Form 5500

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

Department of Labor
Employee Benefits Security Administration

Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation

Annual Return/Report of Employee Benefit Plan

This form is required to be filed for employee benefit plans under sections 104 and 4065 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and sections 6057(b) and 6058(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code).

▶ **Complete all entries in accordance with the instructions to the Form 5500.**

OMB Nos. 1210-0110
1210-0089

2025

This Form is Open to Public Inspection

Part I Annual Report Identification Information

For calendar plan year 2025 or fiscal plan year beginning 01/01/2025 and ending 12/31/2025

A This return/report is for:
- [ ] a multiemployer plan
- [ ] a multiple-employer plan (Filers checking this box must provide participating employer information in accordance with the form instructions.)
- [X] a single-employer plan
- [ ] a DFE (specify) _____

B This return/report is:
- [ ] the first return/report
- [ ] the final return/report
- [ ] an amended return/report
- [ ] a short plan year return/report (less than 12 months)

C If the plan is a collectively-bargained plan, check here. . . . . ▶ [ ]

D Check box if filing under:
- [X] Form 5558
- [ ] automatic extension
- [ ] the DFVC program
- [ ] special extension (enter description)

E If this is a retroactively adopted plan permitted by SECURE Act section 201, check here. . . . . ▶ [ ]

Part II Basic Plan Information—enter all requested information

1a Name of plan
ARES HOLDING CORPORATION EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN

1b Three-digit plan number (PN) ▶ 004

1c Effective date of plan 01/01/2022

2a Plan sponsor's name (employer, if for a single-employer plan)
Mailing address (include room, apt., suite no. and street, or P.O. Box)
City or town, state or province, country, and ZIP or foreign postal code (if foreign, see instructions)
ARES HOLDING CORPORATION

8444 WESTPARK DR
STE 800
MCLEAN, VA 22102-5134

2b Employer Identification Number (EIN)
45-0682771

2c Plan Sponsor's telephone number
703-714-9960

2d Business code (see instructions)
541330

Caution: A penalty for the late or incomplete filing of this return/report will be assessed unless reasonable cause is established.

Under penalties of perjury and other penalties set forth in the instructions, I declare that I have examined this return/report, including accompanying schedules, statements and attachments, as well as the electronic version of this return/report, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete.

SIGN HERE	Filed with authorized/valid electronic signature.	10/15/2026	LINDSEY LYNCH
	Signature of plan administrator	Date	Enter name of individual signing as plan administrator
SIGN HERE			
	Signature of employer/plan sponsor	Date	Enter name of individual signing as employer or plan sponsor
SIGN HERE			
	Signature of DFE	Date	Enter name of individual signing as DFE

3a	Plan administrator's name and address [X] Same as Plan Sponsor	**3b**	Administrator's EIN
		3c	Administrator's telephone number
4	If the name and/or EIN of the plan sponsor or the plan name has changed since the last return/report filed for this plan, enter the plan sponsor's name, EIN, the plan name and the plan number from the last return/report:	**4b**	EIN
a	Sponsor's name	**4d**	PN
c	Plan Name		

5	Total number of participants at the beginning of the plan year	**5**	491
6	Number of participants as of the end of the plan year unless otherwise stated (welfare plans complete only lines **6a(1), 6a(2), 6b, 6c,** and **6d**).		
a(1)	Total number of active participants at the beginning of the plan year	**6a(1)**	422
a(2)	Total number of active participants at the end of the plan year	**6a(2)**	365
b	Retired or separated participants receiving benefits	**6b**	0
c	Other retired or separated participants entitled to future benefits	**6c**	109
d	Subtotal. Add lines **6a(2)**, **6b**, and **6c**.	**6d**	474
e	Deceased participants whose beneficiaries are receiving or are entitled to receive benefits.	**6e**	3
f	Total. Add lines **6d** and **6e**.	**6f**	477
g(1)	Number of participants with account balances as of the beginning of the plan year (only defined contribution plans complete this item)	**6g(1)**	442
g(2)	Number of participants with account balances as of the end of the plan year (only defined contribution plans complete this item)	**6g(2)**	470
h	Number of participants who terminated employment during the plan year with accrued benefits that were less than 100% vested.	**6h**	61
7	Enter the total number of employers obligated to contribute to the plan (only multiemployer plans complete this item)	**7**	

8a If the plan provides pension benefits, enter the applicable pension feature codes from the List of Plan Characteristic Codes in the instructions:

2E 2I 2P 3I

b If the plan provides welfare benefits, enter the applicable welfare feature codes from the List of Plan Characteristic Codes in the instructions:

9a Plan funding arrangement (check all that apply)		**9b** Plan benefit arrangement (check all that apply)	
(1) [ ]	Insurance	**(1)** [ ]	Insurance
(2) [ ]	Code section 412(e)(3) insurance contracts	**(2)** [ ]	Code section 412(e)(3) insurance contracts
(3) [X]	Trust	**(3)** [X]	Trust
(4) [ ]	General assets of the sponsor	**(4)** [ ]	General assets of the sponsor

10 Check all applicable boxes in 10a and 10b to indicate which schedules are attached, and, where indicated, enter the number attached. (See instructions)

a Pension Schedules

- **(1)** [X] **R** (Retirement Plan Information)
- **(2)** [ ] **MB** (Multiemployer Defined Benefit Plan and Certain Money Purchase Plan Actuarial Information) - signed by the plan actuary
- **(3)** [ ] **SB** (Single-Employer Defined Benefit Plan Actuarial Information) - signed by the plan actuary
- **(4)** [ ] **DCG** (Individual Plan Information) – Number Attached _____
- **(5)** [ ] **MEP** (Multiple-Employer Retirement Plan Information)

b General Schedules

- **(1)** [X] **H** (Financial Information)
- **(2)** [ ] **I** (Financial Information – Small Plan)
- **(3)** [ ] **A** (Insurance Information) – Number Attached 0
- **(4)** [ ] **C** (Service Provider Information)
- **(5)** [ ] **D** (DFE/Participating Plan Information)
- **(6)** [ ] **G** (Financial Transaction Schedules)

Part III Form M-1 Compliance Information (to be completed by welfare benefit plans)

11a If the plan provides welfare benefits, was the plan subject to the Form M-1 filing requirements during the plan year? (See instructions and 29 CFR 2520.101-2.) ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

If "Yes" is checked, complete lines 11b and 11c.

