

Office of Emergency Management and Communications BGA Policy 2026 Budget Snapshot

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Departmental Highlights

Snapshot: Appropriation & Staffing Changes from 2025 Budget

	2025 Budgeted	2026 Proposed	Net Change	Percent Change	Average Annual Rate of Change (2021-2025)	Inflation- adjusted Rate of Change (2021-2024)
Appropriations	\$95,101,008	\$99,935,952	\$4,834,944	5.1%	-7.3%	-9.5%
Positions & FTEs	983	970	-13	-1.3%	-1.8%	NA

**Historical rates of change are from 2021 onwards, when the existing division of responsibilities between OEMC, the new OPSA, and the existing police and fire departments was fully implemented.*

- 2026’s proposed budget includes a -13 net headcount shift for OEMC, driven primarily by reductions in FTEs from the Traffic Control Aide Hourly title.

- Despite declining headcount, OEMC's largest appropriations increases, like the department's largest appropriations overall, were in personnel categories, with salaries and wages on payroll up \$6.4 million (9.1%) and overtime up \$3.5 million (57.5%) from 2025.
- Outside contracting through the professional and technical services appropriation, down -\$1.67 million (-24.1%) from 2026, was OEMC's largest single-category decline apart from reserve balance, an appropriation used to represent grant funding not planned for expenditure within the budget year.

