

Hellsgate Fire District Public Safety Personnel Retirement System Pension Funding Policy Fiscal Year Ending 6/30/2024

The intent of this policy is to clearly communicate the Fire Board's pension funding objectives and its commitment to our employees and the sound financial management of the Hellsgate Fire District and to comply with A.R.S. §38-863.01.

Several terms are used throughout this policy:

Unfunded Actuarial Accrued Liability (UAAL) – Is the difference between trust assets and the estimated future cost of pensions earned by employees. This UAAL results from actual results (interest earnings, member mortality, disability rates, etc.) being different from the assumptions used in previous actuarial valuations.

Annual Required Contribution (ARC) – Is the annual amount required to pay into the pension funds, as determined through annual actuarial valuations. It is comprised of two primary components: normal pension cost – which is the estimated cost of pension benefits earned by employees in the current year; and amortization of UAAL – which is the cost needed to cover the unfunded portion of pensions earned by employees in previous years. The UAAL is collected over a period of time referred to as the amortization period. The ARC is a percentage of the current payroll.

Funded Ratio – Is a ratio of fund assets to actuarial accrued liability. The higher the ratio the better funded the pension is with 100% being fully funded.

Intergenerational equity – Ensures that no generation is burdened by substantially more or less pension costs than past or future generations.

Hellsgate Fire District's firefighters who are regularly assigned hazardous duty participate in the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS).

Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS)

PSPRS is administered as an agent multiple-employer pension plan. An agent multiple-employer plan has two main functions: 1) to commingle assets of all plans under its administration, thus achieving economy of scale for more cost-efficient investments and invest those assets for the benefit of all members under its administration and 2) serve as the statewide uniform administrator for the distribution of benefits.

Under an agent multiple employer plan, each agency participating in the plan has an individual trust fund reflecting that agencies' assets and liabilities. Under this plan all contributions are deposited to and distributions are made from that fund's assets, each fund has its own funded ratio and contribution rate, and each fund has a unique annual actuarial valuation. Hellsgate Fire District has one trust fund for fire employees.

The Fire Board formally accepts the assets, liabilities, and current funding ratio of the Hellsgate Fire District's PSPRS trust funds from the June 30, 2023, actuarial valuation, which are detailed below.

Trust Fund	Assets	Accrued Liability	Unfunded Actuarial Accrued Liability	Funded Ratio
Tier 1 & 2	\$4,644,919	\$4,896,065	\$251,146	94.9%
Tier 3	\$119,101,476	\$110,961,191	(\$8,140,285)	107.3%
Hellsgate Fire District Totals	\$123,746,395	\$115,857,256	(\$7,889,139)	106.8%

PSPRS Funding Goal

Pensions that are less than fully funded place the cost of service provided in earlier periods (amortization of UAAL) on the current taxpayers. Fully funded pension plans are the best way to achieve taxpayer and member intergenerational equity. Most funds in PSPRS are significantly underfunded and falling well short of the goal of intergenerational equity.

The Fire Board's PSPRS funding ratio goal is to reach 100% (fully funded).

The Fire Board established this goal for the following reasons:

- The PSPRS trust funds represent only the Hellsgate Fire District's liability.
- The fluctuating cost of an UAAL causes strain on the Hellsgate Fire District's budget, affecting our ability to provide services.
- A fully funded pension is the best way to achieve taxpayer and member intergenerational equity.

The Fire District issued Certificates of Participation on December 23, 2021, to pay off the unfunded liability and established a contingency fund to set aside funds in the event additional unfunded liabilities are incurred. To aid in preventing additional unfunded liabilities from developing, the Fire Board has taken the following actions to achieve this goal:

- Maintain ARC payment from operating revenues – The Board is committed to maintaining the full ARC payment (normal cost) from operating funds. The estimated ARC for FY 2025 is \$100,711 and will be able to be paid from operating funds without diminishing Hellsgate Fire District's services.
- New UAAL amounts presented in the June 30th, 2022 Actuarial have been realized after Certificates of Participation were completed – The Board is committed to maintaining a fully funded pension with no UAAL. A contingency fund was established for this purpose. New assumptions are pushing past prior expectations and contingencies set up. Placing the district in a position to carry a UAAL. The new estimated UAAL for the district is \$251,146. The FY 2025 amount of \$20,034 will be paid from operating funds without diminishing Hellsgate Fire District's services.
- Additionally, HFD will make a deposit of \$220,000 to contribute towards the new UAAL figure of \$251,146 to be drawn from the contingency account set up with the Certificates of Participation to alleviate future year budget constraints due to the UAAL.

Based on these actions the Fire Board plans to achieve its goal of 100% funding by June 30, 2051, in accordance with the amortization timeline set forth by the PSPRS June 30, 2023, Actuarial Valuation.

**Hellsgate Fire District