



Office of Public Safety Administration BGA Policy 2026 Budget Snapshot

Description

Table of contents

- [Departmental Highlights](#)
- [Historical Context](#)
- [Budgeted Position Changes](#)
- [Appropriations](#)
 - [Largest Appropriations](#)
 - [Change from Previous Year](#)

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	\$152,138,585	\$135,710,283	\$16,428,302	-10.8%	3.1%	5.8%
Positions & FTEs	383	373	-10	-2.6%	2.4%	NA

- OPSA is down a net -10 positions from the previous year’s budget, with most of the decline driven by the elimination of 20 timekeeper roles as the city updates and centralizes its timekeeping systems. The largest increase in roles was at the Inquiry Aide III title, which gained five more budgeted positions.

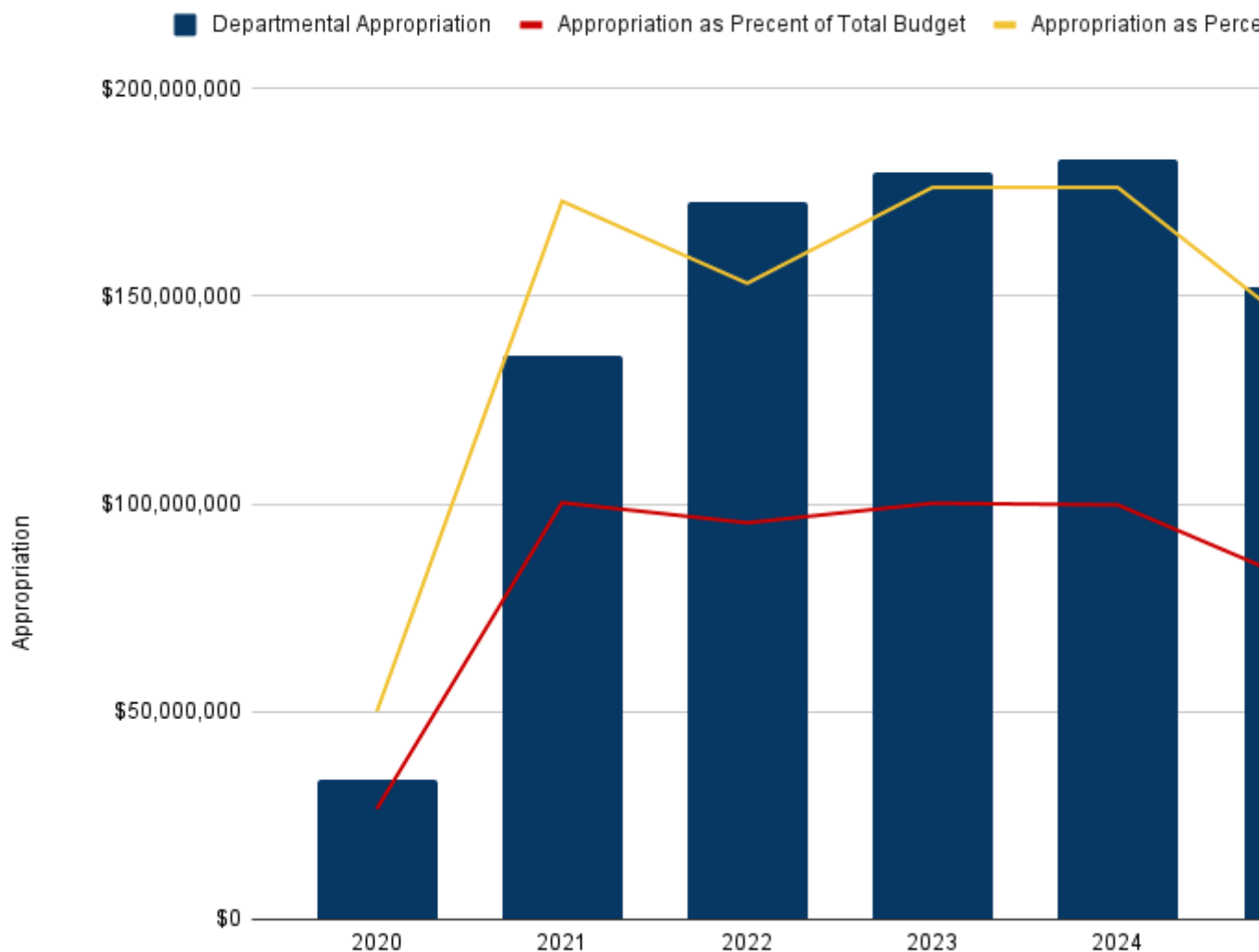
- As with most departments, personnel costs make up the bulk of OPSA's appropriations, with salaries and wages on payroll the largest expense category. The department also has significant IT expenses budgeted, with IT maintenance, software maintenance and licensing, mobile communications services, and IT development all in the top 10 appropriations categories.
- Salaries and wages saw the largest single-category appropriations increase for OPSA, followed by a new \$1.2 million appropriation for software purchases, a category the department did not have in the previous year's budget.
- Outside contracting costs at OPSA declined, with the professional and technical services appropriation down -\$7.1 million (-48.1%), continuing a trend from the previous year when the appropriation dropped -62.5% from 2024. A number of technology-specific appropriations also saw million-dollar-plus reductions, including software maintenance and licensing, telephone maintenance, telephone billing (non-Centrex), mobile communications services, and equipment repair and maintenance.

