

# Annual Repayment Limit

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## **What is the Annual Repayment Limit?**

The Annual Repayment Limit (ARL) may be generally summarized as the maximum amount that a municipality in Ontario can pay each year (without first going to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal) in principal and interest payments for its long-term debt and other long-term financial commitments.

For most municipalities (not including Toronto) the ARL is set at 25 percent of their annual own-source revenues (such as property taxes, user fees and investment income), less their annual existing long-term debt service costs and payments for other long-term financial obligations. Municipalities may only exceed their ARL with the prior approval of the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT).

For more information about the ARL, please see O. Reg. 403/02 (Debt and Financial Obligation Limits) on <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/020403>.

## **Role of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing**

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing issues an updated ARL statement to municipalities once a year. The ARL statement is typically sent to each municipality at the beginning of the calendar year and reflects the most recent financial information submitted by the municipality in its Financial Information Return (FIR), available on <https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/fir/Welcome.htm>.

## **How Does the Ministry Calculate the ARL? \***

The calculation of the ARL involves a number of steps. The ministry first determines the municipality's annual own-source revenue from sources such as property taxes, user fees and investment income. The ministry then calculates the amount that is 25 percent of the municipality's annual own-source revenue. Finally, the ministry subtracts the municipality's annual existing debt service costs and payments for other long-term financial obligations from the 25 percent figure to arrive at the ARL.

The ministry calculates 25 percent of the municipality's annual own-source revenue:

$$\begin{array}{|c|} \hline \text{Municipal} \\ \text{Own-Source Revenue} \\ \text{(e.g. Property Tax, User Fees)} \\ \hline \end{array} \times 25 \% = \begin{array}{|c|} \hline 25 \% \text{ of} \\ \text{Own-Source Revenue} \\ \hline \end{array}$$

The ministry subtracts municipal debt and other financial obligations to determine the ARL:

$$\begin{array}{|c|} \hline 25 \% \text{ of} \\ \text{Own-Source} \\ \text{Revenue} \\ \hline \end{array} - \begin{array}{|c|} \hline \text{Annual Payments for} \\ \text{Existing Debt and Other} \\ \text{Financial Obligations} \\ \text{(Principal + Interest)} \\ \hline \end{array} = \begin{array}{|c|} \hline \text{Annual Repayment Limit} \\ \hline \end{array}$$

For details on specific municipalities, please see <https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/fir/ViewARL.htm>

*\*For illustrative purposes only*

## Role of Municipalities

Municipalities in Ontario are responsible for ensuring that they do not exceed their ARL. When a municipality proposes long-term borrowing (or other long-term financial obligation), the municipal treasurer is responsible for updating the limit provided by the ministry. The treasurer must determine if there is capacity within the municipality's ARL to undertake the planned borrowing.

## Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT)

Applications and appeals in relation to a range of matters are brought before the LPAT (formerly known as the Ontario Municipal Board). In cases where municipalities intend to borrow or commit to amounts above their updated ARL, they must first seek the approval of the LPAT. Learn more at <http://elto.gov.on.ca/tribunals/lpat>.