

[About](#)[Retirement](#)[Health & Wellness](#)[Workforce](#)

For Immediate Release

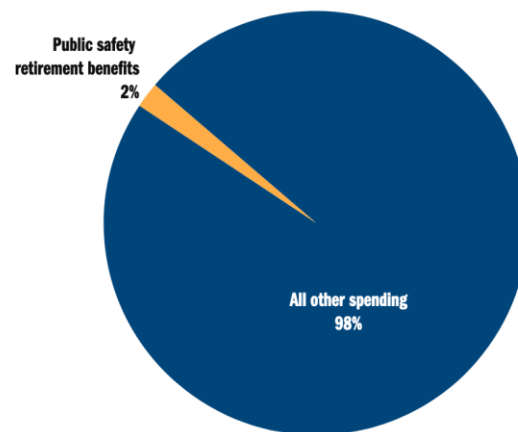
NEW RESEARCH EXAMINES RETIREMENT BENEFITS FOR POLICE AND FIRE PERSONNEL

Public Safety Retirement Benefits Account for Two Percent of Total City, County & School District Expenditures in 2016

WASHINGTON, D.C., February 11, 2020 – As local government officials continue to examine retirement benefits and costs, new research offers a national snapshot of police and fire pensions and retiree healthcare.

The findings are contained in a new analysis from the Center for State and Local Government Excellence ([SLGE](#)) and the Boston College Center for Retirement Research ([CRR](#)), **An Introduction to Police and Fire Pensions**. Download the research [here](#).

Figure 5. Local Government Contributions for Public Safety Retirement Benefits as Share of Total Local Government Expenditures, 2016



The research finds that as of 2016, public safety retirement benefits made up two percent of total city, county, and school district expenditures. The costs of pension benefits earned for police and fire personnel made up 15 percent of payroll, compared to eight percent for non-public safety local employees. For retiree healthcare, the annual cost made up about six percent of payroll, as compared to four percent for other employees. The majority of these higher pension costs is linked to the longer retirement periods.

The analysis also finds that pension benefits are about 25 percent higher for police and fire employees than for non-public safety local employees. This difference may exist to offset the lack of Social Security coverage for some public safety employees.

"Local governments across the country are continually analyzing the retirement benefits provided to the public safety workforce, along with the associated costs. This research provides government leaders and policymakers with a national snapshot so they can make informed decisions," said [Joshua Franzel, PhD](#), president and CEO of SLGE.

Conducted by CRR researchers [Jean-Pierre Aubry](#), associate director of state and local research and [Kevin Wandrei](#), research associate, the research assesses the size of public safety retiree benefit costs utilizing public safety employee data from the [Public Plans Database](#), the U.S. Census Bureau, and government actuarial valuations.

The Center for State and Local Government Excellence (SLGE) helps local and state governments become knowledgeable and competitive employers so they can attract and retain a talented and committed workforce. SLGE identifies leading practices and conducts research on public retirement plans, health care benefits, workforce demographics and skill set needs, and labor force development. SLGE brings state and local leaders together with respected researchers. Access all SLGE publications and sign up for its newsletter at [slge.org](#) and follow [@4govtexcellence](#) on Twitter.

Contact: Center for State and Local Government Excellence | 202.256.1445 | kkenneally@slge.org

###

Visit [slge.org](#), email info@slge.org, or

Follow us on Twitter [@4GovtExcellence](#)