

RETIREMENT AND STABILIZATION SAVINGS

The New York State and Local Retirement System Contribution Stabilization Program is an optional program that establishes a graded contribution rate system. If governments elect to participate, it enables them to pay a portion of annual contributions over time, leading to smoother, more predictable pension costs.

In contrast to the normal annual retirement contribution, as the Retirement System's average rates rise, the County's annual contribution under the Stabilization Program would be less than the normal contribution, since the graded rate increase is capped at one percent. When the System's average rates begin to decline, the graded rates will decline in one percent increments. Therefore, it will be possible for the System's average rates to be lower than the graded rates. In such instances, the County will pay the graded rate. Any additional contributions will first be used to pay off existing amortizations. If all amortizations have been paid, any excess will be deposited into a reserve account and will be used to offset future increases in contribution rates.

	Total Pension	\$ Change in Total	Amortization	Retirement	\$ change in
Year	Obligation	Obligation	Amount	Payment	Payment
2000	\$643,194		-	\$643,194	
2001	\$1,320,535	\$677,341	-	\$1,320,535	\$677,341
2002	\$1,347,950	\$27,415	-	\$1,347,950	\$27,415
2003	\$6,835,144	\$5,487,194	-	\$6,835,144	\$5,487,194
2004	\$13,588,613	\$6,753,469	-	\$13,588,613	\$6,753,469
2005	\$12,826,189	(\$762,424)	-	\$12,826,189	(\$762,424)
2006	\$12,426,562	(\$399,627)	-	\$12,426,562	(\$399,627)
2007	\$11,376,214	(\$1,050,348)	-	\$11,376,214	(\$1,050,348)
2008	\$11,669,562	\$293,348	-	\$11,669,562	\$293,348
2009	\$8,991,399	(\$2,678,163)	-	\$8,991,399	(\$2,678,163)
2010	\$15,162,849	\$6,171,450	-	\$15,162,849	\$6,171,450
2011	\$18,101,692	\$2,938,843	\$4,468,997	\$13,632,695	(\$1,530,154)
2012	\$22,494,064	\$4,392,372	\$7,611,788	\$14,882,276	\$1,249,581
2013	\$26,038,368	\$3,544,304	\$9,453,260	\$16,585,108	\$1,702,832
2014	\$27,014,378	\$976,010	\$7,329,977	\$19,684,401	\$3,099,293
2015	\$24,119,652	(\$2,894,726)	\$3,135,182	\$20,984,470	\$1,300,069
2016	\$24,941,092	\$821,440	\$2,212,804	\$22,728,288	\$1,743,818
2017	\$22,741,865	(\$2,199,227)	\$0	\$22,741,865	\$13,577
2018	\$22,048,251	(\$693,614)	\$0	\$22,048,251	(\$693,614)
2019	\$22,425,774	\$377,523	\$0	\$22,425,774	\$377,523
2020 Estimate	\$22,738,657	\$312,883	\$891,738	\$21,846,919	(\$578,855)
2021 Projection	\$23,224,893	\$486,236	\$974,642	\$22,250,251	\$403,332

As can be seen in the chart above, our retirement system contributions are highly variable from year to year. Since 2009, our retirement system obligation has increased from less than \$9 million to more than \$27 million in 2014. Unfortunately, even though our yearly pension obligation based on salaries and contribution rates is declining, the full benefit of that decrease is offset by payments from past amortizations.

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According to recent trends, Albany County's pension obligation for 2021 is a projected total of \$23,224,893, of which only \$974,642 can be amortized under the original contribution stabilization program for an out of pocket expense of \$22,250,251. The 2020 bill will also contain payments totaling \$3.79 million for prior amortizations and installment payments. Albany County has taken advantage of prepaying the retirement obligation over the past three years. This totals to a savings of \$517,547 combined for the taxpayer. If trends continue, Albany County can save an additional \$175,177 during 2019 – bringing the total to \$692,724. Albany County has also paid down the amortization liability, from a high of over \$31 Million to \$14.7 Million with the inclusion of the payment from 2021 Projection.