

A LOOK INSIDE THE NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT BUDGET

In recent weeks, the call to defund the New York City Police Department (NYPD) has reached a fever pitch. Last week, New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson and the council's Black, Latinx, and Asian Caucus [publicly committed](#) to that demand and promised to pass a budget on July 1 that includes \$1 billion less for policing.

Here is a look inside the most recently adopted NYPD budget—what exactly it includes, how it compares to other big cities, and where funding can be cut and reinvested in communities.

The overall annual cost of the NYPD is \$11 billion

The NYPD's proposed FY20 operating budget of \$5.6 billion is only a fraction of what New York City spends on policing. An additional \$5.4 billion in fringe benefits, pensions, debt service, and judgments comes out of other parts of the city's budget.

Overall costs of NYPD operation

■ Personnel ■ Other than personnel services (OTPS) ■ Fringe benefits ■ Pensions ■ Debt service ■ Judgment and claims

Budget line

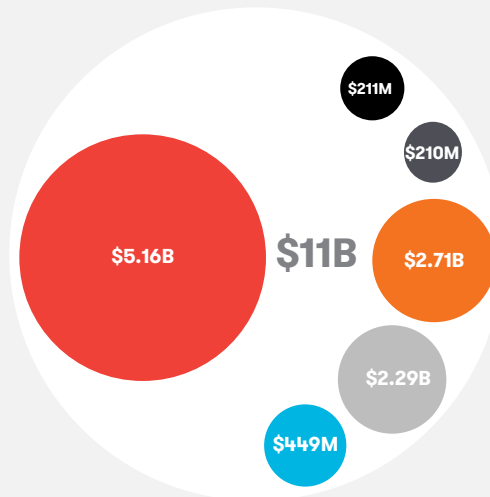
Personnel/OTPS: NYPD

Fringe benefits: Miscellaneous budget

Pensions: Pension contribution agency

Debt service: Debt service agency

Judgment and claims: Judgment and claims account

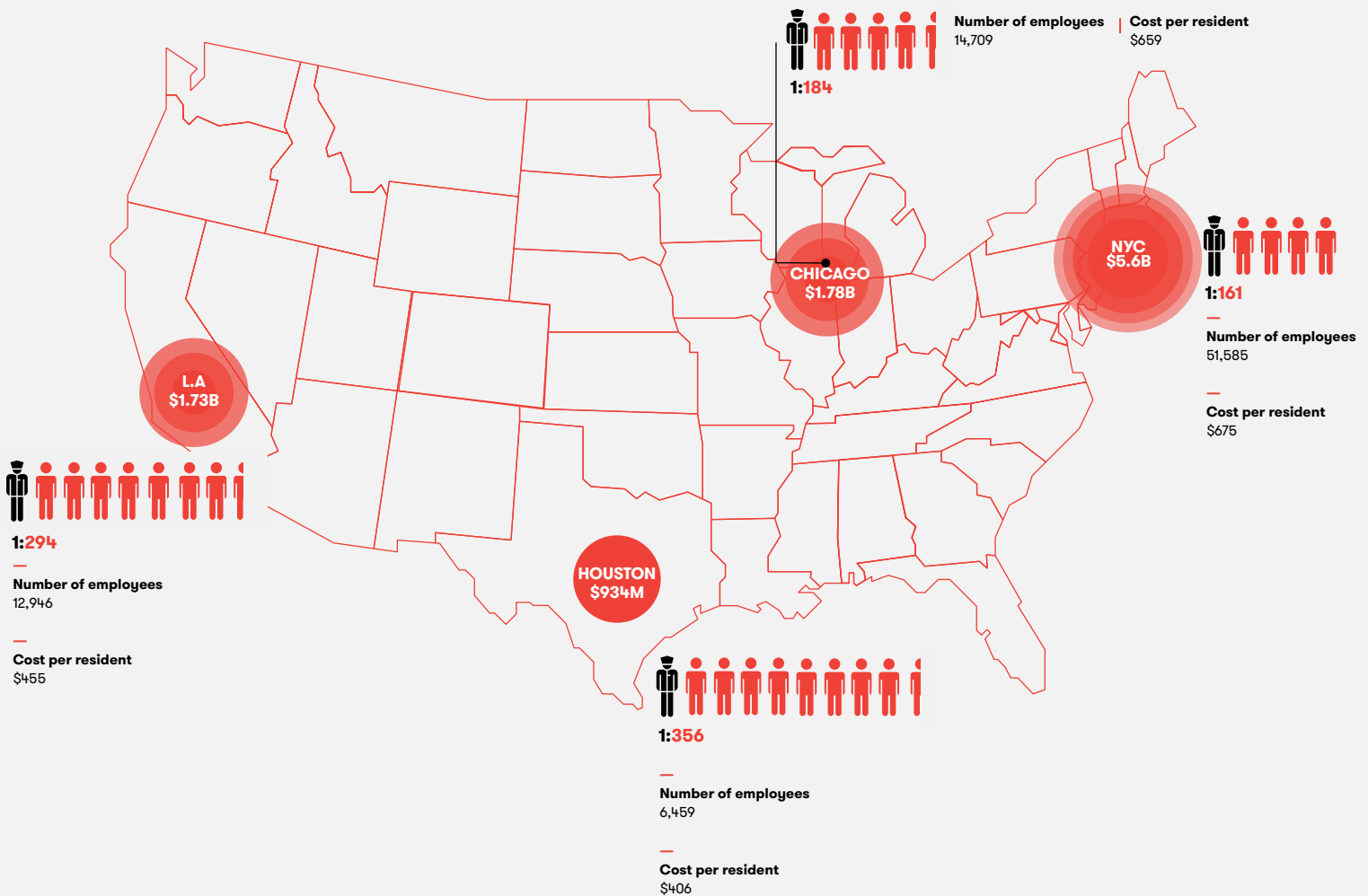


The NYPD is by far the biggest and most expensive police department in the country

Despite New York City's population remaining fairly constant at 8.3 million people over the past five years, the NYPD's budget has grown 18 percent in that time. In 2014, the FY2015 NYPD budget was \$4.7 billion with a headcount of 49,129 uniformed and civilian staff. Despite significant declines in arrests, crime, and police activity since then, the overall NYPD budget in 2020 has swelled to \$5.6 billion. The headcount in that time has grown too, by 4.9 percent, for a total of 51,642 staff.

