



2024 Chicago Budget Overview – BGA Policy Snapshot

Description

The proposed 2024 budget for the City of Chicago, Mayor Brandon Johnson’s first, offers relatively modest increases in citywide spending and staffing, with a 1.3% increase in appropriations and a 0.9% increase in staffing relative to the 2023 budget.

The roughly \$18.2 billion in budgeted appropriations includes approximately \$8 billion in non-departmental – finance general – appropriations and a further \$10.3 billion in departmental budgets.

City Council’s departmental budget hearings begin on Monday Oct. 15. The Better Government Association Policy Team will be providing snapshots of individual departments, as well as the non-departmental – finance general – category, [available online and delivered as a daily newsletter](#).

Below is a preliminary overview of the proposed 2024 budget as a whole, based on the data that was made available with the mayor’s budget address on Wednesday, Oct. 11:

Snapshot: Appropriation & Staffing Changes from 2023 to 2024 Budgets

	2023 Budgeted	2024 Proposed	Net Change	Percent Change
Appropriations	\$17,974,994,000	\$18,213,419,000	\$238,425,000	1.33%
Positions & FTEs	36420	36729	309	0.85%

Budget Highlights

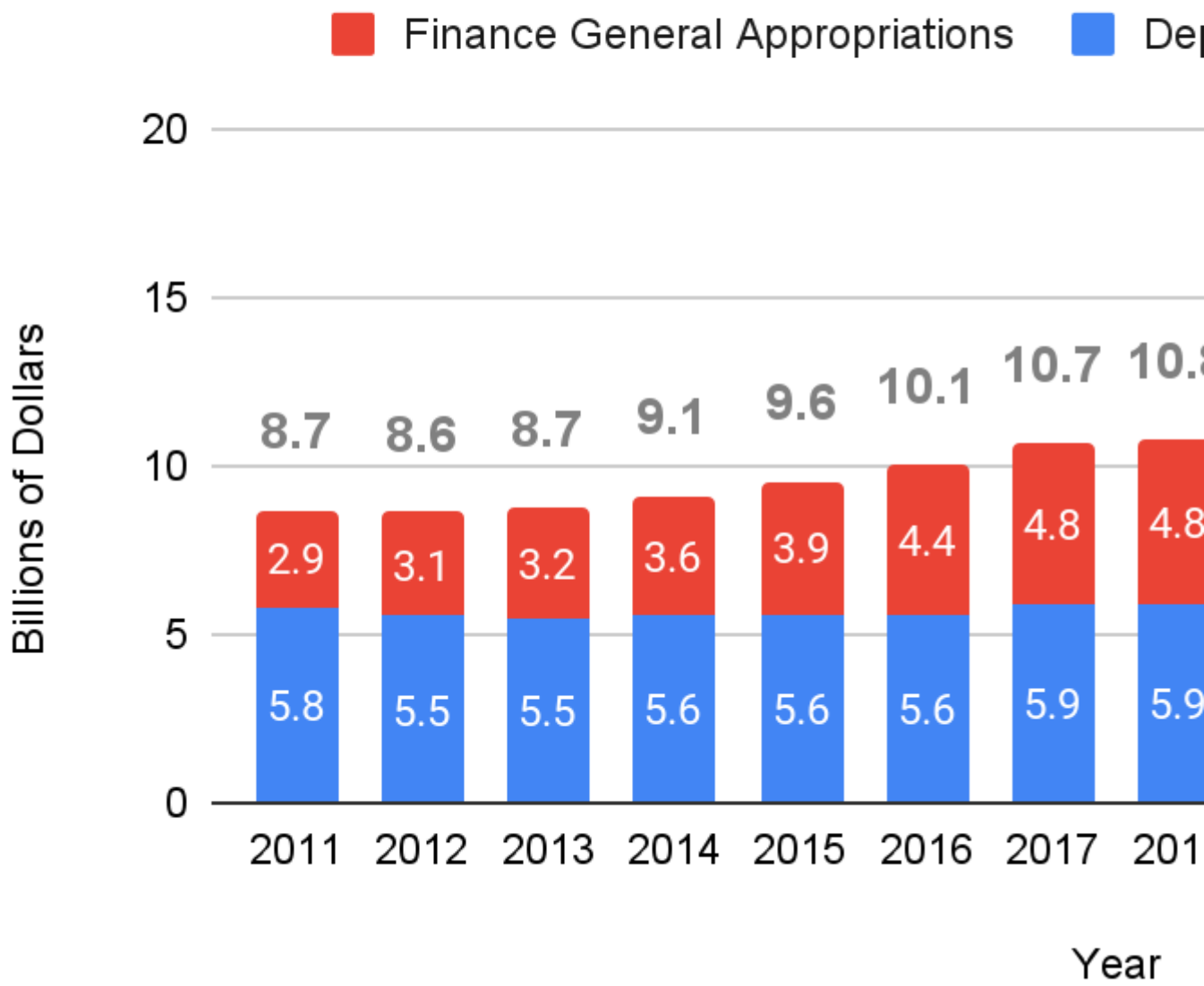
- Overall spending growth is below the historic rate of change for city budgets, while the staffing increases are slightly higher than average.
- The share of the budget assigned to the non-departmental – finance general – category has increased, and finance general growth continues to outpace departmental spending growth, a trend highlighted by BGA Policy in an [analysis of finance general spending from 2011-2023](#).
- The Department of Assets, Information and Services, which was created under Mayor Lightfoot’s administration by combining the existing Fleet and Facilities Management and

