

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

City of Lancaster Non-Uniformed Pension Plan Lancaster County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019

February 2021



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



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**TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR
AUDITOR GENERAL**

The Honorable Mayor and City Council
City of Lancaster
Lancaster County
Lancaster, PA 17602

We have conducted a compliance audit of the City of Lancaster Non-Uniformed Pension Plan for the period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019. We also evaluated compliance with some requirements subsequent to that period when possible. The audit was conducted pursuant to authority derived from the Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act (Act 205 of 1984, as amended, 53 P.S. § 895.402(j)), which requires the Auditor General, as deemed necessary, to audit every municipality which receives general municipal pension system state aid and every municipal pension plan and fund in which general municipal pension system state aid is deposited. The audit was not conducted, nor was it required to be, in accordance with Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. We planned and performed the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our finding and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our finding and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The objectives of the audit were:

1. To determine if municipal officials took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior report; and
2. To determine if the pension plan was administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies.

Our audit was limited to the areas related to the objectives identified above. To determine if municipal officials took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior report, we inquired of plan officials and evaluated supporting documentation provided by officials evidencing that the suggested corrective action has been appropriately taken. To determine whether the pension plan was administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies, our methodology included the following:

- We determined whether state aid was properly determined and deposited in accordance with Act 205 requirements by verifying the annual deposit date of state aid and determining whether deposits were made within 30 days of receipt for all years within the period under audit.
- We determined whether annual employer contributions were calculated and deposited in accordance with the plan's governing document and applicable laws and regulations by examining the municipality's calculation of the plan's annual financial requirements and minimum municipal obligation (MMO) and comparing these calculated amounts to amounts actually budgeted and deposited into the pension plan as evidenced by supporting documentation.
- We determined that there were no employee contributions required by the plan's governing document and applicable laws and regulations for the years covered by our audit period.
- We determined whether retirement benefits calculated for plan members who retired, elected to vest, and separated employment and received a lump-sum distribution during the current audit period represent payments to all (and only) those entitled to receive them and were properly determined and disbursed in accordance with the plan's governing document, applicable laws, and regulations by recalculating the amount of the monthly pension benefits due to the retired individuals and comparing these amounts to supporting documentation evidencing amounts determined and actually paid to the recipients.
- We determined whether the January 1, 2019 actuarial valuation report was prepared and submitted by March 31, 2020, in accordance with Act 205 and whether selected information provided on this report is accurate, complete, and in accordance with plan provisions to ensure compliance for participation in the state aid program by comparing selected information to supporting source documentation.

The City of Lancaster contracted with an independent certified public accounting firm for annual audits of its basic financial statements which are available at the city's offices. Those financial statements were not audited by us and, accordingly, we express no opinion or other form of assurance on them.

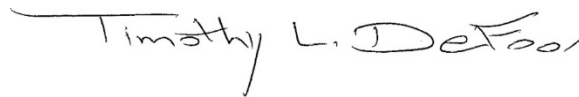
City officials are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the City of Lancaster Non-Uniformed Pension Plan is administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies. As previously described, we tested transactions, interviewed selected officials, and performed procedures to the extent necessary to provide reasonable assurance of detecting instances of noncompliance with legal and regulatory requirements or noncompliance with provisions of contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies that are significant within the context of the audit objectives.

The results of our procedures indicated that, in all significant respects, the City of Lancaster Non-Uniformed Pension Plan was administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies, except as noted in the following finding further discussed later in this report:

Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Incorrect Data
On Certification Form AG 385 Resulting In An Overpayment Of State
Aid

The accompanying supplementary information is presented for purposes of additional analysis. We did not audit the information or conclude on it and, accordingly, express no form of assurance on it.

The contents of this report were discussed with officials of the City of Lancaster and, where appropriate, their responses have been included in the report. We would like to thank city officials for the cooperation extended to us during the conduct of the audit.



TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR
Auditor General

February 10, 2021

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BACKGROUND

On December 18, 1984, the Pennsylvania Legislature adopted the Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act (P.L. 1005, No. 205, as amended, 53 P.S. § 895.101 et seq.). The Act established mandatory actuarial reporting and funding requirements and a uniform basis for the distribution of state aid to Pennsylvania's public pension plans.

Annual state aid allocations are provided from a 2 percent foreign (out-of-state) casualty insurance premium tax, a portion of the foreign (out-of-state) fire insurance tax designated for paid firefighters and any investment income earned on the collection of these taxes. Generally, municipal pension plans established prior to December 18, 1984, are eligible for state aid. For municipal pension plans established after that date, the sponsoring municipality must fund the plan for three plan years before it becomes eligible for state aid. In accordance with Act 205, a municipality's annual state aid allocation cannot exceed its actual pension costs.

In addition to Act 205, the City of Lancaster Non-Uniformed Pension Plan is also governed by implementing regulations published at Title 16, Part IV of the Pennsylvania Code and applicable provisions of various other state statutes including, but not limited to, the following:

Act 399 - Optional Third Class City Charter Law, Act of July 15, 1957 (P.L. 901, No. 399), as amended, 53 P.S. § 41101 et seq.

