

COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS

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

Bloomington

2019 Grade: D

In 2003, Bloomington’s police, fire and municipal pension funds already faced a shortfall of **\$47.1 million**. That meant every Bloomington household, on average, was on the hook for **\$1,763** in future taxes just to eliminate that shortfall.

Bloomington 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	\$4.47 million	\$13.36 million	Up 3.0X
Share of city general budget for pensions	8.2%	13.1%	Up 1.6X

Despite the ramp-up in city payments over those 16 years, Bloomington’s pension debts didn’t decrease. Instead, they jumped by 3.3 times!

By 2019, the shortfall in Bloomington’s police, fire and municipal pension funds totaled **\$154.6 million**. That means each Bloomington household, on average, is now on the hook for **\$4,854** in debt.

Everyone loses under Bloomington’s pension crisis:



Taxpayers are tapped out

Bloomington residents are paying more and more into a broken system. City taxpayers in 2019 contributed 3.0 times more to pensions than in 2003, yet city debts are 3.3 times larger.



Pension costs are devouring the city’s budget

Bloomington pension contributions have grown to consume 13.1% of the city’s budget, up from 8.2% in 2003. That’s crowded out spending on public safety, roads and other core services.



Bloomington worker retirement security is collapsing

The health of Bloomington’s local pension plans have worsened despite those increased taxpayer contributions. In 2003, the plans had 68.8% of the money they needed. By 2019, that had dropped to just 56.6%.



Bloomington’s crisis will only get worse

Bloomington has fewer active government workers available to help pay for a growing number of retirees. In 2003, there were 1.54 active workers for every pensioner. By 2019, there were 1.18 active workers per pensioner.

2019 GRADE



2003 GRADE



Bloomington receives a "D" 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).*

Bloomington received a "D" grade in 2019. The city's total score dropped from 71 in 2003 to 61 in 2019, a decline of 10 points.

Bloomington was one of 64 cities to receive a "D" grade in 2019.

Bloomington Key Facts		
City demographics	2000	2019
Population	64,808	78,015
Households	26,734	31,853
Median household income	\$46,496	\$67,507
City budget	2003	2019
General revenues	\$54,669,698	\$101,792,758
Total revenues	\$100,194,850	\$197,579,970
Total property taxes	\$13,396,215	\$24,889,940
Pension health (police, fire & IMRF)	2003	2019
Total accrued liabilities (benefits owed)	\$151,244,612	\$356,202,318
Total pension assets	\$104,107,878	\$201,594,579
Funded ratio	68.8%	56.6%
Total pension shortfall	\$47,136,734	\$154,607,739
Per household	\$1,763	\$4,854
Active public safety workers	197	239
Public safety pension beneficiaries	128	202
City pension contributions	2003	2019
City contributions	\$4,469,487	\$13,364,426
Per household	\$167	\$420
Percentage of city's general budget	8.2%	13.1%
Employees' contributions	\$1,832,728	\$3,306,868

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

Bloomington Score				
Metric	2003	2019	2003	2019
1. Police pension funded ratio	54.0%	54.2%	5	5
2. Firefighter pension funded ratio	59.9%	50.7%	5	5
3. Municipal (IMRF) pension funded ratio	92.0%	72.3%	9	7
4. City pension debts per household as a percentage of median household income	3.8%	7.2%	8	7
5. City contributions per household as a percentage of median household income	0.36%	0.62%	8	7
6. City contributions as a percentage of total budget	4.5%	6.8%	7	5
7. Ratio of city contributions to employee contributions	2.44	4.04	7	4
8. Percentage surplus/shortfall in actuarially-required city contribution (Police & Fire only)	-14.4%	-2.8%	7	9
9. Asset-to-payout ratio (Police & Fire only)	15.1	12.5	8	7
10. Worker-to-beneficiary ratio (Police & Fire only)	1.54	1.18	7	5
Total score			71	61
Grade			C	D

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

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