

COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS

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

Bolingbrook

2019 Grade: D

In 2003, Bolingbrook’s police, fire and municipal pension funds already faced a shortfall of **\$26.5 million**. That meant every Bolingbrook household, on average, was on the hook for **\$1,521** in future taxes just to eliminate that shortfall.

Bolingbrook 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	\$2.80 million	\$10.21 million	Up 3.6X
Share of city general budget for pensions	6.3%	12.4%	Up 2.0X

Despite the ramp-up in city payments over those 16 years, Bolingbrook’s pension debts didn’t decrease. Instead, they jumped by 4.8 times!

By 2019, the shortfall in Bolingbrook’s police, fire and municipal pension funds totaled **\$127.2 million**. That means each Bolingbrook household, on average, is now on the hook for **\$5,548** in debt.

Everyone loses under Bolingbrook’s pension crisis:



Taxpayers are tapped out

Bolingbrook residents are paying more and more into a broken system. City taxpayers in 2019 contributed 3.6 times more to pensions than in 2003, yet city debts are 4.8 times larger.



Pension costs are devouring the city’s budget

Bolingbrook pension contributions have grown to consume 12.4% of the city’s budget, up from 6.3% in 2003. That’s crowded out spending on public safety, roads and other core services.



Bolingbrook worker retirement security is collapsing

The health of Bolingbrook’s local pension plans have worsened despite those increased taxpayer contributions. In 2003, the plans had 69.8% of the money they needed. By 2019, that had dropped to just 57.2%.



Bolingbrook’s crisis will only get worse

Bolingbrook has fewer active government workers available to help pay for a growing number of retirees. In 2003, there were 3.74 active workers for every pensioner. By 2019, there were 1.39 active workers per pensioner.

2019 GRADE



2003 GRADE



Bolingbrook 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).*

Bolingbrook received a “D” grade in 2019. The city’s total score dropped from 76 in 2003 to 63 in 2019, a decline of 13 points.

Bolingbrook was one of 64 cities to receive a “D” 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

Bolingbrook Key Facts		
City demographics	2000	2019
Population	56,321	74,431
Households	17,401	22,921
Median household income	\$67,852	\$91,290
City budget	2003	2019
General revenues	\$44,754,104	\$82,597,849
Total revenues	\$90,196,998	\$139,151,082
Total property taxes	\$12,364,272	\$20,133,234
Pension health (police, fire & IMRF)	2003	2019
Total accrued liabilities (benefits owed)	\$87,718,567	\$296,914,886
Total pension assets	\$61,260,062	\$169,747,598
Funded ratio	69.8%	57.2%
Total pension shortfall	\$26,458,506	\$127,167,288
Per household	\$1,521	\$5,548
Active public safety workers	187	198
Public safety pension beneficiaries	50	142
City pension contributions	2003	2019
City contributions	\$2,801,558	\$10,210,444
Per household	\$161	\$445
Percentage of city’s general budget	6.3%	12.4%
Employees’ contributions	\$1,412,150	\$2,381,652

Bolingbrook Score				
Metric	2003	2019	2003	2019
1. Police pension funded ratio	64.9%	52.8%	6	5
2. Firefighter pension funded ratio	67.3%	53.2%	6	5
3. Municipal (IMRF) pension funded ratio	86.5%	85.6%	8	8
4. City pension debts per household as a percentage of median household income	2.2%	6.1%	8	7
5. City contributions per household as a percentage of median household income	0.24%	0.49%	8	8
6. City contributions as a percentage of total budget	3.1%	7.3%	8	4
7. Ratio of city contributions to employee contributions	1.98	4.29	8	4
8. Percentage surplus/shortfall in actuarially-required city contribution (Police & Fire only)	-29.0%	-9.4%	4	8
9. Asset-to-payout ratio (Police & Fire only)	25.2	15.9	10	8
10. Worker-to-beneficiary ratio (Police & Fire only)	3.74	1.39	10	6
Total score			76	63
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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