



Massachusetts Office of
Campaign and Political Finance
2021 Mayoral Spending Study

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INTRODUCTION

This study examines campaign finance activity by candidates for mayor in municipal elections throughout Massachusetts in 2021. The Office of Campaign and Political Finance (OCPF) began issuing mayoral studies after the 1997 city elections. OCPF devotes considerable attention to municipal races, both by providing guidance and workshops to candidates and working closely with local election officials to help ensure compliance with the campaign finance law.

All mayoral candidates in the state e-filed campaign finance reports with OCPF in 2021.

The information contained in this study is based on data compiled from campaign finance reports filed by 66 mayoral candidates in the 34 cities that held mayoral elections in 2021. **The study is limited to those candidates who were on the ballot in the November elections in cities and does not include those who were eliminated in preliminary elections.**

Mayoral candidates have campaign finance accounts with banks that file reports directly with OCPF monthly.

Some mayoral candidates in this report may have also held another elected office, such as city councilor, and activity by their committees may also include activity related to that office.

OCPF has taken steps to ensure that the information contained in this report is accurate as of the time of its compilation. The information used for this report does not reflect amendments filed by candidates subsequent to the original filings. In addition, the information provided by candidates and committees may contain some minor balance inconsistencies.

OCPF is an independent state agency that administers Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 55, which provides for disclosure and regulation of campaign finance activity by candidates for state, county and municipal office.

June 2022

FINDINGS

Voters in 34 cities in Massachusetts went to the polls to elect their mayors in 2021. Twenty-eight of those 34 mayoral finals were contested.

Of the contested races, eight featured contests for open seats in Boston, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lynn, Newburyport, North Adams, Northampton and Somerville. Acting mayors were serving in Boston, Holyoke and Lawrence.¹

A total of 66 candidates were on the ballot in November, including 27 incumbents, five of whom were unopposed for re-election.

The mayors who won election in November 2021 were 23 returning incumbents and 11 newcomers. Three incumbents were defeated – Yvonne Spicer of Framingham, Sefatia Romeo Theken of Gloucester, and Donald Humason of Westfield. Kendras Vasquez of Lawrence was acting mayor and defeated.

The mayoral campaign finance activity in brief:

- The 66 mayoral candidates raised \$9,195,468 and spent \$10,043,240 in 2021, new records in both categories. The previous spending and fundraising records were set in 2013, when 63 mayoral candidates raised \$8,508,820 and spent \$8,839,321. In both 2013 and 2021, voters were filling open Boston mayoral seats.
- The median amount of fundraising by mayoral candidates in 2021 was \$43,888, up from \$36,614 in 2019. The median spending figure was \$37,277 in 2021, up from \$27,742 in 2019. (A median represents the exact midpoint of all 66 totals: half were higher and half were lower.). The fundraising median in recent mayoral studies have exceeded \$30,000.
- Fifteen candidates raised more than \$100,000 in 2021 (eight in 2019), and 16 spent more than \$100,000 (10 in 2019).
- The top spender in the 28 contested elections won 20 times. Eight candidates outspent their opponents and lost in Agawam, Amesbury, Framingham, Gloucester, Holyoke, Lynn, Medford and Newburyport.
- The race with the highest spending in 2021 was in Boston, where city councilors Michelle Wu and Annissa Essaibi George reported \$5,812,975 in expenditures. The most

¹ Mayors of two cities, Cambridge and Lowell, are elected as city councilors and are chosen by their fellow members to serve as mayor. Because those candidates never appear on the ballot for mayor, they are not included in this study. The mayor of Worcester is a city councilor-at-large but is also elected by voters separately as mayor. That race is included in this report.

expensive race ever was in 2013 in Boston, when former Mayor Martin Walsh and former Boston City Councilor John Connolly reported total expenditures of \$6,020,548.

