

The N.Y.P.D. Spends \$6 Billion a Year. Proposals to Defund It Want to Cut \$1 Billion.

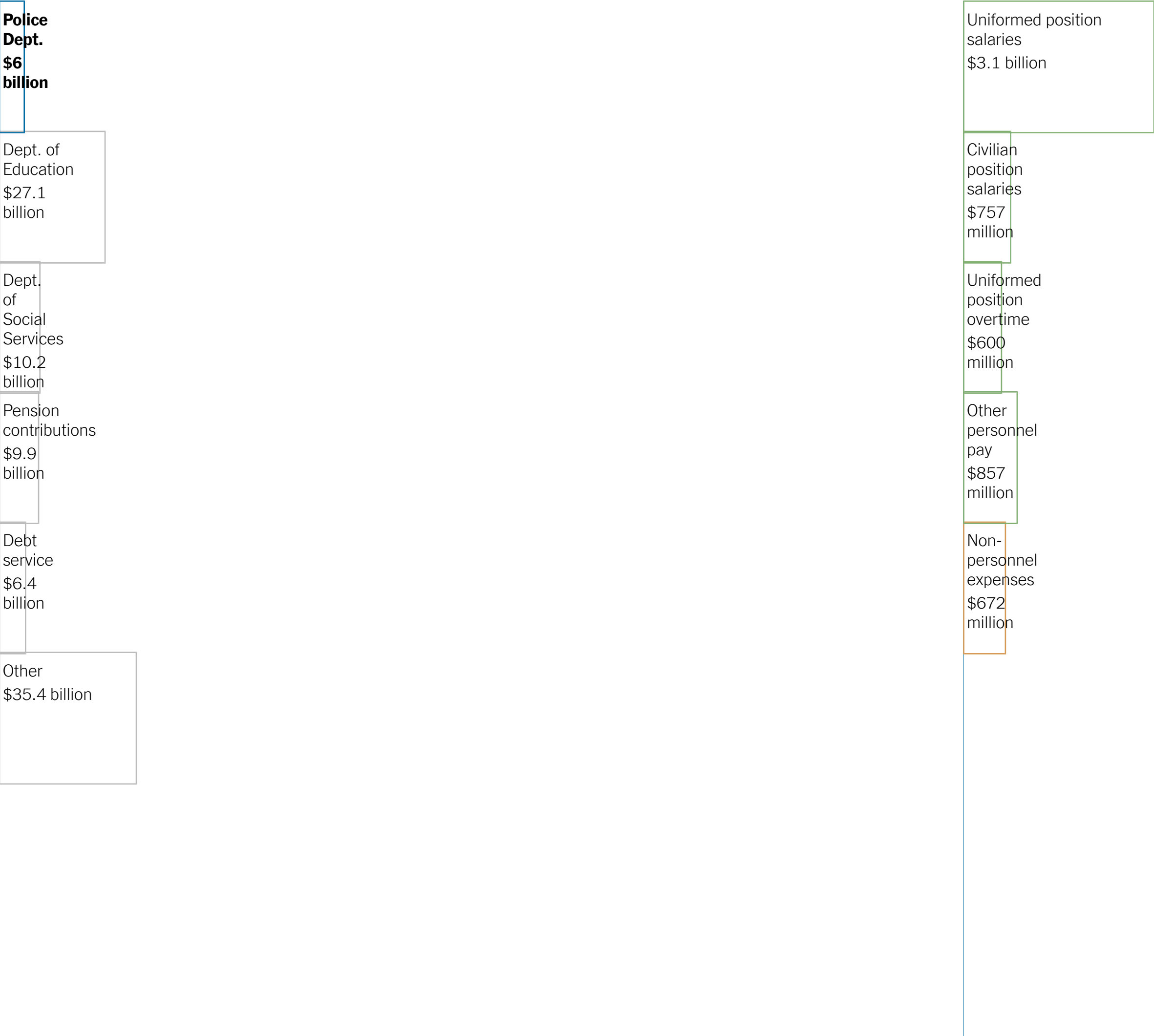
By Ella Koeze and Denise Lu June 20, 2020

As calls to defund the police grow around the country, public officials and advocacy groups in recent weeks have proposed major cuts to the New York City Police Department, the nation’s largest and most expensive force.

