

COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS

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

Lagrange

2019 Grade: F

In 2003, Lagrange’s police, fire and municipal pension funds already faced a shortfall of **\$14.0 million**. That meant every Lagrange household, on average, was on the hook for **\$2,474** in future taxes just to eliminate that shortfall.

Lagrange 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	\$0.71 million	\$3.24 million	Up 4.6X
Share of city general budget for pensions	8.0%	20.2%	Up 2.5X

Despite the ramp-up in city payments over those 16 years, Lagrange’s pension debts didn’t decrease. Instead, they jumped by 2.7 times!

By 2019, the shortfall in Lagrange’s police, fire and municipal pension funds totaled **\$38.1 million**. That means each Lagrange household, on average, is now on the hook for **\$7,128** in debt.

Everyone loses under Lagrange’s pension crisis:



Taxpayers are tapped out

Lagrange residents are paying more and more into a broken system. City taxpayers in 2019 contributed 4.6 times more to pensions than in 2003, yet city debts are 2.7 times larger.



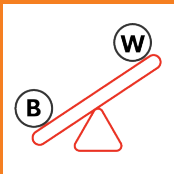
Pension costs are devouring the city’s budget

Lagrange pension contributions have grown to consume 20.2% of the city’s budget, up from 8.0% in 2003. That’s crowded out spending on public safety, roads and other core services.



Lagrange worker retirement security is collapsing

The health of Lagrange’s local pension plans have worsened despite those increased taxpayer contributions. In 2003, the plans had 66.1% of the money they needed. By 2019, that had dropped to just 53.5%.



Lagrange’s crisis will only get worse

Lagrange has fewer active government workers available to help pay for a growing number of retirees. In 2003, there were 0.85 active workers for every pensioner. By 2019, there were 0.74 active workers per pensioner.

2019 GRADE



2003 GRADE



Lagrange 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).*

Lagrange received an "F" grade in 2019. The city's total score dropped from 65 in 2003 to 53 in 2019, a decline of 12 points.

Lagrange 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

Lagrange Key Facts		
City demographics	2000	2019
Population	15,608	15,545
Households	5,660	5,352
Median household income	\$80,342	\$123,965
City budget	2003	2019
General revenues	\$8,860,885	\$16,023,603
Total revenues	\$18,245,181	\$31,096,602
Total property taxes	\$7,299,211	\$9,920,833
Pension health (police, fire & IMRF)	2003	2019
Total accrued liabilities (benefits owed)	\$41,285,423	\$82,001,298
Total pension assets	\$27,282,386	\$43,852,395
Funded ratio	66.1%	53.5%
Total pension shortfall	\$14,003,037	\$38,148,903
Per household	\$2,474	\$7,128
Active public safety workers	45	46
Public safety pension beneficiaries	53	62
City pension contributions	2003	2019
City contributions	\$711,091	\$3,244,740
Per household	\$126	\$606
Percentage of city's general budget	8.0%	20.2%
Employees' contributions	\$385,524	\$726,822

Lagrange Score				
Metric	2003	2019	2003	2019
1. Police pension funded ratio	60.9%	49.0%	6	4
2. Firefighter pension funded ratio	53.4%	45.7%	5	4
3. Municipal (IMRF) pension funded ratio	97.9%	80.9%	9	8
4. City pension debts per household as a percentage of median household income	3.1%	5.7%	8	7
5. City contributions per household as a percentage of median household income	0.16%	0.49%	9	8
6. City contributions as a percentage of total budget	3.9%	10.4%	8	1
7. Ratio of city contributions to employee contributions	1.84	4.46	8	4
8. Percentage surplus/shortfall in actuarially-required city contribution (Police & Fire only)	-41.2%	-0.3%	1	9
9. Asset-to-payout ratio (Police & Fire only)	13.1	9.2	7	5
10. Worker-to-beneficiary ratio (Police & Fire only)	0.85	0.74	4	3
Total score			65	53
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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