

**RCW 39.36.020 Limitation of indebtedness prescribed.** (1) Except as otherwise expressly provided by law or in subsections (2), (3) and (4) of this section, no taxing district shall for any purpose become indebted in any manner to an amount exceeding three-eighths of one percent of the value of the taxable property in such taxing district without the assent of three-fifths of the voters therein voting at an election to be held for that purpose, nor in cases requiring such assent shall the total indebtedness incurred at any time exceed one and one-fourth percent on the value of the taxable property therein.

(2) (a) (i) Public hospital districts are limited to an indebtedness amount not exceeding three-fourths of one percent of the value of the taxable property in such public hospital districts without the assent of three-fifths of the voters therein voting at an election held for that purpose.

(ii) Counties, cities, and towns are limited to an indebtedness amount not exceeding one and one-half percent of the value of the taxable property in such counties, cities, or towns without the assent of three-fifths of the voters therein voting at an election held for that purpose.

(b) In cases requiring such assent counties, cities, towns, and public hospital districts are limited to a total indebtedness of two and one-half percent of the value of the taxable property therein. However, any county that has assumed the rights, powers, functions, and obligations of a metropolitan municipal corporation under chapter 36.56 RCW may become indebted to a larger amount for its authorized metropolitan functions, as provided under chapter 35.58 RCW, but not exceeding an additional three-fourths of one percent of the value of the taxable property in the county without the assent of three-fifths of the voters therein voting at an election held for that purpose, and in cases requiring such assent not exceeding an additional two and one-half percent of the value of the taxable property in the county.

(3) School districts are limited to an indebtedness amount not exceeding three-eighths of one percent of the value of the taxable property in such district without the assent of three-fifths of the voters therein voting at an election held for that purpose. In cases requiring such assent school districts are limited to a total indebtedness of two and one-half percent of the value of the taxable property therein.

(4) No part of the indebtedness allowed in this chapter shall be incurred for any purpose other than strictly county, city, town, school district, township, port district, metropolitan park district, or other municipal purposes: PROVIDED, That a city or town, with such assent, may become indebted to a larger amount, but not exceeding two and one-half percent additional, determined as herein provided, for supplying such city or town with water, artificial light, and sewers, when the works for supplying such water, light, and sewers shall be owned and controlled by the city or town; and a city or town, with such assent, may become indebted to a larger amount, but not exceeding two and one-half percent additional for acquiring or developing open space, park facilities, and capital facilities associated with economic development: PROVIDED FURTHER, That any school district may become indebted to a larger amount but not exceeding two and one-half percent additional for capital outlays.

(5) Such indebtedness may be authorized in any total amount in one or more propositions and the amount of such authorization may exceed the amount of indebtedness which could then lawfully be incurred. Such indebtedness may be incurred in one or more series of

bonds from time to time out of such authorization but at no time shall the total general indebtedness of any taxing district exceed the above limitation.

The term "value of the taxable property" as used in this section shall have the meaning set forth in RCW 39.36.015. [2000 c 156 s 1; 1994 c 277 s 1; 1993 c 240 s 12; 1971 ex.s. c 218 s 1; 1971 c 38 s 1; 1970 ex.s. c 42 s 27; 1969 c 142 s 3; 1967 c 107 s 4; 1959 c 227 s 1; 1953 c 163 s 2; 1917 c 143 s 1; RRS s 5605.]

**Effective date—2000 c 156:** "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [March 27, 2000]." [2000 c 156 s 2.]

**Severability—Effective date—1970 ex.s. c 42:** See notes following RCW 39.36.015.

**Validating—1953 c 163:** "Bonds authorized, issued and sold by any school district prior to the effective date of this act [March 18, 1953] and not in excess of the limitations provided in sections 1 and 2 thereof are hereby approved, ratified and validated, and are a legal and irrevocable obligation of such school district." [1953 c 163 s 3.]

*Cemetery districts, limitation upon indebtedness: RCW 68.52.310.*

*Cities other than first class, limitations upon indebtedness: RCW 35.37.040, 35.37.050.*

*Conditional sales contract debt, not counted as part of debt limit: RCW 28A.335.200, 39.30.010.*

*Counties, limitations upon indebtedness: Chapter 36.67 RCW.*

*Executory conditional sales contracts, limitations on indebtedness: RCW 28A.335.200, 39.30.010.*

*Leases by cities and towns, limitations on indebtedness: RCW 35.42.200.*

*Metropolitan municipal corporations, limitations on indebtedness: RCW 35.58.450.*

*Metropolitan park districts, incurring indebtedness: RCW 35.61.100, 35.61.110.*

*Municipal corporations, limitations upon indebtedness: State Constitution Art. 8 s 6 (Amendment 27).*

*Port districts, limitations upon indebtedness: RCW 39.28.030, 53.36.030.*

*Public utility districts, limitations upon indebtedness: RCW 54.24.018.*

*School districts, limitations upon indebtedness: Chapters 28A.530, 28A.535 RCW.*

*Validation requirement: RCW 39.40.010.*

*Water-sewer districts, limitations upon indebtedness: RCW 57.20.110,  
57.20.120.*