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Helpful Tips

1. When you come across a hyperlink in this document press and hold the [Ctrl] key and click the link ([Cmd] on a Mac). The link will open in a new tab instead of in your current window, taking you away from the page you're viewing. This will allow you to return to your document and continue reading where you left off.
2. Find key words in the document using the [Ctrl] + [F] keys ([Cmd] + [F] on a Mac). These will bring up the search feature in your web browser to search your document.

General Information/Responsibility for Filing – All Entities

Q: What is the Hinkle Annual Financial Data Reporting System?

A: The Hinkle Annual Financial Data Reporting System (Hinkle System) is an application that allows certain financial statement, debt, and demographic data to be entered and/or uploaded and transmitted to the Auditor of State (AOS) to satisfy the filing requirements prescribed by the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) and the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC).

Q: What statute(s) requires my entity to file via the Hinkle System?

A: ORC [§117.38](#) requires every public office, other than a state agency, to file a financial report for each fiscal year. According to ORC [§117.01\(D\)](#), “public office” means any state agency; public institution; political subdivision; or other organized body, office, agency, institution, or entity established by the laws of the State of Ohio for the exercise of any function of government. Other entities, although not public offices, are required to file with the AOS under specific ORC sections.

ORC §117.38 also provides the Auditor of State may prescribe forms by rule or may issue guidelines, or both, for such reports. OAC [117-2-03](#) requires the reports to be filed electronically via the annual financial data reporting system.

For additional information, refer to [AOS Bulletin 2015-007](#), “Required Annual Financial Report Filing by Public Offices and Other Entities Required to File.”

Q: What requires an agricultural society to file via the Hinkle System?

A: OAC [117-10-01](#) requires county agricultural societies and independent agricultural societies to report in accordance with the AOS manual “[Uniform System of Accounting for Agricultural Societies.](#)” Appendix A of the Ohio Compliance Supplement Chapter 1, Section D references the requirement to file in accordance with ORC 117.38, as described above.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers – 2023

Q: May my entity’s required annual financial report be submitted by mailing the report or attaching the document to an email?

A: No. All entities must file via the Hinkle System, unless a small government that does not use the AOS Uniform Accounting Network (UAN), has received a waiver from the AOS (refer to the question related to waivers below).

Q: My entity does not have a computer/internet access to file via the Hinkle System. Is there an alternative method to file?

A: The Hinkle System filing is required only once per year. Even if your entity does not use a computer to maintain financial records, this once-a-year filing can be accomplished by using public computers at most libraries or via a home computer of the fiscal officer/board members.

If a small, non-UAN government entity is unable to access the internet to file electronically, an Electronic Filing Waiver Request for Small Governments form may be completed and submitted for consideration by the AOS. Waivers, if granted, are applicable only to one financial reporting year only and must include the steps the entity will take to assure future electronic filing. The [Electronic Filing Waiver Requests for Small Governments.pdf](#) is available on the [Annual Financial Reporting](#) page under Forms.

Q: The fiscal officers for small entities are not CPAs and do not have the expertise to prepare their entities notes to the financial statements. Why are they required to prepare notes to the financial statements?

A: The notes to the financial statements are part of the financial statements and are the responsibility of the entity. The entity may seek assistance in completion of the financial statements and notes to the financial statements, but must be able to understand the financial statements and notes to the financial statements. The AOS has provided [additional guidance](#) and a [training video](#) to help small entities prepare their financial statements and notes to the financial statements. For specific questions related to preparing financial statements and notes to the financial statements, fill out the [Inquiry Form](#).

Q: Our entity has qualified for “agreed-upon procedures” (AUP) or a “basic audit” instead of a regular GAGAS audit. The AUP or basic audit report does not include notes to the financial statements. Why does my entity have to prepare/file notes to the financial statements if they will not be used by our auditors?

A: First, the primary purpose for an entity to create financial statements is to be accountable to your constituents. Remember, your entity is required to make your financial statements available for public inspection. The statement required to be included on the face of every financial statement (for example “The notes to the financial statements are an integral part of this statement”) refers the

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reader to the notes for information that cannot be determined simply by looking at the financial statements.

Second, to qualify for reduced audit services (e.g., AUP or basic audit), the entity is required to file their final, unaudited financial statements (including notes to the financial statements) via the Hinkle System to be considered “auditable.” Unauditable entities are not eligible for reduced audit services.

Q: The county auditor serves as the fiscal agent for several entities. Since these entity types have a filing requirement via the Hinkle System and are required to prepare notes to the financial statements as part of the filing, who is responsible for preparing and submitting the filings to the Hinkle System for these entities?

A: Overall, the entity must file, but the County may have a statutory responsibility to serve as the fiscal agent. Who prepares the financial statements and notes for these entities needs to be decided by the County and the entity. It may be a joint effort. The Hinkle System emails/links can be sent to either party by updating the “My Profile” section under the entity’s AOS eServices account. [Login Now >>](#)

Q: My entity is the fiscal agent for a Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) and is presented on the financial statements of my entity. Does submitting my entity’s financial statements via the Hinkle System also meet the filing requirements of the JEDD?

A: No. As stated in [Auditor of State Bulletin 2015-007](#), “any entity with a filing requirement must file a separate financial report. Inclusion in the financial statements of another reporting entity does not satisfy the filing requirement.” The JEDD is a separate legal entity with its own reporting and filing requirement even if it is reported as an agency fund of your entity or meets the requirements to be presented as a discretely presented or blended component unit of your entity.

Q: Will the Hinkle System be updated for new GASB and reporting standards?

A: Yes. The Hinkle System will be updated annually by the AOS’s Office for any new standards, if applicable.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers – 2023

Q: I use the Auditor of State’s Uniform Accounting Network (UAN) as my accounting software. Can UAN file my entity’s Hinkle System filing on my entity’s behalf?

A: Yes. UAN will file on behalf of clients to meet the filing requirement from the client’s uploaded year-end AFR file or mailed CD if the client reports on an OCBOA Modified Cash, OCBOA Cash or Regulatory Cash accounting basis. The Year End Checklist has been modified to ask for demographics and debt information, if applicable, as part of the final close-out procedures.

Each UAN client will also need to create and import their notes to the financial statements into the AFR as part of their year-end process with UAN. UAN will combine the financial statements and notes to the financial statements and complete the entity’s Hinkle System filing. If a UAN entity is statutorily mandated to report on a GAAP accounting basis, it will automatically be opted out of UAN filing on its behalf. If an UAN entity is non-governmental or not-for-profit; did not maintain records in UAN for the entire reporting period; or chooses to report on a basis of accounting for which UAN cannot generate financial statements, the entity should submit a request to opt out of UAN filing on their behalf by logging into the entity’s AOS eServices account and accessing the entity’s Hinkle System link.

[Login Now >>](#)

Once the opt-out is approved by the AOS, the UAN entity will receive an “override password” to enter when submitting its annual financial report (AFR) to UAN; therefore, the opt-out must be approved BEFORE the entity submits its AFR to UAN.


