



Department of Family and Support Services    BGA Policy 2025 Budget Snapshot

Description

Departmental Highlights

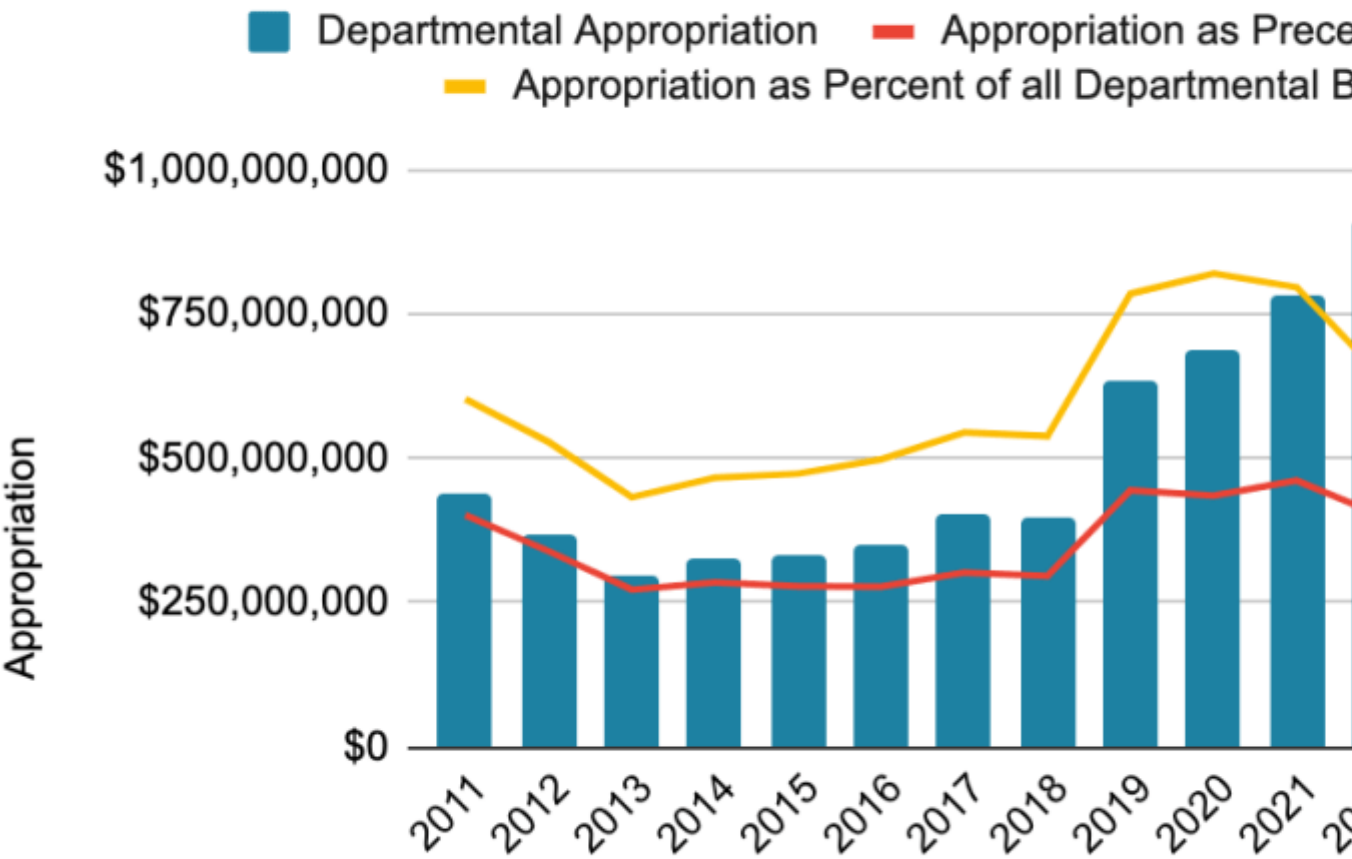
Snapshot: Appropriation & Staffing Changes from 2024 Budget

	2024 Budgeted	2025 Proposed	Net Change	Percent Change
Appropriations	\$915,856,073	\$955,438,394	\$39,582,321	4.3%
Positions & FTEs	455	443	-12	-2.6%