Innovation and Technology departments, has been once again split back out into Fleet/Facilities and Technology/Innovation departments. The decoupling eliminated a total of 28 positions from the previously combined department, but increased overall appropriations by about 9%.

- Other than the 2FM/IT split, no departments saw significant staffing cuts. The Office of the Mayor had the largest single department downsize, with four positions eliminated.

Historical Context

Appropriations in Billions of Dollars, City of Chicago, 2011-2024 (proposed)



From 2011-2023, the citywide budget grew at an average rate of 8.2% per year. Departmental budgets overall increased an average of 5.9% per year during that time period, while Finance General appropriations grew at an average rate of 12.9% annually.

Growth spiked starting in the 2021 budget and more dramatically in the 2022 and 2023 budget as the city began including federal pandemic relief funds into its budgeting, dramatically increasing the appropriations of several departments.

The city's budgeted workforce remained relatively flat across the 2011-2023 time period, with minor year-to-year fluctuations averaging out to an overall growth rate of -0.04%.

2024 Appropriations

Departmental Changes from Previous Year

The most dramatic departmental budget changes are largely the result of changing pandemic funding, as well as the de-merger of 2FM and IT. Departments that in the previous year's budget oversaw American Rescue Plan funds have significantly smaller pools to draw on this year, while non-ARP departments saw smaller cuts or in many cases budget growth. Aviation and Transportation, which are both funded by grants and by revenue streams separate from the city's general corporate fund, saw the largest departmental increases, followed by the Chicago Police Department.