Q: My entity had little to no activity during the reporting period. Is there an alternative to preparing financial statements and notes to the financial statements in order to meet the filing requirement?

A: If your entity has been officially created but did not function (i.e., had no activity, assets, or liabilities) during the reporting period OR if your entity is a community improvement corporation (CIC), including economic development corporations and land reutilization corporations, a special improvement district (SID) or a joint economic development district/zone (JEDD/JEDZ) and had little to no activity during the reporting period, you may qualify to complete and submit the Hinkle System Alternate Report rather than full financial statements and notes to the financial statements. This option is ONLY for entities that meet the specific criteria included in the Alternate Report. Entities that are not eligible will be non-compliant if they file the Alternate Report rather than complete financial statements and notes to the financial statements.

For additional information, refer to the “Hinkle System Alternate Report and FAQs.pdf” available on the [Annual Financial Reporting](#) page under forms.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers – 2023

Q: After reviewing these FAQs, I still have questions. To whom should questions concerning the Hinkle System and/or filing with the AOS be addressed?

A: The Hinkle System has “Help” features, identified by a  placed in areas where questions are anticipated. If you encounter difficulties or have further questions concerning the Hinkle System or the submission process, contact AOS by filling out this [Inquiry Form](#).

Q: If I file comparative statements and have been previously subject to an AUP but am now subject to a full audit, can I still file comparative statements?

A: You can; however, as your entity received an AUP in the previous period, no opinion was rendered on the financial statements; therefore, in the current period, auditors will not be able to give an opinion on the first year in the comparative statements without performing additional procedures on that information.

Maintaining Entity Contact Information on File With the AOS

Q: If an entity’s fiscal officer changes, what is the appropriate manner to have contact information updated to ensure the entity-specific link is received by the new fiscal officer?

A: Follow the “**Notification of Change in Fiscal Officer**” instructions on the [Required Filings & AOS Notifications](#) page (in the first group). There you will find steps on how to change the fiscal officer information within eServices.

Accessing the Hinkle System/Responsibility for Filing

Q: How do I submit my entity’s required annual financial report to the AOS as required by the ORC via the Hinkle System?

A: Each entity required to file its annual financial report (AFR) with the AOS will be provided an email with directions to login to the entity’s eServices account to access the Hinkle System entity-specific filing link for the filing year. This Hinkle System submission will fulfill the entity’s AFR requirement under Ohio law.

The contact person for every entity with a filing requirement is emailed shortly after the end of the entity’s reporting period, as well as in reminder and late-notice emails. Simply log into the entity’s eServices account and link the Hinkle System tab on the left of the webpage to access the Hinkle System for filing your entity’s submission. The entity name and reporting period will appear at the top of the screen.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers – 2023


Q: If our entity’s financial statements are prepared by our fiscal agent (such as the county that prepares a board of health’s financial statements), can the entity-specific link be sent to our fiscal agent rather than our fiscal officer?

A: Yes, if another employee within your entity is responsible for preparing/filing your entity’s financial statements or another entity serves as your entity’s fiscal agent and prepares your financial statements, you may designate a contact person to receive emails from the Hinkle System. Log into your entity’s eServices account and click “My Profile” in the left menu. Create an additional user, designating the type as either “Hinkle System Reporting” (fiscal agent or entity employee) or “Hinkle System Reporting + eServices” (entity employee with multiple responsibilities). [Login Now >>](#)

Note: Each entity is permitted to designate only one Hinkle System user in eServices. If a Hinkle System user is designated, all Hinkle System emails will be sent to that user. The entity’s primary contact will continue to have access to the Hinkle System links and filings via eServices but will no longer receive Hinkle System emails other than the confirmation-of-filing email.

IMPORTANT: The responsibility for completing your annual Hinkle System filing rests with your entity. We have provided the ability to designate a specific employee of your entity (other than the main contact) or your entity’s statutory fiscal agent’s representative to directly receive your entity’s Hinkle System link; however, because the responsibility rests with your entity, the Auditor of State’s Office (AOS) will NOT distribute your Hinkle System filing link directly to your entity’s contracted financial statement preparer. If the AOS identifies a contracted preparer as your "Hinkle System Reporting" user, the user will be removed by the AOS without notification.


Q: I am the fiscal officer for my entity; however, one of my staff members manages the annual financial report. Can correspondence relating to the annual financial report be sent directly to that staff member?

A: Each entity’s fiscal officer is the primary contact for the correspondence related to the annual financial report. The fiscal officer has the ability to share the Hinkle System filing link with other individuals as desired. Log into eServices, click on “Hinkle System” in the left menu. Click the  icon under the “Share Link” column. A form will appear for you to enter the information of the person you wish to send the filing link to. [Login Now >>](#)

Note: Because any individual with the entity-specific link will be able to access the Hinkle System and file on behalf of the entity, be sure the link is given to other individuals ONLY when necessary.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers – 2023

Q: Our entity contracts for GAAP services. Will our GAAP-converter be able to access the Hinkle System to complete the annual filing requirement on behalf of my entity?

A: Yes. Each entity's fiscal officer has the ability to share the Hinkle System filing link with the entity's GAAP-converter. Access this link by logging into eServices and clicking on "Hinkle System" in the left menu. Then click on the  icon under the "Share Link" column. A form will appear for you to enter the information of the person to whom you wish to send the filing link.

This link may be provided to other individuals to file the entity's annual financial report. However, the responsibility to ensure the annual financial report information is filed with the AOS remains with the entity.

Note: Because any individual with the entity-specific link will be able to access the Hinkle System and file on behalf of the entity, be sure the link is given to other individuals ONLY when necessary.

Q: I am the fiscal officer but am not receiving Hinkle System emails. What is the appropriate manner to restore email access?

A: **First**, ensure you have added HinkleSystem@ohioauditor.gov to your email contact list.

Second, check the spam folder of your email account.

Third, log into your entity's AOS eServices account to check your **contact type** and email accuracy. [Login Now >>](#)

Remember, if the entity is required to complete a Hinkle System filing, Hinkle System emails are sent to the entity's Main contact unless a "Hinkle System Reporting" or "Hinkle System Reporting + eServices" contact has been established.

Finally, if you still aren't receiving the emails, contact the AOS by filling out this [Inquiry Form](#).

Q: The Hinkle System emails used to include my entity's Hinkle System filing link. The emails now direct me to log into my eServices account to access my entity's filing link. Why is our entity's Hinkle System filing link no longer provided in the email?

A: Your entity's Auditor of State eServices account is designed to be a one-stop shop for providing and receiving information to and from our clients; however, many entities have not kept their contact information up to date in their eServices account. Requiring your entity to access your Hinkle System link via eServices rather than a link in an email helps to ensure contact information is kept up to date for your entity to access eServices and is a more secure method to access the Hinkle System. To help your entity provide the link to an outside, contracted financial statement preparer, we have also provided a function within eServices to share the link.