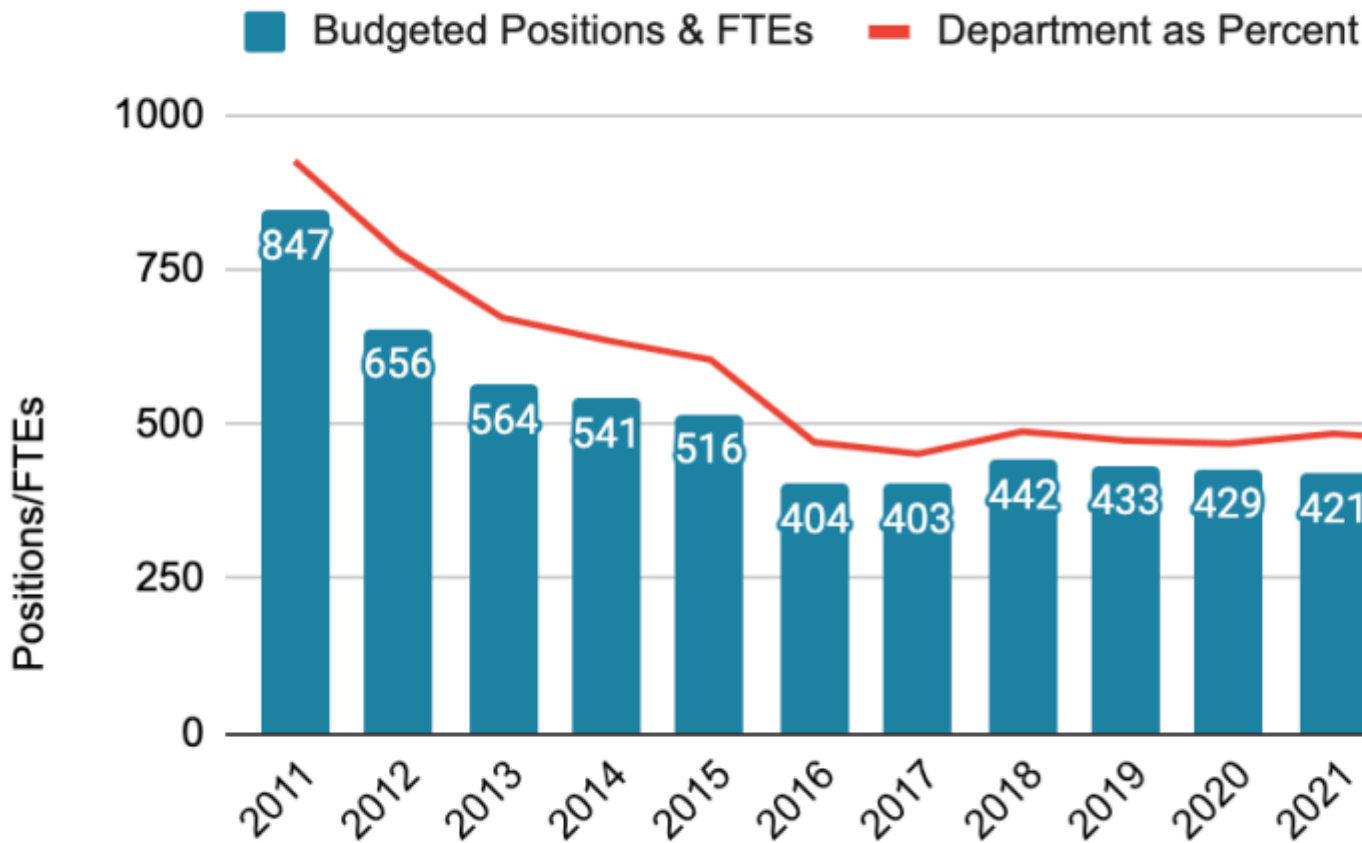
- The loss of DFSS appropriations from pandemic relief and state and federal grant funds was more than offset in this year’s budget by increased appropriations from the corporate, CDBG, and local grants funds. The DFSS corporate fund appropriation is up about \$45.1 million in this budget compared to last year’s, a roughly 37.5% increase.
- A net reduction of -12 positions was primarily achieved by elimination of the departmental clerk positions and a reduction of seven project manager positions. Most other additions or reductions in positions were related to title or seniority changes, and the addition of two community intervention specialist positions with a Spanish specialization.
- Unlike most city departments, DFSS spends more on pass-through and outside contracting than on its largest personnel expenses. The delegate agencies and professional and technical services remained among the department’s largest, despite substantial reductions from the previous year’s appropriations:
  - DFSS delegate agencies appropriations are down -49.8% from \$495.6 million in the 2024 budget to \$248.5 million in 2025
  - Professional and technical services appropriations are down -56.4% from \$151.9 million in 2024 to \$66.2 million in 2025
- As of October 28, 2024, when the new [ARPA dashboard](#) and associated datasets were made available, DFSS had \$369.6 million in allocated ARPA funds, of which \$334.8 million had been obligated and \$255.7 million had been spent.