The various proposals call for removing millions, if not more, from the Police Department’s budget starting July 1, the beginning of the next fiscal year. None, however, move to completely defund the department, whose spending has steadily risen each year.

In its 2019 fiscal year, the Police Department spent nearly \$6 billion, which amounted to about 6 percent of the city’s \$95 billion total spending.

New York City’s total spending in the 2019 fiscal year



Police Dept. \$6 billion
Dept. of Education \$27.1 billion
Dept. of Social Services \$10.2 billion
Pension contributions \$9.9 billion
Debt service \$6.4 billion
Other \$35.4 billion

City of Portland
Office of Financial Management
\$800 million

Note: The fiscal year ended on June 30, 2019.

Nearly 90 percent of the department’s spending went toward **paying personnel**, including salaries, overtime and other benefits like shift differentials for more than 36,000 uniformed and 15,000 civilian positions. The average base pay for officers was nearly \$69,000, but with overtime and additional pay, they could take home more than \$90,000. For some higher ranks, total pay reached more than \$200,000.

The rest of the spending went to **other expenses** like supplies and contractual services.

If a proposal is approved that cuts the department’s budget substantially, then regardless of where such cuts appear, they will almost certainly require significantly reducing the number of officers and staff on payroll.

Among the proposals, a plan from the city comptroller spreads smaller cuts to the department over four years. A coalition within the City Council earlier this month proposed an unprecedented \$1 billion cut from the budget in the 2021 fiscal year. And on Tuesday, the Communities United for Police Reform, an advocacy group, went further, calling for cuts of more than \$1 billion. All seek to redirect funds to various community initiatives.

Three proposals to cut N.Y.P.D. spending

City comptroller \$155 million cut per year for four years



\$112 million – Suspend hiring of new police classes to reduce number of uniformed officers by 3 percent.

\$26 million – Cut uniformed overtime by 5 percent.

\$17 million – Cut non-personnel expenses by 4 percent.

City Council \$1 billion cut for 2021 fiscal year



\$1 billion – The council has not specified cuts, but plans to shift responsibilities away from the N.Y.P.D., cut overtime and reduce uniformed officers by 2,000 (about 5 percent) by suspending hiring of a new police class.

Advocacy group More than \$1 billion cut for 2021 fiscal year



\$397 million – Cut overtime, public relations and surveillance technology use, and cap uniformed officers to budgeted amount.

\$287 million – Fire abusive officers, cut modified duty and deduct settlement payouts from the operating budget as a punitive measure.

\$263 million – Freeze new hires, cancel new cadet classes and cancel cadet training program.

\$219 million – Reduce uniformed officers by about 5 percent, to 2014 levels.

\$96 million – Remove officers from schools, transit systems, homeless outreach and mental health response programs.

The deadline for the City Council to approve the city’s 2021 fiscal year budget is July 1.

In the current fiscal year, the Police Department had a \$5.6 billion budget, the same amount that the City Council earlier this year had anticipated would be set aside for 2021.

Neither the City Council nor Mayor Bill de Blasio has specified exactly which parts of the police budget might see cuts. Though the mayor has pledged to cut funding, his press secretary indicated that he rejected the City Council’s proposal to slash \$1 billion.

Doug Turetsky, the chief of staff and communications director in the city’s Independent Budget Office, said it would take a lot of layoffs to reach that amount in cuts, possibly more than would be politically feasible. “To take a billion off, I mean, that’s a lot. Obviously we’re in a pretty unique political time right now,” Mr. Turetsky said. “You really only get to that level by cutting a fair number of cops. I don’t know if it’s going to happen.”

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Nationwide calls for defunding police forces have taken on added intensity in recent weeks in the wake of white officers killing black men, including George Floyd in Minneapolis and Rayshard Brooks in Atlanta. Defunding has become a rallying cry at many of the protests over racial inequality and police brutality that have followed the killings.

Activists and reformers argue that cutting funds and staff from police departments would allow for other kinds of programs to support safety and well-being. “There’s a move to not just defund and dismantle the police but to pour those resources back into communities that need more support and more opportunities,” said Nancy La Vigne, an expert in criminal justice policy at the Urban Institute’s Justice Policy Center.

