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S&P: Updated Scores For U.S. Metropolitan Statistical Areas Based On Various Criteria For 2019

S&P Global Ratings has updated its scores for U.S. metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) based on its local government GO criteria, priority-lien criteria, water/sewer criteria, and special assessment debt criteria (see "U.S. Local Governments General Obligation Ratings: Methodology And Assumptions" (published Sept. 12, 2013, on RatingsDirect), its "Priority-Lien Tax Revenue Debt" (published Oct. 22, 2018), "U.S. Public Finance Waterworks, Sanitary Sewer, And Drainage Utility Systems: Rating Methodology And Assumptions" (published Jan. 19, 2016), and "Special Assessment Debt Criteria" (published April 2, 2018).

Overall, 31 of the 384 MSA scores changed with 18 improving and 13 weakening. Additionally, one MSA was added: Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, N.Y. This number of changes is lower than it has been during the past three years. The changes are due almost entirely to the employment growth aspect of the MSA score, which represents a comparison of each MSA's percentage change in employment over the past five years against the sum for all MSAs. The change in employment is measured through 2019, and does not take into account recent or projected economic changes in 2020 accompanying the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other factors influencing the changes include:

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