The NYPD's budget and headcount are far higher than that of any other police department in the country.

Police budgets: A comparison of U.S. cities



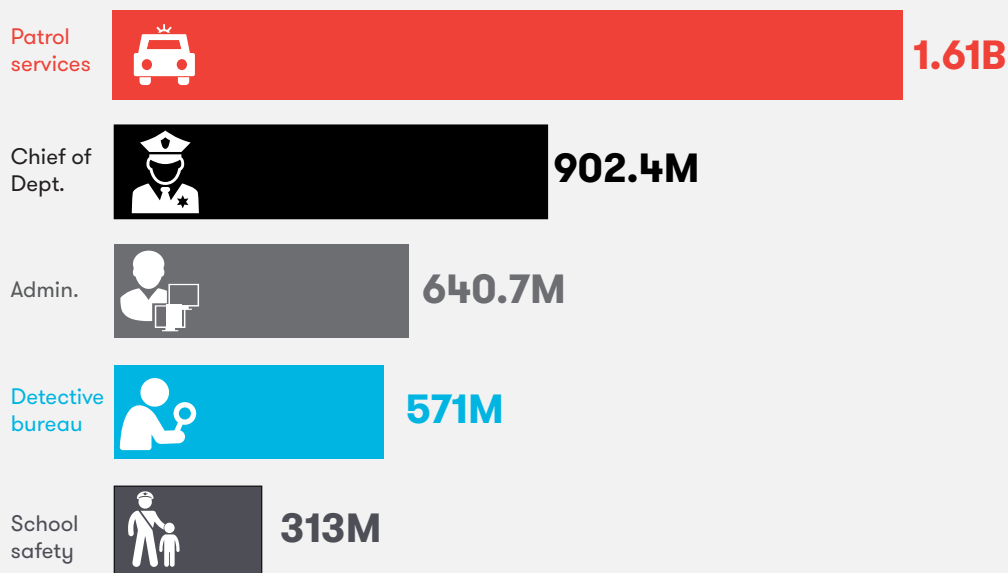
NYPD enforcement targets majority Black neighborhoods for low-level conduct

The defensive cry against cutting police budgets is that crime will go up. However, crime is at an all-time low in New York City and has declined by every meaningful measure over the past five years. Arrests overall have dropped 17.4 percent, and misdemeanor arrests have dropped 26.5 percent. Yet enforcement of so-called quality-of-life offenses persists in majority Black neighborhoods, with 85 percent of the 128,265 summonses police issued last year in New York City given to Black and Latinx people. Meanwhile, dissatisfaction with the police, measured by total civilian complaints against members of service, has increased by 19.5 percent over the past three years.

The five biggest NYPD units constitute almost 75 percent of the overall operating budget

By far the most expensive line item in the NYPD budget is patrol services, which cost the city \$1.61 billion annually to staff its 77 precincts with 17,239 sworn and civilian staff. The second and third most expensive items are the Chief of Department and the Administration, at \$902.4 million and \$640.7 million, respectively. Despite having only 283 staff, the Chief of Department costs are so high because the unit supervises the seven field bureaus (patrol, transit, detective, housing, etc.), the CompStat unit, and other specialized departments, and it approves overtime and additional gross pay. The detective bureau costs \$571 million and, finally, school safety costs \$313 million.