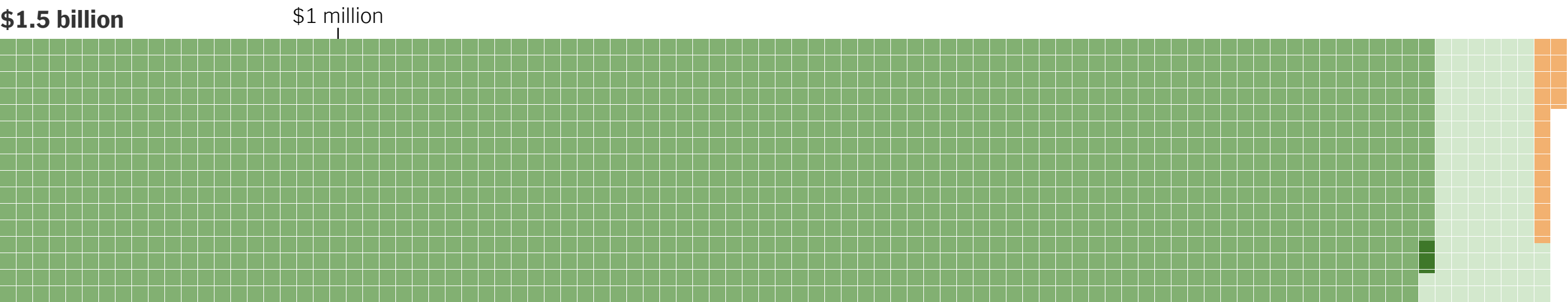
Not everyone is as optimistic. Maria Haberfeld, a professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice who studies law enforcement, said that the current proposals for New York do not have enough expert input. In her view, fewer officers would result in slower response times to violent crime, while not addressing underlying issues. “These proposals are utopian at best, if I want to be positive about it, and if I want to be more negative, are just ridiculous,” she said.

The Police Department’s spending is broken into 16 program areas in the city’s financial reports. In 15 out of the 16, costs related to personnel — such as salary, overtime and benefits — made up more than half of that area’s spending in 2019.

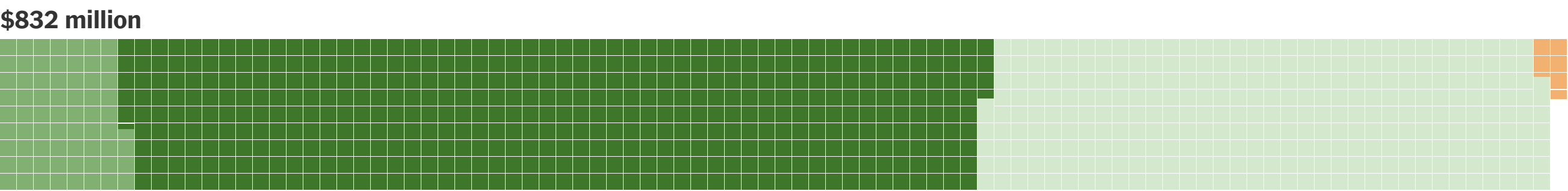
N.Y.P.D.’s operating expenses by program area (2019 fiscal year)

SALARY OVERTIME OTHER PAY AND BENEFITS NON-PERSONNEL EXPENSES

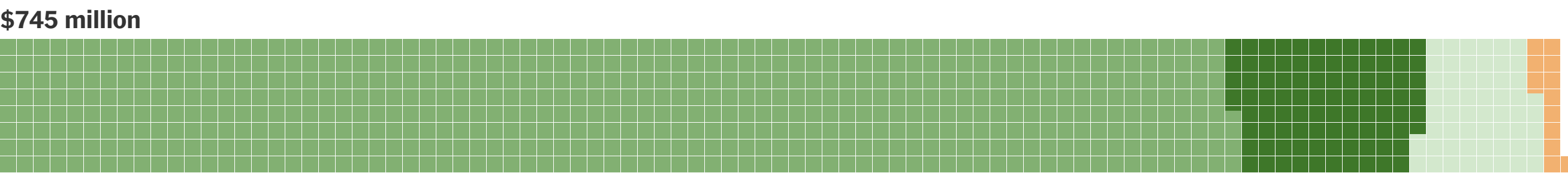
PATROL Responds to emergencies and conducts police officer patrols. Patrol was budgeted to have nearly 19,000 uniformed police officers, by far the most of any program area.



