

CEO

Chief Executive Office
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

Sheriff's Department Budget Fact Sheet Updated March 21, 2022

It is up to Sheriff Alex Villanueva to manage the LASD budget.

The Sheriff—not the Board of Supervisors or the County's Chief Executive Office—has the responsibility and authority to decide how he uses his Department's \$3.6 billion budget. Making the tough fiscal, personnel and programmatic decisions are part of the job—as they are for every County department head.

The Board has not “defunded” the Sheriff's Department.

In fact, the Department's total budget increased from 2020-21 (\$3.54 billion) to 2021-22 (\$3.61 billion).

There have been NO layoffs in the Sheriff's Department.

When the County was forced to tighten its overall spending for the 2020-21 fiscal year due to the severe economic decline caused by the COVID-19 public health crisis, all County general funded departments, including LASD, were asked to institute an 8% spending cut. Instead of submitting a viable plan of thoughtful cuts, the Sheriff offered a proposal that included laying off as many as 888 deputies. The Chief Executive Office ultimately identified funding to avoid any layoffs at all.

The Sheriff continues to provide just one side of the story.

In February, the Chief Executive Office also approved one 40-person Custody Assistant academy class for March or April and one Deputy academy class, as well as the hiring of an additional 20 new deputy trainees and two executive promotions. Justifying additional Academy classes would require the Sheriff to complete an overall strategy for retaining current employees and recruiting to fit today's job market—a plan the Chief Executive Office has requested. This requires focus and vision rather than soundbites and social media posts.

The Sheriff's Department has hired or promoted more than 1,900 new employees under the County's “hiring freeze.”

Despite the sheriff's politically-charged rhetoric, LASD is in no way prohibited from filling critical positions. Seeking to contain LASD deficit spending, the Board adopted motions on October 1, 2019 and April 28, 2020, requiring that the Sheriff justify new hires. Since October 2019, at least 1,234 sworn promotions/new hires and 718 non-sworn personnel

have been approved. In addition, 1,000 non-sworn reserve officers were approved to be hired earlier in 2022.

The Sheriff has not been prevented from hiring more deputies to serve Contract Cities. A process is in place for the Sheriff to request approval to fill the vacancies in his Department, including for services to contract cities. When asked to suggest possible cuts for fiscal year 2020-21, the Sheriff recommended cutting patrols in unincorporated areas and eliminating units like the Special Victims, Major Crime and Parks Bureaus. This amounted to more of a threat than useful set of recommendations, a pattern repeated in his recent remarks to the Norwalk City Council about his inability to provide more patrols.

New LASD hiring has been approved despite a drop in the jail population.

The jail population has decreased as a result of precautions taken against COVID-19 early in the pandemic and criminal justice reforms. Better managing and allocating his workforce is part of the work the Sheriff and his team need to do to further bring down overtime spending and better serve both the public and his workforce.

LASD is projecting a \$111 million budget deficit this year, but the Sheriff has failed to offer a concrete plan for how to live within the Department's means.

Like all department heads, the Sheriff is expected to live within his department's budget. Though LASD was operating in the red before the Sheriff took office, he has shown little ability to course correct and closed FY 19-20 with an adjusted deficit of \$34.9 million. The CEO's budget team is projecting a deficit of between \$80 million to \$111 million for the twelve months ending June 30, 2022.

The Department's 2020-21 budget surplus was supported by one-time funding that cannot be duplicated.

The Department finally ended last year in the black and made some progress in reducing overtime. However, the strategies were primarily one-time measures that cannot be relied on to keep the Sheriff's Department budget balanced.

The Sheriff is responsible for determining which public safety programs best serve County residents and which should be eliminated.

As an elected official, the Sheriff has broad authority to fund programs within his Department as he sees fit. Final operational decisions lie with the Sheriff, and the Chief Executive Office and Board have little interest in or authority to micromanage those choices. The Department alone made the decision to shut down its online crime reporting system, for example, and has 100% control over whether to maintain or eliminate the Cargo CATS Unit.

If public safety is at risk, the Board of Supervisors has shown its readiness to move immediately to find funding to address public concerns.

Just one example of this is the Board's unanimous approval for allocating \$2.4 million in October for enforcement against water theft and illegal cannabis grows in the Antelope

Valley and \$2.5 million to a LASD taskforce to combat illegal dispensaries in the unincorporated areas as well as illegal grows. However, more staffing or more money cannot be used to solve every problem—this approach would leave the County unable to balance its budget.

Claims about cuts to the LASD services and supply budget are misleading.

Though the Board has held \$143 million in reserve to try and help manage expenditures, the Board has transferred that same amount to the Department for its use annually since 2019.

The Department has yet to produce a concrete, data-driven spending plan for public safety.

The Chief Executive Office has repeatedly asked the Sheriff to develop a long-term plan for addressing the LASD budget deficit and continues to look for opportunities to help the Department better spend the \$3.6 billion at its disposal. To date, after repeated requests and numerous meetings, the Department has failed to do the in-depth analysis necessary to safeguard limited resources and ensure public safety.

Los Angeles County does not have a stockpile of unallocated funds.

Like any responsible financial steward, LA County sometimes closes out the year with some money unspent. Money that was not spent during the 2020-21 budget cycle—primarily related to big capital projects that take longer to get underway—has either been carried over to the next fiscal year for the original capital project or fully allocated to other programs and services during the 2021-22 budget process. That includes unspent dollars provided as additional funding for LASD.

It's premature to speculate about what Metro's new contract for public safety services will include.

As for the LASD contract with Metro, Metro will soon be issuing a new request for proposals for public safety services. The scope of that contract has not yet been defined and so any speculation by LASD about the contract's requirements is premature. Both the Metro board and the County Board of Supervisors are committed to rider safety.

Rider safety includes public health concerns.

LASD's most immediate concern should be to ensure that deputies working in public transit are not actively putting riders at risk of infection from COVID-19. As of July 2022, every LASD deputy working the Metro system will need to be vaccinated, and LASD has lagged behind other County departments in its vaccination rates. By refusing to enforce the County's vaccination policy, LASD is putting all riders of the system at risk of contracting COVID-19.