DEFUND. RE-ENVISION. TRANSFORM.

fiscal year 2025

budget toolkit

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	How to Use This Toolkit
2	The Campaign
3	Our Demands
4	Budget
5	General Fund
6	Why Defund the Police?
8	Our Opportunity
9	Take Action
Back Cover	Contact Us

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

Since 2022, the **Defund. Re-Envision. Transform. (DRT)** campaign has created an annual Budget Toolkit in order to increase transparency about the budget process in St. Louis. This toolkit serves to educate St. Louis residents about how the City budget works, how much money is spent on policing as opposed to programs that enhance community wellbeing, and to empower the public to advocate for a budget that reflects their needs. Year after year, St. Louis stubbornly commits to gross over-investment in policing, a system that not only fails to keep us safe but punishes and kills BIPOC communities. We want to change that, and through this toolkit, invite you to join us.

A We created this toolkit for you to feel empowered to make your own changes to St. Louis City's budget. It's the people's money and we get to decide what to do with it! ***Pages 2-3 explain who we are, what our mission is, and our demands.***

B Learn about St. Louis City's budgeting process, the City's current budget priorities, and how the General Fund is being allocated in Fiscal Year 2025 ***(pages 4-5).***

C Learn how St. Louis City's exorbitant spending on policing comes at the expense of real public safety ***(pages 6-7).***

D Bring this toolkit to meetings with elected leaders and policy makers, and/or use it as a guide to express your budget priorities to local leaders via phone, email, and social media. ***Page 9 outlines ways you can take action.***

E Share with friends, family, strangers! Spread the word about real public safety solutions that promote community stability, wellness, and thriving.

Defund. Re-Envision. Transform.

Defund. Re-Envision. Transform. (DRT) is a grassroots campaign anchored by Action St. Louis, ArchCity Defenders, the Coalition Against Police Crimes and Repression, Forward Through Ferguson, and Freedom Community Center.

Mission and Vision

A

Defund *the prison industrial complex*

We must divest from institutions that harm, surveil, and kill our communities, and reallocate funds into programs that promote public safety and wellbeing: housing, education, medical and mental healthcare, youth programs, employment opportunities, transportation, and more.

B

Re-envision *our approach to public safety*

Instead of spending hundreds of millions of dollars each year on the failed "arrest and incarcerate" model of policing, we must begin reducing the role of police and develop public safety systems that address the root causes of harm and violence.

C

Transform *our responses to crisis and harm*

We must transform public safety from systems that criminalize and punish after harm has occurred, and adopt community-based responses that intervene, mediate, and prevent harm. We do this by civilianizing units of the criminal legal system and investing in programs equipped with the resources to handle social challenges.

OUR DEMANDS

1

We demand our city defund the most obvious sources of waste and abuse in the police department, including St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department (SLMPD) overtime and vacant positions, Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), ShotSpotter, and the Real Time Crime Center.

2

We demand our city re-envision public safety by developing nonpolice and civilian alternatives to police that are accountable and responsive to the needs of all St. Louisans.

3

We demand the transformation of St. Louis through community-based methods of preventing and responding to harm; divestment from institutions that surveil, incarcerate, and kill Black & brown communities; and investment into the people.

Background

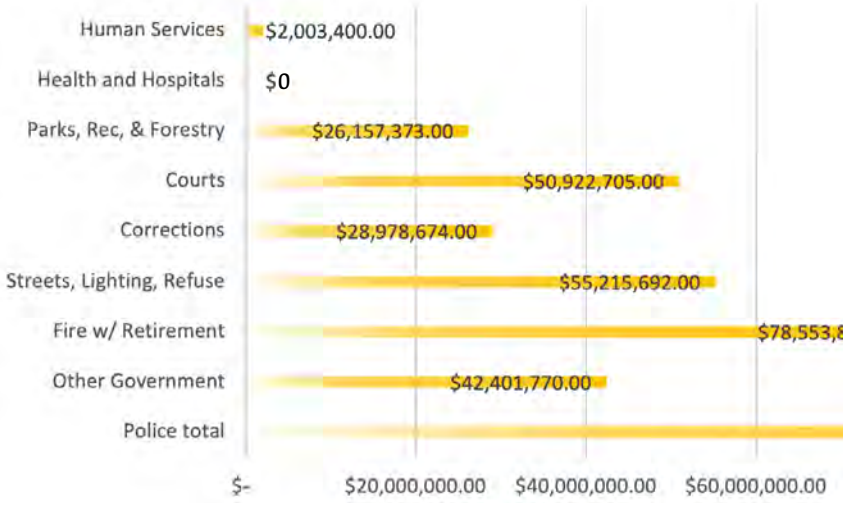
The City of St. Louis creates a budget for each fiscal year (FY), July 1 to June 30. The City has budgeted about $1.33 billion for the Fiscal Year 2025 (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025).[1]

The budget is called the "Annual Operating Plan." It is a document that ***(1)*** sets policy; ***(2)*** identifies new initiatives; and ***(3)*** allocates the resources necessary to maintain City services and meet the mayoral administration's objectives for that fiscal year.