Timing of Hinkle System Submissions/Due Dates

Q: What is the deadline for submission?

A: Entities filing on a GAAP basis have 150 days following fiscal year-end to submit their annual financial reports to the AOS, with the exception of entities subject to ORC §1724.05 and §1726.11, which have 120 days; the Ohio Expositions Commission, which must file no later than September 30 of each year; and state universities and colleges, which must file no later than October 31 of each year. Other entities, and GAAP-mandated entities choosing to not file on a GAAP basis, have 60 days following fiscal year-end to complete their submission.

Q: Can our entity file a “draft” financial report to meet the filing deadline and then re-submit the final, unaudited financial statements later?

A: The Ohio Revised Code filing requirements do not provide for a “draft” filing. Ohio Revised Code [§117.38](#) not only prescribes the filing deadlines but also indicates at the time the report is filed with the Auditor of State, the chief fiscal officer shall publish a notice in a general-circulation newspaper in the political subdivision or taxing district that states the financial report has been completed by the public office and is available for inspection at the office of the chief fiscal officer. Therefore, you should not file with the Auditor of State until the final, unaudited financial statements are prepared and ready for inspection and audit.

Additionally, unless the filing was incomplete (e.g., the entity attempted to upload more than one document and, therefore, only a portion of the complete financial statements was received), the AOS will generally not permit re-filing. Any required adjustments will only be reflected in the audited financial statements. If re-filing is permitted, the filing date and accounting basis of the re-filed annual financial report will become the basis for determining compliance with the filing requirements.

Finally, the Hinkle System filings are used to generate the publicly available reports, as required by ORC [§117.38\(D\)](#), on the AOS website under [References/Summarized Annual Financial Reports](#). Although labeled as “unaudited,” the data is used by many outside parties for research and statistical information. The assumption is that it is accurate to the best of the entity’s ability.

Q: Should I wait to submit my entity’s financial information via the Hinkle System until after our audit is complete?

A: No. The financial information you enter/upload into the Hinkle System should be the **final, unaudited** financial statements your entity prepares for audit.

As indicated in [AOS Bulletin 2015-007](#), the AOS (or the contracted IPA firm) will audit the financial statements and notes to the financial statements uploaded via the Hinkle System. Therefore, your audit cannot be completed until the Hinkle System filing is complete.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers – 2023

Q: We are a GAAP-mandated entity, but we prepare GASB 34 lookalike financial statements. What is the filing deadline? Is it 150 days as if they were GAAP financial statements?

A: GASB 34 lookalike financial statements are OCBOA Modified Cash or OCBOA Cash basis reporting. Therefore, the annual financial information is due within 60 days.

Q: My entity is GAAP-mandated and will be filing GAAP financial statements with a due date of 150 days after the end of the reporting period. Why am I receiving a remainder email informing me the 60-day deadline is approaching as if we will file on a non-GAAP basis?

A: Some GAAP-mandated entities choose to file on a non-GAAP basis. Until the entity selects the filing type (basis of accounting) for their current year Hinkle System filing via clicking the entity-specific link and selecting the basis, we do not know which basis the entity intends to use to prepare its financial statements; therefore, we send a reminder of the 60 day deadline to all entities which have not selected a filing type or have indicated the filing type as OCBOA Cash or OCBOA Modified Cash (or Regulatory Cash for entities that are not GAAP-mandated). If the entity has already accessed the Hinkle System and selected GAAP as the filing type, the 60-day filing reminder email will not be sent. Instead, the entity will receive the reminder email only at 140 days after the end of the reporting period.

Q: If the due date falls on a weekend or legal holiday, is the deadline extended?

A: Yes, if the statutory due date falls on a weekend, on a legal holiday or when the AOS is closed to the public, the deadline will be extended to the next business day.

Q: What do we do if our final, unaudited financial statements cannot be filed by the statutory due date, because of our GAAP converter's schedule and/or waiting for updated information from outside parties for note disclosures?

A: Your entity's disclosures are only required to include the most current information that is available at the time the financial statements are prepared. The notes would just need to disclose that fact. Entities should ensure sufficient time has been planned and any necessary assistance has been engaged to prepare their final, unaudited, annual financial statements to meet the statutory filing due date. The GAAP converter's schedule is not one of the allowable reasons to request an extension.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers – 2023

Q: My entity plans to prepare an Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) for audit and submission to the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for award. Are we required to file the final, complete, unaudited ACFR via the Hinkle System or can we only submit the final, unaudited basic GAAP financial statements, notes, etc., and provide the remaining sections of the ACFR at the time of audit?

A: Preparation of an ACFR is voluntary and is therefore not required to meet statutory filing requirements via the Hinkle System; however, the due date for submitting the audited ACFR to GFOA for award is six (6) months (approximately 180 days) after the end of the reporting period year-end. If your entity plans to complete and submit a ACFR to GFOA for award, we strongly recommend that your entity plan appropriately to complete the entire unaudited ACFR on, or preferably before, the statutory filing due date and upload it via the Hinkle System. While your entity would not be subject to a non-compliance citation if the Hinkle System filing is not the entire unaudited ACFR, completion of the unaudited ACFR after the Hinkle System filing due date may impact the completion of the audit by the GFOA filing deadline.

Q: My entity officially closed/dissolved as of a date other than our normal period-end (a community school with June 30th as year-end that closed/dissolved as of September 30th.) How do I complete the entity's final Hinkle System filing?

A: As soon as your entity officially closes/dissolves, notify the Auditor of State's (AOS) office in accordance with ORC [§117.10\(E\)](#), as described in "Dissolution of a Public Office" on the AOS [Required Filings & AOS Notifications](#) page.

The applicable AOS region will request your entity's Hinkle System link (for the period which includes the closure date) to be emailed to your entity's contact on file with the AOS and made available via your entity's eServices account.

Note: The Hinkle System links are only generated for an entity's statutory/normal period-end; therefore, the link generated will be for the next normal year period-end. For example, if a community school with a normal June 30 period-end closes/dissolves as of September 30, 2024, the Hinkle System link generated will be for the period-end of June 30, 2025. Since this is a final filing, your entity should disregard the date reflected in the Hinkle System link (in the example, June 30, 2025) and prepare financial statements/notes and any key data for the dates of operation during that period (in the example, July 1, 2024, to September 30, 2024).

Extensions to Filing Due Dates

Q: Am I able to obtain an extension for filing the annual financial report?