NYPD budget by departments



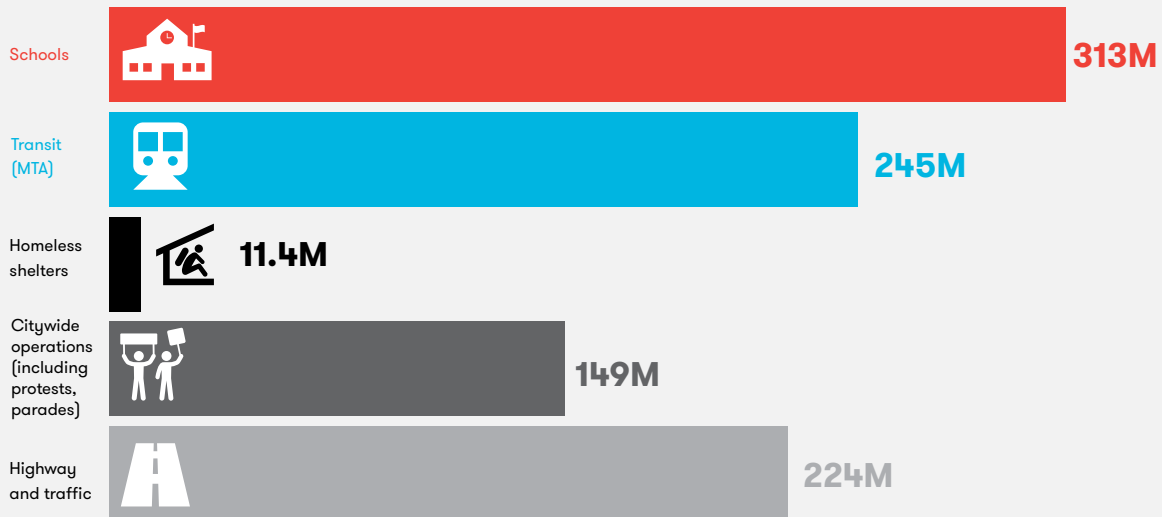
Expenditure on overtime pay alone consistently exceeds the costs of most NYPD units

In FY20, the NYPD budgeted \$625 million for overtime, which, if considered a unit on its own, would be the fourth biggest expenditure in the annual NYPD operating budget. And, if past trends continue, the NYPD will likely exceed the estimated overtime budget and spend more than \$700 million by the time FY20 is finished.

NYPD conducts enforcement in schools, subways, and shelters; during protests; and for traffic

The NYPD spends close to \$1 billion alone policing schools, subways, homeless shelters, protests and large street gatherings, and highways and traffic. These are low-risk circumstances that require a “customer service” approach of warmth and hospitality, not security and threat, and which in other cities are handled by government entities other than the police. Some of these functions, such as policing the subways, are duplicative, given that the MTA added another \$50 million annually to its budget last year to hire more MTA officers.

NYPD budget: A breakdown of unnecessary or duplicative enforcement



The NYPD enjoys favorable pensions and fringe benefits and protection from allegations of misconduct

In addition to paying \$5.6 billion in operating costs, the city spends \$5.4 billion covering NYPD costs such as fringe benefits and pensions. NYPD staff enjoy more favorable terms for their benefits and pensions than most other city employees—[dozens of retired police officers collect annual pensions](#) of more than \$200,000. The city also shields the NYPD from the costs of officer misconduct, brutality, and violence. In 2019, the city’s Judgment and Claims Division paid out \$210 million to cover the costs of substantiated claims of misconduct by NYPD officers.

Capital costs in the NYPD budget

Aside from operating expenses, each year the NYPD budgets capital expenses for new infrastructure, technology, buildings, and equipment. Instead of budgeting annually, the capital budget spans 10 years to account for the time lapse in undertaking new construction, replacing outdated technology, or replacing cars and other NYPD vehicles. The NYPD proposes to increase the costs of the 10-year capital budget from \$1.46 billion to \$3 billion, which includes constructing a new firearms facility and property warehouse and renovating police buildings and precincts.

Other expenditure facts at a glance

New York City taxpayer money pays for

94 percent

of the overall NYPD budget.

Despite playing a critical role in police oversight and accountability, the NYPD’s Internal Affairs Bureau only has 625 staff

and costs

\$73.6 million

to operate, a relatively small price considering the importance of the unit.

The NYPD spends

\$6.34 million

annually on body-worn cameras, even though footage from the cameras is not provided to a specific person or the public absent a lengthy Freedom of Information Law request.

Data from this fact sheet was drawn from the following sources:

Nevin Singh and Eisha Wright, “Report to the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Public Safety on the Fiscal 2021 Executive Budget for the New York Police Department,” The Council of the City of New York, May 14, 2020, <https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2020/05/FY21-NYPD-Executive-Report-1.pdf>; Melanie Hartzog, “Expense Revenue Contract,” The City of New York Executive Budget Fiscal Year 2020,

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/erc4-19.pdf>; “Mayors Management Report: Preliminary Fiscal 2020,” City of New York, January 2020, <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/pmmr2020/nypd.pdf>; and “Claims Report: Fiscal Year 2019,” Office of the New York City Comptroller, June 2020, <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/Claims-Report-FY-2019.pdf>.