- The top fundraiser among mayoral candidates in 2021 was Annissa Essaibi George of Boston, who raised \$2.7 million. The fundraising record was set in 2013 when Walsh raised \$3,004,406, surpassing the previous record of \$1,518,353 set in 2009 by former Boston Mayor Thomas Menino.
- Michelle Wu of Boston topped the spending list at \$3,047,256 in 2021, a new record. The previous record was set in 2013, when Martin Walsh reported \$3,015,209 in expenditures, breaking the record set in 2009 by Menino, who spent \$2.7 million.
- The average amount spent per vote by a candidate in 2021 was \$24.13, a new record. The previous record was set in 2013 when \$20.96 was spent per vote.

Comparisons to figures from other years are difficult, due to such factors as turnover of candidates and the fact that not all cities hold mayoral elections every two years.

A significant factor in any study of mayoral spending is whether Boston is included. The largest city in the state, Boston elects its mayor every four years and has generated the greatest amount of campaign finance activity by far each time it is included in this study.

Campaign Finance Activity by Mayoral Candidates in Municipal General Elections 1997-2021

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of candidates</i>	<i>Receipts</i>		<i>Expenditures</i>		
		<i>Total</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Average spent per vote</i>
1997	66	\$3,708,975	\$28,157	\$3,835,055	\$27,127	\$6.63
1999	69	\$3,198,736	\$32,289	\$3,284,268	\$23,388	\$7.44
2001	76	\$4,546,947	\$32,644	\$5,852,880	\$33,040	\$11.70
2003	70	\$3,587,911	\$31,586	\$3,949,051	\$27,672	\$11.03
2005	71	\$5,778,781	\$30,021	\$6,209,404	\$27,621	\$14.18
2007	69	\$3,577,819	\$29,122	\$3,914,462	\$25,339	\$12.23
2009	73	\$5,549,845	\$30,523	\$7,542,006	\$28,924	\$16.52
2011	71	\$3,386,403	\$30,218	\$3,549,375	\$27,469	\$11.01
2013	63	\$8,508,820	\$34,626	\$8,839,321	\$32,964	\$20.96
2015	61	\$3,692,411	\$34,895	\$3,786,953	\$30,782	\$12.93
2017	58	\$5,959,743	\$37,439	\$6,092,517	\$30,988	\$15.48
2019	64	\$3,351,435	\$36,614	\$3,591,596	\$27,742	\$12.07
2021	66	\$9,195,478	\$43,888	\$10,043,240	\$37,277	\$24.13

Data are for candidates in the general election only and does not include those who were eliminated in a preliminary election.

The findings in more detail:

Most Active Races

The greatest amount of spending for a mayoral race in 2021 was in Boston, where Michelle Wu defeated fellow city councilor Annessa Essabi George.

The record for a race was set in 2013 in Boston, when former Mayor Martin Walsh and former City Councilor John Connolly reported spending a total of \$6,020,548.

Highest Total Expenditures by Mayoral Race 2021

	City	Total Expenditures	Population*
1)	Boston	\$5,812,975	675,647
2)	Everett	\$491,509	49,075
3)	Lawrence	\$425,714	89,143
4)	Newton	\$421,784	88,923
5)	Lynn	\$353,680	101,253
6)	Somerville	\$279,376	81,045
7)	Framingham	\$212,624	72,362
8)	Fall River	\$183,492	94,000
9)	Salem	\$182,192	44,480
10)	Haverhill	\$170,120	67,787

* Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Gardner had the least amount of spending (\$12,928) in cities with contested mayoral elections.

Top Fundraisers

Annissa Essaibi George of Boston was the top fundraiser in 2021, reporting \$2,689,973.

The fundraising record was set in 2013 by former Boston Mayor Martin Walsh, who raised \$3,004,406. The previous fundraising record was \$1,518,353 set in 2009 by former Boston Mayor Thomas Menino.