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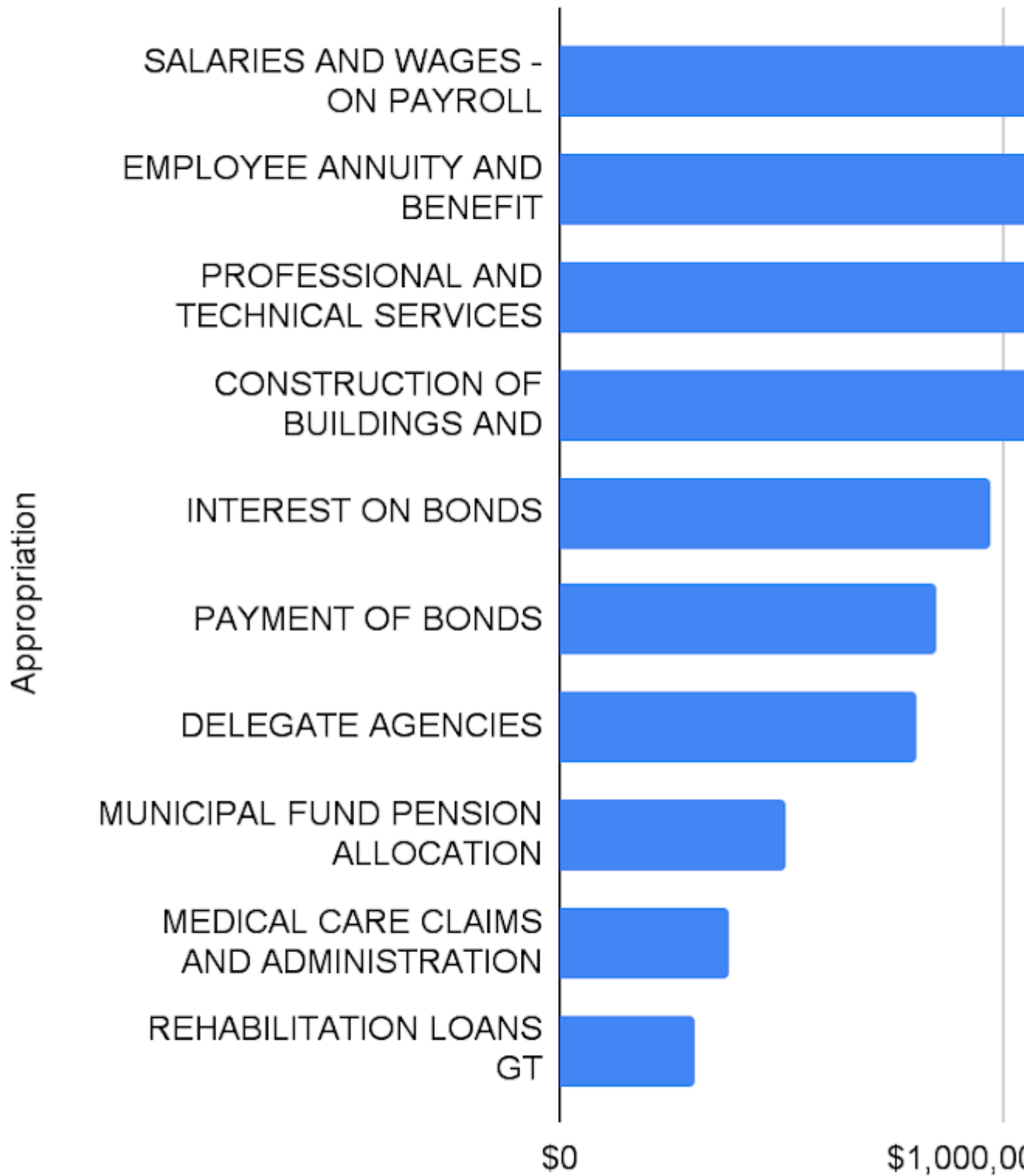
[Link to chart](#)

The new Department of Technology and Innovation, combined with the new Department of Fleet and Facilities Management, totalled about \$50.7 million more in budgeted appropriations this year than the Department of Assets, Information, and Services budgeted in 2023, a roughly 9% increase.

Largest Cost Drivers

The city's top 10 largest appropriation accounts remain the same as in the previous year's budget. Salaries and wages are the largest single expense category, followed by pension payments and by outside contracting (termed "professional and technical services" in city budgets).

Top 10 Largest Appropriations, 2024 Prop



Of the 10 largest appropriations, rehabilitation loans and grants saw the largest percent increase from 2023, while payment of bonds and pass-through spending to delegate agencies saw the largest drop.

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Staffing

Departmental Changes from Previous Year

The city added a total of 309 positions in the 2024 budget recommendations, with the largest increases (other than the newly-created Innovation and Technology department) at Aviation, Public Health, and Transportation.

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[Link to chart](#)

No departments saw major staffing cuts, other than the elimination of IT staff from the Fleet and Facilities Management department (formerly Assets, Information and Services), which resulted in a net reduction of 28 positions. The Office of the Mayor had the largest single-department reduction in headcount with four positions eliminated.

Departmental Detail Snapshots

The information above is a brief, very broad overview of the spending and staffing changes in Mayor Johnson's proposed 2024 municipal budget. BGA Policy will be producing more detailed snapshots of changes at the departmental level and in the non-departmental Finance General category throughout the two weeks of City Council budget hearings.

Budget snapshots can be viewed online as they become available, and are also available for email delivery. Sign up at the [Budget Snapshots 2024 landing page](#) on the Better Government Association website!