11b Is the plan currently in compliance with the Form M-1 filing requirements? (See instructions and 29 CFR 2520.101-2.) ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

11c Enter the Receipt Confirmation Code for the 2025 Form M-1 annual report. If the plan was not required to file the 2025 Form M-1 annual report, enter the Receipt Confirmation Code for the most recent Form M-1 that was required to be filed under the Form M-1 filing requirements. (Failure to enter a valid Receipt Confirmation Code will subject the Form 5500 filing to rejection as incomplete.)

Receipt Confirmation Code_____

SCHEDULE H (Form 5500)

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

Department of Labor
Employee Benefits Security Administration

Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation

Financial Information

This schedule is required to be filed under section 104 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), and section 6058(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code).

▶ **File as an attachment to Form 5500.**

OMB No. 1210-0110

2025

This Form is Open to Public Inspection

For calendar plan year 2025 or fiscal plan year beginning 01/01/2025 and ending 12/31/2025

A Name of plan
ARES HOLDING CORPORATION EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN

B Three-digit plan number (PN) ▶ 004

C Plan sponsor's name as shown on line 2a of Form 5500
ARES HOLDING CORPORATION

D Employer Identification Number (EIN)
45-0682771

Part I Asset and Liability Statement

1 Current value of plan assets and liabilities at the beginning and end of the plan year. Combine the value of plan assets held in more than one trust. Report the value of the plan's interest in a commingled fund containing the assets of more than one plan on a line-by-line basis unless the value is reportable on lines 1c(9) through 1c(14). Do not enter the value of that portion of an insurance contract which guarantees, during this plan year, to pay a specific dollar benefit at a future date. **Round off amounts to the nearest dollar.** MTIAs, CCTs, PSAs, and 103-12 IEs do not complete lines 1b(1), 1b(2), 1c(8), 1g, 1h, and 1i. CCTs, PSAs, and 103-12 IEs also do not complete lines 1d and 1e. See instructions.

Assets		(a) Beginning of Year	(b) End of Year
a Total noninterest-bearing cash	1a	0	15719
b Receivables (less allowance for doubtful accounts):			
(1) Employer contributions	1b(1)		
(2) Participant contributions	1b(2)		
(3) Other	1b(3)		
c General investments:			
(1) Interest-bearing cash (include money market accounts & certificates of deposit)	1c(1)		
(2) U.S. Government securities	1c(2)		
(3) Corporate debt instruments (other than employer securities):			
(A) Preferred	1c(3)(A)		
(B) All other	1c(3)(B)		
(4) Corporate stocks (other than employer securities):			
(A) Preferred	1c(4)(A)		
(B) Common	1c(4)(B)		
(5) Partnership/joint venture interests	1c(5)		
(6) Real estate (other than employer real property)	1c(6)		
(7) Loans (other than to participants)	1c(7)		
(8) Participant loans	1c(8)		
(9) Value of interest in common/collective trusts	1c(9)		
(10) Value of interest in pooled separate accounts	1c(10)		
(11) Value of interest in master trust investment accounts	1c(11)		
(12) Value of interest in 103-12 investment entities	1c(12)		
(13) Value of interest in registered investment companies (e.g., mutual funds)	1c(13)		
(14) Value of funds held in insurance company general account (unallocated contracts)	1c(14)		
(15) Other	1c(15)		

		(a) Beginning of Year	(b) End of Year
1d Employer-related investments:			
(1) Employer securities	1d(1)	10445230	14705591
(2) Employer real property	1d(2)		
1e Buildings and other property used in plan operation	1e		
1f Total assets (add all amounts in lines 1a through 1e)	1f	10445230	14721310
Liabilities			
1g Benefit claims payable	1g	0	15719
1h Operating payables	1h	18254071	17564218
1i Acquisition indebtedness	1i		
1j Other liabilities	1j		
1k Total liabilities (add all amounts in lines 1g through1j)	1k	18254071	17579937
Net Assets			
1l Net assets (subtract line 1k from line 1f)	1l	-7808841	-2858627

Part II Income and Expense Statement

2 Plan income, expenses, and changes in net assets for the year. Include all income and expenses of the plan, including any trust(s) or separately maintained fund(s) and any payments/receipts to/from insurance carriers. Round off amounts to the nearest dollar. MTIAs, CCTs, PSAs, and 103-12 IEs do not complete lines 2a, 2b(1)(E), 2e, 2f, and 2g.