Historical Context

The Office of Public Safety Administration was created in Lori Lightfoot's first budget, and launched as a full and independently functioning department by 2021. The 2020 OPSA budget was something of a placeholder, without fully-fleshed appropriation and position totals, making 2021 the first benchmark year for the department's subsequent growth.

From 2021-2025, OPSA appropriations rose at an average rate of 3.1% annually, compared to a citywide annual average of 9.8% for the same time period. (Citywide budgets increased dramatically in those same calendar years due primarily to the influx of pandemic-era grant funds.)

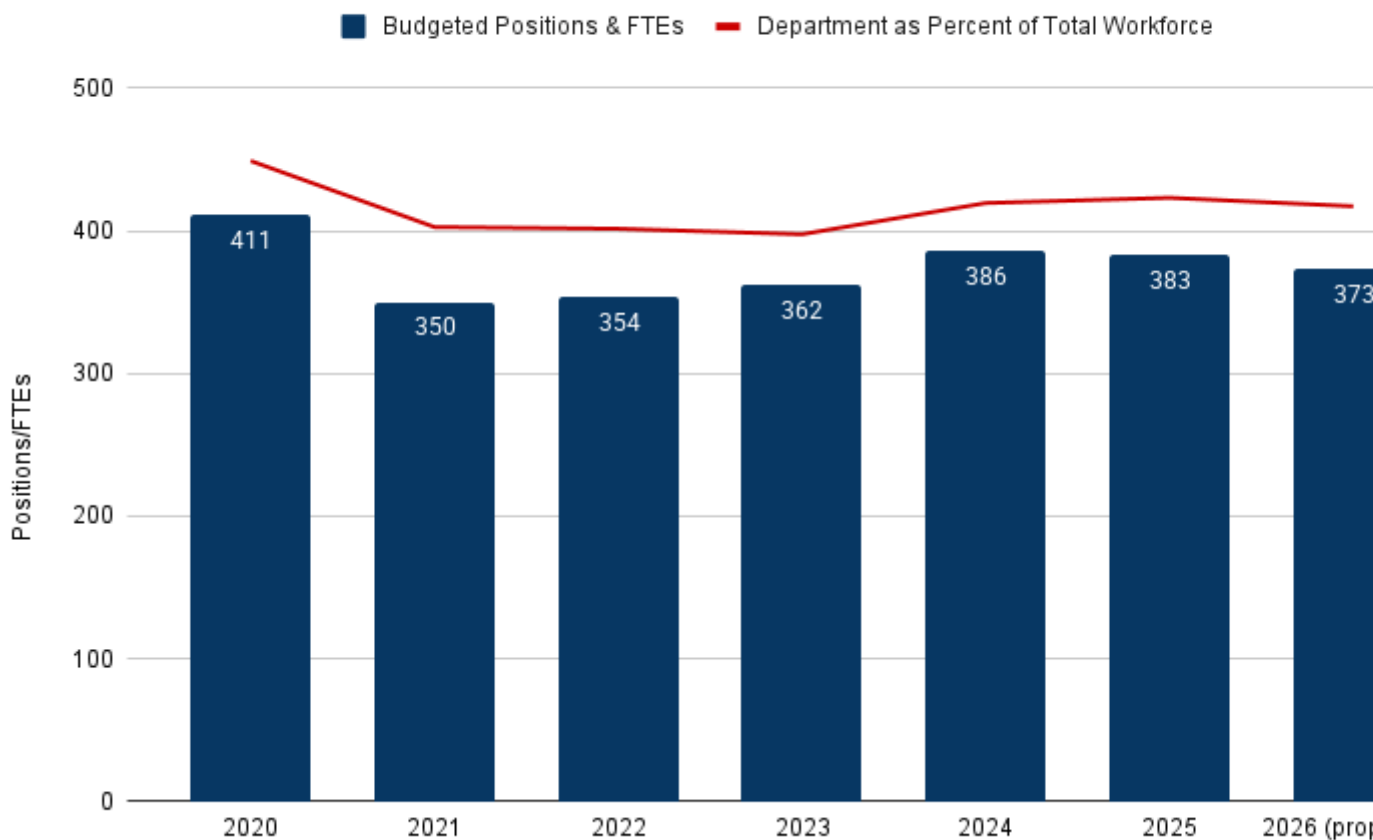
OPSA Appropriation, Chicago City Budgets 2020-2026 (proposed)



