



Department of Administrative Hearings BGA Policy 2026 Budget Snapshot

Description

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The Department of Administrative Hearings is a quasi-judicial body authorized to administer hearings on ordinance violations that do not include a penalty of imprisonment. Administrative hearings offer an alternative to full court cases for low-level traffic violations, building code violations, and similar non-violent, city-level offenses.

Departmental Highlights

Snapshot: Appropriation & Staffing Changes from 2025 Budget

	2025 Budgeted	2026 Proposed	Net Change	Percent Change	Average Annual Rate of Change (2011-2025)	Inflation- adjusted Rate of Change (2011-2024)
Appropriations	\$8,560,776	\$8,389,224	- \$171,552	-2.0%	1.3%	-0.8%
Positions & FTEs	39	39	0	0.0%	-0.8%	NA

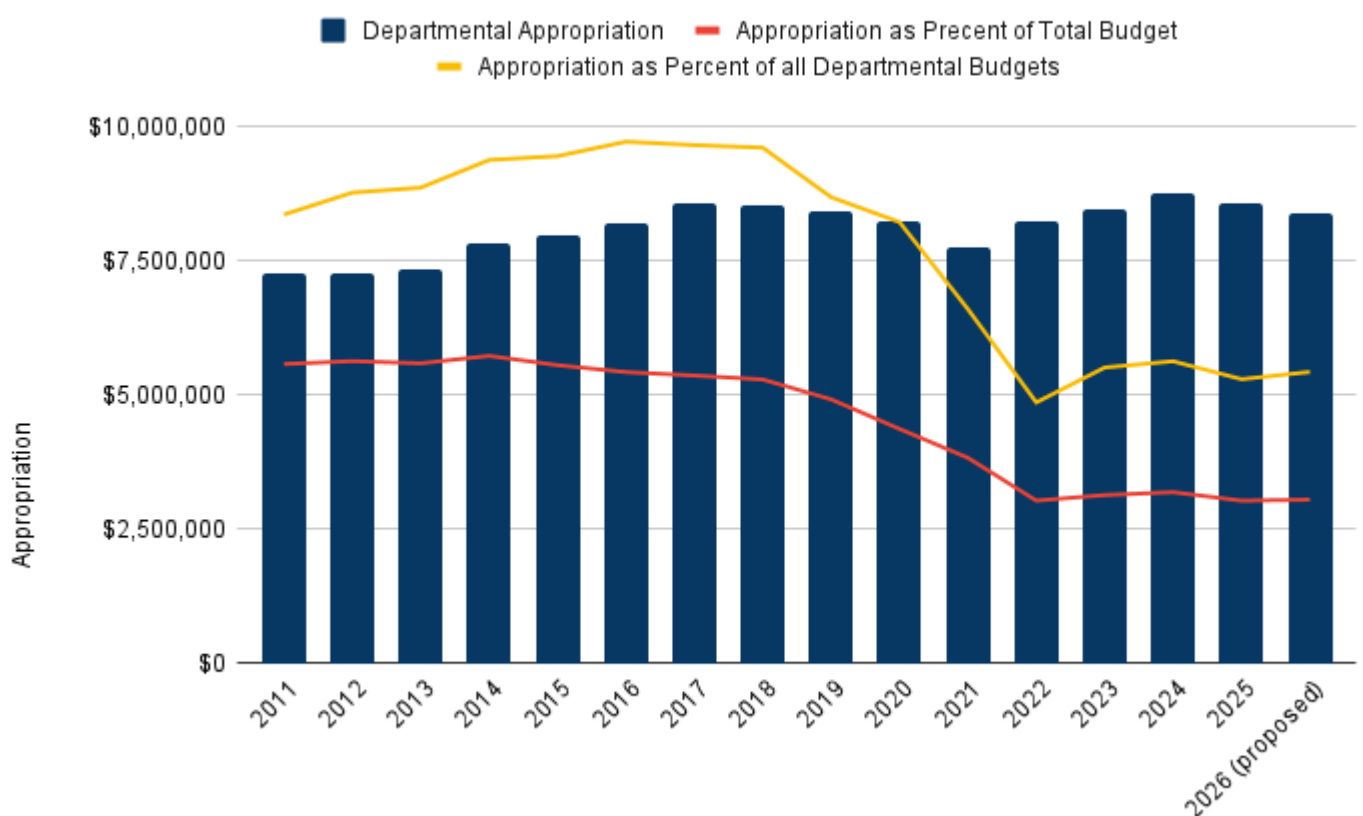
- The 2026 budget proposal makes no changes in DAH’s staffing from the previous year. Headcount and titles/positions remain the same.

- As with most departments, personnel costs make up the bulk of DAH's appropriations, with salaries and wages on payroll the largest expense category. Despite a cut this year DAH's professional and technical services appropriation (used for outside contracting) is nearly as large as the salary appropriation, with IT maintenance the third-largest and only other million-dollar-plus departmental appropriation.
- The IT maintenance appropriation saw the largest increase in DAH's budget, up roughly \$188,000 (16%) from the previous year. The professional and technical services appropriation, used for outside contracting, saw the largest reduction, down roughly -\$328,000 (-10.6%).