Income		(a) Amount	(b) Total
a Contributions:			
(1) Received or receivable in cash from: **(A)** Employers	2a(1)(A)	1566226	
(B) Participants	2a(1)(B)		
(C) Others (including rollovers)	2a(1)(C)		
(2) Noncash contributions	2a(2)		
(3) Total contributions. Add lines **2a(1)(A), (B), (C),** and line **2a(2)**	2a(3)		1566226
b Earnings on investments:			
(1) Interest:			
(A) Interest-bearing cash (including money market accounts and certificates of deposit)	2b(1)(A)		
(B) U.S. Government securities	2b(1)(B)		
(C) Corporate debt instruments	2b(1)(C)		
(D) Loans (other than to participants)	2b(1)(D)		
(E) Participant loans	2b(1)(E)		
(F) Other	2b(1)(F)		
(G) Total interest. Add lines **2b(1)(A)** through **(F)**	2b(1)(G)		0
(2) Dividends: **(A)** Preferred stock	2b(2)(A)		
(B) Common stock	2b(2)(B)		
(C) Registered investment company shares (e.g. mutual funds)	2b(2)(C)		
(D) Total dividends. Add lines **2b(2)(A)**, **(B)**, and **(C)**	2b(2)(D)		0
(3) Rents	2b(3)		
(4) Net gain (loss) on sale of assets: **(A)** Aggregate proceeds	2b(4)(A)		
(B) Aggregate carrying amount (see instructions)	2b(4)(B)		
(C) Subtract line **2b(4)(B)** from line **2b(4)(A)** and enter result	2b(4)(C)		0
(5) Unrealized appreciation (depreciation) of assets: **(A)** Real estate	2b(5)(A)		
(B) Other	2b(5)(B)	4260361	
(C) Total unrealized appreciation of assets. Add lines **2b(5)(A)** and **(B)**	2b(5)(C)		4260361

		(a) Amount	(b) Total
(6) Net investment gain (loss) from common/collective trusts	2b(6)		
(7) Net investment gain (loss) from pooled separate accounts	2b(7)		
(8) Net investment gain (loss) from master trust investment accounts	2b(8)		
(9) Net investment gain (loss) from 103-12 investment entities	2b(9)		
(10) Net investment gain (loss) from registered investment companies (e.g., mutual funds)	2b(10)		
c Other income	2c		
d Total income. Add all **income** amounts in column (b) and enter total	2d		5826587
Expenses			
e Benefit payment and payments to provide benefits:			
(1) Directly to participants or beneficiaries, including direct rollovers	2e(1)	84146	
(2) To insurance carriers for the provision of benefits	2e(2)		
(3) Other	2e(3)		
(4) Total benefit payments. Add lines **2e(1)** through **(3)**	2e(4)		84146
f Corrective distributions (see instructions)	2f		
g Certain deemed distributions of participant loans (see instructions)	2g		
h Interest expense	2h		792227
i Administrative expenses:			
(1) Salaries and allowances	2i(1)		
(2) Contract administrator fees	2i(2)		
(3) Recordkeeping fees	2i(3)		
(4) IQPA audit fees	2i(4)		
(5) Investment advisory and investment management fees	2i(5)		
(6) Bank or trust company trustee/custodial fees	2i(6)		
(7) Actuarial fees	2i(7)		
(8) Legal fees	2i(8)		
(9) Valuation/appraisal fees	2i(9)		
(10) Other trustee fees and expenses	2i(10)		
(11) Other expenses	2i(11)		
(12) Total administrative expenses. Add lines **2i(1)** through **(11)**	2i(12)		0
j Total expenses. Add all **expense** amounts in column (b) and enter total	2j		876373
Net Income and Reconciliation			
k Net income (loss). Subtract line **2j** from line **2d**	2k		4950214
l Transfers of assets:			
(1) To this plan	2l(1)		
(2) From this plan	2l(2)		

Part III Accountant's Opinion

3 Complete lines 3a through 3c if the opinion of an independent qualified public accountant is attached to this Form 5500. Complete line 3d if an opinion is not attached.

a The attached opinion of an independent qualified public accountant for this plan is (see instructions):

(1) [X] Unmodified **(2)** [ ] Qualified **(3)** [ ] Disclaimer **(4)** [ ] Adverse

b Check the appropriate box(es) to indicate whether the IQPA performed an ERISA section 103(a)(3)(C) audit. Check both boxes (1) and (2) if the audit was performed pursuant to both 29 CFR 2520.103-8 and 29 CFR 2520.103-12(d). Check box (3) if pursuant to neither.

(1) [ ] DOL Regulation 2520.103-8 **(2)** [ ] DOL Regulation 2520.103-12(d) **(3)** [X] neither DOL Regulation 2520.103-8 nor DOL Regulation 2520.103-12(d).

c Enter the name and EIN of the accountant (or accounting firm) below:

(1) Name: COHEN & COMPANY **(2)** EIN: 34-1912961

d The opinion of an independent qualified public accountant is **not attached** as part of Schedule H because:

(1) [ ] This form is filed for a CCT, PSA, DCG or MTIA. **(2)** [ ] It will be attached to the next Form 5500 pursuant to 29 CFR 2520.104-50.

Part IV Compliance Questions

4 CCTs and PSAs do not complete Part IV. MTIAs, 103-12 IEs, and GIAs do not complete lines 4a, 4e, 4f, 4g, 4h, 4k, 4m, 4n, or 5. 103-12 IEs also do not complete lines 4j and 4l. MTIAs also do not complete line 4l. DCGs do not complete lines 4e, 4f, 4k, 4l, and 5, and DCGs generally complete the rest of Part IV collectively for all plans in the DCG, except as otherwise provided (see instructions).

During the plan year:

		Yes	No	Amount
a Was there a failure to transmit to the plan any participant contributions within the time period described in 29 CFR 2510.3-102? Continue to answer "Yes" for any prior year failures until fully corrected. (See instructions and DOL's Voluntary Fiduciary Correction Program.)	**4a**		X	
b Were any loans by the plan or fixed income obligations due the plan in default as of the close of the plan year or classified during the year as uncollectible? Disregard participant loans secured by participant's account balance. (Attach Schedule G (Form 5500) Part I if "Yes" is checked.)	**4b**		X	
c Were any leases to which the plan was a party in default or classified during the year as uncollectible? (Attach Schedule G (Form 5500) Part II if "Yes" is checked.)	**4c**		X	
d Were there any nonexempt transactions with any party-in-interest? (Do not include transactions reported on line 4a. Attach Schedule G (Form 5500) Part III if "Yes" is checked.)	**4d**		X	
e Was this plan covered by a fidelity bond?	**4e**	X		1000000
f Did the plan have a loss, whether or not reimbursed by the plan's fidelity bond, that was caused by fraud or dishonesty?	**4f**		X	
g Did the plan hold any assets whose current value was neither readily determinable on an established market nor set by an independent third party appraiser?	**4g**		X	
h Did the plan receive any noncash contributions whose value was neither readily determinable on an established market nor set by an independent third party appraiser?	**4h**		X	
i Did the plan have assets held for investment? (Attach schedule(s) of assets if "Yes" is checked, and see instructions for format requirements.)	**4i**	X		
j Were any plan transactions or series of transactions in excess of 5% of the current value of plan assets? (Attach schedule of transactions if "Yes" is checked and see instructions for format requirements.)	**4j**		X	
k Were all the plan assets either distributed to participants or beneficiaries, transferred to another plan, or brought under the control of the PBGC?	**4k**		X	
l Has the plan failed to provide any benefit when due under the plan?	**4l**		X	
m If this is an individual account plan, was there a blackout period? (See instructions and 29 CFR 2520.101-3.)	**4m**		X	
n If 4m was answered "Yes," check the "Yes" box if you either provided the required notice or one of the exceptions to providing the notice applied under 29 CFR 2520.101-3.	**4n**			

5a Has a resolution to terminate the plan been adopted during the plan year or any prior plan year? [ ] Yes [X] No

If "Yes," enter the amount of any plan assets that reverted to the employer this year _____.

5b If, during this plan year, any assets or liabilities were transferred from this plan to another plan(s), identify the plan(s) to which assets or liabilities were transferred. (See instructions.)

5b(1) Name of plan(s)	**5b(2)** EIN(s)	**5b(3)** PN(s)

5c Was the plan a defined benefit plan covered under the PBGC insurance program at any time during this plan year? (See ERISA section 4021 and instructions.) ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not determined

If "Yes" is checked, enter the My PAA confirmation number from the PBGC premium filing for this plan year _____.

SCHEDULE R (Form 5500)

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

Department of Labor
Employee Benefits Security Administration

Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation

Retirement Plan Information

This schedule is required to be filed under sections 104 and 4065 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and section 6058(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code).

▶ **File as an attachment to Form 5500.**

OMB No. 1210-0110

2025

This Form is Open to Public Inspection.

For calendar plan year 2025 or fiscal plan year beginning 01/01/2025 and ending 12/31/2025

A Name of plan
ARES HOLDING CORPORATION EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN

B Three-digit plan number (PN) ▶ 004

C Plan sponsor's name as shown on line 2a of Form 5500
ARES HOLDING CORPORATION

D Employer Identification Number (EIN)
45-0682771

Part I Distributions

All references to distributions relate only to payments of benefits during the plan year.

1 Total value of distributions paid in property other than in cash or the forms of property specified in the instructions ..... | 1 | 0

2 Enter the EIN(s) of payor(s) who paid benefits on behalf of the plan to participants or beneficiaries during the year (if more than two, enter EINs of the two payors who paid the greatest dollar amounts of benefits):

EIN(s): 41-3405577

Profit-sharing plans, ESOPs, and stock bonus plans, skip line 3.

3 Number of participants (living or deceased) whose benefits were distributed in a single sum, during the plan year ..... | 3 |

Part II Funding Information (If the plan is not subject to the minimum funding requirements of section 412 of the Internal Revenue Code or ERISA section 302, skip this Part.)

4 Is the plan administrator making an election under Code section 412(d)(2) or ERISA section 302(d)(2)? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

If the plan is a defined benefit plan, go to line 8.

5 If a waiver of the minimum funding standard for a prior year is being amortized in this plan year, see instructions and enter the date of the ruling letter granting the waiver. **Date:** Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

If you completed line 5, complete lines 3, 9, and 10 of Schedule MB and do not complete the remainder of this schedule.

6 a	Enter the minimum required contribution for this plan year (include any prior year accumulated funding deficiency not waived)	6a	
b	Enter the amount contributed by the employer to the plan for this plan year	6b	
c	Subtract the amount in line 6b from the amount in line 6a. Enter the result (enter a minus sign to the left of a negative amount)	6c	

If you completed line 6c, skip lines 8 and 9.

7 Will the minimum funding amount reported on line 6c be met by the funding deadline? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

8 If a change in actuarial cost method was made for this plan year pursuant to a revenue procedure or other authority providing automatic approval for the change or a class ruling letter, does the plan sponsor or plan administrator agree with the change? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Part III Amendments

9 If this is a defined benefit pension plan, were any amendments adopted during this plan year that increased or decreased the value of benefits? If yes, check the appropriate box. If no, check the "No" box. ..... ☐ Increase ☐ Decrease ☐ Both ☐ No

Part IV ESOPs (see instructions). If this is not a plan described under section 409(a) or 4975(e)(7) of the Internal Revenue Code, skip this Part.

10 Were unallocated employer securities or proceeds from the sale of unallocated securities used to repay any exempt loan? ..... ☐ Yes ☒ No

11 a Does the ESOP hold any preferred stock? ..... ☐ Yes ☒ No

b If the ESOP has an outstanding exempt loan with the employer as lender, is such loan part of a "back-to-back" loan? (See instructions for definition of "back-to-back" loan.) ..... ☐ Yes ☒ No

12 Does the ESOP hold any stock that is not readily tradable on an established securities market? ..... ☒ Yes ☐ No

Part V Additional Information for Multiemployer Defined Benefit Pension Plans

13 Enter the following information for each employer that (1) contributed more than 5% of total contributions to the plan during the plan year or (2) was one of the top-ten highest contributors (measured in dollars). See instructions. *Complete as many entries as needed to report all applicable employers.*

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*
(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____
(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify):

---

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*
(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____
(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

---

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*
(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____
(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