The City of Lancaster Non-Uniformed Pension Plan is a single-employer defined benefit pension plan locally controlled by the provisions of Resolution No. 17-2004, which adopted the provisions of a separately executed cash balance plan agreement, as amended and restated effective January 1, 2004. The plan is also affected by the provisions of collective bargaining agreements between the city and its non-uniformed employees. The plan was established January 1, 1957. Active members are not required to contribute to the plan. As of December 31, 2019, the plan had 316 active members, 31 terminated members eligible for vested benefits in the future, and 67 retirees receiving pension benefits from the plan.

CITY OF LANCASTER NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

Noncompliance With Prior Recommendation

The City of Lancaster has not complied with the prior recommendation concerning the following as further discussed in the Finding and Recommendation section of this report:

- Incorrect Data On Certification Form AG 385 Resulting In An Underpayment Of State Aid

CITY OF LANCASTER NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Recommendation – Incorrect Data On Certification Form AG 385 Resulting In An Overpayment Of State Aid

Condition: Although the city was subsequently reimbursed for the total underpayment of state aid disclosed in the prior audit report, the city again failed to implement adequate internal control procedures to ensure compliance with the instructions that accompany Certification Form AG 385 to assist them in accurately reporting the required pension plan data. The city certified an ineligible councilperson (1 unit) and overstated payroll by \$8,000 on the Certification Form AG 385 filed in 2020. The data contained on this certification form is based on prior calendar year information.

Criteria: Act 205 defines a Municipality as follows:

Any city, borough, incorporated town, township, home rule municipality, association of municipalities cooperating pursuant to the act of July 12, 1972 (P.L. 762, No. 180), referred to as the Intergovernmental Cooperation Law, or authority established by the actions of any county, city, borough, town or township or jointly by any such political subdivisions.

In addition, Act 205 defines a Municipal Employee as follows:

Any person who provides regular services for a municipality in return for compensation from the municipality.

Furthermore, Act 205 defines a Pension Plan or System as follows:

The various aspects of the relationship between a municipality and its employees with respect to the retirement coverage provided by a municipality to the employees.

Pursuant to Act 205, at Section 402(e)(2), in order to be eligible for certification, an employee must have been employed on a full-time basis for at least six consecutive months and must have been participating in a pension plan during the certification year. Additionally, the instructions accompanying Certification Form AG 385 prescribes the following criteria for certification purposes:

Each Non-Uniformed Employee MUST meet each of these conditions anytime between January 1st and December 31st of the *prior calendar year*:

- a. Be an active, full-time non-uniformed employee employed by the municipality.
- b. Be employed for any six (6) consecutive months during the *prior calendar year*.
- c. Work not less than 35 hours per week.
- d. Be a member of a non-uniformed employee pension plan and meet all of its requirements.

CITY OF LANCASTER NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – (Continued)

Section 402(j) further states, in part:

The Auditor General shall have the duty of administering the General Municipal Pension System State Aid Program. The Auditor General may promulgate rules and regulations necessary for the efficient administration of this program and may specify the form and content of any forms applicable to the program.

Although the act does not specifically define what constitutes full-time, based on past practice and Section 402(j) above, the department has established that on average, a full-time employee is one who has been employed continuously by the municipality (i.e., performs services each week on a continuous and consistent basis, averaging approximately 35 hours per week or more and receives other fringe benefits that similarly situated employees classified as full-time and employed by the municipality are entitled).

Cause: The detailed personnel roster report generated by the city’s payroll system for use in preparing the AG 385 inadvertently included the councilperson and the city lacked adequate internal control procedures, such as having another individual review and verify the accuracy of the data certified, to ensure compliance with the instructions that accompanied Certification Form AG 385 prior to submission.

Effect: The data submitted on this certification form is used, in part, to calculate the state aid due to the city for distribution to its pension plans. Because the city’s state aid allocations were based on unit value, the incorrect certification of pension data affected the city’s state aid allocations, as identified below:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Units Overstated</u>	<u>Unit Value</u>	<u>State Aid Overpayment</u>
2020	1	\$ 4,924	\$ 4,924

In addition, the city used the overpayment of state aid to pay the minimum municipal obligation (MMO) due to the non-uniformed pension plan; therefore, if the reimbursement to the Commonwealth is made from the pension plan, the plan’s MMO will not be fully paid.

Recommendation: We recommend that the total excess state aid, in the amount of \$4,924, plus interest, be returned to the Commonwealth. A check in this amount, with interest compounded annually from date of receipt to date of repayment, at a rate earned by the pension plan, should be made payable to: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and mailed to: Department of the Auditor General, Municipal Pension & Fire Relief Programs Unit, 321 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120. A copy of the interest calculation must be submitted along with the check.

