



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Local Government

What's in the Cleveland Police Budget?

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Public services are the foundation of our daily lives, ensuring we have clean water to drink, our garbage is picked-up, our streets are well-lit, and many other unnoticed but essential functions. Municipal operating budgets pool our tax dollars to fund public services, including policing. With increased public outcry following police killings of Black men and women, activists are scrutinizing public safety spending at higher levels than ever before. This report is a reference tool to better understand public spending on policing. It brings together information on the budget of the city of Cleveland, the Department of Public Safety, and the Cleveland Division of Police.

Context

A community is safe when all residents have good schools, clean air and water, well-paying jobs, health care and parks to enjoy. Too many neighborhoods in Cleveland lack these basics. Cleveland is among the poorest big cities in the nation. Research has shown that people of low income are more likely to experience crime than those of higher income. Cleveland's rate of property crime has fallen over the past decade but the rate of violent crime has increased: it was 6th highest in the nation among big cities in 2018. The annual number of homicides rose to a new high in 2020. Cleveland is heavily policed, with 47 law enforcement officers per 10,000 residents. Of these, 41 are uniformed officers. Among the 8,950 cities reporting to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting System in 2019, Cleveland ranked 7th in number of uniformed officers.

The CDP operates under a consent decree with the federal Department of Justice (DOJ), established in 2015 to correct systemic deficiencies and practices that violated constitutional rights. Cleveland is the only city to have had two such settlements. The city has reached operational or general compliance with 37% of the 255 provisions of the decree that the court monitors. The timeframe for compliance was extended from 2020 to 2022.

National research finds that Black, brown and Indigenous people are more likely to be on the receiving end of police violence. About two-thirds of the CDP force is white, and two-thirds of Cleveland's residents are Black, brown or Indigenous: that ratio has not changed, going back to 2008. Police violence during 2020 protests over the killing of Black people has increased demand for stronger control over and accountability within the Cleveland Division of Police. A coalition –

Citizens for a Safer Cleveland – has submitted signatures to put a police accountability initiative on the city’s November election ballot.

Cleveland Division of Police Budget highlights

- The city’s 2021 GRF is \$665 million. Of that, \$371.5 million (56%) supports public safety, including police, fire, emergency services, animal control and other services. The Cleveland Division of Police makes up the biggest share of the Public Safety Department’s budget, at \$218.2 million. Police services are the largest single service the city provides through the GRF budget, using 33% of general taxpayer revenues.
- City officials will increase the GRF budget of the City of Cleveland by an anticipated 2% over 2020. In the five years including and between 2017 and 2021, they will boost the GRF by an estimated 11.6% (2.3% a year, on average).
- They will increase spending on police by an anticipated 3.5% in 2021 over 2020. In the five years including and between 2017 and 2021, they will boost the police budget by an estimated 17.9%, about 3.5% a year.
- The number of uniformed police officers has risen over the past five years. An additional 99 officers are anticipated to be hired in 2021, raising the total to 1,640.
- Multi-year federal grant funding supported growth of uniformed staff over the past year. Police presence in the city is enlarged by federal officers assigned to the city as well as by police staff of large institutions including hospitals and universities.
- Judgments and settlements for Cleveland police misconduct total \$46.9 million since 2010, rising in recent years with a few increasingly large settlements. The median is far smaller, at \$30,000 over the past 10 years: the average was \$381,000.
- City officials dedicate \$6 million in 2021 to the Community Relations Board and to the Office of Prevention, Intervention and Opportunity, which strengthen community – police relations and offer services to assist youth and families involved with the criminal justice system.
- City officials also provide \$6 million in 2021 for offices related to the consent decree: The Civilian Police Review Board, the Office of Professional Standards, the Community Police Commission, and the office of the Department of Justice.

For years, cities relied heavily on police, without addressing the root causes of crime and violence. Cleveland and its residents face many challenges, including poverty, segregated neighborhoods, and a high rate of violent crime. As more officers are hired – as budgeted for in the 2021 budget and called for by some mayoral candidates – the police budget will expand. Where might money for expanded or new approaches to public safety come from? Federal funds from the American Rescue Plan Act can start to help. Over the next two years, Cleveland will receive \$512 million from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) that can be used to lay the groundwork for a healthier future. In the long run, the city must examine its budget for sustainable investment that gets at the roots of the problem.