---

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*
(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____
(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

---

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*
(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____
(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

---

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*
(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____
(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

14 Enter the number of deferred vested and retired participants (inactive participants), as of the beginning of the plan year, whose contributing employer is no longer making contributions to the plan for:

a The current plan year. Check the box to indicate the counting method used to determine the number of inactive participants: ☐ last contributing employer ☐ alternative ☐ reasonable approximation (see instructions for required attachment)	**14a**	
b The plan year immediately preceding the current plan year. ☐ Check the box if the number reported is a change from what was previously reported (see instructions for required attachment)	**14b**	
c The second preceding plan year. ☐ Check the box if the number reported is a change from what was previously reported (see instructions for required attachment)	**14c**	

15 Enter the ratio of the number of participants under the plan on whose behalf no employer had an obligation to make an employer contribution during the current plan year to:

a The corresponding number for the plan year immediately preceding the current plan year	**15a**	
b The corresponding number for the second preceding plan year	**15b**	

16 Information with respect to any employers who withdrew from the plan during the preceding plan year:

a Enter the number of employers who withdrew during the preceding plan year	**16a**	
b If line 16a is greater than 0, enter the aggregate amount of withdrawal liability assessed or estimated to be assessed against such withdrawn employers	**16b**	

17 If assets and liabilities from another plan have been transferred to or merged with this plan during the plan year, check box and see instructions regarding supplemental information to be included as an attachment ☐

Part VI Additional Information for Single-Employer and Multiemployer Defined Benefit Pension Plans

18 If any liabilities to participants or their beneficiaries under the plan as of the end of the plan year consist (in whole or in part) of liabilities to such participants and beneficiaries under two or more pension plans as of immediately before such plan year, check box and see instructions regarding supplemental information to be included as an attachment ☐

19 If the total number of participants is 1,000 or more, complete lines (a) and (b):

a Enter the percentage of plan assets held as:
Public Equity: _____% Private Equity: _____% Investment-Grade Debt and Interest Rate Hedging Assets: _____%
High-Yield Debt: _____% Real Assets: _____% Cash or Cash Equivalents: _____% Other: _____%

b Provide the average duration of the Investment-Grade Debt and Interest Rate Hedging Assets:
☐ 0-5 years ☐ 5-10 years ☐ 10-15 years ☐ 15 years or more

20 **PBGC missed contribution reporting requirements.** If this is a multiemployer plan or a single-employer plan that is not covered by PBGC, skip line 20.

a Is the amount of unpaid minimum required contributions for all years from Schedule SB (Form 5500) line 40 greater than zero? ☐ Yes ☐ No

b If line 20a is "Yes," has PBGC been notified as required by ERISA sections 4043(c)(5) and/or 303(k)(4)? Check the applicable box:

☐ Yes.

☐ No. Reporting was waived under 29 CFR 4043.25(c)(2) because contributions equal to or exceeding the unpaid minimum required contribution were made by the 30th day after the due date.

☐ No. The 30-day period referenced in 29 CFR 4043.25(c)(2) has not yet ended, and the sponsor intends to make a contribution equal to or exceeding the unpaid minimum required contribution by the 30th day after the due date.

☐ No. Other. Provide explanation._____

Part VII IRS Compliance Questions

21a Does the plan satisfy the coverage and nondiscrimination tests of Code sections 410(b) and 401(a)(4) by combining this plan with any other plans under the permissive aggregation rules? ☐ Yes ☒ No

21b If this is a Code section 401(k) plan, check all boxes that apply to indicate how the plan is intended to satisfy the nondiscrimination requirements for employee deferrals and employer matching contributions (as applicable) under Code sections 401(k)(3) and 401(m)(2).

☐ Design-based safe harbor method

☐ "Prior year" ADP test

☐ "Current year" ADP test

☒ N/A

22 If the plan sponsor is an adopter of a pre-approved plan that received a favorable IRS Opinion Letter, enter the date of the Opinion Letter ___/___/_____ (MM/DD/YYYY) and the Opinion Letter serial number_____.

ARES Holding Corporation Employee Stock Ownership Plan

Financial Statements
December 31, 2025 and 2024

Cohen & Co®

cohenco.com

ARES HOLDING CORPORATION EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN

DECEMBER 31, 2025 AND 2024

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Cohen & Co

Independent Auditor's Report

Plan Participants, Board of Directors, and Trustee
ARES Holding Corporation Employee Stock Ownership Plan

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the ARES Holding Corporation Employee Stock Ownership Plan (the Plan), an employee benefit plan subject to the Employee Retirement Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), which comprise the statement of net assets (deficit) available for benefits as of December 31, 2025 and 2024, and the related statement of changes in net assets (deficit) available for benefits for the year ended December 31, 2025, and the related notes to the financial statements.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the net assets (deficit) available for benefits of the Plan as of December 31, 2025 and 2024, and the changes in net assets (deficit) available for benefits for the year ended December 31, 2025, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Plan and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audits. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Plan's ability to continue as a going concern for one year after the date the financial statements are available to be issued.

Management is also responsible for maintaining a current Plan instrument, including all Plan amendments, administering the Plan, and determining that the Plan's transactions that are presented and disclosed in the financial statements are in conformity with the Plan's provisions, including maintaining sufficient records with respect to each of the participants, to determine the benefits due or which may become due to such participants.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgement made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Plan's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Plan's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

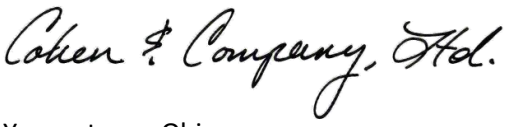
We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audits, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audits.

Supplemental Schedule Required by ERISA

Our audits were conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements as a whole. The supplemental Schedule of Assets Held at End of Year as of December 31, 2025, is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the financial statements but is supplementary information required by the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA. Such information is the responsibility of the Plan's management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with GAAS.

