

Local Criminal Justice Data: Part II in a Series
Local Annual Budget Distribution
Working Paper 2019-06



Jessica Burt
Research Assistant
jmb2808@rit.edu

Janelle Duda-Banwar, Ph.D.
Senior Researcher
jmdgcj@rit.edu

John Klofas, Ph.D.
Director-Emeritus
jmkgcj@rit.edu

Irshad Altheimer, Ph.D.
Director of Center for Public Safety Initiatives
ixagcj@rit.edu

<https://www.rit.edu/cla/criminaljustice/cpsi/work>

Introduction

There are many questions of interest concerning the local criminal justice system. Conversations on various topics, however, are often stymied by the lack of available data on the criminal justice system. Specific information on the criminal justice system is often unknown to members of the community, but is essential for active engagement in a democracy. This paper works to provide part of this essential data to members of the community in an effective and simple manner. This paper is the second in a series on the topic of local criminal justice system data. The purpose of this working paper series is to effectively and clearly provide essential criminal justice data to members of the community. For a complete collection of the data please visit our story map at: <https://arcg.is/OSPzX5>.

This paper is focused on the distribution of local annual budgets. This includes the amount of funding that Monroe County and the City of Rochester distribute to criminal justice and which departments receive funding. The amount of money spent on criminal justice is often a talking point with community members. Issues related to funding are often raised when discussing funding and its relationship to crime reduction. This information is also essential for taxpayers in the local community to have a deeper understanding of the allocation of government resources. As individual departmental budgets increase, the total County and City budget increase as well, causing potential increases in taxes. The relationship between budgets and taxes reveals the importance of this information being presented to members of the community in a clear and simple manner.

Research Questions

This paper works to answer the questions: “What percentage of the Monroe County budget is distributed to criminal justice departments?” and “What percentage of the City of Rochester budget is distributed to criminal justice departments?”

Methodology

The two areas of focus for this data collection are Monroe County and the City of Rochester. Although Rochester is a city in Monroe County, the City of Rochester Budget is exclusive to that of Monroe County. The Monroe County and City of Rochester Budgets are both available to the public on their respective websites and are updated annually. They are both full length documents with extensive information. For this analysis, the City of Rochester Adopted Budget for 2017-2018 and the Monroe County Adopted Budget for 2018 were used. From these budget documents, the total budget for the area and the total budget for all criminal justice related departments was collected. For Monroe County, the criminal justice related departments included are the Public Defender’s Office, Public Safety, the District Attorney’s Office and the Sheriff’s Office. The Public Safety department includes agencies such as Probation, the 911 Dispatch Center, and the Monroe Crime Analysis Center. For the City of Rochester, the only department related to criminal justice was the Rochester Police Department.

The percent of the total budget that each department received as well as the percent of the budget that criminal justice related departments received in total was calculated. The total criminal justice budget was calculated by summing the budgets of the criminal justice related departments. The total criminal justice budget was subtracted from the total Monroe County budget to calculate the total budget that was distributed to non-criminal justice departments. The Rochester Police Department budget was subtracted from the total City of Rochester budget to

calculate the total budget for all other non-criminal justice related departments. The percent of the total budget that the police department encompassed was calculated as well as the percent of the total budget that is distributed to other departments.

Data

The data presented in Table 1 display the percentage of the total Monroe County budget that was allocated to criminal justice departments. In total, the County spent almost 1.2 billion dollars (\$1,198,934,207) in 2018. Of that, almost 250 million dollars (21%) was spent on criminal justice. Table 2 displays the distribution of the total criminal justice budget. In other words, Table 1 shows that 21% of the total budget was distributed to criminal justice departments and Table 2 displays the departmental distribution of that 21%.

The Sheriff's Office received the most funding, with 60.42% of the total criminal justice budget. Public Safety received 30.16% of the budget, including many departments such as, Probation, the 911 Dispatch Center and the Monroe Crime Analysis Center. Although it appears to have the second largest percentage of the budget, this department is divided into many smaller agencies. Of interesting note is that the District Attorney's Office receives almost twice as much as the Public Defender's Office, 6.19% and 3.23% of the budget, respectively. This distribution represents the emphasis that the County puts on the prosecution of crimes versus the defense of criminal defendants.