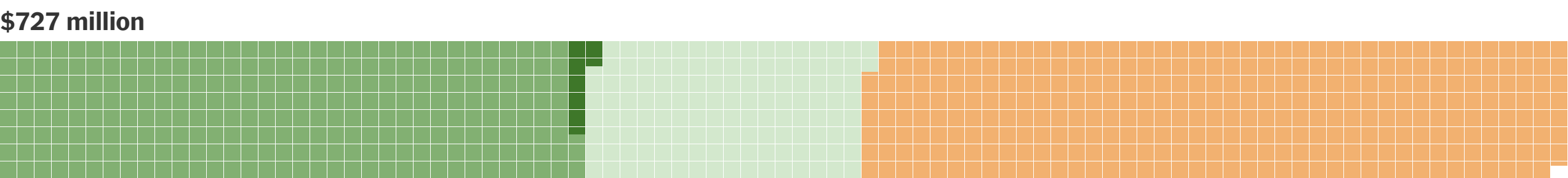
CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT Runs daily operations of the major field bureaus, including detective and patrol, plus other commands within the department. Spending includes overtime pay for those other bureaus and commands.



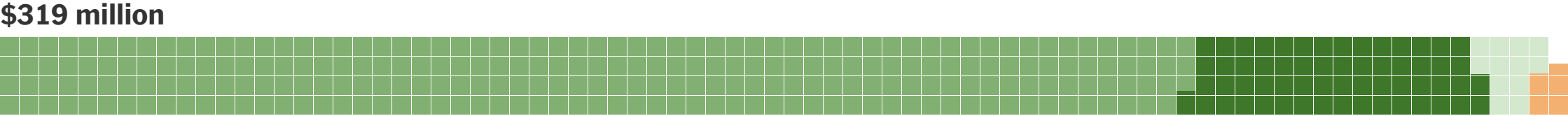
DETECTIVE BUREAU Conducts investigations of crimes, including homicide, robbery, missing persons and certain sex crimes.



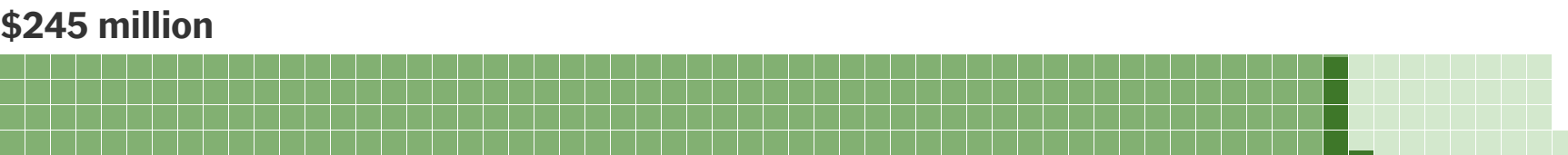
ADMINISTRATION Runs the administrative functions of the department. Includes the Office of the Police Commissioner and other executive staff.



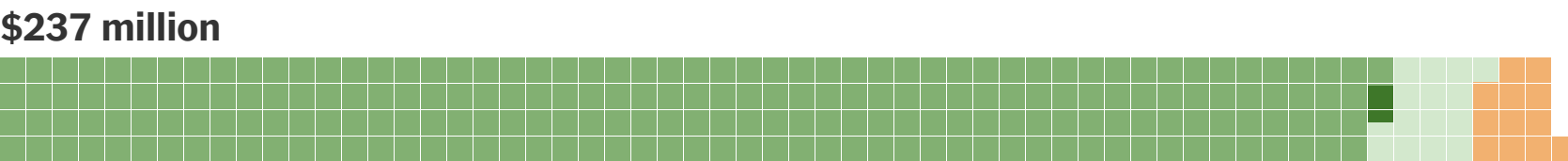
SCHOOL SAFETY Provides security in public schools with civilian school safety agents.



