

# The Financial State of Nebraska

As of June 30, 2011



## STATE ASSETS EXCEED ITS BILLS

Assets	\$18,172,882,000
Less: Capital Assets	\$9,971,862,000
Restricted Assets	\$4,504,108,000
<b>Assets Available to Pay Bills</b>	<b>\$3,696,912,000</b>
Less: Bills	\$2,500,900,000
<b>Assets Left After Bills Are Funded</b>	<b>\$1,196,012,000</b>
<b>Each Taxpayer's* Surplus</b>	<b>\$2,100</b>

The state of Nebraska has \$18.2 billion in assets, but most of these assets are not available to pay State bills.

The \$10 billion of capital assets, such as roads, buildings and land, should not be sold to pay bills. The use of \$4.5 billion of the assets is restricted by law or contract.

That leaves \$3.7 billion of State's assets available to pay \$2.5 billion of bills as they come due.

The \$1.2 billion surplus is available to pay future bills. Unlike most states, Nebraska has the money needed to pay State employees' retirement benefits and other costs.

**Each Taxpayer's\* Share of the Financial Surplus \$2,100**

## STATE LIABILITIES ARE UNDERSTATED

<b>Total Retirement Liabilities</b>	<b>\$519,600,000</b>
<b>Reported Retirement Liabilities</b>	<b>\$0</b>

Truth in Accounting's detailed analysis discovered Nebraska has promised \$519.6 million in retirement benefits. However, as a result of the confusing way the State does its accounting, no retirement liabilities are reported. This means State liabilities are understated.

State statutes require the legislature to pass a balanced budget. The Nebraska legislatures, unlike those in most other states, have lived up to the intent of these statutes. But during these tough economic times, citizens need to be vigilant to make sure legislators do not start to use the budgeting tactics that other states use.

These budget tactics include:

- Hiding current payroll costs by offering pension and state retirees' health care benefits without providing adequate funding;
- Borrowing money to pay current bills; and
- Charging current bills to the State's "credit card" by delaying the payment of bills.

**Truthful budgetary accounting** includes the portion of retirement benefits employees earn in current compensation costs every year they work.

**Accurate accounting requires all real and certain** expenses be reported in the State budget and financial statements when incurred, not when paid.

## THE BILLS THE STATE HAS ACCUMULATED

State Bonds	\$727,510,000
Other Liabilities	\$2,072,172,000
Less: Debt Related to Capital Assets	\$818,382,000
Unfunded Pension Benefits	\$519,600,000
<b>Bills</b>	<b>\$2,500,900,000</b>

The State has accumulated bonds of \$727.5 million and other liabilities of \$2.1 billion. The calculation of assets available to pay bills does not include capital assets, so \$818.4 million of related debt is removed from the calculation of State bills.

Unfunded employees' retirement benefits represent 21% of State bills. Unfunded pension benefits total \$519.6 million. Unlike most states, Nebraska has assets available to pay these liabilities.

Nebraska elected officials seem to promise only what they can afford.

*Data is derived from the state of Nebraska's June 30, 2011 audited Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and retirement plans' actuarial reports.*

*\*Based on the number of Nebraska federal tax filers with a tax liability.*