DATA BRIEF

District Full-Time Equivalents Grew Much Faster than Population Over 10-Year Period

January 15, 2025 A data brief from the Office of the D.C. Auditor

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DATA BRIEF

District Full-Time Equivalents Grew Much Faster than Population Over a 10-Year Period

The District of Columbia government has seen significant staffing growth over the past decade. From FY 2014 to 2023, the number of budgeted Full-Time Equivalent positions (FTEs) supported by the General Fund grew by approximately 29%. This FTE growth far outpaced the population growth of just 2.3% during the same period.

This data brief highlights four selected agencies with high FTE growth rates over the 10-year period. The data are based on FTE figures that are a part of the District's official system of record, approved in the Annual Budget and Financial Plan, and incorporated into the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR). In addition to filled positions, the data include active positions that were vacant or not fully funded during the fiscal year.

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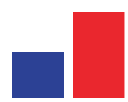
Key takeaways

1. During the 10-year period examined, the number of budgeted FTEs grew by 28.7%.
2. In nine out of 10 years, D.C. Government's budgeted FTE growth was at least double the rate of population growth.
3. Combining the four examined agencies, a total of 1,401.49 budgeted FTEs were added between FY 2014-2023 (including 825.14 added between FY 2018-2023).

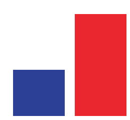
At four selected agencies, the number of budgeted FTE grew from FY 2014-2023 as follows:

Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)



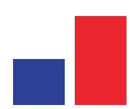
86% increase

Department of Human Services (DHS)



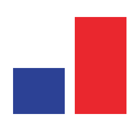
121% increase

Department of Employment Services (DES)



94% increase

Office of Contracting and Procurement (OCP)



111% increase

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Background, Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The District of Columbia government has seen significant staffing growth over the past decade. From 2014 to 2023, the number of budgeted full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) supported by the General Fund—the collection of revenues that fund the District's operations—grew by approximately 29%. This FTE growth far outpaced the city's population growth of just 2.3% during the same period.[1]

This data brief highlights four agencies with high FTE growth rates over the 10-year period:

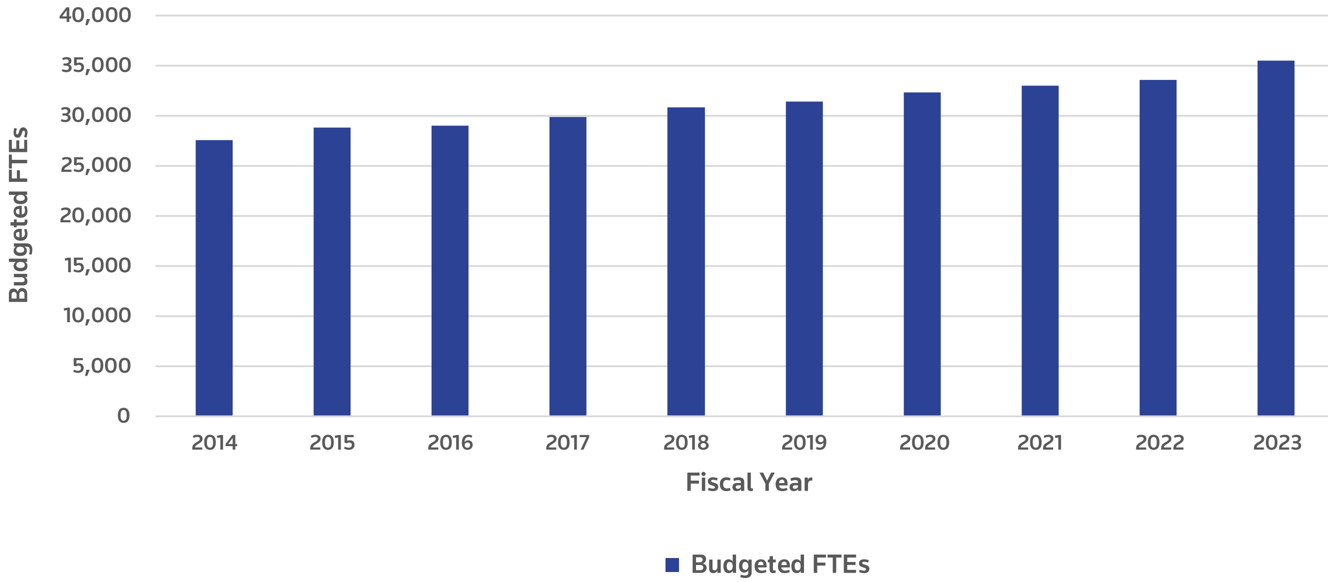
- The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)
- The Department of Human Services (DHS)
- The Department of Employment Services (DOES)
- The Office of Contracting and Procurement (OCP)