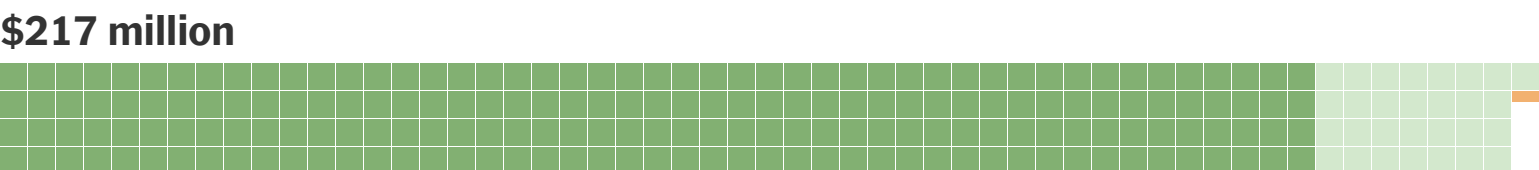
TRANSIT Manages policing in the New York City Transit System.



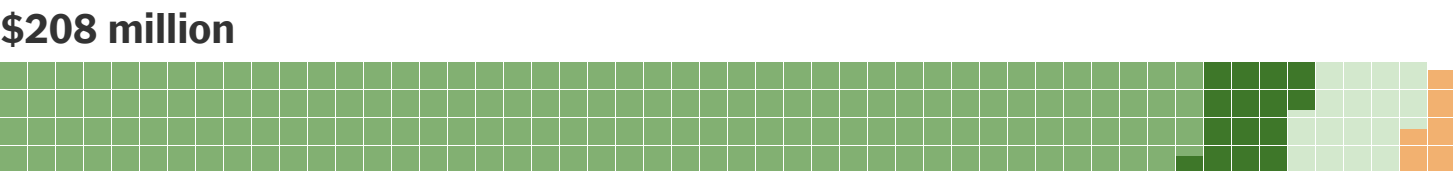
TRANSPORTATION Manages policing on roads and highways.



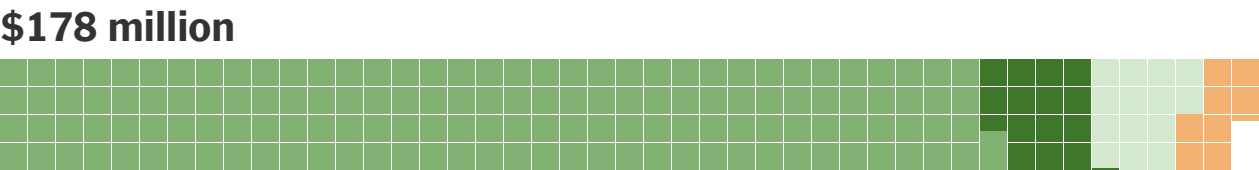
HOUSING BUREAU Manages policing in the city's public housing.



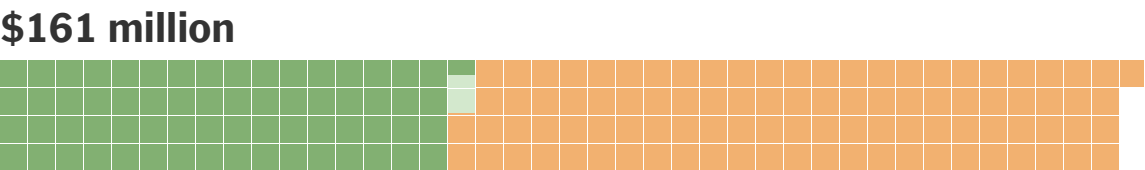
INTELLIGENCE AND COUNTERTERRORISM Monitors potential terrorist targets and includes the Critical Response Command, which can respond to terrorist attacks. Provides security for visiting officials.



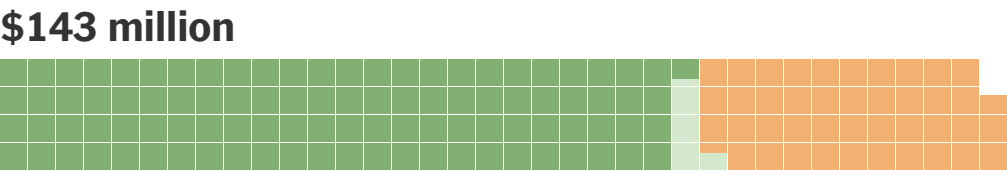
CITYWIDE OPERATIONS Manages special mobile units for police emergencies and unusual circumstances. In charge of aviation and navigable waters enforcement. Includes mounted units, canine units, scuba units and other special functions.



