

Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance

2023 Mayoral Spending Study

OCPF ONE ASHBURTON PLACE BOSTON, MA 02108

617-979-8300 www.ocpf.us OCPF@mass.gov

INTRODUCTION

This study examines campaign finance activity by candidates for mayor in municipal elections throughout Massachusetts in 2023. 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 2023.

The information contained in this study is based on data compiled from campaign finance reports filed by 67 mayoral candidates in the 33 cities that held mayoral elections in 2023. 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.

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.

March 2024

FINDINGS

Voters in 33 cities in Massachusetts went to the polls to elect their mayors in 2023. Thirty-one of the 33 mayoral finals were contested (incumbents in Attleboro and Leominster ran unopposed).¹

Of the contested races, five featured contests for open seats in Agawam, Haverhill, Marlborough, Melrose and Pittsfield. An acting mayor was serving in Revere.

A total of 67 candidates were on the ballot in November, including 28 incumbents.

The mayors who won election in November 2023 were 23 returning incumbents and 10 newcomers. Four incumbents were defeated – Charles Kokoros of Braintree, Stephen Louis DiNatale of Fitchburg, Roxann Wedegartner of Greenfield and Scott Galvin of Woburn.

The mayoral campaign finance activity in brief:

- The 67 mayoral candidates raised \$3,925,740 and spent \$4,951.079 in 2023. The records in both categories were set in 2021, a Boston mayoral election year, when 66 candidates raised \$9,195,468 and spent \$10,043,240.
- Six candidates raised more than \$100,000 in 2023, nine fewer than in 2021. Eleven candidates spent more than \$100,000 in 2023, five fewer than in 2021.
- The top spender in the 31 contested elections won 22 times. Nine candidates outspent their opponents and lost in Braintree, Chicopee, Fitchburg, Greenfield, Marlborough, Medford, Revere, Waltham and Woburn.
- The race with the highest spending in 2023 was in Quincy, where Mayor Thomas Koch and his challenger Anne Mahoney reported \$1,078,592 in expenditures for the calendar year. The most 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 2023 was Mayor Thomas Koch of Quincy, who raised \$619,677. The fundraising record was set in 2013 when Martin Walsh raised \$3,004,406 as a Boston mayoral candidate, surpassing the previous record of \$1,518,353 set in 2009 by former Boston Mayor Thomas Menino.

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.

- Mayor Thomas Koch of Quincy topped the spending list in 2023, reporting \$962,040. Mayor Michelle Wu of Boston holds the spending record, \$3,047,256, set in 2021. The previous record was set in 2013, when Martin Walsh reported \$3,015,209 in expenditures.
- The average amount spent per vote by a candidate in 2023 was \$13.42. The average amount spent per vote by a candidate in 2021 was \$24.13, a 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, staggered terms, 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. Boston did not hold a mayoral election in 2023.

The totals in this study do not include independent expenditures made to support or oppose candidates for mayor. Independent expenditures are made by independent expenditure political action committees (IEPACs) and other organizations, without coordinating with the candidates they support or oppose. In 2023, \$815,014 in expenditures were disclosed by IEPACs, and an additional \$213,663 by other entities, largely on mayoral and city council races.

Campaign Finance Activity by Mayoral Candidates in Municipal General Elections 1997-2023

	Number of candidates	Receipts		Expenditures			
Year		Total	Median	Total	Median	Average spent per vote	
1007		\$2.700.075	Φ20.1 <i>57</i>	\$2.025.055	Ф27.127	\$6.63	
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	
2023	67	\$3,925,740	\$33,762	\$4,951,079	\$45,974	\$13.42	

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 mayoral race with the greatest amount of spending in 2023 was in Quincy, where Mayor Thomas Koch and challenger Anne Mahoney reported \$1,078,592 in expenditures.