Collectively, the General Fund FTEs of the four agencies doubled from 1,400 in FY 2014 to 2,802 in FY 2023. Using FTE data provided by the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) Office of Budget and Planning (OBP), ODCA examined changes in FTEs at the program level within agency budgets. This data includes all General Fund FTE positions that were authorized in an approved budget, but it is important to note that some authorized positions were not actually funded or filled during the fiscal year. Nonetheless, ODCA's examination suggests questions for the Council to consider in its oversight of the District government.

1 FY 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, Exhibit S4-A (Demographic and Economic Statistics, Last Ten Fiscal Years), citing U.S. Census annual population estimates

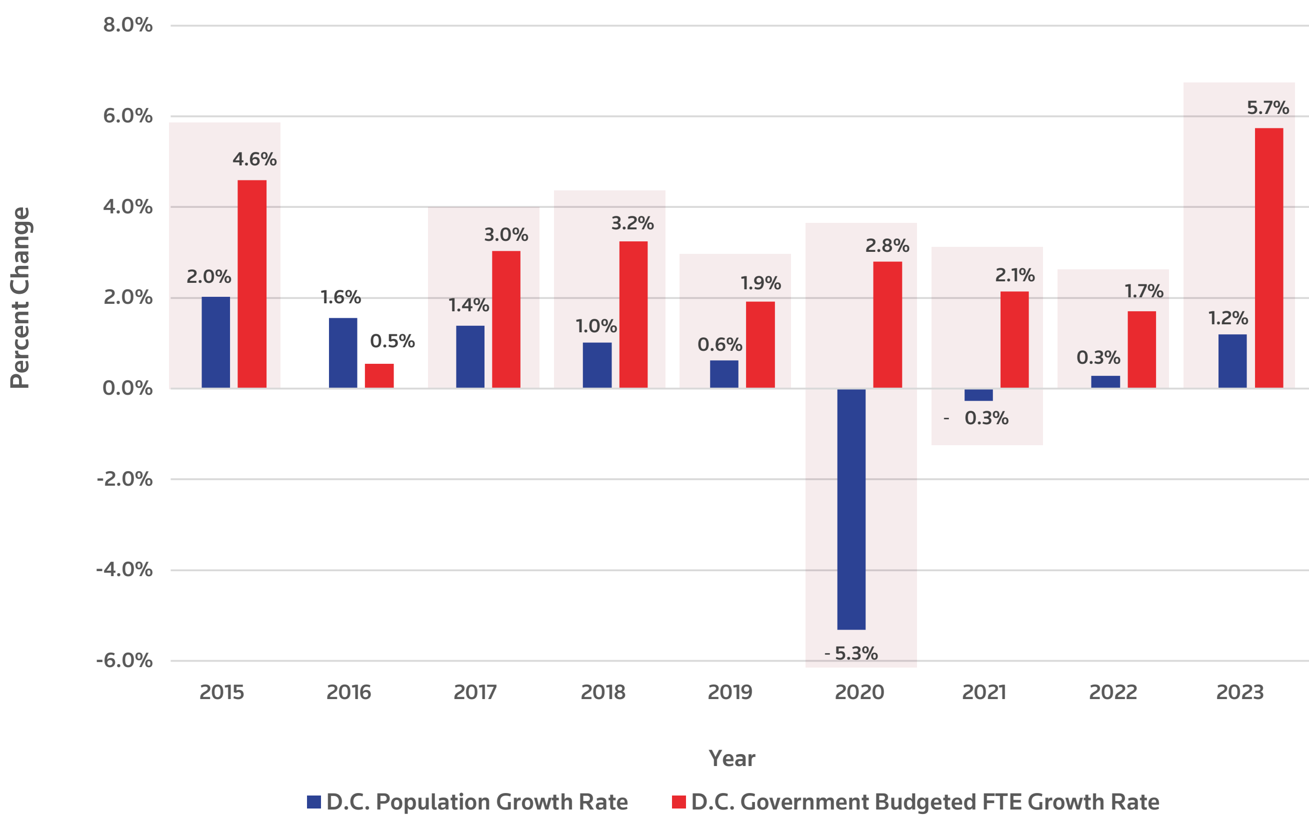
This data brief was drafted, reviewed, and approved in accordance with the standards outlined in the Office of the D.C. Auditor (ODCA) Policies and Procedures.

