



*The Office of the*  
**Minnesota  
State Auditor**

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## **State Auditor Julie Blaha Releases Annual County Finances Report**

2017 Minnesota County Finances Report shows increased revenues and expenditures for counties, while debt and fund balances decreased.

### **Current-Year Trends**

- Minnesota county revenues totaled \$6.94 billion in 2017. This represents an increase of \$314.5 million, or 4.7 percent, over 2016.
- Counties reported total expenditures of \$7.36 billion in 2017. This represents an increase of \$392.9 million, or 5.6 percent, over 2016 total expenditures. Between 2016 and 2017, current expenditures increased 4.3 percent to \$5.59 billion, capital outlays decreased 3.2 percent to \$1.13 billion, and debt service increased 44.1 percent to \$644.8 million.
- In 2017, Minnesota counties reported outstanding long-term debt of \$3.54 billion. This represents a decrease of 3.4 percent from the long-term debt reported in 2016. Of the \$3.54 billion in long-term debt, \$3.21 billion was outstanding bonded debt, and \$333.4 million was other long-term debt.
- Minnesota county enterprises reported operating losses of \$46.9 million in 2017. This represents a decrease of 42.1 percent from the operating losses of \$81.1 million reported in 2016. County enterprises posted a net loss of \$10.0 million in 2017, a decrease of 61.7 percent from the \$26.1 million net loss reported in 2016.
- Minnesota counties' unrestricted fund balances of the General Fund and Special Revenue Funds totaled \$2.65 billion in 2017. This represents a decrease of 1.5 percent from 2016. The average unrestricted fund balance as a percent of current expenditures for counties was 47.3 percent in 2017 compared to 50.1 percent in 2016. Among individual counties, unrestricted fund balances as a percent of total current expenditures ranged from -19.0 percent (Faribault County) to 148.3 percent (Lake County).

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### Ten-Year Trends

- Between 2008 and 2017, in actual dollars, total county revenues rose 24.4 percent. When adjusted for inflation, the increase in total revenues was 5.5 percent over this period.
- Between 2008 and 2017, the share of total revenues derived from taxes increased from 43.3 percent to 47.8 percent, while the share of total revenues derived from intergovernmental revenues decreased from 39.5 percent to 37.5 percent.
- Between 2008 and 2017, in actual dollars, total county expenditures increased 18.3. When adjusted for inflation, county expenditures increased 0.4 percent over the ten-year period.

To view the complete report, which includes an Executive Summary, charts and graphs, go to:

<http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=20190409.000>

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*The Office of the State Auditor is the constitutional office that oversees more than \$20 billion in local government finances for Minnesota taxpayers. The Office of the State Auditor helps to ensure financial integrity and accountability in local government financial activities. Julie Blaha is Minnesota's 19th State Auditor. Follow us on Twitter @MNStateAuditor.*