

COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS

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

Alsip

2019 Grade: F

In 2003, Alsip’s police, fire and municipal pension funds already faced a shortfall of **\$20.3 million**. That meant every Alsip household, on average, was on the hook for **\$2,682** in future taxes just to eliminate that shortfall.

Alsip 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	\$1.28 million	\$6.51 million	Up 5.1X
Share of city general budget for pensions	11.3%	22.4%	Up 2.0X

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

By 2019, the shortfall in Alsip’s police, fire and municipal pension funds totaled **\$67.2 million**. That means each Alsip household, on average, is now on the hook for **\$8,981** in debt.

Everyone loses under Alsip’s pension crisis:



Taxpayers are tapped out

Alsip residents are paying more and more into a broken system. City taxpayers in 2019 contributed 5.1 times more to pensions than in 2003, yet city debts are 3.3 times larger.



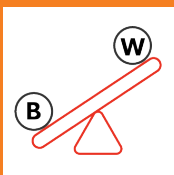
Pension costs are devouring the city’s budget

Alsip pension contributions have grown to consume 22.4% of the city’s budget, up from 11.3% in 2003. That’s crowded out spending on public safety, roads and other core services.



Alsip worker retirement security is collapsing

The health of Alsip’s local pension plans have worsened despite those increased taxpayer contributions. In 2003, the plans had 59.6% of the money they needed. By 2019, that had dropped to just 46.8%.



Alsip’s crisis will only get worse

Alsip has fewer active government workers available to help pay for a growing number of retirees. In 2003, there were 1.73 active workers for every pensioner. By 2019, there were 0.92 active workers per pensioner.

2019 GRADE



2003 GRADE



Alsip 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).*

Alsip received an "F" grade in 2019. The city's total score dropped from 66 in 2003 to 42 in 2019, a decline of 24 points.

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

Alsip Key Facts		
City demographics	2000	2019
Population	19,725	19,022
Households	7,577	7,488
Median household income	\$47,963	\$63,312
City budget	2003	2019
General revenues	\$11,362,412	\$29,090,428
Total revenues	\$28,704,324	\$61,901,012
Total property taxes	\$5,561,629	\$13,856,936
Pension health (police, fire & IMRF)	2003	2019
Total accrued liabilities (benefits owed)	\$50,267,436	\$126,406,178
Total pension assets	\$29,949,173	\$59,156,882
Funded ratio	59.6%	46.8%
Total pension shortfall	\$20,318,263	\$67,249,296
Per household	\$2,682	\$8,981
Active public safety workers	83	78
Public safety pension beneficiaries	48	85
City pension contributions	2003	2019
City contributions	\$1,281,208	\$6,510,963
Per household	\$169	\$870
Percentage of city's general budget	11.3%	22.4%
Employees' contributions	\$506,290	\$789,671

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

Alsip Score				
Metric	2003	2019	2003	2019
1. Police pension funded ratio	49.6%	35.6%	4	3
2. Firefighter pension funded ratio	59.8%	55.9%	5	5
3. Municipal (IMRF) pension funded ratio	102.0%	81.1%	10	8
4. City pension debts per household as a percentage of median household income	5.6%	14.2%	7	2
5. City contributions per household as a percentage of median household income	0.35%	1.37%	8	3
6. City contributions as a percentage of total budget	4.5%	10.5%	7	1
7. Ratio of city contributions to employee contributions	2.53	8.25	6	1
8. Percentage surplus/shortfall in actuarially-required city contribution (Police & Fire only)	-28.8%	33.5%	4	10
9. Asset-to-payout ratio (Police & Fire only)	14.7	9.7	7	5
10. Worker-to-beneficiary ratio (Police & Fire only)	1.73	0.92	8	4
Total score			66	42
Grade			D	F

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

Communities in crisis: More than half of Illinois cities get "F" grades for local pensions