Figure 1. General Fund Budgeted FTEs, 2014–2023



Source: 1. OBP Data; FY 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR), Exhibit S-5C

Figure 2. D.C. Population and Budgeted FTE Growth Rates, 2015-2023



Note: 1. The shaded areas show FTEs growing at a rate of double (or more) the rate of D.C. population.
Source: 2. FY 2023 ACFR, Exhibits S-4A and S-5C.

Key Takeaways

- During the 10-year period examined, the number of D.C. government FTEs grew by 28.7%.
- In nine out of 10 years, D.C. government's budgeted FTE growth was at least double the rate of the city's population growth.
- Among the four examined agencies, a total of 1,401.49 budgeted FTEs were added since 2014 and 825.14 since 2018.

Caveats

- The data are based on FTE figures that are a part of the District's official system of record approved in the Annual Budget and Financial Plan and incorporated into the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) but are known to include FTEs that were vacant or not fully funded during the fiscal year.
- The data shows FTEs that are supported by the District's General Fund only (Local Fund, Dedicated Taxes, and Special Purpose Funds).[2] The data excludes FTEs supported by Federal Grants, Medicaid, and Private Funds.[3]
- In most cases, we analyzed agency budgets at the program level because categories at the activity level were not stable over the 10-year period.

Analysis Results

Agency Growth by Program

While not every agency grew at the same pace, there were some outliers among those with budgeted FTEs that went beyond the average pace of growth. The section below outlines whether certain programs within an agency had high rates of growth for the five-year period (FYs 2018-2023) and/or 10-year period (FYs 2014-2023). A high rate of growth for the 10-year period means that it was over 29%, which was the rate that D.C.'s government overall grew between 2014-2023.[4] The District's budget structure breaks each agency's spending into programs such as Agency Management and within each program, identifies "activities" with an expected budget and FTEs for each activity.

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2 General Fund: "The principal operating fund of the District, which is used to account for all financial resources except those required to be accounted for in another fund. General fund revenues consist of Local, Dedicated Tax, and Special Purpose Revenues." In FY 2021 through FY 2024, Local Funds included a total of approximately $1.5 billion that was provided pursuant to the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and designated by the District as "local revenue replacement" in the financial plan to offset what was claimed as expected revenue lost due to the pandemic.

3 Federal Funds include: Federal Grants, provided by federal agencies for specific purposes with conditions set by the grantor; Federal Payments, specified in the District's appropriations acts and governed by federal appropriations law; Federal Medicaid Payments, which cover eligible healthcare costs under joint oversight by District and federal authorities; and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, allocated through Coronavirus Relief programs to support public health and economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

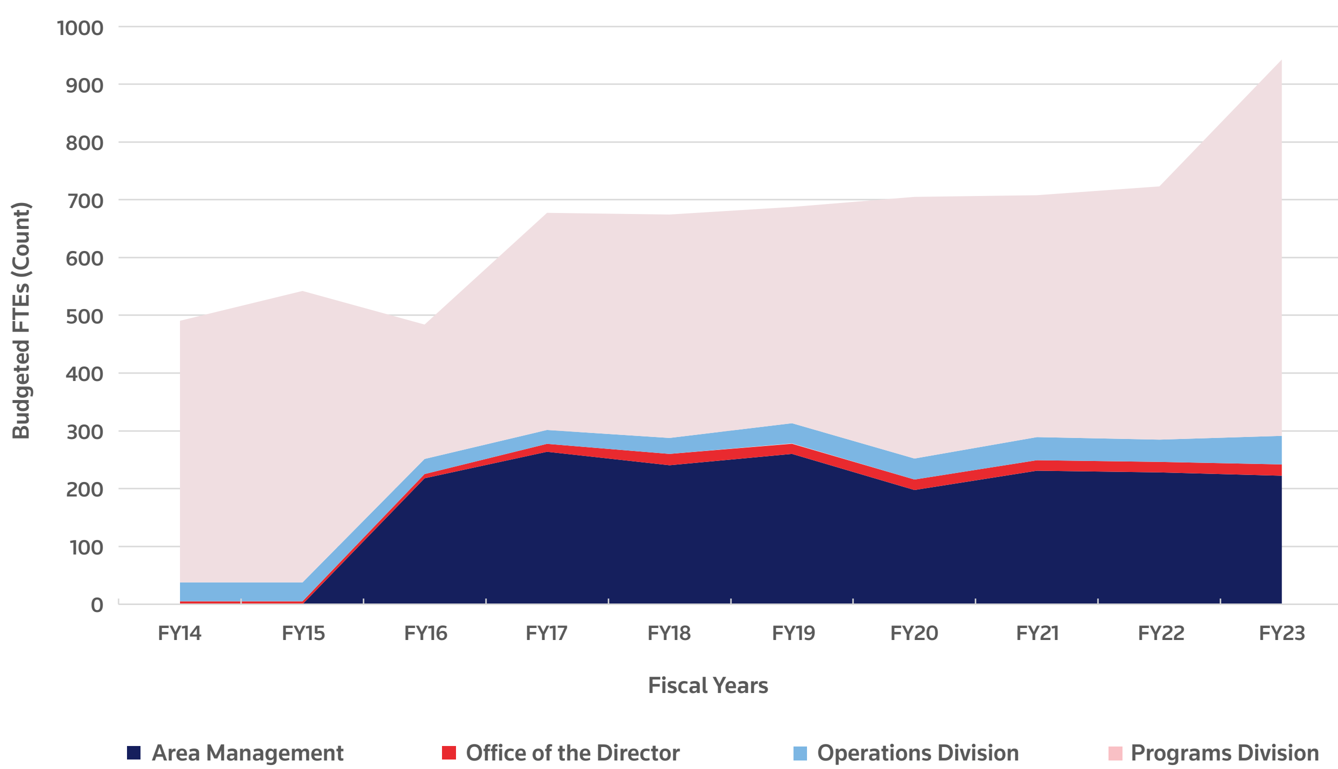
4 In 2014, D.C. Government had 27,560 budgeted General Fund FTEs and in 2023 it had 35,480 budgeted General Fund FTEs.

Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)

DPR experienced significant growth in FTEs over the past decade and also over the five-year period. However, the 10-year growth is largely attributed to the introduction of the Area Management program, which added more than 200 budgeted FTEs in 2016. Since then, the program's FTE count has declined by about 7% as of FY 2023. Additionally, a few areas of growth that seemed to break from normal agency trajectories were the **Office of the Director** which almost quadrupled in size between 2014 and 2017 and has since remained consistent around 19 budgeted FTEs, **Operations Division** with a 52% growth in the 10-year period and the **Programs Division** with 44% growth in the 10-year period, adding 198 budgeted FTEs between 2014 and 2023.

DPR's budgeted FTE growth occurred in two notable jumps: between 2016 and 2017 and again from 2022 to 2023. From 2016 to 2017 the Programs Division experienced a significant jump due to the consolidation of the **Area Management** program into the **Recreation Programs**. This reorganization eliminated all of the numbered Areas" and accounted for 45.77 (24%) of the 192.07 budgeted FTEs. Additionally, the **Programs Division** added 143.3 (75%) budgeted FTEs which mostly came from the addition of the **Roving Leaders Programs** and the **Seasonal Camps** activities. Similarly, from 2022 to 2023, DPR had another spike in budgeted FTEs of 219.47 which occurred with the **Programs Division** adding 154 budgeted FTEs to their **Recreational Services – Comm Recreation** activity and adding an additional 51 budgeted FTEs to their **Seasonal Camps** activity.

Figure 3. Department of Parks and Recreation Budgeted FTE Growth, 2014–2023



Source: 3. Table only includes programs that grew at rapid rates relative to other programs

For further consideration:

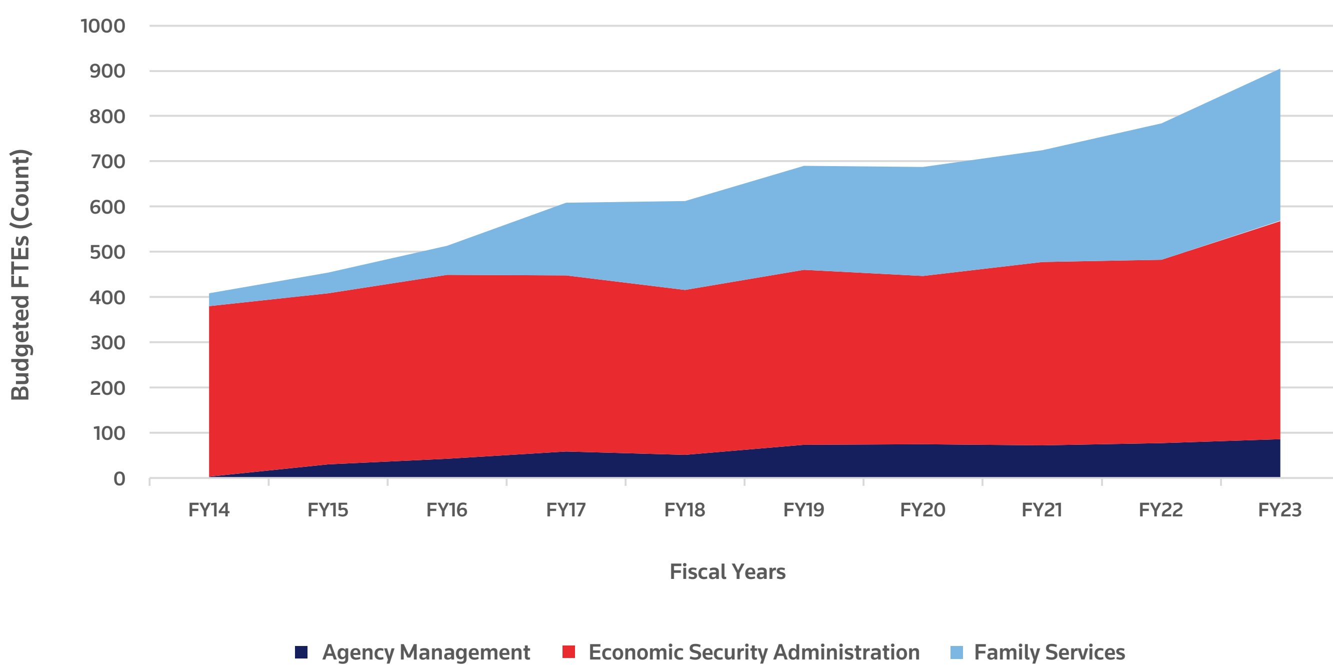
- What factors contributed to the changes made in Area Management and the Programs Division and have the services delivered justified the growth?
- Has the Program Division's increase in staffing led to measurable improvements in program outcomes and efficiency?
- Is the long-term growth for the Office of the Director and Operations programs primarily driven by an expansion of their responsibilities and how has this impacted their effectiveness?

Department of Human Services (DHS)

DHS exceeded both five-year and 10-year growth rates (48% and 121% respectively) with an addition of 498 General Fund FTEs between 2014 and 2023. The programs driving this growth were:

1. **Agency Management**, which grew from three budgeted FTEs to 85.4 in 10 years.
2. **Family Services** ballooned with a 10-year growth rate of 1,068%, representing more than 300 new budgeted FTEs by 2023.
3. The **Economic Security Administration** increased 32% in the five-year period and added 118 budgeted FTEs.

Figure 4. Department of Human Services Budgeted FTE Growth, 2014–2023



For further consideration:

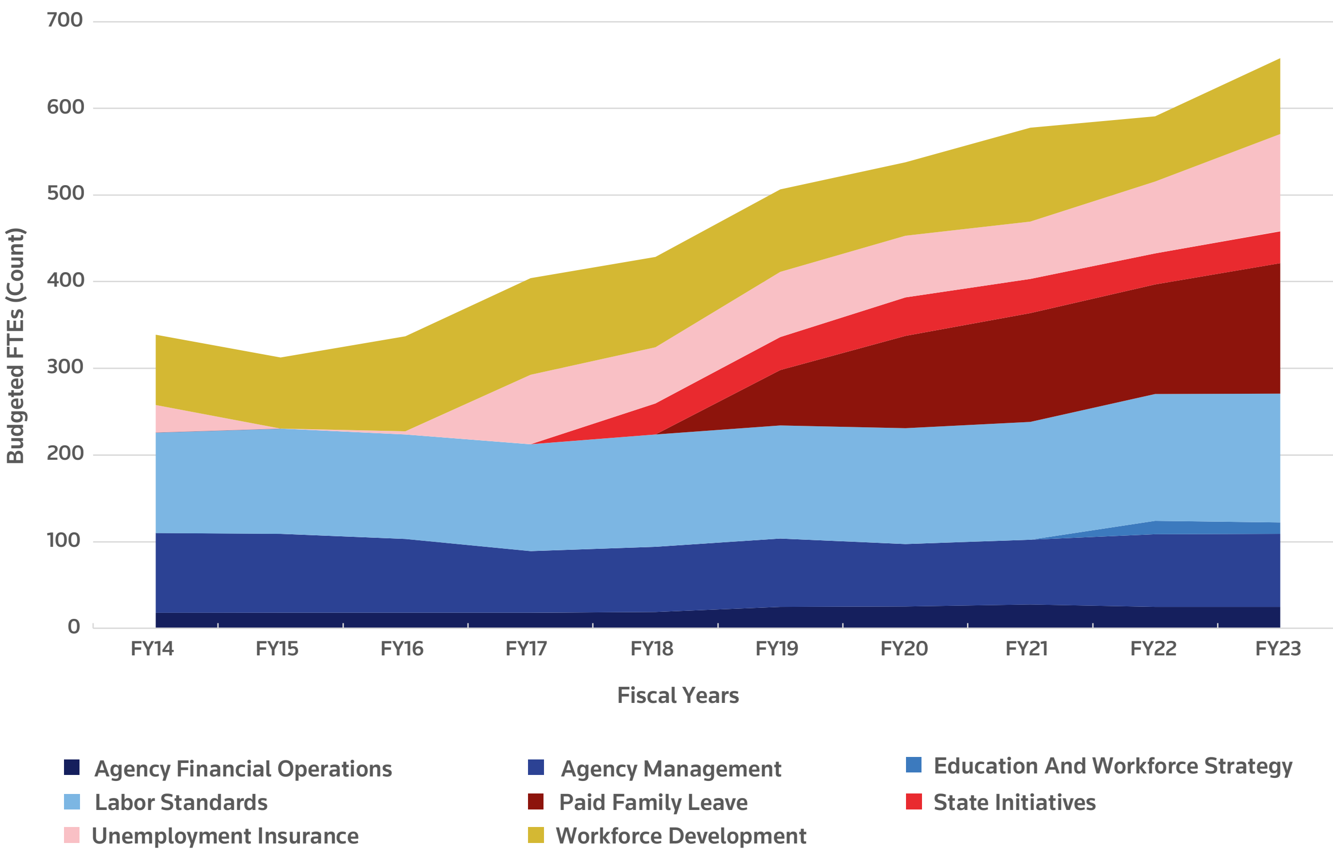
- What aspects of **Agency Management** and **Family Services** led to DHS growing so much?
- What led to the **Economic Security Administration** growing so much in five years and has the

administration taken action based on the finding in the District's FY 2023 Single Audit[5] that the District's significant investment in FTEs had not resulted in compliance with program requirements for TANF, SNAP, and other ESA programs?[6]

Department of Employment Services (DOES)

DOES had two new programs added (**Education and Workforce Strategy** and **Paid Family Leave**) within the five-year period (2018-2023) that led to 164 new budgeted FTEs (13 and 151 respectively), and which makes up almost one-quarter of its total 2023 budgeted FTEs. Additionally, its **Unemployment Insurance Program** workforce increased by 251% from 32 to 112 budgeted FTEs in the 10-year period.

Figure 5. Department of Employment Services Budgeted FTE Growth, 2014–2023



5 The Office of the Chief Financial Officer issues an annual report commonly called the Single Audit of Federal Awards Programs to determine compliance with federal requirements, obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement, and to issue an auditor's report that includes their opinion on the matter.

6 Schedules of Expenditures of Federal Awards and Reports Required by the Uniform Guidance – Year Ended September 30, 2023, pages 51-54.