In FY25, the Police Department is currently allocated the most money of any other department: $131.9M (23%) or $163.2M (28% when including the Police Pension Fund).[2]

Taxpayers mainly contribute to the General Fund (GF) portion of the City's budget. This is the main operating fund of the City, from which most city services are funded. Budgeted at about $580.9M for FY25, the General Fund is the largest of the City's funding units.[3]

City of St. Louis General Fund Budget Allocation (FY25)



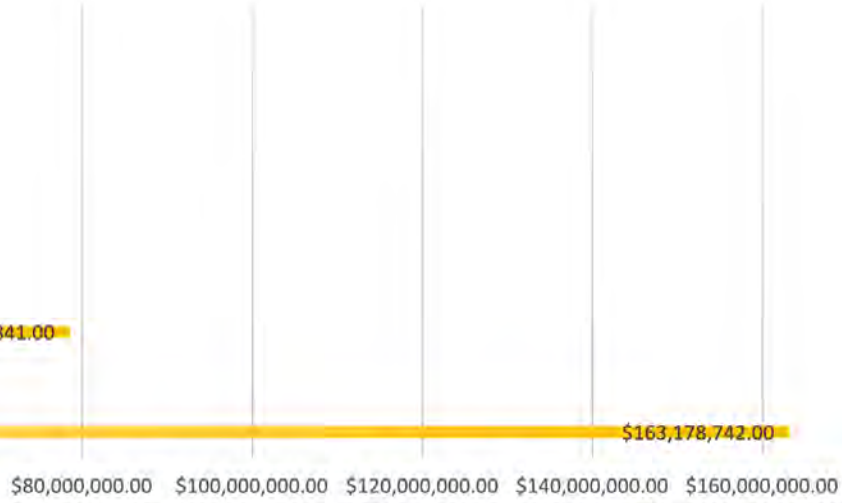
The FY25 budget proposes to spend $163.2M from the General Fund (28% of the fund) on the police department and police retirement.

An additional $5.6M is allocated for the city counselor police unit.[4]

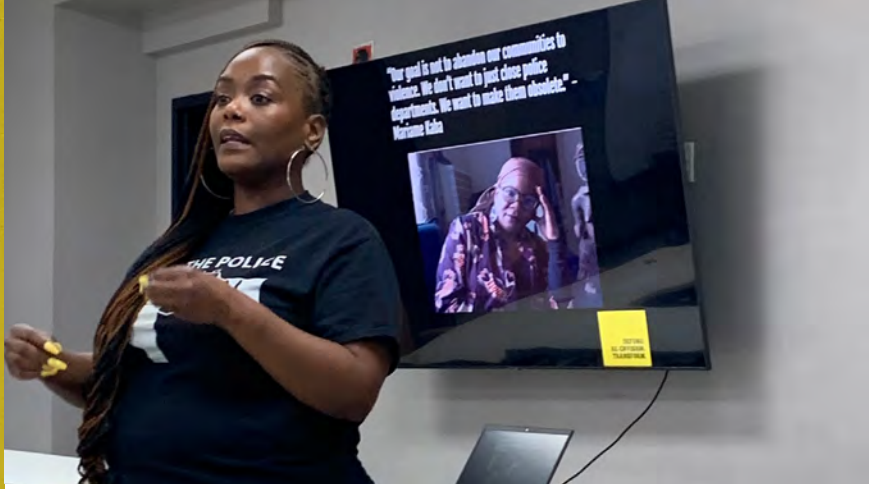
This brings the total proposed general fund spending on police to about $168.8M or just about 29% of the City's General Fund.

In contrast, the proposed FY25 General Fund budget includes about $2M for Human Services (about 0.3% of the General Fund budget).[2]

Another way to look at it is that ***for every $1 the city budgeted to spend from the general fund on police in FY25, they budgeted less than a penny on Human Services***.



WHY DEFUND THE POLICE?



A *Police don't keep us safe.*

When proposing divestment from police, the loudest response is always: "What about violent crime?" The reality is, most police officers only make one felony arrest per year.

The New York Times and multiple studies have shown that the proportion of time officers spend responding to incidents classified as violent crime is between 2% and 6%. The other 94-98% is made up of nonviolent or noncriminal incidents, traffic, passive downtime, and paperwork.[5]

We are over-relying on systems that DO NOT prevent the most violent of crimes and spend less than 10% of their time responding to it.