A: Normally, entities should ensure sufficient time has been planned and any necessary assistance has been engaged to prepare their annual financial statements; however, the AOS recognizes that circumstances may arise that justify granting an extension of the annual report filing deadline as permitted by ORC [§117.38](#). Generally, the AOS will consider granting an extension to a public office, or other entity required to file, under extraordinary circumstances, as defined below:

- 1) The public office is in an area where a major flood or natural disaster has recently occurred.
- 2) The records are destroyed through fire or casualty.
- 3) The records are not updated due to the recent death or disability of the person responsible for preparing the financial report.
- 4) A newly elected or appointed public official requests extension due to poor maintenance of financial records by the predecessor official.
- 5) Other extenuating circumstances as determined by the AOS

Note: The schedule of your entity's hired financial statement converter/preparer and/or your entity waiting for updated note disclosure information from an outside party are not permissible reasons to request a filing extension. Your entity's notes are required to include the most current disclosure(s) available at the time of the filing. Scheduling of your entity's financial statement converter/preparer and/or obtaining financial information from component unit entities to incorporate into financial statements should be coordinated with your converter/preparer and/or with the component unit entities to ensure the primary government meets its Hinkle System filing deadline. Additional situations that are normally not eligible for an extension are included in the Hinkle System extension application.

Please be aware that receiving an extension for filing the entity's annual financial report does not eliminate noncompliance with the requirements of OAC [117-2-03\(B\)](#), which requires certain entity types to prepare their financial reports pursuant to GAAP.

Q: My entity is statutorily required to file our financial reports pursuant to GAAP, but we choose to file on an OCBOA cash/modified cash basis. Can my entity qualify for a due date extension on this/these basis/bases of accounting?

A: If your entity is statutorily required to report pursuant to GAAP and you choose to file financial statements on an OCBOA cash/modified cash basis, requests for extension will generally be denied.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers – 2023

Q: What are the procedures to request an extension of the filing due date for my entity's Hinkle System filing?

A: All applicable clients*, including UAN clients, required to file their annual financial report via the Hinkle System, **MUST** submit an extension request through their entity-specific Hinkle System link **no later than the due date for completing their Hinkle System filing****. Specific steps to complete an extension request are available on the [Annual Financial Reporting](#) page under the Quick Guides "Filing Extension Requests".

Note: Extension requests submitted by other methods will not be accepted.

**Entities that have received an AOS-approved Electronic Filing Waiver Request for Small Governments for the applicable reporting period will be provided instructions for requesting an extension with the AOS-approved waiver. All extension requests must be submitted before the reporting deadline.*

***With the exception of universities and colleges that have a statutory September 30 deadline for extension requests or the Ohio Exposition Commission, which is not provided an extension option in the Ohio Revised Code.*

Selecting the Appropriate Filing Type (Basis of Accounting)

Q: What basis of accounting is required?

A: OAC [117-2-03](#)(B) requires all counties, cities, and school districts, including educational service centers and community schools, and government insurance pools to prepare their annual financial reports pursuant to GAAP. Entities subject to filing requirements under ORC §1724.05 and §1726.11 are also required to report in accordance with GAAP. Additionally, [OAC 126:3-1-01](#)(A)(2)(a) requires state universities and colleges to prepare their financial statements in accordance with GAAP. All other entity types may report on any accounting basis; however, most smaller entities prepare regulatory cash basis financial statements.

Q: When I select the basis of accounting in the Hinkle System, I receive a warning message. Why? (Only applicable to cities, counties, school districts, educational service centers, community schools, community improvement corporations (CICs), development corporations, colleges, and universities and, governmental insurance pools).

A: The Hinkle System requires you to select the basis of accounting on which your entity's annual financial report will be filed (GAAP, OCBOA Modified Cash, or OCBOA Cash). The warning message serves as notification that since your entity is required to file its annual financial report on a GAAP basis, and the basis of accounting selected is OCBOA Modified Cash or OCBOA Cash basis, your entity may be subject to noncompliance with ORC [§117.38](#). If the incorrect basis of accounting was selected, please follow the steps for resetting the filing type.

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Q: My entity is GAAP-mandated; however, in the past, we have chosen to file on the Regulatory Cash basis. The only filing types (bases of accounting) available for me to select via the Hinkle System are GAAP, OCBOA Cash and OCBOA Modified Cash. Why?

A: With the implementation of GASB Statement 34 in 2003, the Regulatory Cash basis was no longer a basis of accounting acceptable for GAAP-mandated entities and will always result in issuance of an adverse opinion by the auditors. An adverse opinion means the financial statements are materially misstated and do not present a fair view of the entity's financial position and operations. Since the Regulatory Cash basis is no longer an acceptable basis of accounting for GAAP-mandated entities, it was not included as an option for GAAP-mandated entities to file via the Hinkle System.

Q: Should a small government entity select the regulatory cash basis, OCBOA cash basis, OCBOA modified cash basis or GAAP basis?

A: Small governments are not mandated to follow a required basis of accounting; therefore, a small government entity may select any accounting basis to present. The most common basis presented for small governments is the regulatory cash basis, which is sometimes referred to as the "AOS basis" and presents by fund type. The OCBOA cash or OCBOA modified cash basis is also known as the "GASB 34 look-alike" and present in a format similar to GAAP.

Finalizing the Hinkle System Filing

Q: I am the fiscal officer of a governmental entity but have either assigned staff or contracted to have the financial information entered into the Hinkle System. Whose name and title should be entered into the acknowledgment page when submitting the annual financial information?

A: The individual who keyed/uploaded the annual financial information into the Hinkle System should enter his/her name and title into the acknowledgment page to ensure the proper individual is contacted if questions arise.

Q: I completed the upload of the PDF file of the financial statements and notes to the financial statements but did not receive a confirmation email. Why?

A: The upload is not the final step in the Hinkle System submission. Once the upload is complete, click the next button to finalize the submission. Once the submission is complete, an online acknowledgment will appear on the screen and an automated email confirmation will be created. If you received the on-screen confirmation but not the email confirmation, please check your email spam folder and ensure the Hinkle System email is added to your email contacts.

Viewing a Hinkle System Submission

Q: My entity submitted our financial statements via the Hinkle System, but when I click on the filing link now, it just indicates the submission has been completed. How can I determine if the submission was received? How can I view what was submitted?

A: When the submit button is clicked, the person who submitted the filing (whose email is to be included on the certification page) as well as the entity's fiscal officer/other contact in the AOS database (if different), will receive an automated email indicating the filing is completed. If an email was not received, refer to the previous Q&A.

Once the filing is completed, the entity may view the submission either by accessing [Summarized Annual Financial Reports](#) via the AOS website. Or by logging into the entity's eServices account and clicking the "Hinkle System" in the left menu. From there the entity will be able to view/print the PDF file that was uploaded as well as the keyed data, if applicable. [Login Now >>](#)

Q: When I view my entity's submission via eServices, I can see only the notes to the financial statements. I uploaded both the financial statements and the notes. Why can't I see the financial statements?

A: It appears you attempted to upload multiple files. Unless your entity files on the regulatory cash basis, the Hinkle System **will accept only one PDF file**. If you uploaded a second PDF file, the first upload is overwritten and only the final uploaded file is transmitted to the AOS. If your entity files on the regulatory cash basis, you will have the option to upload separate files for the financial statements and notes to the financial statements, which will be combined by the application. Please refer to the questions regarding modifying your Hinkle System filing.