Space Intentionally Left Blank

Table 1: Local Monroe County Budget Distribution for 2018

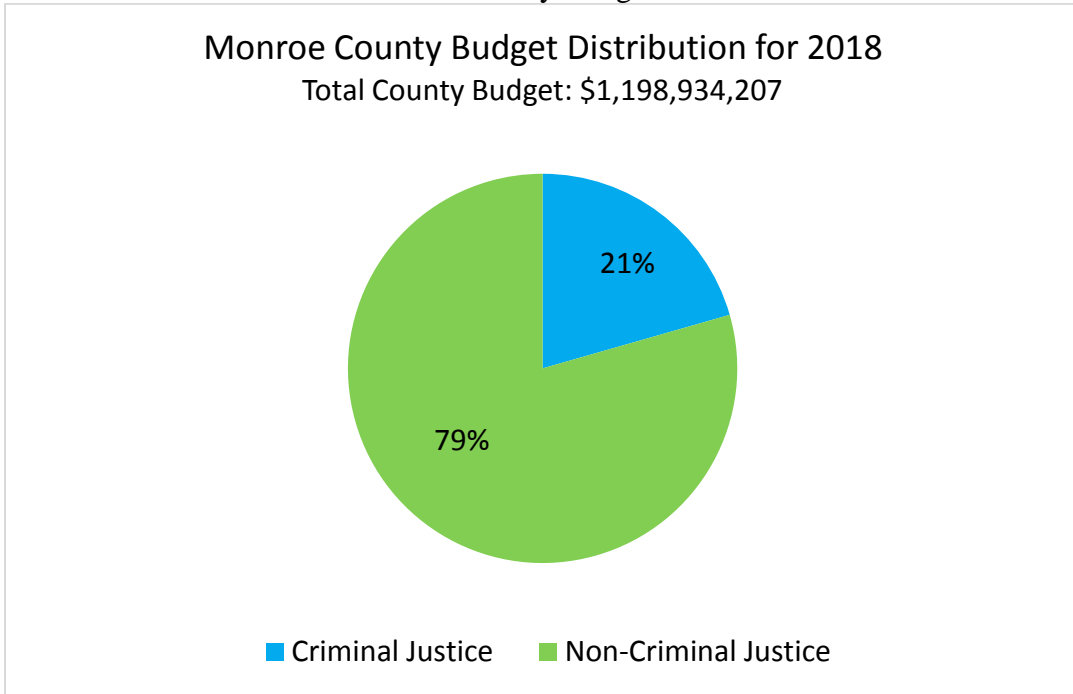


Table 2: Monroe County Criminal Justice Department Budget Distribution for 2018

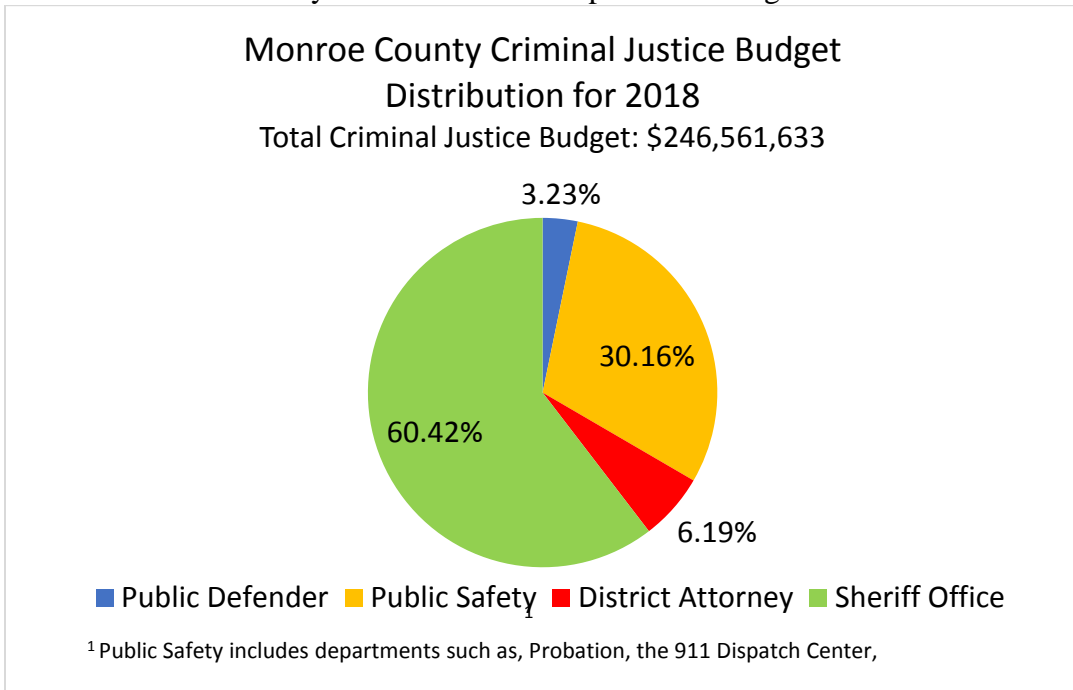
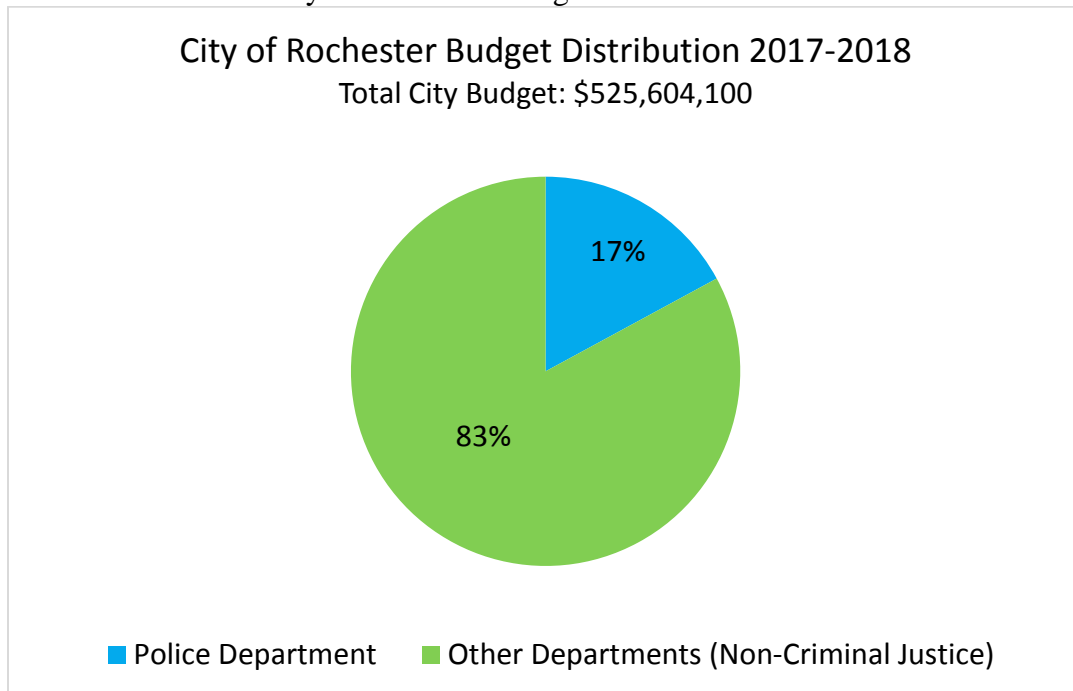