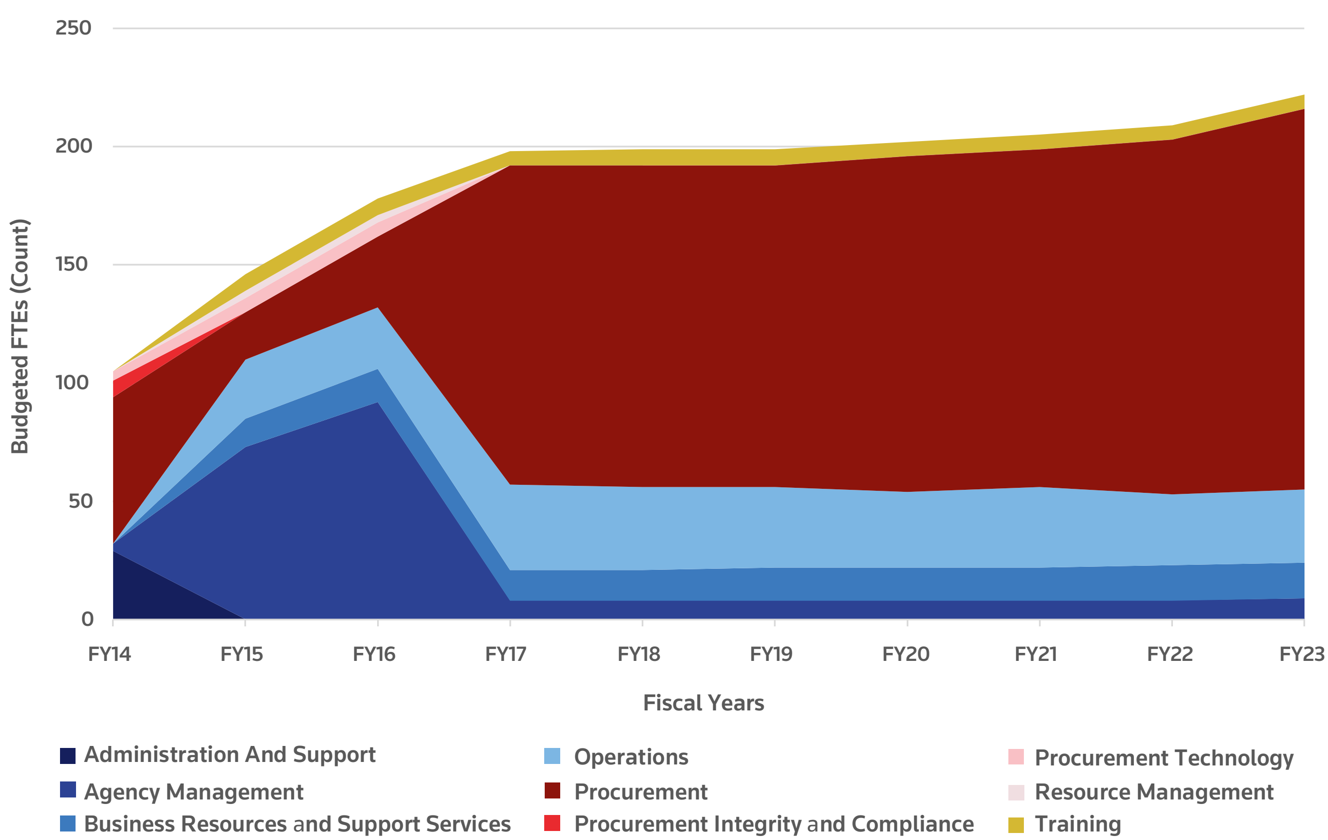
For further consideration:

- **Paid Family Leave** was introduced in 2019 and has grown steadily year-over-year from 64 budgeted FTEs to 151 in FY 2023. Was this level of growth (approximately 135%) necessary and are there program metrics that justify that growth level?
- Given that D.C. Government has grown by 29% in the past decade, why has the **Unemployment Insurance** seen a growth rate of 251%? Why has that level been maintained beyond the pandemic?

Office of Contracting and Procurement (OCP)

OCP had high 10-year growth and low five-year growth and much of that growth was driven by the **Procurement** program, which had a 160% increase in staff leading to a 99 budgeted FTE increase in 10 years. Most FTEs in the program labeled "procurement" are in the activity titled Procurement Management Support. While most of the agency's growth in budgeted FTEs occurred between FY 2014 and 2017, it has still seen over a 12% increase (24 budgeted FTEs) since 2017.

Figure 6. Office of Contracting and Procurement Budgeted FTE Growth, 2014–2023



For further consideration:

- What has been the primary driver of the increase in Procurement staff?

Conclusion

The analysis of staffing trends within the District of Columbia government reveals significant growth in certain agencies over the past decade. With an overall increase of 29% in budgeted full-time equivalents (FTEs) from 2014 to 2023, key agencies like the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Employment Services (DOES), and the Office of Contracting and Procurement (OCP) have seen staffing growth that exceeds the District's overall growth which, as noted, was significantly greater than the District's population growth.

We hope this information will be useful to the Council in performing its oversight and budget development.