Historical Context

Department of Family and Support Services  
Chicago City Budgets 2011-2025 (proposed)



# Department of Family and Support Services Workforce, 2011-2025 (proposed)



The Department of Family and Support Services budget increased significantly under the Lightfoot administration, even before the infusion of federal funds during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Budget growth was not matched by staffing growth because the majority of the increase was dedicated to the “Delegate Agencies” and “Professional and Technical Services” appropriations outside contracting and pass-through spending on private and non-profit service providers. Those two outside contracting appropriations make up the majority of the department’s budget every year.

At the start of the Emanuel administration, the city was budgeting \$29.2 million for DFSS outside contracting. As DFSS workforce declined, outside contracting increased, reaching budgeted appropriations totalling \$463.5 million in Emanuel’s final budget, and increasing further to \$508.3 million in Lightfoot’s first.

From 2011-2024, the DFSS budget grew at an average rate of 8.4% per year. Departmental budgets overall increased an average of 6.1% per year over the same time period, while the total city budget including Finance General appropriations grew at an average rate of 8.5% annually.

The department's budgeted workforce declined at a rate of roughly -3.6% annually from 2011-2023. Overall budgeted positions for the city remained relatively flat across the same time periods, with minor year-to-year fluctuations averaging out to an overall growth rate of -0.04%.

## **Staffing**

A net reduction of -12 positions was primarily achieved by elimination of the departmental clerk positions and a reduction of seven project manager positions. Most other additions or reductions in positions were related to title or seniority changes, and the addition of two community intervention specialist positions with a Spanish specialization.

## **Appropriations**

The loss of DFSS appropriations from pandemic relief and state and federal grant funds was more than offset in this year's budget by increased appropriations from the corporate, CDBG, and local grants funds. The DFSS corporate fund appropriation is up about \$45.1 million in this budget compared to last year's, a roughly 37.5% increase.

### **Largest Appropriations**

The largest DFSS appropriation in this year's budget is a \$395 million "reserve balance" appropriation from a variety of grant funds, including the pandemic relief, CDBG, and federal, state, and local grant funds.

This appropriation, which appears in several department's budgets and has been retroactively added to 2024 appropriations data as well, was not used in the previous year's budget at the time of its passage. BGA Policy has reached out to the Office of Budget and Management for clarification of this appropriation's purpose and has not yet received a reply.

Unlike most city departments, DFSS spends more on pass-through and outside contracting than on its largest personnel expenses. Delegate agencies is the department's largest appropriation apart from the new reserve balance, followed by professional and technical services.

### **Change from Previous Year**

Appropriations for summer programs and homeless services have both increased dramatically, up 88.8% and 81.1% respectively.

The Chicago Youth Services Corp appropriation, a DFSS-only appropriation out of the corporate fund in last year's budget, has been entirely eliminated in the 2025 proposal.

In addition to the new reserve balance appropriation, the 2025 budget dataset includes a retroactive negative value of -\$2,652,784 for the 2024 office and building services appropriation. In the original 2024 appropriations ordinance as passed, the appropriation was \$43,216.

The Office of Budget and Management has not responded to a request for clarification regarding negative appropriations data or the discrepancy between the 2024 appropriations dataset and the 2024 appropriations values in the 2025 recommendations dataset.

## **ARPA Allocations**

The city budget does not typically break down budget appropriations to the programmatic level. However, this year the Office of Budget and Management has made available a new [ARPA dashboard](#) and associated datasets that detail the allocations, obligations, and expenditures made towards ARPA-funded programs.

As of October 28, 2024, when the datasets were made available, DFSS had \$369.6 million in allocated ARPA funds, of which \$334.8 million had been obligated and \$255.7 million had been spent.

All of the DFSS-assigned programs except the low barrier shelter program had begun obligating and expending funds as of the October 28, 2024 data. The Resiliency Fund 2.0, youth intervention programs, and rapid rehousing program allocations were all more than three-quarters spent, and in most cases nearly fully obligated as well.

ARPA funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024. The city can obligate funds by entering a contract, order for services, or similar award or transaction; by entering into an interagency agreement; by dedicating the funds to certain personnel costs for positions that existed and were filled prior to December 31, 2024; or by using them to cover the legal or administrative costs of ARPA itself.

As of the October 28, 2024 data, the city had allocated roughly \$1.9 billion in ARPA funds, of which 91.8%, roughly \$1.7 billion, had been obligated.