Modifying a Hinkle System Submission

Q: My entity has submitted its Hinkle System filing, but we have subsequently identified errors, typos, etc., and would like to resubmit. I attempted to re-submit via my entity's Hinkle System filing link but could not. Can I re-submit my entity's Hinkle System filing?

A: The AOS expects each entity to submit the filing only once by the statutory due date (or approved extension date); therefore, the filing link is locked upon submission. Before submitting the filing, the entity should complete all reviews, verify the correct basis of accounting has been selected, and view the uploaded file to ensure it is the correct and complete file. If the original filing was not complete (i.e., the financial statements and footnotes were not merged into one file for upload), we will permit the financial statements to be re-filed; however, with the modification to allow regulatory cash basis financial statements to be uploaded via two separate files, we do not anticipate filing of incomplete financial statements will occur. We will generally not permit re-filing due to errors, typos, etc. If significant, errors could be subject to audit adjustment. If a modification is necessary due to an incomplete filing, the fiscal officer must contact the AOS by filling out this [Inquiry Form](#).

Q: If I need to file an amended financial statement because the original filing was incomplete (as described in the previous Q&A), will my entity be subject to a noncompliance citation if the original filing was submitted by the statutory due date/approved extension date?

A: If the Hinkle System filing is re-submitted, the filing date recorded with the AOS will be the date the modified submission is filed. If the modified date is not within the statutory due date or extension period approved by the AOS, the entity may be subject to a noncompliance citation in the management letter and a monetary fine in accordance with ORC [§117.38](#).

Information Required to Complete the Filing within the Hinkle System – General

Q: Does the Schedule of Federal Awards Expenditure need to be included in the annual filing?

A: No. The Schedule of Federal Awards Expenditure is not required to be included with the annual financial report to comply with filing requirements. Therefore, it has not been incorporated into the Hinkle System. However, if applicable, your entity should prepare its Schedule of Federal Awards Expenditure for the financial audit of the entity.

Information Required to Complete the Filing within the Hinkle System – By Entity Type

Cities & Counties

Q: What information is needed for a city or county to complete the filing requirements within the Hinkle System?

A: The following items are needed to complete the filing requirements in the Hinkle System:

- Annual Financial Statements and Related Footnotes
- Population for the Reporting Year
- Total Annual Final Appropriations for All Funds for the Reporting Year
- Average Number of Utility Customers for the Reporting Year (if applicable)
- Full Tax Rate per \$1,000 of Assessed Valuation for the Reporting Year – the tax rate will differentiate between inside and outside (voted) millage
- Total Assessed Property Tax Valuation for the Reporting Year
- Unrestricted General Fund Carryover Cash Balance at Year End (a.k.a. Fund Balance at Year End for the General Fund as Reported on the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance – Budget (Non-GAAP Basis) and Actual or General Fund Cash Balance at Year End Less Any Outstanding Encumbrances)
- The complete financial statements, including note disclosures, will also need to be uploaded into the system. The components of the full reporting package vary by basis of accounting.

See the **PDF FILE REQUIRED COMPONENTS** section applicable to all entities at the end of this document.

School Districts & Educational Service Centers

Q: What information is needed for a school or educational service center (ESC) to complete the filing requirements in the Hinkle System?

A: The following items are needed to complete the filing requirements in the Hinkle System:

- Annual Financial Statements and Related Footnotes
- Average Daily Membership (ADM) for the Reporting Year
- Total Annual Final Appropriations for All Funds for the Reporting Year
- Full Tax Rate per \$1,000 of Assessed Valuation for the Reporting Year, by Inside and Voted Millage
- Total Assessed Property Tax Valuation for the Reporting Year
- Unrestricted General Fund Carryover Cash Balance at Year End (a.k.a. Fund Balance at Year End for the General Fund as Reported on the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance – Budget (Non-GAAP Basis) and Actual or General Fund Cash Balance at Year End Less Any Outstanding Encumbrances)
- The complete financial statements, including note disclosures, will also need to be uploaded into the system. The components of the full reporting package vary by basis of accounting.
See the **PDF FILE REQUIRED COMPONENTS** section applicable to all entities at the end of this document.

Community School

Q: What information is needed for a community school to complete the filing requirements in the Hinkle System?

A: The following items are needed to complete the filing requirements in the Hinkle System:

- Annual Financial Statements and Related Footnotes
- Total Enrollment (FTE) for the Reporting Year
- Total Forecasted Expenditures for the Reporting Year as Reported to the Ohio Department of Education
- Unrestricted Carryover Cash Balance at Year End
- Community School Models (Check all that apply)
 - Site-based Community School
 - Internet/Online Community School
 - Drop-out Recovery and Prevention School
 - Use Blended Learning Model
 - Use Credit Flex
 - Other, please specify
- The complete financial statements, including note disclosures, will also need to be uploaded into the system. The components of the full reporting package vary by basis of accounting.
See the **PDF FILE REQUIRED COMPONENTS** section applicable to all entities at the end of this document.

Libraries

Q: What information is needed for a library to complete the filing requirements in the Hinkle System?

A: The following items are needed to complete the filing requirements within the Hinkle System:

- Annual Financial Statements and Related Footnotes
- Estimated Number of Patrons
- Yearly Circulation
- Full Tax Rate Per \$1,000 of Assessed Valuation for the Reporting Year (if applicable) – the tax rate will be differentiated between inside and outside (voted) millage
- Total Assessed Property Tax Valuation for the Reporting Year (if applicable)
- Unrestricted General Fund Carryover Cash Balance at Year End (a.k.a. Fund Balance at Year End for the General Fund as Reported on the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance – Budget (Non-GAAP Basis) and Actual or General Fund Cash Balance at Year End Less Any Outstanding Encumbrances)
- The complete financial statements, including note disclosures, will also need to be uploaded into the system. The components of the full reporting package vary by basis of accounting.

See the **PDF FILE REQUIRED COMPONENTS** section applicable to all entities at the end of this document.

Townships

Q: What information is needed for a township to complete the filing requirements in the Hinkle System?

A: The following items are needed to complete the filing requirements in the Hinkle System:

- Annual Financial Statements and Related Footnotes
- Population
- Total Annual Final Appropriations for All Funds for the Reporting Year
- Full Tax Rate Per \$1,000 of Assessed Valuation for the Reporting Year – the tax rate will be differentiated between inside and outside (voted) millage
- Total Assessed Property Tax Valuation for the Reporting Year
- Unrestricted General Fund Carryover Cash Balance at Year End (a.k.a. Fund Balance at Year End for the General Fund as Reported on the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance – Budget (Non-GAAP Basis) and Actual or General Fund Cash Balance at Year End Less Any Outstanding Encumbrances)
- Full Reporting package to be uploaded into the system. The components of the full reporting package vary by basis of accounting.