Appendix A: Agency Growth Tables

High 10-Year Growth
High 5-Year Growth
High Growth for Both
New Program (High Hires)
Program Erased

Note: All figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Agency/Program Names	Weighted 5Y Growth	Weighted 10Y Growth	FY14 Budgeted FTEs	FY18 Budgeted FTEs	FY23 Budgeted FTEs
Department of Parks and Recreation (Figure 3)	**38%**	**86%**	**544**	**733**	**1,011**
Agency Financial Operations	0%	0%	5	5	5
Agency Management	6%	41%	37	49	52
Area Management	-7%	N/A	-	240	223
Office of the Director	-4%	280%	5	20	19
Operations Division	80%	52%	33	28	50
Park Policy and Programs Division	N/A	-20%	5	-	4
Partnerships and Development Division	40%	17%	6	5	7
Programs Division	68%	44%	453	387	652
Department of Human Services (Figure 4)	**48%**	**121%**	**413**	**615**	**911**
Agency Financial Operations	60%	60%	4	4	6
Agency Management	66%	2747%	3	51	85
Economic Security Administration	32%	28%	377	365	483
Family Services	72%	1068%	29	195	336

Agency/Program Names	Weighted 5Y Growth	Weighted 10Y Growth	FY14 Budgeted FTEs	FY18 Budgeted FTEs	FY23 Budgeted FTEs
Department of Employment Services (Figure 5)	**54%**	**94%**	**339**	**429**	**658**
Agency Financial Operations	32%	39%	18	19	25
Agency Management	12%	-9%	92	75	84
Education And Workforce Strategy	N/A	N/A	N/A	-	13
Labor Standards	15%	28%	116	130	149
Paid Family Leave	N/A	N/A	N/A	-	151
State Initiatives	2%	N/A	N/A	36	37
Unemployment Insurance	74%	251%	32	65	112
Workforce Development	-16%	8%	81	105	88

Agency/Program Names	Weighted 5Y Growth	Weighted 10Y Growth	FY14 Budgeted FTEs	FY18 Budgeted FTEs	FY23 Budgeted FTEs
Office of Contracting and Procurement (Figure 6)	**12%**	**111%**	**105**	**199**	**222**
Administration and Support	N/A	-100%	29	0	0
Agency Management	13%	200%	3	8	9
Business Resources and Support Services	15%	N/A	N/A	13	15
Operations	-11%	N/A	N/A	35	31
Procurement	18%	160%	62	136	161
Procurement Integrity and Compliance	N/A	-100%	7	N/A	N/A
Procurement Technology	N/A	-100%	4	N/A	N/A
Resource Management	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Training	-14%	N/A	N/A	7	6

Appendix A: Agency Growth Tables

High 10-Year Growth
High 5-Year Growth
High Growth for Both
New Program (High Hires)
Program Erased

Agency/Program Names	Weighted 5Y Growth	Weighted 10Y Growth	FY14 Budgeted FTEs	FY18 Budgeted FTEs	FY23 Budgeted FTEs
Department of Parks and Recreation (Figure 3)	**38%**	**86%**	**544**	**733**	**1,011**
Agency Financial Operations	0%	0%	5	5	5
Agency Management	6%	41%	37	49	52
Area Management	-7%	N/A	-	240	223
Office of the Director	-4%	280%	5	20	19
Operations Division	80%	52%	33	28	50
Park Policy and Programs Division	N/A	-20%	5	-	4
Partnerships and Development Division	40%	17%	6	5	7
Programs Division	68%	44%	453	387	652
Department of Human Services (Figure 4)	**48%**	**121%**	**412.55**	**615.36**	**910.65**
Agency Financial Operations	60%	60%	3.75	3.75	6.00
Agency Management	66%	2747%	3.00	51.36	85.40
Economic Security Administration	32%	28%	377.00	365.00	483.00
Family Services	72%	1068%	28.80	195.25	336.25

Department of Employment Services (Figure 5)	**54%**	**94%**	**338.95**	**428.69**	**658.10**
Agency Financial Operations	32%	39%	18.01	19.01	25.00
Agency Management	12%	-9%	92.04	75.00	84.03
Education And Workforce Strategy	N/A	N/A	N/A	-	13.17
Labor Standards	15%	28%	115.85	129.60	148.70
Paid Family Leave	N/A	N/A	N/A	-	150.59
State Initiatives	2%	N/A	N/A	36.00	36.74
Unemployment Insurance	74%	251%	32.00	64.50	112.29
Workforce Development	-16%	8%	81.05	104.58	87.58

Office of Contracting and Procurement (Figure 6)	**12%**	**111%**	**105**	**199**	**222**
Administration and Support	N/A	-100%	29	0	0
Agency Management	13%	200%	3	8	9
Business Resources and Support Services	15%	N/A	N/A	13	15
Operations	-11%	N/A	N/A	35	31
Procurement	18%	160%	62	136	161
Procurement Integrity and Compliance	N/A	-100%	7	N/A	N/A
Procurement Technology	N/A	-100%	4	N/A	N/A
Resource Management	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Training	-14%	N/A	N/A	7	6