In forming our opinion on the supplemental schedule, we evaluated whether the supplemental schedule, including its form and content, is presented in conformity with the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA.

In our opinion, the information in the accompanying schedule is fairly stated, in all material aspects, in relation to the financial statements as a whole, and the form and content are presented in conformity with the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA.



Youngstown, Ohio
October 14, 2026

STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS (DEFICIT) AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

DECEMBER 31, 2025 AND 2024

	2025			2024		
	COMPANY STOCK			COMPANY STOCK		
	ALLOCATED	UNALLOCATED	TOTAL	ALLOCATED	UNALLOCATED	TOTAL
ASSETS						
INVESTMENT - AT FAIR VALUE	$ 2,205,839	$ 12,499,752	$ 14,705,591	$ 1,044,523	$ 9,400,707	$ 10,445,230
CASH	15,719		15,719			
	2,221,558	12,499,752	14,721,310	1,044,523	9,400,707	10,445,230
LIABILITIES						
NOTE PAYABLE		17,564,218	17,564,218		18,254,071	18,254,071
DISTRIBUTIONS PAYABLE	15,719		15,719			
	15,719	17,564,218	17,579,937		18,254,071	18,254,071
NET ASSETS (DEFICIT) AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS	$ 2,205,839	$ (5,064,466)	$ (2,858,627)	$ 1,044,523	$ (8,853,364)	$ (7,808,841)

See accompanying notes to the financial statements.

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS (DEFICIT) AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2025

	COMPANY STOCK		
	ALLOCATED	UNALLOCATED	TOTAL
ADDITIONS TO NET ASSETS ATTRIBUTABLE TO:			
Employer contributions	$ 84,146	$ 1,482,080	$ 1,566,226
Net appreciation in fair value of investment	426,036	3,834,325	4,260,361
Allocation of 36,727 shares of Company stock, at fair value	735,280		735,280
Total additions	1,245,462	5,316,405	6,561,867
DEDUCTIONS FROM NET ASSETS ATTRIBUTABLE TO:			
Allocation of 36,727 shares of Company stock, at fair value		735,280	735,280
Distributions	84,146		84,146
Interest expense		792,227	792,227
Total deductions	84,146	1,527,507	1,611,653
NET INCREASE	1,161,316	3,788,898	4,950,214
NET ASSETS (DEFICIT) AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS:			
BEGINNING OF YEAR	1,044,523	(8,853,364)	(7,808,841)
END OF YEAR	$ 2,205,839	$ (5,064,466)	$ (2,858,627)

See accompanying notes to the financial statements.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. DESCRIPTION OF PLAN

The following description of the ARES Holding Corporation Employee Stock Ownership Plan (the Plan) provides only general information. Participants should refer to the Plan agreement for a more complete description of the Plan's provisions.

General

ARES Holding Corporation (the Company) established the Plan effective January 1, 2022. The Plan operates as a leveraged employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) and is designed to comply with Section 4975(e)(7) and the regulations thereunder of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC), as amended, and is subject to the applicable provisions of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended (ERISA). The Plan is administered by a trustee (the Trustee) appointed by the Company's Board of Directors. The Trustee and plan administrator oversee governance of the Plan.

On December 9, 2022, the Plan purchased 734,545 shares of ARES Holding Corporation common stock (Company Stock) from the Company, with a note payable of $19,500,000 (Note 6) and holds the Company Stock in a trust established under the Plan. The borrowings are to be repaid over the term of the loan by fully deductible Company contributions to the Plan. As the Plan makes each payment of principal and interest, an appropriate percentage of Company Stock will be allocated to eligible employees' accounts in accordance with applicable regulations under the IRC.

The borrowings are collateralized by the unallocated shares of Company Stock. The Company has no rights against the shares once they are allocated to participants under the provisions of the ESOP. Accordingly, the financial statements of the Plan as of December 31, 2025 and 2024, and for the year ended December 31, 2025, present separately the assets and liabilities and changes therein pertaining to:

a) the accounts of participants with vested rights in allocated Company Stock (Allocated), and

b) Company Stock not yet allocated to eligible participants (Unallocated).

Eligibility

The Plan covers substantially all employees of the Company who are at least age 21, have completed one year of service, as defined, and have worked at least 1,000 hours during the Plan year. The Plan excludes bargaining employees, leased employees, residents of Puerto Rico, and contractors. An employee eligible to participate in the Plan becomes a participant on the first day of the Plan quarter coinciding with or following completion of the eligibility requirements.

Contributions

The Plan is funded solely by the Company's discretionary contributions to the Plan as determined by the Company's Board of Directors. Contributions authorized by the Board of Directors for the year ended December 31, 2025, were $1,566,226. All Company contributions are subject to the limitations imposed under IRC Section 404(a)(3)(A). Employee contributions are not permitted.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. DESCRIPTION OF PLAN (Continued)

Contributions (continued)

The Company is obligated to make contributions in cash to the Plan which, when aggregated with the Plan's distributions on unallocated Company Stock and dividends and interest earnings received, equal the amount necessary to enable the Plan to make its regularly scheduled payments of principal and interest due on its note payable. Contribution amounts in excess of the required loan payments are allocated to the eligible participants in the Plan.

Participant Accounts

The Plan is a defined contribution plan under which a separate individual account is established for each participant. Each participant's account is credited, as of the last day of each Plan year, with an allocation of shares of the Company Stock released by the Trustee from the unallocated account and forfeitures of terminated participants' nonvested accounts. Only those participants who are eligible employees of the Company, as defined, will receive an allocation. Allocations are based on a participant's eligible compensation, relative to total eligible compensation. Plan earnings or losses are allocated to each participant's account based on the ratio of the participant's account balance.

