



March 16, 2026

The Hon. Phil Mendelson
Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia
The John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington DC 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson and Councilmembers:

I write to let you know that the Office of the D.C. Auditor (ODCA) has updated the spending database we published in November along with the data brief, [Twenty Years of DC Agency Overspending](#) to add agency budget and spending totals from the FY 2025 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR).

Our [searchable database](#) now includes local source budgets for the last 20 years, FY 2006 through FY 2025, comparing what the Council approved for each agency in the spring with the “final” expenditures as reported in the ACFR following the financial close for each fiscal year. Councilmembers and staff—as well as the public – can download the spreadsheet and see the spending record for each District agency as well as other summaries of the budget/spending data. With another difficult budget season before you, understanding where spending has grown is a first step to bringing District spending into line with anticipated revenues.

As was the case in the last several years, consistent “overspending” agencies in FY 2025 included the Department of General Services, the Metropolitan Police Department, and the Department of Human Services. Others among significant overspenders in FY 2025 were Settlements and Judgments, the Department of Behavioral Health, and the not-for-profit hospital corporation subsidy. Councilmembers with oversight for these agencies may wish to ask for the factors that led to the changes in spending for each of these lines in the FY 2025 budget, and whether the increases were approved as part of the supplemental budget, through individual reprogrammings, or were adjustments in “month 13” after the close of the fiscal year.

As a reminder, the Council approved the supplemental FY 2025 budget along with the FY 2026 budget; reprogrammings over \$1 million receive passive approval when the Council does not act to block a reprogramming with a resolution of disapproval; and the “month 13” adjustments are made without Council action.

Just as important as spending that exceeds the Council-approved mark are the instances of spending that are significantly less than had been approved by Council. Again this year the Office of Unified Communications underspent its budget. Issues with the District’s 911 system are well known: understaffing has been a persistent challenge that the administration has acknowledged and has sought to address. And the number and proportion of shifts working at less than full strength has been trending

down. But spending well under the budget mark does not seem to match the recognized need for greater investments in a vital public safety service. Another agency that underspent its appropriation is the small but high-priority Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, home of the violence interrupter and other violence-prevention and mitigation programs.

Again in FY 2025 the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) seriously overbudgeted for “repayment of loans an interest,” or debt service. As the data brief noted, this budget line has slowly and inexorably moved up the list for total spending, surpassing the Metropolitan Police Department and most other operating agencies.

In terms of approved budget, debt service rose from \$371 million in local funds budgeted by the Council in FY 2006 to \$1.2 billion in FY 2025 according to the ACFR. The actual spending for debt service has been lower than the amount budgeted in *20 out of 20 years*. The underspending in FY 2025 totaled \$177 million. As we noted, debt service funds have been used consistently to fill gaps for agencies that have overspent their Council-approved local funds budget.

We hope this analysis is useful as you undertake the challenges of an increasingly difficult budget and financial outlook for the District of Columbia.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,



Kathleen Patterson
D.C. Auditor

cc: Councilmembers