
10. Montana
11. Ohio
12. Idaho
13. Nevada
14. Missouri
15. Alabama
16. Texas
17. Indiana
18. South Carolina
19. Virginia
20. New Hampshire
21. North Carolina
- 22. Colorado**
23. Georgia
24. Washington
25. Iowa
26. Minnesota
27. Kansas
28. Arkansas
29. Wisconsin
30. Oregon
31. Arizona
32. Mississippi
33. Louisiana
34. New Mexico
35. Michigan
36. Vermont
37. Rhode Island
38. Delaware
39. Pennsylvania
40. West Virginia
41. Maryland
42. New York
43. Maine
44. California
45. Hawaii
46. Kentucky
47. Illinois
48. New Jersey
49. Massachusetts
50. Connecticut
51. Puerto Rico

UNDERLYING RATIOS

	Cash ratio	Quick ratio	Current ratio	Operating ratio	Surplus (or deficit) per capita	Net asset ratio	Long-term liability ratio	Long-term liability per capita
Colorado	1.25	1.76	2.01	1.05	\$250	0.27	0.21	\$1,351
National average	2.40	3.18	3.54	1.06	\$448	-0.03	0.47	\$3,069

	Tax-to-income ratio	Revenue-to-income ratio	Expenses-to-income ratio	Pension-to-income ratio	OPEB-to-income ratio	Primary debt-to-income ratio
Colorado	0.04	0.11	0.10	0.31	0.00	0.02
National average	0.06	0.14	0.13	0.31	0.03	0.06

KEY TERMS

- **Cash solvency** measures whether a state has enough cash to cover its short-term bills, which include accounts payable, vouchers, warrants, and short-term debt. (Colorado ranks 35th.)
- **Budget solvency** measures whether a state can cover its fiscal year spending using current revenues. Did it run a shortfall during the year? (Colorado ranks 19th.)
- **Long-run solvency** measures whether a state has a hedge against large long-term liabilities. Are enough assets available to cushion the state from potential shocks or long-term fiscal risks? (Colorado ranks 14th.)
- **Service-level solvency** measures how high taxes, revenues, and spending are when compared to state personal income. Do states have enough “fiscal slack”? If spending commitments demand more revenues, are states in a good position to increase taxes without harming the economy? Is spending high or low relative to the tax base? (Colorado ranks 8th.)
- **Trust fund solvency** measures how much debt a state has. How large are unfunded pension liabilities, OPEB liabilities, and state debt compared to the state personal income? (Colorado ranks 33rd.)

For a complete explanation of the methodology used to calculate Colorado’s fiscal health rankings, see Eileen Norcross and Olivia Gonzalez, “Ranking the States by Fiscal Condition,” 2016 ed. (Mercatus Research, Mercatus Center at George Mason University, Arlington, VA, June 2016).