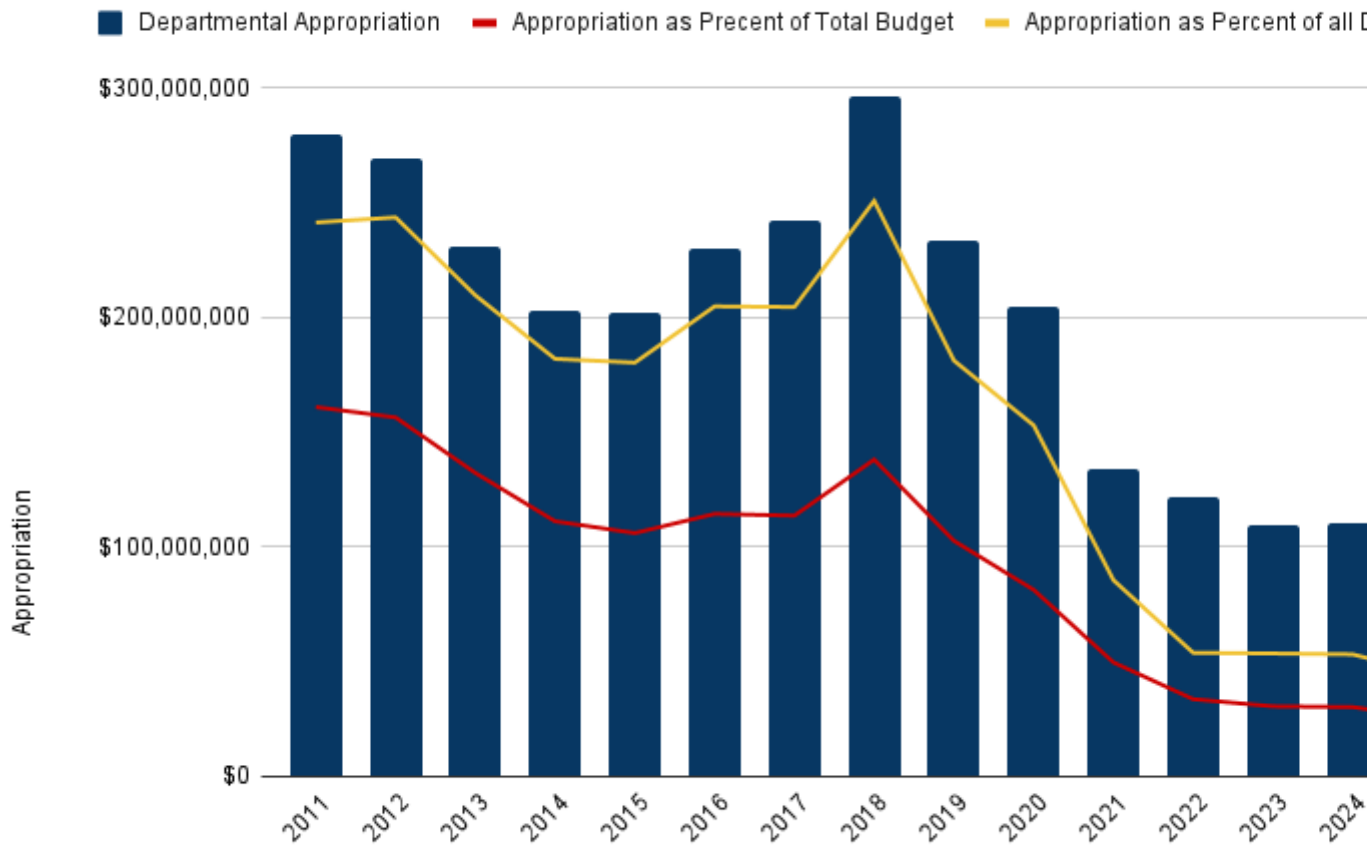
Historical Context

OEMC has undergone a number of oversight and responsibility changes over the years, causing significant changes in both budget and headcount.

A 2016 shift of crossing guards from the Chicago Public Schools budget to the city budget resulted in a near-doubling of OEMC's budgeted headcount in 2016, a move that was reversed with a corresponding staffing drop in 2021.

Appropriations have declined as various OEMC expenses became obsolete or were shifted to other budgets, including phone billing and hardware categories and wages and benefits for crossing guards, and since 2021 as the Office of Public Safety Administration has taken over and centralized some of OEMC's functions.

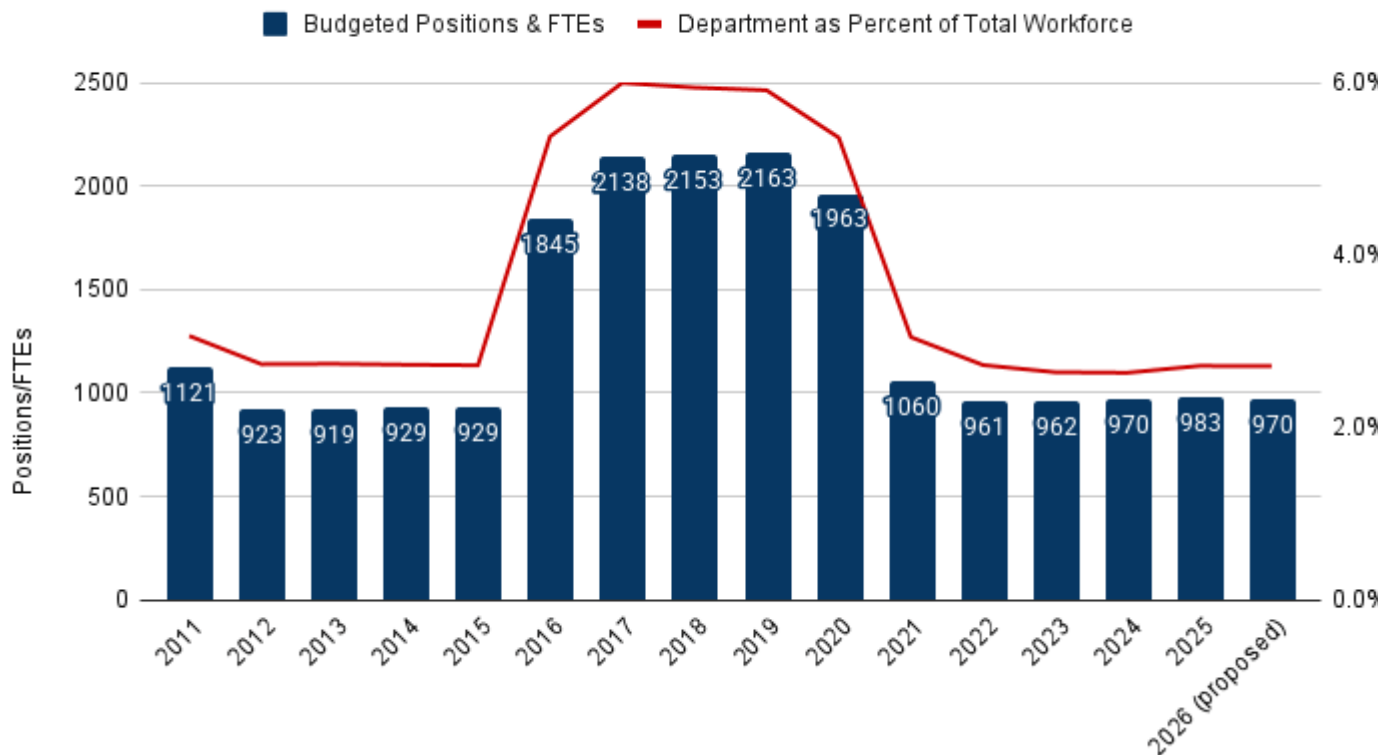
OEMC Appropriation, Chicago City Budgets 2011-2026 (proposed)