Over the past three complete budget years for which local fund actuals/encumbrances data is available, OPSA spent on average 92.3% of its locally funded budget, compared to the citywide average 86.4% local fund spend.

Apart from an initial budgeted total that was slightly higher than subsequent years, OPSA's budgeted headcount has remained relatively consistent over the department's existence, growing slightly at an average annual rate of 2.4% from 2021-2025, compared to a citywide average over the same time period of 1%.

OSPA Budgeted Workforce, 2020-2026 (proposed)



From February through September of 2025, the months for which the city released full-time position vacancy data, OSPA averaged a 20.9% vacancy rate, among the highest in the city. The citywide average across the same months was 11.2%.

43 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:

Budgeted Position Changes

OSPA is down a net -10 positions from the previous year's budget, with most of the decline driven by the elimination of 20 timekeeper roles as the city updates and centralizes its timekeeping systems. The largest increase in roles was at the Inquiry Aide III title, which gained five more budgeted positions.

Appropriations

OPSA is 84.9% locally-funded in this year’s budget proposal, up slightly from the previous year’s 83%.

Roughly half of OPSA’s budget, the largest share, comes from the Corporate Fund, with another third from the Emergency Communication Fund and the remainder made up of grants, grant management, and airport funds.

Fund	Fund Code	2025 Budgeted	2026 Proposed	Net Change from 2025	Percent Change from 2025	Percent of 2026 Recommended Funds
Corporate Fund	100	\$71,898,244	\$69,276,373	-\$2,621,871	-3.6%	51.0%
Emergency Communication Fund	353	\$54,355,865	\$45,810,117	-\$8,545,748	-15.7%	33.8%
Federal Grant Fund	0	\$24,857,000	\$18,867,000	-\$5,990,000	-24.1%	13.9%
Grants Management Fund	75	\$0	\$1,684,000	\$1,684,000	New Fund	1.2%
Chicago Midway Airport Fund	610	\$42,238	\$42,238	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
Chicago O’Hare Airport Fund	740	\$32,238	\$30,555	-\$1,683	-5.2%	0.0%
Local Public and Private Grant Fund	0	\$953,000	\$0	-\$953,000	-100.0%	0.0%

Largest Appropriations

As with most departments, personnel costs make up the bulk of OPSA’s appropriations, with salaries and wages on payroll the largest expense category. The department also has significant IT expenses budgeted, with IT maintenance, software maintenance and licensing, mobile communications services, and IT development all in the top 10 appropriations categories.

In 2024, the most recent complete budget year for which local fund actuals and encumbrances data is available, OPSA spent 91.9% of its locally-funded budget.

(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

Salaries and wages saw the largest single-category appropriations increase for OPSA, followed by a new \$1.2 million appropriation for software purchases, a category the department did not have in the previous year's budget.

Outside contracting costs at OPSA declined, with the professional and technical services appropriation down -\$7.1 million (-48.1%), continuing a trend from the previous year when the appropriation dropped -62.5% from 2024. A number of technology-specific appropriations also saw million-dollar-plus reductions, including software maintenance and licensing, telephone maintenance, telephone billing (non-Centrex), mobile communications services, and equipment repair and maintenance.