Diversification

Diversification is offered to participants close to retirement so that they may have the opportunity to move part of the value of their investment in Company Stock into investments which are more diversified. Participants who are at least age 55 with at least ten years of participation in the Plan may elect to diversify a portion of their account. Diversification is offered to each eligible participant over a six year period. In each of the first five years, a participant may diversify up to 25% of the number of shares allocated to his or her account, less any shares previously diversified. In the sixth year, the percentage changes to 50%. Participants who elect to diversify receive a rollover to another qualified defined contribution plan sponsored by the Company. The election to diversify is made subsequent to year-end based upon the shares of Company Stock in the participant's account at year-end.

Vesting

If a participant's employment with the Company ends for any reason other than retirement, permanent disability, or death, he or she will vest based on years of continuous service with the Company. After two years of service, participants will vest 20% per year and are fully vested after five years of service.

Payment of Benefits

Upon termination of service for any reason or attainment of normal retirement age, as defined, a participant may elect to receive either a lump-sum amount equal to the value of the participant's vested interest in his or her account, or annual installments over a future period. If the participant's account balance is between $1,000 and $7,000, the plan administrator makes an automatic rollover of the account balance to a qualified individual retirement account. If the participant's account balance is less than $1,000, the plan administrator directs the Trustee to make a lump-sum distribution. For termination of service for other reasons, a participant may receive the value of the vested interest in his or her account as a lump-sum distribution.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. DESCRIPTION OF PLAN (Continued)

Put Option

Under federal income tax regulations, Company Stock that is held by the Plan and its participants and is not readily tradable on an established market, or is subject to trading limitations, includes a put option. The put option is a right to demand that the Company buy any shares of its stock distributed to participants for which there is no market. The put price is representative of the current appraised value of the Company Stock. The put option permits the participant to sell Company Stock to the Company for a period of sixty days after such shares are distributed at the fair market value as of the last valuation date, as specified in the Plan document. The Company can pay for the purchase with interest over a period of five years. The purpose of the put option is to ensure that the participant has the ability to ultimately obtain cash.

Voting Rights

The Trustee votes on behalf of the Plan in the collective best interest of participants and beneficiaries.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of Accounting

The financial statements of the Plan are prepared on the accrual basis of accounting.

Use of Accounting Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP) requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of net assets (deficit) available for benefits and changes therein, and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

The current method of valuation of the investment considers certain assumptions related to the Company's future performance. These factors are subject to change over time and are reviewed periodically. Further, because of the inherent uncertainty of the valuation process, those estimated fair values may differ significantly from the values that would have been used had a ready market for the investment existed, and the differences could be material.

Investment Valuation and Income Recognition

The shares of Company Stock are valued at fair value. See Note 5 for discussion of fair value measurements. Dividend income is recorded on the ex-dividend date. Net appreciation in fair value of investment includes the Plan's gains and losses on investments bought and sold, as well as held during the year.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Payment of Benefits

Benefits are recorded when paid.

Plan Expenses

The Plan's administrative expenses are paid either by the Plan or the Company as provided by the Plan agreement. Expenses that are paid by the Company are excluded from these financial statements.

Income Taxes

In accordance with GAAP, the plan administrator is required to evaluate tax positions taken by the Plan and recognize a tax liability for any significant uncertain position that more likely than not would not be sustained upon examination by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). As of December 31, 2025 and 2024, and for the year ended December 31, 2025, the Plan did not have a liability for unrecognized tax benefit The Plan is subject to routine audits by tax authorities; however, there are currently no audits for any tax periods in progress.

Subsequent Events

Plan management has evaluated subsequent events through October 14, 2026, the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

3. INVESTMENT

At December 31, 2025 and 2024, the investment in Company Stock is as follows:

	December 31, 2025	
	Allocated	Unallocated
ARES Holding Corporation Common Stock:		
Number of shares	110,182	624,363
Cost	$ 2,925,319	$ 16,574,681
Estimated fair value	$ 2,205,839	$ 12,499,752

	December 31, 2024	
	Allocated	Unallocated
ARES Holding Corporation Common Stock:		
Number of shares	73,455	661,090
Cost	$ 1,950,217	$ 17,549,783
Estimated fair value	$ 1,044,523	$ 9,400,707

The fair value of the Company Stock is determined annually, as of December 31, by an independent third-party appraiser. The Company Stock held as a Plan asset is valued using the most recent valuation approved by the Trustee. The Plan owns 100% of the outstanding stock of ARES Holding Corporation.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

3. INVESTMENT (Continued)

The investment is non-participant directed.

4. ADMINISTRATION OF PLAN ASSETS

The Plan's assets, which consist primarily of Company Stock, are held by the Trustee of the Plan.

Company contributions are held and managed by the Trustee, who invests cash received, interest, and dividend income and makes distributions to participants. The Trustee also administers the payment of interest and principal on the notes payable.

Certain administrative functions are performed by officers or employees of the Company. No such officer or employee receives compensation from the Plan. Administrative expenses for the Trustee's fees are paid directly by the Company.

5. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

The framework for measuring fair value provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value. The hierarchy gives the highest priority to unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities (Level 1) and the lowest priority to unobservable inputs (Level 3). The three levels of the fair value hierarchy are described as follows:

Level 1 Inputs to the valuation methodology are unadjusted quoted prices for identical assets or liabilities in active markets that the Plan has the ability to access.

Level 2 Inputs to the valuation methodology include: quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets; quoted prices for identical or similar assets or liabilities in inactive markets; inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset or liability; or inputs that are derived principally from or corroborated by observable market data by correlation or other means. If the asset or liability has a specified (contractual) term, the level 2 input must be observable for substantially the full term of the asset or liability.

Level 3 Inputs to the valuation methodology are unobservable and significant to the fair value measurement.