Over the past three complete budget years for which local fund actuals/encumbrances data is available, OEMC spent on average 88.6% of its locally funded budget, compared to the citywide average 86.4% local fund spend.

Staffing levels have been at a slight decline since the removal of crossing guards from OEMC's headcount and the establishment of OPSA, both in 2021. OEMC's budgeted headcount decreased at an average rate of -1.8% annually from 2021-2025, compared to a citywide average increase for the same timeframe of 1%.

OEMC Budgeted Workforce, 2011-2026 (proposed)



From February through September of 2025, the months for which the city released full-time position vacancy data, OEMC averaged a 16.6% vacancy rate, compared to the citywide average of 11.2%.

118 of the department's budgeted full-time positions were persistent vacancies, meaning that the same title/division/section/subsection combination was vacant for all eight months of available data. The bulk of the department's persistent vacancies were across various communications officer titles:

Budgeted Position Changes

2026's proposed budget includes a -13 net headcount shift for OEMC, driven primarily by reductions in FTEs from the Traffic Control Aide - Hourly title.

Appropriations

OEMC is 91.6% locally-funded in this year's budget proposal, up from the previous year's 85.1%.

Nearly three-quarters of OEMC's appropriations come out of the Emergency Communication Fund, with the Corporate Fund providing a further 10% and grants and the airport funds making up the remainder.

Fund	2025 Budgeted	2026 Proposed	Net Change from 2025	Percent Change from 2025	Percent of 2026 Recommended Funds
Emergency Communication Fund	\$63,564,819	\$73,644,125	\$10,079,306	15.9%	73.7%
Corporate Fund	\$10,588,072	\$10,391,772	-\$196,300	-1.9%	10.4%
Federal Grant Fund	\$11,505,000	\$6,148,000	-\$5,357,000	-46.6%	6.2%
Chicago Oâ??Hare Airport Fund	\$4,703,470	\$5,180,333	\$476,863	10.1%	5.2%
State Grant Fund	\$2,290,000	\$2,290,000	\$0	0.0%	2.3%
Chicago Midway Airport Fund	\$2,108,647	\$2,281,722	\$173,075	8.2%	2.3%
Local Public and Private Grant Fund	\$341,000	\$0	-\$341,000	-100.0%	0.0%

Largest Appropriations

As with most departments, personnel costs make up the bulk of OEMCâ??s appropriations, with salaries and wages on payroll by far the largest expense category. Overtime is the departmentâ??s next-largest expense.

In 2024, the most recent complete budget year for which local fund actuals and encumbrances data is available, OEMC spent 86.6% of its locally-funded budget, with a slight overspend in internal transfers and reimbursements more than balanced by underspend in personnel services and other categories.

(Because the appropriation categories used in the 2022-2024 actuals datasets from the Department of Finance do not correspond exactly to the appropriation accounts used in the budgets presented by the Office of Budget and Management, an exact line-by-line comparison of real spend to budget is not possible.)

Change from Previous Year

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