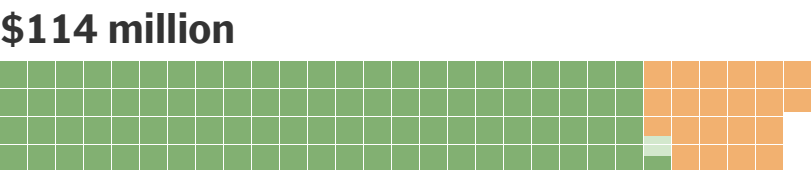
SUPPORT SERVICES Provides logistical support, including management of vehicles and evidence warehouses.



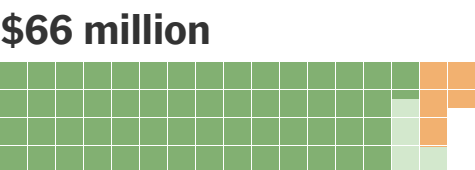
COMMUNICATIONS Manages emergency calls from the public for police, fire and medical assistance, as well as the N.Y.P.D.'s telephone and radio communications systems.



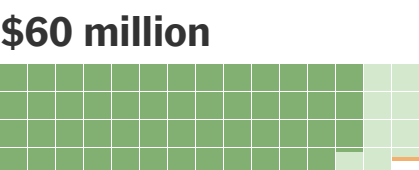
TRAINING Administers all formal personnel training for the department.



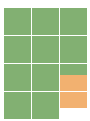
INTERNAL AFFAIRS Investigates corruption and misconduct within the department.



CRIMINAL JUSTICE BUREAU Acts as the liaison between the N.Y.P.D. and other agencies involved in criminal justice.



COMMUNITY AFFAIRS Encourages communication with the community and conducts community outreach programs in partnership with community members.



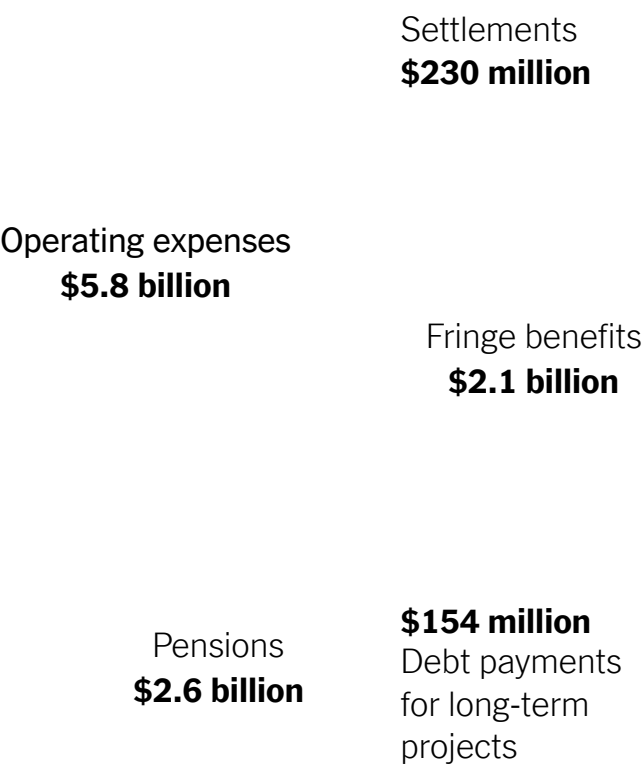
Note: The fiscal year ended on June 30, 2019.

In addition to these 16 program areas, spending reports specifically note two types of spending that are not funded by the city: \$159 million in federal grants for security and counter-terrorism, and \$49 million for overtime for events where the officers serve as security and crowd control forces who are reimbursed by state, federal or private entities. These expenses are part of the total money that the department spent in 2019, but they are recorded separately.

Ultimately, the Police Department’s operating expenses are a fraction of its total cost for the city — something the defunding proposals also seek to limit.

According to a report from the mayor’s office, the total amount the city spent on all police or police-related costs in 2018 was \$10.6 billion. That was on top of \$230 million in settlements the city also paid for personal injury and property damage claims against the Police Department, more than a fifth of the city’s total claim payouts for that year.

N.Y.P.D.-related expenses for 2018 fiscal year



Sources: Independent Budget Office of the City of New York (New York City expenditures), New York City Council (N.Y.P.D. expenditures).