In addition, the City of St. Louis leads all major metropolitan police departments across the nation in most killings by police officer per capita.[6]

B *Social problems are not police problems.*

If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. An entity trained and authorized to use force should NOT be the primary approach to addressing mental health crises, homelessness, drug use, and other social challenges.

C *Exorbitant spending on policing comes at a human cost.*

The St. Louis General Fund budget allocates approximately $580.9M to police, and only $2M to Human Services, the purpose of which is to "enhance the quality of life of citizens through the provision of social service programs," and to "promote City living and neighborhood stabilization through the preservation of afforable and accessible housing."[5]

The excessive cost of over-policing leaves critical public safety systems underfunded, such as affordable housing, public education, physical and mental healthcare, youth programs, violence prevention programs, etc.

This plays out in predictable ways on the ground, leaving our city's highest policed neighborhoods with the least amount of resources.

Under these conditions, marginalized people are punished, but don't receive support. Black St. Louisans are 3x more likely to live in poverty and 5x more likely to experience unemployment than the rest of the population.[7]

The budget should be used to invest in people and communities, not for building up systems that surveil and harm us.

D *Reform is not enough.*

Following the high-profile murders of Mike Brown, Eric Garner, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and more, we have seen reform after reform. None have changed the overwhelming rates of abuse and violence, and 2022 saw the highest number of police killings on record.[8]

For decades, cities have attempted to reform police through increased accountability, diversity, and training. Because they did not question the role of the police, these reforms simply expanded police power, instead of reducing police abuse.

OUR OPPORTUNITY

To live in a safer community without police will require a multi-pronged investment and policy change approach. ***We must demand divestment from wasteful spending on SLMPD and investment into our communities and programs that actually keep us safe.*** This includes: creating alternatives to calling the police for mental health needs; equitable access to the public resources; investing in proven-effective programs that communities are already relying on for nonpolice intervention and violence prevention; and decriminalizing unmet mental health needs, sex work, and drug use.

When we pool our resources and make our voices heard, anything is possible. Join us in transforming our city into a safe and abundant community, where we can all thrive.

Sources

1. City of St. Louis, Missouri. FY2025 Annual Operating Plan and Executive Overview as Proposed to the Board of Estimate and Apportionment (E&A) Board of E&A, S-7. Available at https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/budget/documents/upload/Intro-and-summaries.pdf
2. City of St. Louis, Missouri. FY2025 Annual Operating Plan and Executive Overview as Proposed to the Board of E&A, S-1. Available at https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/budget/documents/upload/Intro-and-summaries.pdf
3. City of St. Louis, Missouri. FY2025 Annual Operating Plan and Executive Overview as Proposed to the Board of E&A, S-2. Available at https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/budget/documents/upload/Intro-and-summaries.pdf
4. City of St. Louis, Missouri. FY2025 Annual Operating Plan and Executive Overview as Proposed to the Board of E&A, S-1. Available at https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/budget/documents/upload/Intro-and-summaries.pdf
5. How Do the Police Actually Spend Their Time? The New York Times (June 19, 2020). Available at https://www.nytimes-com/2020/06/19/upshot/unrest-police-time-violent-crime.html
6. Mapping Police Violence: Cities (April 20 2021). Available at https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/cities
7. Inmate Population By Day, City of St. Louis (2022) https://www.stlouismo.gov/data/dashboards/inmates/by-day.cfm. Available at https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/data/dashboards/inmates/index.cfm
8. 2022 Police Violence Report. Mapping Police Violence (2022). Available at https://policeviolencereport.org/

TAKE ACTION

1. Follow ***@defundslmpd*** on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, and learn more at ***drt-stl.org***

2. Sign up to receive email alerts from the campaign at ***bit.ly/drtnewsletter***

3. Attend our ***monthly Movement Meetings*** every first Thursday of the month.

4. Stay tuned to our social media for opportuinities to ***testify*** at public hearings.

Note: We will be offering trainings, teach-ins, and other tools that dive deeper into various aspects of the St. Louis City budget and budgeting process throughout the rest of the budget cycle. Stay tuned by following ***@defundslmpd.***

CONTACT US

ACTION ST. LOUIS

@ActionSTL
Email: info@actionstl.org
actionstl.org

ARCHCITY DEFENDERS

@ArchCityDefense
Email: ibordeaux@archcitydefenders.org
archcitydefenders.org

FATAL STATE VIOLENCE RESPONDER HOTLINE

(314) 643-6244

FORWARD THROUGH FERGUSON

@STLChange
Email: contact@forwardthroughferguson.org
forwardthroughferguson.org & transforming911.org

FREEDOM COMMUNITY CENTER

@FCCStLouis
Email: info@freedomstl.org
freedomstl.org

DEFUND.
RE-ENVISION.
TRANSFORM.