

Department of Water Management BGA Policy 2025 Budget Snapshot

Description

The Department of Water Management oversees the construction and maintenance of Chicago’s city-owned water and sewer infrastructure. DWM is the third-largest operating department by headcount.

Similar to the Department of Aviation, the Department of Water Management is self-funding: appropriations are drawn from the city’s sewer and water funds, as well as grants, rather than from the general corporate fund.

Departmental Highlights

Snapshot: Appropriation & Staffing Changes from 2024 Budget

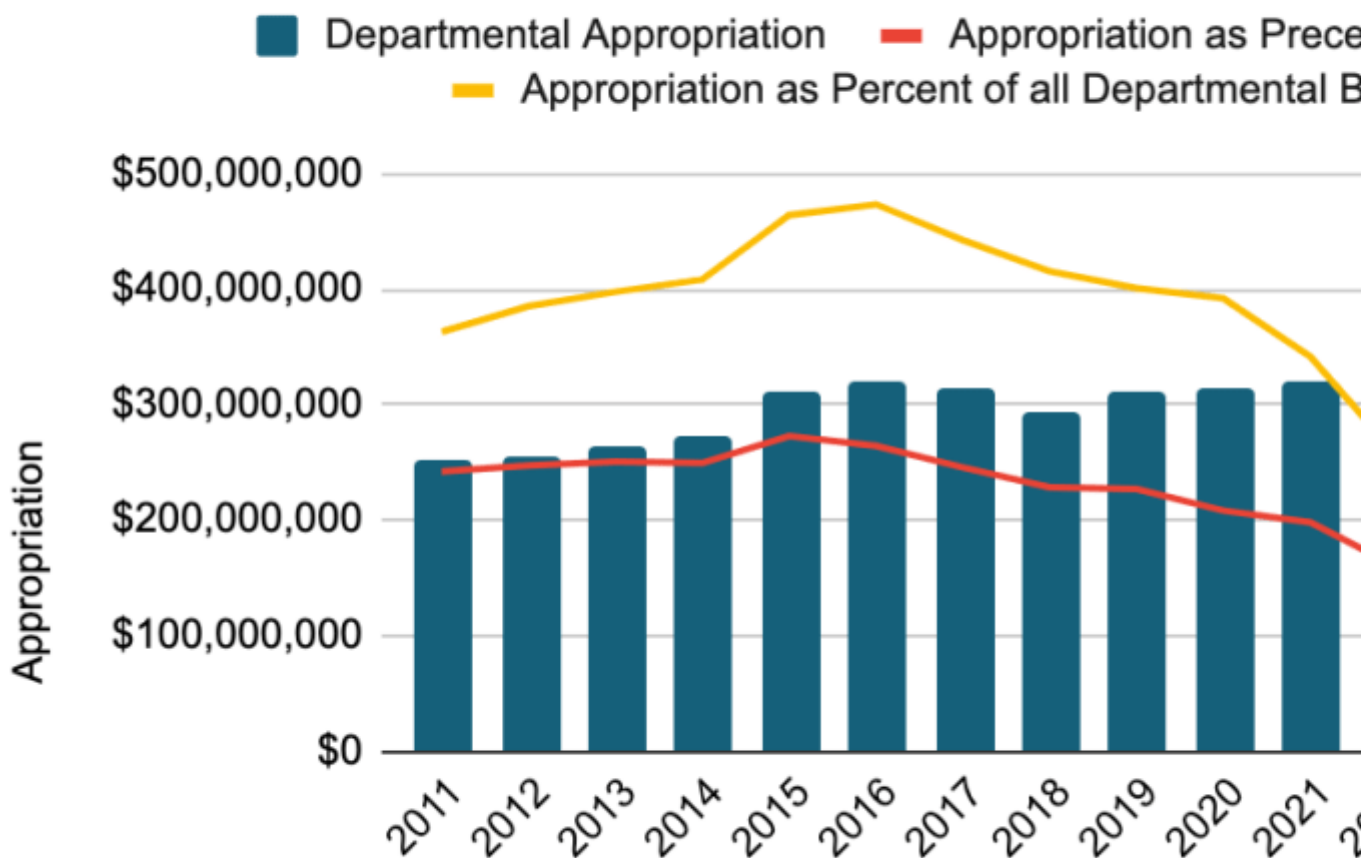
	2024 Budgeted	2025 Proposed	Net Change	Percent Change
Appropriations	\$397,830,838	\$417,185,283	\$19,354,445	4.86%
Positions & FTEs	2482	2492	10	0.40%

- Overall DWM headcount was up a net 10 positions/FTEs. Laborer positions saw the largest net increase, up eight FTEs across various titles, followed by administrative assistant positions, up a net six across various titles.
- Civil engineer headcount was reduced by eight positions across various titles, and a number of positions from the previous year’s budget were eliminated entirely without replacement via retitling, including various clerk and data entry positions, as well as a Coordinator of Tugboat Operations, Director of Legal Services, Procurement Control Officer, Senior Equity Officer, and Supervisor of Cost Control position.
- Salaries and wages on payroll and outside contracting through the professional and technical services saw the largest increases from the previous year’s budget, with the professional/technical services appropriation in particular jumping 88.8%, a \$11.1 million increase.
- The departmental appropriation for construction of buildings and structures saw a major reduction from the previous year’s budget, down -\$18.2 million (-79.3%), while the maintenance and construction budget dropped -\$1.5 million (-21.6%).

