

COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS

More than half of Illinois cities get “F” grades for local pensions

Belleville

2019 Grade: F

In 2003, Belleville’s police, fire and municipal pension funds already faced a shortfall of **\$37.4 million**. That meant every Belleville household, on average, was on the hook for **\$2,089** in future taxes just to eliminate that shortfall.

Belleville began contributing more money – taxpayer dollars – to pensions in an attempt to make the plans healthier. Over the next 16 years, city contributions increasingly crowded out spending for public safety, roads and other core services.

	2003	2019	Change
City (taxpayer) contributions to pensions	\$2.47 million	\$7.78 million	Up 3.1X
Share of city general budget for pensions	14.0%	29.5%	Up 2.1X

Despite the ramp-up in city payments over those 16 years, Belleville’s pension debts didn’t decrease. Instead, they jumped by 2.5 times!

By 2019, the shortfall in Belleville’s police, fire and municipal pension funds totaled **\$93.4 million**. That means each Belleville household, on average, is now on the hook for **\$5,316** in debt.

Everyone loses under Belleville’s pension crisis:



Taxpayers are tapped out

Belleville residents are paying more and more into a broken system. City taxpayers in 2019 contributed 3.1 times more to pensions than in 2003, yet city debts are 2.5 times larger.



Pension costs are devouring the city’s budget

Belleville pension contributions have grown to consume 29.5% of the city’s budget, up from 14.0% in 2003. That’s crowded out spending on public safety, roads and other core services.



Belleville worker retirement security is collapsing

The health of Belleville’s local pension plans have worsened despite those increased taxpayer contributions. In 2003, the plans had 57.7% of the money they needed. By 2019, that had dropped to just 51.1%.



Belleville’s crisis will only get worse

Belleville has fewer active government workers available to help pay for a growing number of retirees. In 2003, there were 1.15 active workers for every pensioner. By 2019, there were 0.88 active workers per pensioner.

2019 GRADE

F

2003 GRADE

D

Belleville receives an "F" grade for its local pension crisis

Local officials handcuffed by state pension mandates.

Wirepoints quantified the negative impact of local pensions by examining the finances of Illinois' 175 largest cities from 2003 to 2019. The analysis was based on ten equally-weighted metrics. Cities were given an A through F grade based on a 100-point scale (10 points per metric).*

Belleville received an "F" grade in 2019. The city's total score dropped from 63 in 2003 to 52 in 2019, a decline of 11 points.

Belleville was one of 102 cities to receive an "F" grade in 2019.

175 Cities – Summary Scores			
Grade	Score	Number of cities	
		2003	2019
A	≥90	4	0
B	80-89	35	1
C	70-79	81	8
D	60-69	48	64
F	≤59	7	102

Belleville Key Facts		
City demographics	2000	2019
Population	41,410	41,585
Households	17,895	17,570
Median household income	\$35,979	\$48,099
City budget	2003	2019
General revenues	\$17,596,909	\$26,373,108
Total revenues	\$39,565,946	\$80,975,558
Total property taxes	\$10,842,590	\$29,139,791
Pension health (police, fire & IMRF)	2003	2019
Total accrued liabilities (benefits owed)	\$88,325,881	\$190,833,935
Total pension assets	\$50,945,907	\$97,438,348
Funded ratio	57.7%	51.1%
Total pension shortfall	\$37,379,974	\$93,395,587
Per household	\$2,089	\$5,316
Active public safety workers	134	141
Public safety pension beneficiaries	117	160
City pension contributions	2003	2019
City contributions	\$2,470,230	\$7,778,531
Per household	\$138	\$443
Percentage of city's general budget	14.0%	29.5%
Employees' contributions	\$1,077,583	\$1,416,553

Belleville Score				
Metric	2003	2019	2003	2019
1. Police pension funded ratio	49.7%	50.0%	4	5
2. Firefighter pension funded ratio	42.3%	41.5%	4	4
3. Municipal (IMRF) pension funded ratio	105.3%	80.9%	10	8
4. City pension debts per household as a percentage of median household income	5.8%	11.1%	7	5
5. City contributions per household as a percentage of median household income	0.38%	0.92%	8	6
6. City contributions as a percentage of total budget	6.2%	9.6%	5	2
7. Ratio of city contributions to employee contributions	2.29	5.49	7	3
8. Percentage surplus/shortfall in actuarially-required city contribution (Police & Fire only)	-11.5%	4.4%	7	10
9. Asset-to-payout ratio (Police & Fire only)	10.1	9.6	6	5
10. Worker-to-beneficiary ratio (Police & Fire only)	1.15	0.88	5	4
Total score			63	52
Grade			D	F

*Wirepoints analyzed 175 of Illinois' largest cities, excluding Chicago, that have a local police, firefighter and municipal (IMRF) pension fund.

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