Unused Increment Rate
(not applicable to school districts)

Unused Increment Rate

The unused increment rate can be used to increase the voter-approval tax rate, depending upon the tax rates adopted by a city in the previous three years. The unused increment rate is the three year rolling sum of the difference between the actual tax rate and the voter-approval tax rate. A city has the ability to bank any unused amounts below the voter-approval tax rate to use up to three years. Conversely, if a city adopts the voter-approval tax rate all three years, the unused increment rate would be zero. School districts do not calculate an unused increment rate.

VOTER-APPROVAL TAX RATE
(Tax rate used to levy taxes in preceding year(s))

— (MINUS)

ACTUAL TAX RATE
(Voter-approval tax rate in preceding tax year less unused increment rate for the preceding year)

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UNUSED INCREMENT RATE

Maximum Unused Increment Rate – Three Year Look Back Calculation

Taxing units calculate the unused increment rate by comparing the actual tax rates in the previous three-years to the voter-approval tax rate, the maximum tax rate a unit can adopt without triggering an election. This comparison is made before considering the unused increment allowance in the voter-approval tax rate.

The unused increment for any year prior to 2020 is considered zero.

If a municipality is considered a defunding municipality, the difference between the municipality's actual tax rate and the voter-approval tax rate is considered zero.

Counties that reduce the funding or allocate funding away from a law enforcement agency without voter approval, the difference between the actual tax rate and the voter-approval tax rate is considered zero.

Look back three years

2021 (Year 1)	2022 (Year 2)	2023 (Year 3)	2024
1¢	+ 2¢	+ 2¢	= 5¢ (Max)
Taxing unit adopts a tax rate $0.01 less than the voter-approval tax rate.	Taxing unit adopts a tax rate $0.02 less than the voter-approval tax rate.	Taxing unit adopts a tax rate $0.02 less than the voter-approval tax rate.	Taxing unit may adjust the voter-approval tax rate higher by up to $0.05 without triggering an election.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I calculate my taxing unit's unused increment rate?

The unused increment rate looks back at the difference between the taxing unit's voter-approval tax rate without the unused increment and the adopted tax rate for each of the preceding three years. This process is commonly referred to as "banking" unused pennies by adopting a tax rate below the allowable revenue growth of 3.5 percent. Depending on the tax rate adopted each year, the taxing unit may contribute to or withdraw from the banked pennies. The formula for the unused increment rate is the following: (previous year voter-approval tax rate without the unused increment rate – previous year actual tax rate) + (2nd preceding year voter-approval tax rate without the unused increment rate – 2nd preceding year actual tax rate) + (3rd preceding year voter-approval tax rate without the unused increment rate – 3rd preceding year actual tax rate) = the current year's total unused increment rate.

What happens if my taxing unit adopts a tax rate that uses some or all the available unused increment rate for the current year?

If a taxing unit adopts a tax rate that uses some or all the available unused increment rate, that taxing unit will effectively "withdraw" that portion or all the unused increment. By adopting a tax rate below its voter-approval tax rate but greater than what the voter-approval tax rate would have been without the unused increment, the formula would result in a negative contribution or draw down for that individual year of the total three-year look back. Over the next three years, the current year will contribute a negative number to the unused increment calculation, effectively lowering or zeroing out the total unused increment rate in future years.

Do we have to use all the available unused increment rate when calculating this year's voter-approval rate?

Your voter-approval tax rate calculation must include the entire unused increment rate, however, the taxing unit does not have to adopt a tax rate that uses any of the unused increment rate or "banked" pennies. The unused increment rate available for the current year depends upon the amount of unused increment in each of the previous three years. If a portion of unused increment was used in the previous three years, only the portion that is unused rolls to the next year.

Are there posting or publishing requirements for the unused increment rate?

Yes, the unused increment rate is calculated within the Tax Rate Calculation Worksheet and the worksheet must be published. However, there is no specific requirement that a notice of tax rate, hearing or meeting must separately identify the unused increment rate.

Is an election to approve the adopted tax rate triggered if the adopted tax rate is less than the voter-approval tax rate with the unused increment rate added?

No, the voter-approval tax rate is inclusive of any available unused increment rate and is now the highest tax rate a taxing unit may adopt before an automatic election is triggered.

What happens to the unused increment rate if we do not use it?

The unused increment rate looks at the previous 3 years. If a taxing unit adopts a tax rate equal to what its voter-approval tax rate would have been without the addition of the unused increment rate, it will not contribute any "banked" pennies to the unused increment rate for that year within the calculation for the next three years. The unused pennies from the two proceeding years will still be available within the calculation in the next immediate year.