See the **PDF FILE REQUIRED COMPONENTS** section applicable to all entities at the end of this document.

Villages

Q: What information is needed for a village to complete the filing requirements in the Hinkle System?

A: The following items are needed to complete the filing requirements in the Hinkle System:

- Annual Financial Statements and Related Footnotes
- Population
- Total Annual Final Appropriations for All Funds for the Reporting Year
- Average Number of Utility Customers
- Full Tax Rate Per \$1,000 of Assessed Valuation for the Reporting Year – the tax rate will be differentiated between inside and outside (voted) millage
- Total Assessed Property Tax Valuation for the Reporting Year
- Unrestricted General Fund Carryover Cash Balance at Year End (a.k.a. Fund Balance at Year End for the General Fund as Reported on the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance – Budget (Non-GAAP Basis) and Actual or General Fund Cash Balance at Year End Less Any Outstanding Encumbrances)
- The complete financial statements, including note disclosures, will also need to be uploaded into the system. The components of the full reporting package vary by basis of accounting.

See the **PDF FILE REQUIRED COMPONENTS** section applicable to all entities at the end of this document.

All Other Entity Types

Q: What information is needed to complete the filing requirements in the Hinkle System for any other entity type not already identified?

A: The complete financial statements, including note disclosures, in PDF format will need to be uploaded into the system. The components of the full reporting package vary by basis of accounting. See the **PDF FILE – REQUIRED COMPONENTS – ALL ENTITIES** section below.

PDF File – Required Components – All Entities

Q: What should be included in the PDF file which must be uploaded for any other entity type not already specifically identified?

A: The components of the full reporting package vary by basis of accounting as follows:

- **Governmental Entities (including Governmental Nonprofit Entities) filing GAAP, OCBOA Cash, or OCBOA Modified Cash basis:**
 - Management’s Discussion & Analysis (required for GAAP; optional for OCBOA Cash or OCBOA Modified Cash)
 - Basic Financial Statements
 - Government-wide Financial Statements
 - Fund Financial Statements*
 - Notes to the Basic Financial Statements
 - Any Other Required Supplementary Information (RSI) (GAAP only)
- **Nongovernmental Nonprofit Entities filing GAAP, OCBOA Cash, or OCBOA Modified Cash basis:**
 - Basic Financial Statements
 - Statement of Financial Position
 - Statement of Activities (also known as Statement of Changes in Net Assets)
 - Statement of Functional Expenses (if applicable – FASB ASC 958-720-45-15 requires all nonprofit organizations to present an analysis of expenses by both nature and function in one location. The location can be in one of three places: as a separate statement – the statement of functional expenses; as a schedule in the notes to the financial statements; or on the face of the statement of activities, most likely as line items of natural expenses within functional classifications)
 - Statement of Cash Flows (GAAP only)
 - Notes to the Financial Statements
 - Any Other RSI (GAAP only)
- **Regulatory Cash Basis Entities (a cash basis commonly referred to as “AOS basis”):**
 - Basic Financial Statements
 - Statement(s) (or Combined Statement(s)) of Receipts, Disbursements and Changes in Fund Balances*
 - Notes to the Basic Financial Statements

* Effective with implementation of GASB 84, fund statements (GAAP, OCBOA Cash, or Modified Cash) will include a Statement of Fiduciary Net Position and a Statement of Changes in Fiduciary Net Position. Regulatory Cash Basis entities will be required to include a Combined Statement of Additions, Deductions, and Changes in Fund Balances – All Fiduciary Funds (if applicable) beginning with financial statements ended 12/31/2020.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers – 2023

Q: How large of a file can be uploaded?

A: The file must be saved as a PDF and be less than 30MB.

Q: Can I upload more than one file?

A: Unless your financial statements are presented on the regulatory cash basis, you can upload only one file.

Uploading a second file will replace the first file you already uploaded. You will need to combine all files into a single PDF for upload into the Hinkle System. For information on how to do this, see the Quick Guide on how to “create, merge, and resize a PDF” on the [Annual Financial Reporting](#) page.

Note: Regulatory cash basis filers have the option to upload separate PDF documents of the financial statements and notes to the financial statements that will be combined via the Hinkle System application.

The following questions are only for those entities that must enter certain key data into the Hinkle System – Cities; Counties; Schools, including Esc and Vocational Schools; Community Schools; Townships; Villages; and Libraries.

General Questions

Q: Why isn't the PDF of the full, unaudited financial statements, including notes to the financial statements, sufficient to meet statutory requirements without having to key data into the Hinkle System?

A: The AOS is using the keyed data for several reasons. Unfortunately, because entities, other than UAN clients, do not use the same accounting system, the AOS cannot provide a method for data to be uploaded.

Q: The counties are required to key in data as well as upload a PDF of the full financial statements and notes to the financial statements. Are small entities for which the county serves as fiscal agent required to key data into the Hinkle System?

A: No, the only entity types required to key financial data are cities, counties, school districts, educational service centers, community schools, townships, libraries, and villages. All other entities required to file with the AOS are only required to upload the PDF of the full financial statements, including the notes to the financial statements.

Q: What is the recommended method to move between data entry cells in the Hinkle System?

A: We recommend using the **[Tab]** key to move between data fields. The Hinkle System does NOT respond to using the **[Enter]** key to move between data fields or to advance within the Hinkle System, and the positioning of the cursor within each cell using the mouse is cumbersome.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers – 2023

Q: Since all numerical fields in the Hinkle System are pre-populated with zeros, what is the easiest method to enter the required data?

A: Using the **[Tab]** key, as referenced above, to move between data fields will automatically highlight the zero and enable the user to directly enter the data.

Q: The Hinkle System requires a negative sign (-) precede other financing use/other non-operating expense/disbursement amounts. Is there a method to enter the information without entering the negative sign?

A: No. For the Hinkle System to accurately perform calculations, these values must be entered as negative numbers by including a negative sign before each dollar amount.

Q: How should I input an amount for an account line item that is reflected on my financial statement but does not appear in the Hinkle System?

A: The Hinkle System was designed to include the most common account line items applicable to each entity type. However, each financial statement also includes an “other” account line item within each category. If an account line item in your financial statement does not relate to the account line items in the Hinkle System, please include this amount in the appropriate “other” account line item.

Q: Do I have the ability to save the data I have entered in the Hinkle System and complete the submission later?

A: Yes. The Hinkle System is designed to save all progress upon the advancement to the next screen. However, if the submission process will not be completed in one session, the Internet browser should be closed between sessions.

Specific Financial Statement Elements – All Entities

Q: Should “Cash in Segregated Accounts” and “Cash with Fiscal Agent” be included in “Cash and Cash Equivalents” or in “Other Assets”?