Top Mayoral Campaign Fundraisers 2021

	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Receipts</i>	<i>Won/Lost</i>
1)	Annissa Essaibi George	Boston	\$2,689,973	Lost
2)	Michelle Wu	Boston	\$2,564,240	Won
3)	Carlo DeMaria (I)	Everett	\$355,129	Won
4)	Kendras Vasquez (I)*	Lawrence	\$205,327	Lost
5)	Darren Cyr	Lynn	\$200,651	Lost
6)	Brian DePena	Lawrence	\$176,237	Won
7)	Kimberley Driscoll (I)	Salem	\$162,341	Won
8)	Jared Nicholson	Lynn	\$153,272	Won
9)	Katjana Ballantyne	Somerville	\$143,318	Won
10)	Ruthanne Fuller (I)	Newton	\$140,777	Won

(I) = Incumbent *Acting mayor

The winning candidates who reported the least amount of money raised in 2021 were Mayor Edward Bettencourt of Peabody (\$1,660), and William Sapelli of Agawam (\$9,089).

Top Spenders

Michelle Wu of Boston topped the spending list at \$3,047,256 in 2021, a new record. The previous record was set in 2013 when former Boston Mayor Martin Walsh reported \$3,015,209 in expenditures, breaking the record set in 2009 by former Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, who spent \$2,676,589.

Top Expenditures by Mayoral Campaigns in 2021

	<i>Name</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Expenditures</i>	<i>Won/Lost</i>
1)	Michelle Wu	Boston	\$3,047,256	Won
2)	Annissa Essaibi George	Boston	\$2,765,719	Lost
3)	Carlo DeMaria (I)	Everett	\$424,639	Won
4)	Ruthanne Fuller (I)	Newton	\$351,064	Won
5)	Darren Cyr	Lynn	\$218,897	Lost
6)	Brian DePena	Lawrence	\$217,699	Won
7)	Kendrys Vasquez (I)*	Lawrence	\$208,015	Lost
8)	Katjana Ballantyne	Somerville	\$161,877	Won
9)	James Fiorentini (I)	Haverhill	\$150,274	Won
10)	Kimberley Driscoll (I)	Salem	\$145,742	Won

(I) = Incumbent (O) *Interim mayor

The opposed candidate who spent the least and won was Mayor William Sapelli of Agawam, who reported \$10,509 in expenditures.

Per-Vote Spending

Mayoral candidates on average spent \$24.13 per vote in 2021, a new record. The previous record, \$20.96, was set in 2013. The average was \$12.07 in 2019, and \$15.48 in 2017.

Incumbent Mayor Carlo DeMaria of Everett had the highest per-vote average in 2021, \$113, a new record. The previous record of \$89.33 was set in 2019 by former Fall River Mayor Jasiel Correia.

Per-Vote Expenditures by Mayoral Candidates 2021

	<i>Name</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Won/Lost</i>
1.	Carlo DeMaria (I)	Everett	\$113.00	Won
2.	Annissa Essaibi George (O)	Boston	\$54.36	Lost
3.	Darren Cyr (O)	Lynn	\$48.12	Lost
4.	James Kelcourse	Amesbury	\$40.09	Lost
5.	Nicole Marie LaChapelle (I)	Easthampton	\$38.48	Won
6.	Kendrys Vasquez (I)*	Lawrence	\$38.36	Lost
7.	Brian DePena	Lawrence	\$35.27	Won
8.	Michelle Wu (O)	Boston	\$33.40	Won
9.	Ruthanne Fuller (I)	Newton	\$32.17	Won
10.	Yvonne Spicer (I)	Framingham	\$31.31	Lost

(I) = Incumbent (O) = Open Seat *Acting Mayor

Five Winning and Opposed Candidates with the Lowest Per-Vote Average in 2021

William Sapelli, Agawam:	\$2.41
Joseph Petty, Worcester:	\$3.31
Gina-Louise Sciarra, Northampton:	\$4.62
Michael Nicholson, Gardner:	\$4.73
Michael Cahill, Beverly:	\$5.06

Boston recorded the greatest number of votes cast for mayor, 142,118 and Gardner recorded the fewest votes cast, 2,829, in a contested election in 2021.