Table 3 displays the percent of the total City of Rochester budget that is distributed to the police department. It is interesting to note that although the only department related to criminal justice is the police department, a similar percent of the total budget was distributed to criminal justice across both the City (17%) and the County (21%). This suggests that both the City and County place comparable value on the importance of criminal justice.

It is important when comparing the budget for criminal justice departments to mention the number of crimes present in each of those areas. The total number of serious offenses reported by the Rochester Police Department for 2017 was 9,911. The total number of serious offenses reported by the Monroe County Sheriff's Office for 2017 was 3,022. These serious offenses included all part I offenses encompassing both property and violent crime. It is important to note that despite this difference, the County has additional responsibilities, such as supervisions of persons on probation.

Table 3: City of Rochester Budget Distribution for 2017-2018



Limitations

One limitation of these findings is the lack of information on outside funding that departments receive. Often departments such as the Rochester Police Department or Sheriff's Office receive funding that is not displayed in the annual budget. An example of this type of outside funding is consistent grant funding from federal or New York State sources, such as the Project Safe Neighborhoods Grant which is awarded annually to law enforcement agencies across the country. This funding is not directly accounted for as the budget information was solely collected from the adopted budgets for the County and City, respectively.

A second limitation involves the data collection process. The criminal justice departments examined were selected based on the researchers' assessment of the extent that each department focused on crime. Therefore, law offices for the City of Rochester and the County that did not deal with crime directly were not included. The budget for City and County departments are divided into mandated and non-mandated budgets. Mandated is defined as the portion of the budget that supports services required by state law whereas the non-mandated budget funds services that the state does not require. The total budget, regardless of its state requirements, were used for this data set. Accounting for the percent of the budget that is non-mandated and its distribution in terms of type and expenditure in departments may change the analysis of the data presented. Interestingly, mandated and non-mandated budgets are not consistent per department and some budgets are not mandated at all.

An additional limitation is the depth of departmental budget information for these data. The data presented in this paper provide surface level information regarding the budget distribution. Further provided in each budget is the dispersion of funding for each department. For example, the type and nature of expenditures for the Rochester Police Department range

from services provided to personnel salaries. An in-depth chart detailing where the funding for each department is dispersed would allow for discussion about if it is being utilized properly for the benefit of the community.

Conclusion

One important conclusion from collecting these data is that this information is publicly available to members of the community. Departments are transparent about budget information such as where their money is being spent, how much they request, and how much they receive. However, this information is presented in a lengthy document which takes time to analyze and understand. Visual distribution of the budget data, like that provided in this paper, allows members of the community to understand how their money is being spent and which departments local representatives are placing emphasis on. This understanding allows for crucial discussions about crime and its relation to departmental funding. The amount of crime occurring in a community is important to community members. The amount of funding an agency receives determines the level of crime fighting and the extent that tools for decreasing crime can be used.

Further research could be done to determine the distribution of the funding that supports these budgets to understand where a majority of the funding for these departments comes from, especially with knowledge that there is outside funding for many departments. It would be interesting to evaluate the impact that budgets have on departmental decisions such as, allegations against police for use of force, technological advancements in policing, and use of resources.

For a complete collection of the data reviewed, visit our story map at: <https://arcg.is/OSPzX5>.