

Appendix A

Scope of Report & Methodology

This report provides a summary of the financial operations of the 185 Minnesota cities over 2,500 in population for calendar year 1998. Information concerning Minnesota cities with populations of less than 2,500 is contained in a separate report.

Revenues and expenditures for governmental functions (including expendable trust funds) are summarized by population classes based on the 1990 populations from the Bureau of the Census. The 1998 populations are from "Minnesota Populations, 1998," issued by the Office of the State Demographer. Population classes correspond to the legal definitions of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th class cities. The 4th class cities are further divided between those over and under 2,500 in population. Starting in 1991, data for the cities under 2,500 are published in a separate report.

The sources of the data are annual city financial reporting forms, audits by public accountants and the State Auditor, county auditors' reports of indebtedness, and the Department of Revenue records of state shared tax distributions, grants, aids, taxable valuations, and tax levies.

Cities with populations greater than 2,500 are required by Minn. Stat. §§ 471.695 - 471.699 to submit comprehensive annual financial reports prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) which require the modified accrual basis of accounting for governmental funds and the accrual basis for enterprise funds.

This publication includes the financial operations of the governmental funds for each city. The governmental funds are the General Fund, Special Revenue Funds, Capital Projects Funds, and Debt Service Funds. This data is outlined in the summary table of revenues and expenditures and in the five-year comparison table of revenues and expenditures.

In conformance with GASB Statement No. 14 "Defining the Governmental Reporting Entity," effective in 1993, all city functions over which city officials exercise oversight responsibility are included in the city's financial statements. As a result of Statement No. 14, some cities have included HRA and economic development activities in their financial statements.

Beginning in 1985, principal payments in debt service funds have been included as expenditures. Effective in 1987, principal paid on special assessment bonds have also been included. Total expenditures (including principal payments) should not be compared to years prior to 1987, or distortions will result.

On Table 21, there is a column entitled "Other Long-Term Debt." Other long-term debt consists primarily of long-term lease agreements, installment purchase contracts, and notes.

This report separates all reported enterprise funds from the city governmental funds and expendable trust funds. Minnesota cities operate many types of public service enterprises. The operations of nine major enterprise funds common to most cities are summarized and presented separately. Enterprise funds whose operations are exclusive to culture and recreational activities are combined together into "Culture and Recreation Enterprise Operations." All other enterprise funds are combined together as "Other City Enterprises." In this report, electric utilities that operate generation and distribution systems are combined with those operating distribution systems only. Footnotes used in the analysis of the enterprise operations are described at the end of the enterprise fund section.

The financial operations of the 828 municipal public service enterprises are presented in eleven tables (10 through 20). The enterprises furnish many types of services and operate wholly or in large part with revenues derived from the sale of goods or services. When possible, each type of enterprise is presented separately in this report. In some cities, the operations of two or more enterprises are combined. For example, the functions of sanitary sewers, sewage disposal, and the operation of the water utility may be combined. This treatment is not in conformity with preferred reporting practices, and the combined enterprises are disclosed with appropriate footnotes.

The data for the governmental funds consists of the primary government which in some cities includes component units. Commencing in 1994, discreetly presented component units are included in the governmental funds. Those discreetly presented component units for enterprise operations are reported in the enterprise section of this report.