Success Rate for Top Spenders

Traditionally, the candidate who spends the most money wins. The top spender in the 28 contested elections won 20 times, or 71 percent of the contests in 2021. Eight candidates outspent their opponents and lost in Agawam, Amesbury, Framingham, Gloucester, Holyoke, Lynn, Medford and Newburyport.

Past years:

- 2019: The top spender won 86 percent of the time (24 of 28)
- 2017: The top spender won 87 percent of the time (20 of 23)
- 2015: The top spender won 75 percent of the time (18 of 24)
- 2013: The top spender won 80 percent of the time (20 of 25)
- 2011: The top spender won 86 percent of the time (26 of 31)
- 2009: The top spender won 71 percent of the time (22 of 31)
- 2007: The top spender won 64 percent of the time (18 of 28)
- 2005: The top spender won 72 percent of the time (21 of 29)
- 2003: The top spender won 68 percent of the time (21 of 31)
- 2001: The top spender won 79 percent of the time (27 of 34)

Winners

Typically, winning candidates as a whole raise and spend more than those who lose. In 2021, the median expenditure total was \$47,167 for winners and \$27,815 for unsuccessful candidates. In 2019, the median expenditure total was \$38,180 for winners and \$19,414 for unsuccessful candidates.

Receipts and Expenditures by Winning and Losing Mayoral Candidates 2021

	Raised	Spent
<i>Winners (34)</i>		
Total	\$5,040,965	\$5,757,662
Average	\$148,263	\$169,343
<i>Unsuccessful (32)</i>		
Total	\$4,154,512	\$4,285,577
Average	\$129,828	\$133,924

Open seats

A total of eight contests featured open seats in Boston, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lynn, Newburyport, North Adams, Northampton and Somerville. Acting mayors were serving in Boston, Holyoke and Lawrence. The same number of open seats were available in 2019.

Incumbents

In 2021, 27 of the 66 candidates were incumbents. The mayors who won election in November 2021 were 23 returning incumbents and 11 newcomers. Three incumbents were defeated – Yvonne Spicer of Framingham, Sefatia Romeo Theken of Gloucester, and Donald Humason of Westfield. Kendras Vasquez of Lawrence was acting mayor and defeated.

Three incumbents were defeated in 2019 – Stephanie Muccini Burke of Medford, Jasiel Correia of Fall River and Kenneth Gray of Amesbury.

Mayoral Campaign Receipts and Expenditures by Incumbency 2021

	Raised	Spent
<i>Incumbents (27)</i>		
Totals	\$1,970,437	\$2,251,550
Average	\$72,979	\$83,390
<i>Non-Incumbents (39)</i>		
Totals	\$7,225,041	\$7,791,689
Average	\$190,132	\$205,044

Table of all candidates follows.