Historical Context

DAH's budget has been relatively stable in recent years, growing at an average annual rate of 1.3% from 2011-2025, which adjusted for inflation equates to a -0.8% annual decline. The city budget as a whole grew at an average rate of 8.3% (inflation-adjusted 4.4%) over the same time period.

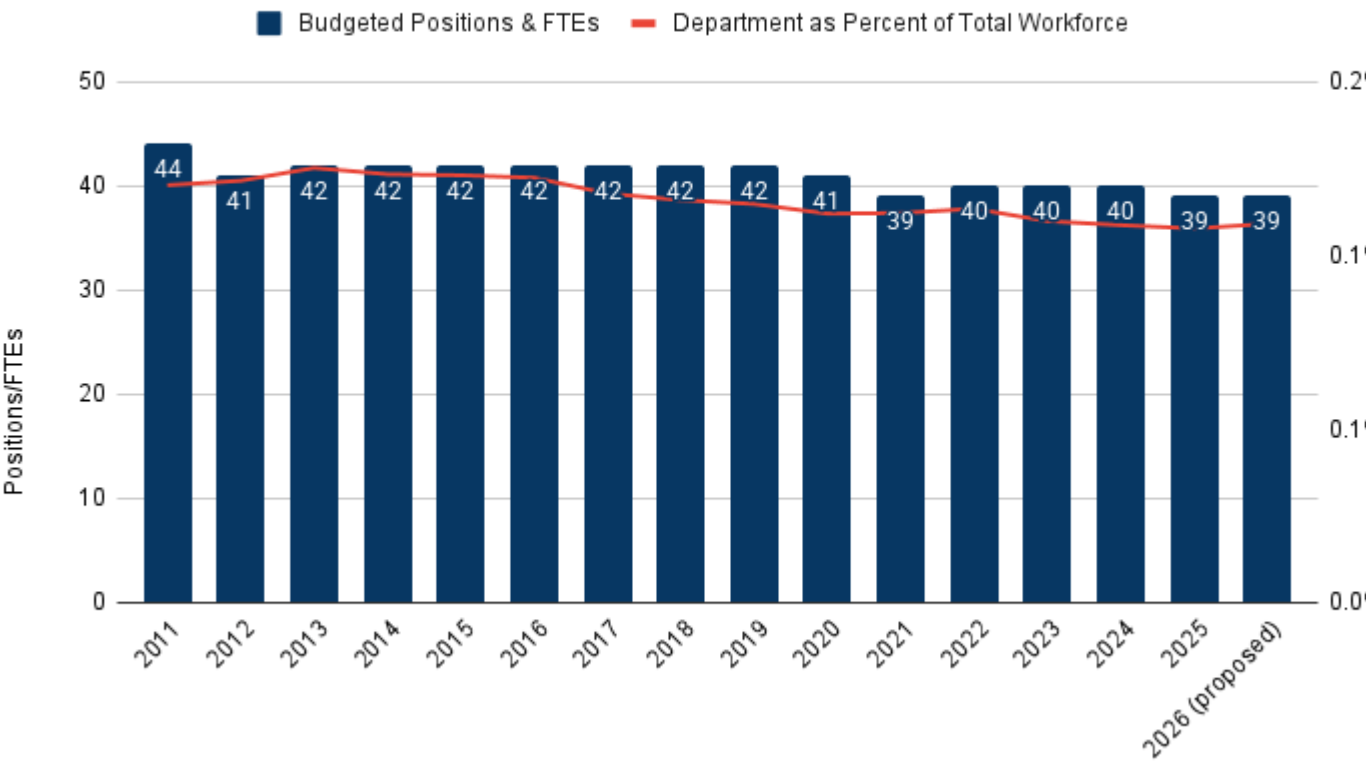
DAH Appropriation, Chicago City Budgets 2011-2026 (proposed)



Over the past three complete budget years for which local fund actuals/encumbrances data is available, DAH spent on average 83% of its locally funded budget, compared to the citywide average 86.4% local fund spend.

Headcount at DAH has declined slightly over time, down an average of -0.8% annually from 2011-2025, compared to a citywide average annual change of -0.1%. The current budget proposal makes no change in DAH’s budgeted positions.

DAH Budgeted Workforce, 2011-2026 (proposed)



From February through September of 2025, the months for which the city released full-time position vacancy data, DAH averaged a 15.4% vacancy rate, compared to the citywide average of 11.2%.

Six 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

The 2026 budget proposal makes no changes in DAH’s staffing from the previous year. Headcount and titles/positions remain the same.

Appropriations

DAH is entirely locally-funded in this year’s budget proposal, with all appropriations coming from the Corporate Fund.

Largest Appropriations

As with most departments, personnel costs make up the bulk of DAH's appropriations, with salaries and wages on payroll the largest expense category. Despite a cut this year DAH's professional and technical services appropriation (used for outside contracting) is nearly as large as the salary appropriation, with IT maintenance the third-largest and only other million-dollar-plus departmental appropriation.

In 2024, the most recent complete budget year for which local fund actuals and encumbrances data is available, DAH spent 82.6% of its locally-funded budget.

Change from Previous Year

The IT maintenance appropriation saw the largest increase in DAH's budget, up roughly \$188,000 (16%) from the previous year. The professional and technical services appropriation, used for outside contracting, saw the largest reduction, down roughly -\$328,000 (-10.6%).