The asset's fair value measurement level within the fair value hierarchy is based on the lowest level of any input that is significant to the fair value measurement. Valuation techniques maximize the use of relevant observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

5. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)

Following is a description of the valuation methodology used for assets measured at fair value.

Company stock: Valued at fair value based upon an annual independent appraisal by a firm hired by the Trustee. This appraisal was based on a combination of the market (capitalization of earnings) and income (discounted cash flow) valuation methods. Unobservable inputs used for the market method include public comparables and revenue multiples while inputs for the income valuation method include the weighted average cost of capital, required return on equity and residual cash flow value. Additionally, both methods reflected that a market participant would also recognize a discount for lack of marketability. Plan management accumulates the data for the appraiser from the audited and projected financial statements of the Company. The appraiser prepares a preliminary report which the Trustee reviews in detail and approves. The appraiser's report, upon approval, is used to estimate per share value that a participant will receive upon distribution.

The preceding method described may produce a fair value calculation that may not be indicative of net realizable value or reflective of future fair values. Furthermore, although the Plan believes its valuation method is appropriate and consistent with other market participants, the use of different methodologies or assumptions to determine the fair value of certain financial instruments could result in a different fair value measurement at the reporting date.

Assets measured at fair value are comprised of Level 3 Company Stock at December 31, 2025 and 2024, totaling $14,705,591 and $10,445,230, respectively.

Following is a reconciliation of activity for the fair value of the Plan's Level 3 assets for the year ended December 31, 2025:

Balance - Beginning of year	$ 10,445,230
Net unrealized gains	4,260,361
Balance - End of year	$ 14,705,591

6. NOTE PAYABLE

During 2022, the Plan borrowed $19,500,000 from the Company to purchase 734,545 shares of Company Stock. The term loan agreement bears interest at 4.34% requiring annual payments of principal and interest payable on December 31 until the maturity date of December 2042. The loan had an outstanding balance of $17,564,218 and $18,254,071 at December 31, 2025 and 2024, respectively. Interest expense of $792,227 was incurred during the year ended December 31, 2025. The unallocated outstanding Company Stock owned by the Plan is collateral for the loan.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

6. NOTE PAYABLE (Continued)

The maturity of the note payable is as follows:

2026	$ 719,793
2027	751,032
2028	783,626
2029	817,636
2030	853,121
Thereafter	13,639,010
	$ 17,564,218

The investment in unallocated Company Stock is restricted to the extent that it is security for the note payable. Shares of the unallocated Company Stock become available for allocation to participants based on a ratio of principal and interest paid in the Plan year to the total principal and interest to be paid on the note in future years.

7. RELATED PARTY AND PARTY-IN-INTEREST TRANSACTIONS

The Plan invests in shares of common stock of ARES Holding Corporation, which is the plan sponsor. These investment activities are related party and party-in-interest transactions. As described in Notes 2 and 4, the Company pays the expenses of the Plan. These related party and party-in-interest transactions are exempt from the prohibited transactions rules of ERISA.

8. TAX STATUS

The Plan has adopted a pre-approved plan provided by Principal Financial Group (Principal). Principal has received an opinion letter dated June 30, 2020, from the IRS stating that the pre-approved plan is acceptable under Section 401 of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) for use by employers for the benefit of their employees. Although the Plan has been amended since receiving the opinion letter, the plan administrator believes that the Plan is currently designed and being operated in compliance with the applicable requirements of the IRC and, therefore, believes that the Plan is qualified and the related trust is tax exempt.

9. PLAN TERMINATION

The Company reserves the right to terminate the Plan at any time, subject to Plan provisions. Upon termination of the Plan, the plan sponsor directs the Trustee to pay all liabilities and expenses of the ESOP and to sell shares of financed Company Stock held as collateral to the extent it determines such sale to be necessary in order to repay the loan. Subsequently, the interest of each participant in the trust fund will be distributed to such participant or his or her beneficiary at the time prescribed by the Plan terms and the IRC.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

10. RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES

The Plan investment consists of the Company Stock, which is exposed to various risks such as interest rate, market, and credit risks as well as valuation assumptions based on earnings, cash flows, and other such techniques. Due to the level of risk associated with the investment in the Company Stock and due to uncertainties inherent in the estimates and assumptions process, it is at least reasonably possible that changes in the value of the Company Stock will occur in the near term and that such changes could materially affect the amounts reported in the statement of net deficit available for benefits.

11. SECURE 2.0

The Securing a Strong Retirement Act of 2022 (SECURE 2.0) was signed into law on December 29, 2022, and includes mandatory and optional provisions with effective dates in 2025 and later. The plan administrator will determine the optional provisions to elect and amend the Plan document accordingly.

ARES HOLDING CORPORATION EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN
FORM 5500 EIN: 45-0682771
PLAN NUMBER: 004 YEAR ENDED: DECEMBER 31, 2025
EMPLOYER: ARES HOLDING CORPORATION

SCHEDULE H, PART IV, LINE 4(i) - SCHEDULE OF ASSETS HELD AT END OF YEAR

(a)	(b) Identity of Issue	(c) Description of Investment	(d) Cost	(e) Current Value
*	ARES Holding Corporation Common Stock	734,545 Shares of Common Stock	$ 19,500,000	$ 14,705,591

** A party-in-interest as defined by ERISA.*

ARES HOLDING CORPORATION EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN
FORM 5500 EIN: 45-0682771
PLAN NUMBER: 004 YEAR ENDED: DECEMBER 31, 2025
EMPLOYER: ARES HOLDING CORPORATION

SCHEDULE H, PART IV, LINE 4(i) - SCHEDULE OF ASSETS HELD AT END OF YEAR

(a)	(b) Identity of Issue	(c) Description of Investment	(d) Cost	(e) Current Value
*	ARES Holding Corporation Common Stock	734,545 Shares of Common Stock	$ 19,500,000	$ 14,705,591

** A party-in-interest as defined by ERISA.*