CITY OF LANCASTER NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – (Continued)

We also recommend that in the future, plan officials establish adequate internal control procedures, such as verifying the accuracy of information generated from the city’s payroll system and having at least 2 individuals review the data certified, to ensure compliance with the instructions that accompany Certification Form AG 385 to assist them in accurately reporting the required pension data.

In addition, if the reimbursement to the Commonwealth is made from non-uniformed pension plan funds, we recommend that any resulting MMO deficiency be paid to the pension plan with interest, at a rate earned by the pension plan.

Management’s Response: Municipal officials agreed with the finding without exception.

Auditor’s Conclusion: Compliance will be monitored subsequent to the release of the audit report and through our next audit of the pension plan.

CITY OF LANCASTER NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN
 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
 (UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF FUNDING PROGRESS

Historical trend information about the plan is presented herewith as supplementary information. It is intended to help users assess the plan’s funding status on a going-concern basis, assess progress made in accumulating assets to pay benefits when due, and make comparisons with other state and local government retirement systems.

The actuarial information is required by Act 205 biennially. The historical information, beginning as of January 1, 2015, is as follows:

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Actuarial Valuation Date	Actuarial Value of Assets (a)	Actuarial Accrued Liability (AAL) - Entry Age (b)	Unfunded (Assets in Excess of) Actuarial Accrued Liability (b) - (a)	Funded Ratio (a)/(b)
01-01-15	\$ 11,378,965	\$ 14,549,372	\$ 3,170,407	78.2%
01-01-17	13,176,339	16,682,745	3,506,406	79.0%
01-01-19	15,018,571	19,293,484	4,274,913	77.8%

Note: The market value of the plan’s assets at 01-01-15, 01-01-17, and 01-01-19 have been adjusted to reflect the smoothing of gains and/or losses subject to a corridor between 80 to 120 percent of the market value of assets. This method will lower contributions in years of less than expected returns and increase contributions in years of greater than expected returns. The net effect over long periods of time is to have less variance in contribution levels from year to year.

CITY OF LANCASTER NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
(UNAUDITED)

The comparability of trend information is affected by changes in actuarial assumptions, benefit provisions, actuarial funding methods, accounting policies, and other changes. Those changes usually affect trends in contribution requirements and in ratios that use the actuarial accrued liability as a factor.

Analysis of the dollar amount of the actuarial value of assets, actuarial accrued liability, and unfunded (assets in excess of) actuarial accrued liability in isolation can be misleading. Expressing the actuarial value of assets as a percentage of the actuarial accrued liability (Column 4) provides one indication of the plan's funding status on a going-concern basis. Analysis of this percentage, over time, indicates whether the system is becoming financially stronger or weaker. Generally, the greater this percentage, the stronger the plan.

CITY OF LANCASTER NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN
 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
 (UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF CONTRIBUTIONS

Year Ended December 31	Actuarially Determined Contribution	Actual Contributions	Contribution Deficiency (Excess)	Covered- Employee Payroll*	Contributions as a Percentage of Covered- Employee Payroll*
2010	\$ 499,125	\$ 499,125	\$ -		
2011	504,280	504,280	-		
2012	516,512	516,512	-		
2013	658,895	658,895	-		
2014	697,516	697,517	(1)	\$ 13,168,505	5.12%
2015	900,704	900,704	-	14,312,665	6.29%
2016	931,774	931,774	-	15,105,036	6.17%
2017	1,050,161	1,050,161	-	16,203,075	6.48%
2018	1,097,191	1,097,191	-	16,675,240	6.58%
2019	1,221,228	1,221,228	-	17,186,114	7.11%

* This schedule is presented pursuant to the implementation of GASB Statement No. 67, *Financial Reporting for Pension Plans* by reporting entities responsible for administering the pension plan to improve financial reporting by state and local governmental pension plans. Due to the statement being implemented only recently, the amount of Covered-Employee Payroll was not provided for years prior to 2014.

CITY OF LANCASTER NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN
 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
 NOTES TO SUPPLEMENTARY SCHEDULES
 (UNAUDITED)

The information presented in the supplementary schedules was determined as part of the actuarial valuation at the date indicated. Additional information as of the latest actuarial valuation date follows:

Actuarial valuation date	January 1, 2019
Actuarial cost method	Entry age normal
Amortization method	Level dollar closed
Remaining amortization period	12 years
Asset valuation method	Plan assets are valued using the method described in Section 210 of Act 205, as amended, subject to a corridor of 80-120% of the market value of assets
Actuarial assumptions:	
Investment rate of return	7.5% - Preretirement, 6.5% - Postretirement
Projected salary increases *	4.5%
Cost-of-living adjustments	None assumed

* Includes inflation at 3.0%

CITY OF LANCASTER NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom W. Wolf
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

The Honorable Danene Sorace
Mayor

Mr. Ismail Smith Wade-El
Council President

Mr. E. William Andrews
City Controller

Mr. Patrick Hopkins
Director of Administrative Services

Ms. Van Huynh
Deputy Director, Finance

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