A: Cash in Segregated Accounts, Cash with Fiscal Agent, and any Restricted Cash should be reported as Cash and Cash Equivalents in the Hinkle System.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers – 2023

Q: On the face of my prepared Statement of Net Position, I report my depreciable capital assets net of accumulated depreciation. Why does the data entry in the Hinkle System require reporting capital assets at gross and separately reporting accumulated depreciation? Can I just report the net?

A: The data entered into the Hinkle System is also used to populate the calculations for the Financial Health Indicators. A key health indicator is the condition of capital assets. The ratio of accumulated depreciation as compared with depreciable assets provides insight into the age of capital assets and future cash-flow needs for replacement of capital assets. Although the Financial Health Indicators are currently for cities and counties only, the data is necessary information for all GAAP entities to enter separately into the Hinkle System.

Q: On the face of my entity's prepared financial statements, all tax revenues are reported under one line item; however, for the data entry in the Hinkle System, separate line items are reflected for different tax type revenues (e.g., property taxes, income taxes, or sales taxes). How do I enter these taxes into the Hinkle System?

A: The data entered into the Hinkle System is also used to populate calculations for the Financial Health Indicators. Separate indicators are generated for each of these tax types; therefore, it is important to enter the data for these tax revenues separately by type even if the uploaded financial statements combine them under one line item. Although the Financial Health Indicators are currently for cities and counties only, for comparison purposes, tax revenues should be entered separately in the Hinkle System for all entities when requested.

Enterprise Funds – Cities, Counties, Villages

Q: My entity maintains more than one Water Fund or other utility fund. One fund is presented as a major fund and the others are classified as non-major enterprise funds. How should I enter the required data for my utility funds into the Hinkle System?

A: Generally, for reporting purposes, entities present each utility as one fund. If separate funds are maintained/reported for a utility, the activities of the like-enterprise funds (i.e., each water fund or applicable operation) should be totaled and entered as one within the Hinkle System.

Q: Our entity has a major proprietary fund other than water, sewer, electric, or landfill, but those are the only templates in the Hinkle System. Do I need to enter the information for my additional major proprietary fund?

A: The Hinkle System was designed to capture the most common proprietary funds; therefore, the only proprietary information collected by keying information into the Hinkle System is for the water, sewer, electric, or landfill funds, if applicable to your entity. All other proprietary fund information outside of these four funds will not be captured directly in the Hinkle System but should still be included in your annual financial statements, which will also be uploaded in the Hinkle System.

Q: Our village maintains a storm water enterprise fund. How do we report its activity in the Hinkle System?

A: The only proprietary information collected by the Hinkle System is for the water, sewer, electric, or landfill funds, if they are applicable to your entity. All other proprietary fund information outside of these four funds will not be captured directly in the Hinkle System but should still be included within your annual financial statements, which will be uploaded in the Hinkle System.

Enterprise Funds – Townships

Q: Our township has an enterprise fund. How do I enter it in the Hinkle System?

A: Currently, no proprietary fund information is collected by the Hinkle System for a township. All proprietary fund information should still be included within your annual financial statements, which must be uploaded in the Hinkle System.

Long-Term Debt Obligations at Year End

Cities; Counties; Schools, Including Esc and Vocational Schools; Community Schools; Townships, Villages; and Libraries

Q: Our outstanding debt includes Capital Appreciation Bonds (CABs). For outstanding debt information in the filing, should we include or exclude accumulated accretion on CABs?

A: The accumulated accreted interest on CABs should be included in the total outstanding debt reported.

Q: In what debt category should we report certificates of participation in the “Long-Term Obligations at Year End” section of the Hinkle System?

A: Certifications of participation should be included in the Miscellaneous Long Term Obligations total.

Q: Why do we need to allocate the net effect of reporting pension and other post-employment benefits (OPEB) liabilities? (Applicable only to cities and counties reporting under the GAAP basis of accounting)

A: The data keyed into the Hinkle System is also being used in the calculations of the Financial Health Indicators. The effects of implementation of GASB 68 for statewide pensions and GASB 75 for OPEB have been removed from the applicable line items for consideration of Financial Health Indicators assuming 100% of the net effect is closed against Unrestricted Net Assets/Position; however, a few entities have allocated a portion of the effect to Restricted Net Assets/Position. If your entity allocates the net effect of the liability to both Restricted and Unrestricted Net Assets/Position, please indicate the allocation percentage in the tables to calculate the indicators more accurately. The tables are pre-populated with 100% to Unrestricted Net Assets/Position.

Other Information – Demographics

Average Daily Membership (ADM) or Full Time Equivalent (FTE) for the Reporting Year (applicable to school districts, including community schools and ESCs):

Q: What number should be provided as ADM or FTE for school districts and community schools?

A: The ADM/FTE demographics information is requested to provide perspective related to entity size. For this purpose, traditional school districts and community schools may use the following link (<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Finance-and-Funding/School-Payment-Reports>). Traditional schools can provide the district ADM from the ADM Detail Report associated with the latest final payment. Community schools can use the Student Summary presented on the latest Community School Detail Payment Report.

Q: For an educational service center (ESC), what number should be reported for ADM in the “Other Information – Demographics” section?

A: The ADM for an ESC should be the total ADM for all the schools serviced by the ESC.

Q: For a joint vocational school, should the ADM include the number of adult students?

A: No, the ADM should not include adult students. It should only report the ADM for the state funding level.

Q: Can you explain each of the Community School Models?

A: The models are as follows:

- **Site-based Community School** – A site-based community school (also called a brick-and-mortar school) is one in which students receive instruction in a classroom, led by a teacher.
- **Internet/Online Community School** – A community school, also known as an eSchool, in which the enrolled students work primarily from their homes. Students work on assignments in non-classroom-based learning opportunities provided via an Internet-based or other computer-based instructional method that does not rely on regular classroom instruction, or via comprehensive instructional methods that include Internet-based, other computer-based and non-computer-based learning opportunities.
- **Dropout Recovery and Prevention School** – A dropout prevention and recovery school is a community school that meets either definition below:
 1. A community school that operates a drug recovery program in cooperation with a court
 2. A community school in which most students are enrolled in a dropout prevention and recovery program operated by the school.
- **Use Credit Flex** - Credit Flex requires a local policy. With Credit Flex, high school students can earn credit three ways, or a combination of these ways:
 1. By completing traditional coursework
 2. By testing out or otherwise demonstrating mastery of the course content

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers – 2023

3. By pursuing one or more “educational options” (e.g., distance learning, educational travel, independent study, an internship, music, arts, afterschool program, community service or engagement project, and sports).

Estimated Number of Patrons (applicable only to Libraries):

Q: Should the number of patrons reported only include those who hold a library card?

A: The total number of patrons reported in the Hinkle System should be the number of registered borrowers as reported in the State Library Annual Report as “Registered Borrowers Total.” Please report the information using the statistics compiled for the latest Annual State Library Report available at the time the financial information is reported in the Hinkle System.