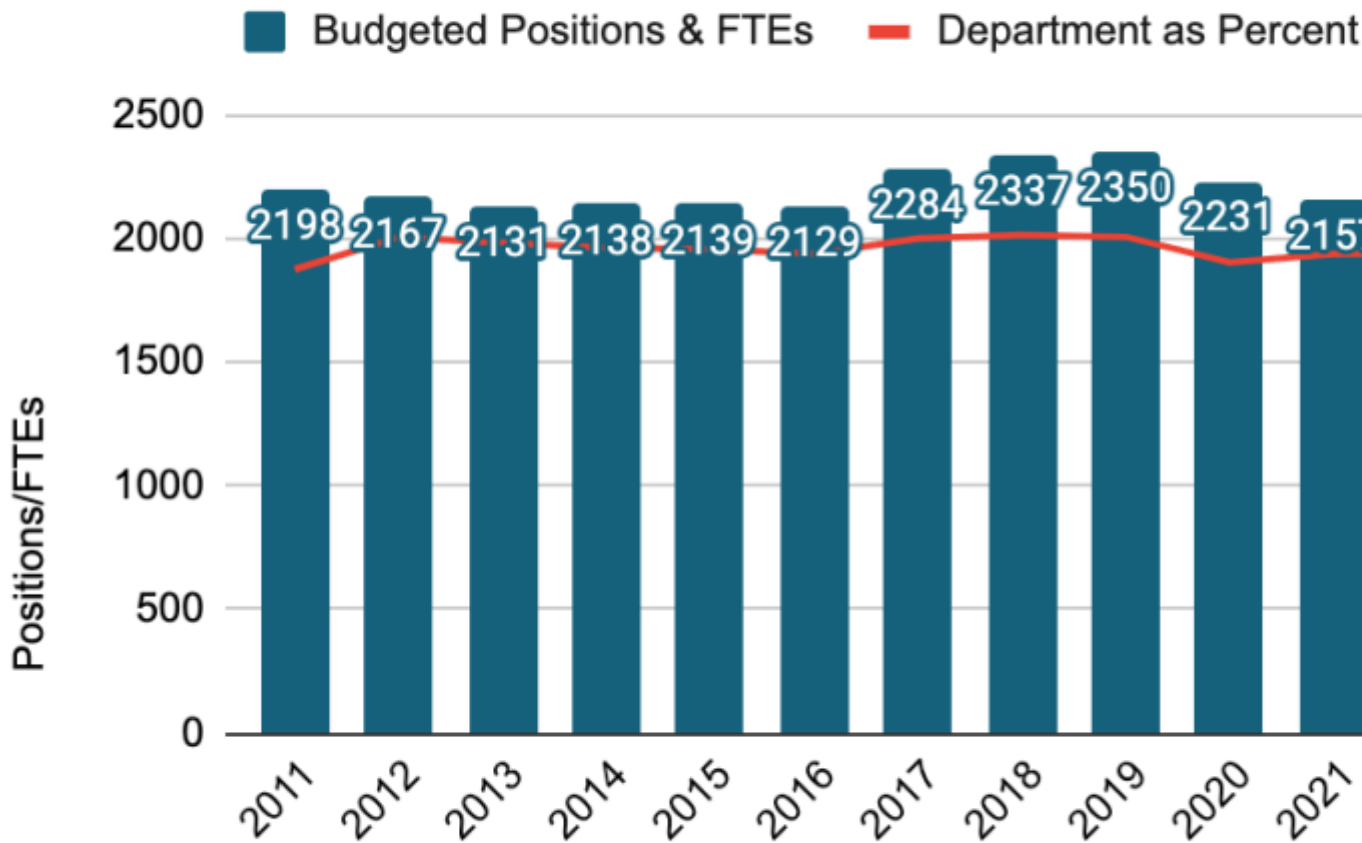
- As with several other departments, DWM’s budget includes a “reserve balance” appropriation from a number of grant funds. This appropriation, which appears in several department’s budgets and has been retroactively added to 2024 appropriations data as well, was not used in the previous year’s budget 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.

Historical Context

Department of Water Management Appropriation Budgets 2011-2025 (proposed)



Department of Water Management Budgeted 2011-2025 (proposed)



The department of Water Management’s operating budgets have remained relatively consistent over recent years, with spending and staffing growth tracking close to overall citywide increases.

From 2011-2024, the department budget grew at an average rate of 4.4% 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 grew at a rate of roughly 1.0% annually from 2011-2024. Overall budgeted positions for the city remained relatively flat across the same time period, with minor year-to-year fluctuations averaging out to an overall growth rate of 0.04%.

Staffing

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Appropriations

The Department of Water Management is self-funding, with the bulk of its appropriations from the water and sewer funds. Proposed appropriations from the CDBG fund are down from the previous year, with increases in water and sewer appropriations more than compensating to produce the department's overall 4.9% increase in appropriations.

Largest Appropriations

As the third-largest department by headcount, DWM's largest appropriation by far is \$246 million for salaries and wages on payroll, followed by a smaller but still substantial \$26.7 million overtime appropriation.

Change from Previous Year

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