

# U.S. government's shadow balance sheet

The U.S. government is understating how much debt it actually has, according to a new report\*. In addition to \$16.7 trillion of debt, unfunded liabilities exceed \$70 trillion – over \$615,000 for every household

**\$1.86 trillion:** Liabilities of government trust funds including *Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund* and *Military Retirement Fund*

**\$7.52 trillion:** Housing related commitments. Includes \$6.112tn debts of mortgage agencies *Fannie Mae* and *Freddie Mac*, and \$1.408tn of “guaranteed” mortgages

**\$7.406 trillion:** Value of bank deposits insured by *Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.*

**\$1.128 trillion:** *Federal Reserve* emergency lending during 2008 financial crisis

**\$26.5 trillion:** Amount *Social Security Administration* needs to invest to pay for future benefits

**\$325 billion:** Government-backed loan guarantees (e.g. student loans)

**\$27.6 trillion:** Funds needed to invest to pay for future *Medicare* costs

Total  
**\$72.339 trillion**

Official government debt  
**\$16.74 trillion**

\*Paper by University of California-San Diego professor **James Hamilton**

**Other estimates of shadow debt:** **Christopher Cox**, Bingham Consulting, and **Bill Archer**, PricewaterhouseCoopers **\$86.8 trillion**

Boston University professor **Laurence J. Kotlikoff** **\$211 trillion**

Sources: University of California-San Diego, Wall Street Journal, PRB

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