Yearly Circulation (applicable only to Libraries):

Q: The Hinkle System requests the libraries include circulation statistics. What circulation types should I include? Examples: books, DVDs, music CDs, books on CD, e-books, magazines, e-magazines, video games, interlibrary loans, and public computer use. I am not sure what information is required.

A: The demographics information is requested to provide perspective related to entity size. For the yearly circulation, you can rely on the information available from the latest statistics compiled for the State Library Annual Report using “Total Circulation.” Please report the information using the statistics compiled for the latest Annual State Library Report available at the time the financial information is reported in the Hinkle System.

Population:

Q: For the population for the reporting year, the only information I have available is an estimate from the US Census Bureau from a few years ago. Is this acceptable to use?

A: For reporting the population of your entity, please include the best estimate that is available. Therefore, an estimate from the US Census Bureau is acceptable if that is the best estimate that can be obtained.

Total Annual Final Appropriations for All Funds for the Reporting Year:

Q: What data should be provided in the “Other Information – Demographics” section for the final annual appropriations for all funds?

A: The total final appropriations for all funds and account line items legally required to be budgeted by the government. If advances are budgeted for by the government, they also should be included in this amount. However, prior year encumbrances should be excluded from this amount as they do not require re-appropriation.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers – 2023

Q: Since Educational Service Centers (ESCs) are not required to adopt a budget, we do not present budgetary information in the compiled GAAP and/or OCBOA financial statements. Are we still required to enter “Total Annual Appropriations” in the Hinkle System?

A: If your entity does not adopt a budget, an amount should not be entered on the Total Annual Appropriations line. However, many ESCs still adopt a budget, though not statutorily required. In the case where appropriations are adopted, the information should be completed in the Hinkle System.

Full Tax Rate per \$1,000 of Assessed Valuation:

Q: Does the “Full Tax Rate per \$1,000 of Assessed Valuation” refer to the voted millage, as opposed to the effective millage?

A: The tax rate reported as part of the “Other Information – Demographics” section should be the full tax rate, not the effective rate.

Q: What is the difference between “inside” millage and “outside” (voted) millage?

A: In Ohio, millage is referred to as "inside" millage and "outside" millage. Inside (unvoted) millage is an unvoted property tax authorized by the Ohio Constitution and established by the General Assembly, which may not exceed 10 mills in any taxing district. Public schools, counties, townships, and other local governments are allocated a portion of the 10 inside mills. Outside (voted) millage, is any millage "outside" the 10 mills that is provided by the Constitution of the State of Ohio. Outside mills must be voted on and approved by the majority of the voters in the taxing district where the tax will be levied.

Total Assessed Property Tax Valuation:

Q: Should my entity include the assessed or total valuation for the requested property tax valuation in the “Other Information – Demographics” section?

A: The assessed valuation should be provided.

Q: If a township includes a village (municipality) within its boundaries and some of its tax levies do not apply within the municipality, should the township include the entire valuation (including the municipality) or just the value that excluded the municipality? Similarly, should the township include all the levies or only those that apply to the entire township?

A: The township should use the tax rate and valuation that pertains only to the entire township, excluding the municipality.

Unrestricted General Fund Carryover Cash Balance at Year-End

Q: For “Unrestricted General Fund Carryover Cash Balance at Year End” reported in the “Other Information – Demographics” should the amount be unencumbered cash fund balance (e.g., 12/31/2024 fund cash balance minus 12/31/2025 encumbrances)?

A: The “Unrestricted General Fund Carryover Cash Balance at Year End” should be the unencumbered cash fund balance for the General Fund at year-end. This amount can be obtained from the Fund Balance, End of Year reported in the Actual column on the Budget-to-Actual Statement for the General Fund in your GAAP financial statements.

Average Number of Utility Customers:

Q: The “Other Information – Demographics” section of the Hinkle System requires my entity’s average number of utility customers. Since we maintain multiple utilities, what number should I report?

A: The demographics information is requested to provide perspective related to entity size. The average number of utility customers should consider all utilities provided by the entity. As an example, if you have 200 Water Customers, 250 Sewer Customers, and 400 Electric Customers, the average number of customers is 283 ($200+250+400=850$ total number of customers $\div 3$ utilities =283).

Audit Related Issues

Q: During my audit, my auditors have informed me of deficiencies in my Hinkle System filing. Do I need to re-file?

A: No unless the re-filing is due to an incomplete original filing. Your entity’s Hinkle System filing should not be modified/updated to include any audit-identified adjustments. Audit adjustments will be reflected in the audit report for your entity. Modifying your Hinkle System filing to incorporate any audit-identified adjustments will not change the impact of the adjustments on your audit and could result in a citation for noncompliance with the Hinkle System filing deadline and a monetary fine.

Q: What will be the impact on my audit if I fail to file via the Hinkle System?

A: Failure to file or filing beyond the statutory or extended due date may result in a noncompliance citation reported in your entity’s management letter and a monetary fine. Because the financial statements and notes filed via the Hinkle System are audited, failure to file may result in your entity being declared “unauditable.”

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers – 2023

Q: Will the AOS audit staff still be available to prepare our entity's notes to the financial statements as they have in the past?

A: The AOS has provided training, webinars, shells for financial statements and notes to the financial statements to assist the entity with preparing their own financial statements and footnotes. The auditors can still prepare footnotes, assuming it does not affect our independence and our audit staff has the capacity to comply with the request; however, the responsibility for preparation of the note's rests with the entity. It is not part of the audit services; therefore, these non-audit services will be separately identified in the Letter of Arrangement and billed at the consulting rate. The AOS audit staff; however, will not be available to prepare the notes before the audit, which will generally be after the due date for filing your entity's final, unaudited financial statements, and will likely result in the entity receiving a noncompliance citation for filing late.

Q: I have been contacted by my entity's auditors and informed the financial statements/notes to the financial statements uploaded into the Hinkle System and/or the basis of accounting (filing type) selected by my entity were incomplete and I need to re-file. Why was my entity not notified of these deficiencies at the time my entity completed its Hinkle System submission?

A: The Hinkle System is an automated online system for entities to meet their statutory filing requirement with the Auditor of State. The System does not have the ability to analyze the content of the uploaded file and/or determine if the financial statements filed correspond to the filing type selected. The analysis occurs before or at the time of the audit by the auditors. Entities required to re-file via the Hinkle System may be subject to noncompliance citations/penalties. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each entity to ensure their Hinkle System filing is complete, accurate, and filed by the due date.

Q: Our entity has been informed that any adjustments made to the financial statements after submission via the Hinkle System will result in an audit adjustment. Is this true?

A: The AOS auditors and contracted IPA firms will audit the financial statements and notes to the financial statement uploaded into the Hinkle System. As with any audit of financial statements, if a material adjustment is detected as part of the audit procedures, an audit adjustment will be proposed. However, if the adjustment is the result of information that was not available at the time of the submission of the financial statements AND the audit does not disclose a weakness in the procedures the entity used to prepare the financial statements, a material weakness or significant deficiency will not be reported.