

October 20, 2022

Sent via email to: Committeonthebudgetandgovernmentoperations@cityofchicago.org

To City Council Committee on Budget and Government Operations:

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, represent a network of policy advocates, grassroots organizers, community members, and those directly affected by policing practices in Chicago. Our organizations work to address the structural harms of the criminal legal system and create community conditions that disrupt entry into that system. We support policies, practices, and investments that lead to healthy and livable communities.

We are writing to the Committee on Budget and Government Operations (Committee) to voice our concerns regarding the Chicago Police Department (CPD or Department) budget, as laid out in Mayor Lightfoot's 2023 Budget Recommendations (Recommendations). The Recommendations call for a \$1.7 billion investment into the Department.¹ We urge the Committee to meaningfully consider our concerns surrounding this massive investment into CPD compared to the level of investments made to community resources that promote public safety. Additionally, we request the Committee require greater transparency regarding components of CPD's budget. Transparency allows residents and the City Council to understand the decisions behind what the city funds, what it does not fund, and how those decisions impact their communities' well-being.

The following are concerns identified by our group:

1. **We need more investment in community resources that support public safety.** We agree with Mayor Lightfoot that investing in historically neglected communities and the root causes of violence, rather than relying on arrests, promotes public safety. However, despite the Mayor's sentiments, funding for CPD makes up 65% of public safety appropriations in the Recommendations and is almost four times the amounts proposed for Community Services (\$293.5 million) and City Development (\$174.6 million) combined.² The 2023 Budget Recommendations also include an additional \$20 million to CPD's Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) Detail.³ The Recommendations increase CPD's budget, while other public safety departments such as the Fire Department will see a proposed decrease (down to \$771 million from \$775.5 million).⁴ Although the 2023 Budget Recommendations reflect important increases in spending on housing and mental health services, we ask City Council to consider whether the Recommendations meaningfully reflect a commitment to addressing the root causes of violence and neglected communities. In our view, they do not. We recommend reallocating financial resources from CPD to critical city services and community resources that support public safety, including housing, education, and healthcare providers.

¹ The \$1.7 billion proposed for the CPD does not include funding for the police accountability offices: Chicago Police Board and Civilian Office of Police Accountability, which have separate proposed budgets in the amounts of \$588,184 and \$15 million, respectively. City of Chicago, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. 2023 Budget Recommendations, p. 19. Accessed October 3. [Rec 2023](#).

² City of Chicago, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. 2023 Budget Recommendations, p. 19. Accessed October 3. [Rec 2023](#)

³ City of Chicago, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. 2023 Budget Recommendations, p. 517. Accessed October 3: [Rec 2023 \(chicago.gov\)](#). Unlike the recommendations under the Corporate Fund for CPD, the proposed appropriation for CPD's CTA Detail does not include a breakdown of the number of officers allowed to volunteer for this security Detail while off-duty. The public cannot analyze the basis of this appropriation without understanding how the increased dollars correlate to resource allocation.

⁴ Spielman, Fran. 2022. "Millions more to fight crime and homelessness, help immigrants: Lightfoot makes case for 'bold' 2023 budget." *Chicago Sun Times*, October 03: <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2022/10/3/23385057/chicago-budget-2023-lightfoot-city-council-spending-pensions>.

One way to accomplish this goal is to **reduce the number of officers per capita** and recover that money for further investments in community-based approaches to public safety. According to a 2020 Vera Report, Chicago ranks 5th nationally in police-to-resident ratio.⁵ CPD had 4.7 officers per 1,000 people in 2020 while the national ratio is 2.4 officers per 1,000 people. Mayor Lightfoot mentioned in her budget remarks that CPD's recruitment efforts may result in one of CPD's largest recruitment classes in recent history. Despite the number of officers, Chicago residents do not feel safer. Communities on the South and West sides of the city continue to experience high crime rates despite increased police presence.⁶ If City Council and the Mayor are committed to data-driven budget decisions, and community members are no safer with increased police presence, then it is time to reduce rather than grow the number of police and to invest more in Community Services and City Development.

- 2. We need greater transparency regarding CPD's specific line items, spending rationale, and external funding sources.** We appreciate Mayor Lightfoot's assertion that her office and City Council make data-informed budget decisions. The public and City Council will benefit from more transparency around the data that informs decisions regarding CPD's budget. The City Council and Mayor should promote transparency by providing additional layers of detail in the budget recommendations and other budget documents throughout the budget process more broadly.