Table 1

Candidate	City	Incumbent	Receipts	Expenditures	Balance As of 12/31/21	Winner	Votes	Spending Average Per Vote
Alvanos, Charles	Mayoral, Agawam		\$23435.05	\$23407.11	\$27.94		1,002	\$23.36
Sapelli, William P.	Mayoral, Agawam	✓	\$9089.55	\$10509.94	\$6995.02	✓	4,359	\$2.41
Kelcourse, James	Mayoral, Amesbury		\$100,646.72	\$93,733.00	\$14,083.71		2,338	\$40.09
Gove, Cassandra M.	Mayoral, Amesbury	✓	\$36071.70	\$26929.75	\$10523.32	✓	3,645	\$7.39
McGhee, Todd	Mayoral, Attleboro		\$11958.65	\$12045.76	\$0.00		2,351	\$5.12
Heroux, Paul	Mayoral, Attleboro	✓	\$19,994.00	\$23,013.00	\$330.00	✓	4,493	\$5.12
Cahill, Michael P.	Mayoral, Beverly	✓	\$25618.73	\$29658.55	\$12521.16	✓	5,861	\$5.06
Ngotho, Esther	Mayoral, Beverly		\$5427.31	\$3730.70	\$2071.61		2,246	\$1.66
Essaibi George, Annissa	Mayoral, Boston		\$2689973.84	\$2765719.78	\$34657.64		50,879	\$54.36
Wu, Michelle	Mayoral, Boston		\$2564240.54	\$3047256.14	\$58444.49	✓	91,239	\$33.40
Sullivan, Robert	Mayoral, Brockton	✓	\$125670.06	\$111060.84	\$50163.60	✓	8,093	\$13.72
Cardoso, Albertina R.	Mayoral, Brockton		\$27567.93	\$27426.87	\$152.82		3,194	\$8.59
Vieau, John L.	Mayoral, Chicopee	✓	\$12384.21	\$7131.61	\$13071.91	✓	3,396	\$2.10
LaChapelle, Nicole Marie	Mayoral, Easthampton	✓	\$52608.00	\$105289.60	\$25302.41	✓	2,736	\$38.48
Berzins, Eric	Mayoral, Easthampton		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		350	0
Routhier, Keith	Mayoral, Easthampton		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		214	0
DeMaria, Carlo	Mayoral, Everett	✓	\$355129.99	\$424639.38	\$34529.67	✓	3,758	\$113.00
Capone, Fred	Mayoral, Everett		\$82063.52	\$66870.37	\$18950.31		3,548	\$18.85
Coogan, Paul E.	Mayoral, Fall River	✓	\$116805.27	\$113877.75	\$29787.38	✓	7,533	\$15.12
Ponte, Clifford	Mayoral, Fall River		\$63594.37	\$69615.98	\$2797.21		4,654	\$14.96
DiNatale, Stephen Louis	Mayoral, Fitchburg	✓	\$22579.30	\$17244.12	\$38993.05	✓	2,553	\$6.75
Cordio, Andrew	Mayoral, Fitchburg		\$3160.30	\$884.32	\$2275.98		1,026	\$0.86
Spicer, Yvonne M.	Mayoral, Framingham	✓	\$104440.62	\$122393.28	\$9470.31		3,909	\$31.31
Sisitsky, Charlie	Mayoral, Framingham		\$92988.78	\$90231.35	\$2757.43	✓	8,283	\$10.89
Nicholson, Michael J.	Mayoral, Gardner	✓	\$16422.71	\$10668.88	\$6138.60	✓	2,254	\$4.73
Sargent, Peter	Mayoral, Gardner		\$2260.00	\$2260.00	\$0.00		575	\$3.93
Verga, Gregory	Mayoral, Gloucester		\$69380.63	\$67653.76	\$11838.63	✓	5,829	\$11.61
Romeo Theken, Sefatia A.	Mayoral, Gloucester	✓	\$40866.52	\$80178.13	\$2242.44		4,047	\$19.81
Fiorentini, James	Mayoral, Haverhill	✓	\$94520.76	\$150274.02	\$34780.84	✓	5,643	\$26.63
LePage, Colin	Mayoral, Haverhill		\$17974.14	\$19846.73	\$1131.31		4,790	\$4.14
Sullivan, Michael	Mayoral, Holyoke		\$76901.08	\$89811.09	\$176.03		3,548	\$25.31
Garcia, Joshua	Mayoral, Holyoke		\$68489.96	\$63749.04	\$4740.92	✓	4,566	\$13.96
