

RANK  
**20**

# ARKANSAS

## SUMMARY

On the basis of its solvency in five separate categories, Arkansas ranks 20th among the US states for its fiscal health. Its new rank makes Arkansas one of the biggest movers since last year's edition, primarily a result of improvements in the state's operating ratio and surplus per capita. Arkansas holds between 3.07 and 3.98 times the cash needed to cover short-term obligations, higher than the average for the states. Revenues exceed expenses by 4 percent, and the state's net position increased by \$287 per capita. On a long-run basis after meeting its debts, Arkansas's net assets are 10 percent of total assets. Total primary government debt is \$4.1 billion, or 3.5 percent of state income, slightly lower than the US average. Long-term liabilities are 33 percent of total assets, well below the US average. On a guaranteed-to-be-paid basis, unfunded pension liabilities are \$38.71 billion or 33 percent of state income, and OPEB is 2 percent of state income.

## 2015 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
<b>Arkansas</b>	<b>\$1.60 billion</b>	<b>\$4.10 billion</b>	<b>\$116.49 billion</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>\$1,376</b>
National average	\$6.09 billion	\$12.71 billion	\$305.43 billion	3.7%	\$1,804

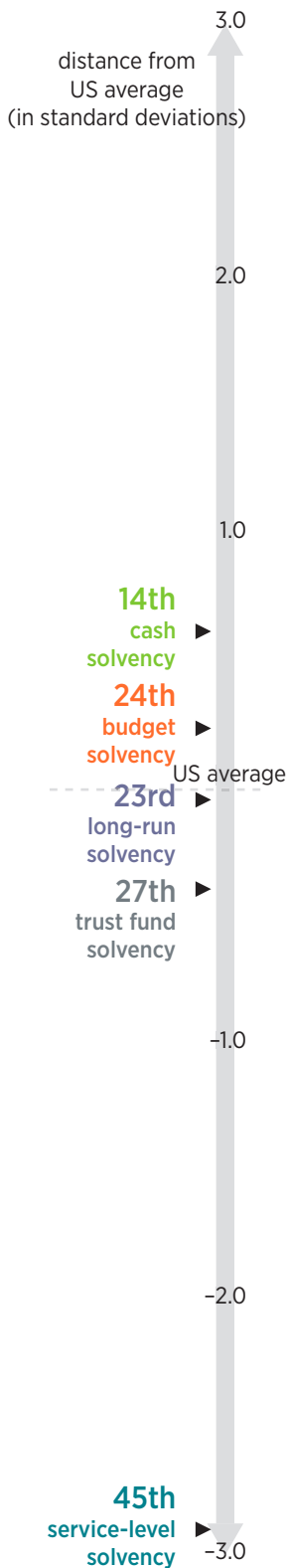
### PENSION LIABILITY

	Unfunded pension liability	Funded ratio	Market value of unfunded liability	Market value of funded liability ratio
<b>Arkansas</b>	<b>\$5.95 billion</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>\$38.71 billion</b>	<b>38%</b>
National average	\$20.62 billion	74%	\$105.50 billion	36%

### OTHER POSTEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS (OPEB)

	Total unfunded OPEB	Funded ratio
<b>Arkansas</b>	<b>\$1.90 billion</b>	<b>0%</b>
National average	\$12.97 billion	12%

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



## 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
<b>Arkansas</b>	<b>3.07</b>	<b>3.79</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>\$287</b>	<b>0.10</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>\$2,772</b>
National average	2.68	3.66	3.93	1.04	\$150	-0.17	0.61	\$4,272

	Tax-to-income ratio	Revenue-to-income ratio	Expenses-to-income ratio	Pension-to-income ratio	OPEB-to-income ratio
<b>Arkansas</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>0.02</b>
National average	0.06	0.13	0.13	0.35	0.04

## 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. (Arkansas ranks 14th.)
- **Budget solvency** measures whether a state can cover its fiscal year spending using current revenues. Did it run a shortfall during the year? (Arkansas ranks 24th.)
- **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? (Arkansas ranks 23rd.)
- **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? (Arkansas ranks 45th.)
- **Trust fund solvency** measures how much debt a state has. How large are unfunded pension liabilities and OPEB liabilities compared to the state personal income? (Arkansas ranks 27th.)

For a complete explanation of the methodology used to calculate Arkansas’s fiscal health rankings, see Eileen Norcross and Olivia Gonzalez, “Ranking the States by Fiscal Condition,” 2017 ed. (Mercatus Research, Mercatus Center at George Mason University, Arlington, VA, July 2017).