Hiring. Not only would the public benefit from more details about how much the city spends on CPD's recruitment and candidate screening process, we would also benefit from information about the data the city considers in deciding the appropriate amount to spend on such activities. Such data, may include, assessing candidate requirements and their effects on quality of service.

Training. Similarly, it is unclear how the Mayor determines the appropriateness of proposing \$31 million in salary appropriations for CPD's Training Division for FY2023. Given this significant amount, it would be helpful to know whether the city evaluates the training quality, including the curriculum used, instructors' quality, officer engagement, and the effectiveness of its training programs, when developing this budget line item. Additionally, the city should make all this data publicly available throughout the budget process.

Police Assignments, Staffing, and Overtime. Additional details regarding police assignments and staffing will also provide the public with more information about budget decisions. The 2023 Budget Recommendations outline positions and salaries for the Department. But the Recommendations do not specify officer assignments per police district or by special team/unit. A recent article stated that Chicago police officers are not "consistently on the street at the times when most shootings happen in the city."⁷ The public and City Council will benefit from more transparency over how the Department decides where to place officers and the number of officers placed per district, team/unit, and shift.

Furthermore, the public is in the dark regarding the specifics of overtime hours. Access to data around the amount of overtime hours officers can accrue, the number of overtime hours CPD allocated by district, how those hours vary across special teams and units, and whether overtime hours are

⁵ Vera Justice Institute. 2020. *What Policing Costs: Chicago, IL*. Accessed October 04, 2022. <https://www.vera.org/publications/what-policing-costs-in-americas-biggest-cities/chicago-il>.

⁶ Ballalesteros, Carlos. 2020. *Chicago Is Spending \$1.6 Billion on 13,000 Police. Is It Worth It?* July 30. Accessed October 04, 2022. <https://www.injusticewatch.org/news/2020/chicago-police-staffing/>.

⁷ Sweeney, Annie. 2022. "Analysis suggests Chicago police deployment doesn't match up with when most shootings take place." *Chicago Tribune*, August 15: <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/criminal-justice/ct-police-gps-study-deployments-20220815-3zildidncfbtpgu2zdwnnname-story.html>.

proportional to the crimes occurring in specific areas can help inform the public about the reasoning for proposed overtime appropriations.

Mental Health Services. Our communities’ concerns regarding the lack of mental health treatment and trauma-informed community responses continue to grow, and we urge greater investments in these critical services. While we believe officers are not qualified to effectively respond to behavioral and mental health crises, we expect the budget to clarify how much CPD allots for each of these mental health-related programs: crisis intervention responses, co-responder services, diversion programs, and mental health services and counseling for officers’ mental health needs.

Other Public Safety Expenses. Budget recommendations and subsequent budget documents should account for specifics around public safety spending, including downloadable datasets accounting for past spending. Many other expenses impact policing, including weapons costs, construction funds, paying police-related settlements, and Consent Decree costs.⁸ For the public to accurately capture the footprint of police spending, budgets should clearly articulate those line-item expenses and include accessible and downloadable data reflecting the actual amount spent during previous years. Other city departments such as the Office of Public Safety Administration should also publish policing-related expenses, like the ShotSpotter contract.

Funding from External Sources. In addition to general information about the grants CPD receives, a description of those grants, including who provides each grant, the purpose of each grant, and how such grants are allocated within CPD can help inform the public of the true costs and funders of CPD’s work. The public should have clarity around all resources allocated to the various CPD and public safety initiatives.

Thank you, Committee, for considering the concerns raised by the undersigned organizations and individuals. CPD budget directly impacts the lives of Chicagoans every day, and we urge the Committee to reallocate CPD funds to more meaningfully invest in community needs and promote transparency throughout the budget, but especially as it relates to public safety. If you have any further concerns, please contact Nancy Negrete at nnegrete@bpchicago.org. Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Cc: Community Commission on Public Safety & Accountability (*via email*)

⁸ The Corporate Fund’s breakdown of CPD’s proposed budget includes a line item “For the Payment of Tort and Non-Tort Judgments,” but does not provide details regarding the types of disputes involved (e.g., employee disputes, police misconduct lawsuits, etc.). Furthermore, some disputes are resolved before a final judgment, but the proposed budget does not indicate whether the amounts allocated include settlements. Similarly, the proposed CPD budget includes a line item for the “Consent Decree,” but it does not provide details regarding independent monitoring costs, new software or equipment, consultants, or other Consent Decree related expenses.