Vasquez, Kendrys	Mayoral, Lawrence	✓	\$205327.12	\$208015.24	\$298.93		5,423	\$38.36
DePena, Brian	Mayoral, Lawrence		\$176237.34	\$217699.22	\$3992.61	✓	6,172	\$35.27
Mazzarella, Dean J.	Mayoral, Leominster	✓	\$52005.34	\$54529.05	\$13566.79	✓	5,083	\$10.73
Freeman, Andrea	Mayoral, Leominster		\$39649.07	\$39886.81	\$5513.62		1,999	\$19.95
Cyr, Darren P.	Mayoral, Lynn		\$200651.64	\$218897.50	\$0.00		4,549	\$48.12
Nicholson, Jared	Mayoral, Lynn		\$153272.32	\$134783.99	\$21093.00	✓	7,993	\$16.86
Vigeant, Arthur G.	Mayoral, Marlborough	✓	\$26325.00	\$33317.45	\$41326.49	✓	2,986	\$11.16
Garceau, David J.	Mayoral, Marlborough		\$2,975.00	\$2,975.00	\$0.00		1,505	\$1.98
Lungo-Koehn, Breanna	Mayoral, Medford	✓	\$92708.77	\$71846.22	\$29157.43	✓	7,352	\$9.77
Falco Jr., John	Mayoral, Medford		\$79277.77	\$79946.34	\$2522.14		5,768	\$13.86
Perry, Neil P.	Mayoral, Methuen	✓	\$30511.00	\$8468.52	\$26900.84	✓	3,359	\$2.52
Reardon, Sean	Mayoral, Newburyport		\$51752.47	\$49575.76	\$6160.60	✓	3,236	\$15.32
Tontar, Charles	Mayoral, Newburyport		\$48929.73	\$50203.44	\$2173.38		3,209	\$15.64
Fuller, Ruthanne	Mayoral, Newton	✓	\$140777.85	\$351064.62	\$12393.53	✓	10,912	\$32.17
Sangiolo, Amy Mah	Mayoral, Newton		\$81584.67	\$70720.73	\$14176.09		9,380	\$7.54
Macksey, Jennifer	Mayoral, North Adams		\$48848.81	\$41297.14	\$7590.73	✓	1,681	\$24.57
Bond, Lynette	Mayoral, North Adams		\$32884.49	\$28204.10	\$4861.26		1,484	\$19.00
Sciarra, Gina-Louise	Mayoral, Northampton		\$33136.59	\$27106.50	\$9193.89	✓	5,866	\$4.62
Warner, Marc	Mayoral, Northampton		\$4830.51	\$4146.86	\$583.65		2,517	\$1.65
Bettencourt, Edward A.	Mayoral, Peabody	✓	\$1660.35	\$4091.95	\$68675.73	✓	6,266	\$0.65
Driscoll, Kimberley	Mayoral, Salem	✓	\$162,341.67	\$145,742.85	\$60,170.00	✓	6,459	\$22.56
Dibble, Stephen	Mayoral, Salem		\$36661.30	\$36450.55	\$649.71		4,511	\$8.08
Ballantyne, Katjana	Mayoral, Somerville		\$143318.88	\$161877.54	\$13683.37	✓	10,032	\$16.14
Mbah, Wilfred N.	Mayoral, Somerville		\$115343.13	\$117499.46	\$1399.21		6,737	\$17.44
O'Connell, Shaunna	Mayoral, Taunton	✓	\$69758.86	\$44760.50	\$38427.46	✓	4,369	\$10.24
Reichert, William C.	Mayoral, West Springfield	✓	\$49009.70	\$10945.56	\$137015.64	✓	2,851	\$3.84
McCabe, Michael A.	Mayoral, Westfield		\$40391.46	\$38105.18	\$12597.01	✓	4,744	\$8.03
Humason, Donald F.	Mayoral, Westfield	✓	\$20895.00	\$22636.88	\$8106.13		3,867	\$5.85
Galvin, Scott	Mayoral, Woburn	✓	\$37055.00	\$29853.29	\$29495.14	✓	4,348	\$6.87
Crowley, Ellen	Mayoral, Woburn		\$8578.94	\$8021.89	\$557.05		2,199	\$3.65
Petty, Joseph	Mayoral, Worcester	✓	\$49,859.92	\$33,409.25	\$49,502.46	✓	10,100	\$3.31
Colorio, Donna	Mayoral, Worcester		\$24,654.47	\$19,913.30	\$12,319.61		4,153	\$4.79
Stefan, Peter	Mayoral, Worcester		\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00		933	\$0.00
Coleman, Bill	Mayoral, Worcester		\$0.00	\$136.56	\$0.00		1,513	\$0.09