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 2023

	City	Total Expenditures	Population*
1)	Quincy	\$1,078,592	101,636
2)	Springfield	\$757,719	155,929
3)	Revere	\$481,713	62,186
4)	Braintree	\$248,636	39,143
5)	Worcester	\$206,260	206,518
6)	Taunton	\$200,598	59,408
7)	Somerville	\$196,716	81,045
8)	Medford	\$172,291	59,659
9)	Brockton	\$122,922	105,643
10)	Melrose	\$122,169	29,817

* Source: U.S. Census Bureau

New Bedford, with a population of 101,079, had the least amount of spending (\$16,280) in cities with contested mayoral elections.

Top Fundraisers

Mayor Thomas Koch of Quincy was the top fundraiser in 2023, reporting \$619,677. In 2021, Annissa Essaibi George of Boston was the top fundraiser, reporting \$2,689,973.

The fundraising record was set in 2013 by former Boston Mayor Martin Walsh, who raised \$3,004,406.

Top Mayoral Campaign Fundraisers 2023

	Candidate	City	Receipts	Won/Lost
1)	Thomas Koch (I)	Quincy	\$619,677	Won
2)	Domenic Sarno (I)	Springfield	\$293,589	Won
3)	Daniel Rizzo	Revere	\$245,569	Lost
4)	Patrick Keefe *	Revere	\$209,341	Won
5)	Justin Hurst	Springfield	\$150,285	Lost
6)	Shauna O'Connell (I)	Taunton	\$101,452	Won
7)	Anne Mahoney	Quincy	\$99,090	Lost
8)	Joseph Petty (I)	Worcester	\$94,937	Won
9)	Charles Kokoros (I)	Braintree	\$92,964	Lost
10)	Melinda Barrett	Haverhill	\$91,257	Won

⁽I) = Incumbent *Acting mayor

The winning and opposed candidates who reported the least amount of money raised in 2023 were Mayor Michael Nicholson of Gardner (\$17,364) and Mayor Neil Perry of Methuen (\$17,500).

Top Spenders

Mayor Thomas Koch of Quincy topped the spending list at \$962,040 in 2023. In 2021, a new record was set by Michelle Wu of Boston, at \$3,047,256 in expenditures. The previous record was set in 2013 when former Boston Mayor Martin Walsh reported \$3,015,209 in expenditures.

Top Expenditures by Mayoral Campaigns in 2023

	Name	City	Expenditures	Won/Lost
1)	Thomas Koch (I)	Quincy	\$962,040	Won
2)	Domenic Sarno (I)	Springfield	\$570,398	Won
3)	Daniel Rizzo	Revere	\$259,398	Lost
4)	Patrick Keefe *	Revere	\$222,315	Won
5)	Justin Hurst	Springfield	\$187,320	Lost
6)	Charles Kokoros (I)	Braintree	\$182,729	Lost
7)	Shauna O'Connell (I)	Taunton	\$123,018	Won
8)	Anne Mahoney	Quincy	\$116,552	Lost
9)	Katjana Ballantyne (I)	Somerville	\$108,788	Won
10)	Richard Caraviello	Medford	\$102,754	Lost

⁽I) = Incumbent *Interim mayor

The opposed candidates who spent the least and won were Mayor Jon Mitchell of New Bedford (\$13,739) and Jennifer Mackey of North Adams (\$17,068).

Per-Vote Spending

Mayoral candidates on average spent \$13.42 per vote in 2023. The record was set in 2021, when \$24.13 was spent per vote. The previous record, \$20.96, was set in 2013.

Incumbent Mayor Thomas Koch had the highest per-vote average in 2023, \$92.68. The record was set in 2021 by Mayor Carlo DeMaria of Everett, \$113 per vote. The previous record of \$89.33 was set in 2019 by former Fall River Mayor Jasiel Correia.

Per-Vote Expenditures by Mayoral Candidates 2023

	Name	e City		Won/Lost	
1.	Thomas Koch (I)	Quincy	\$92.68	Won	
2.	Daniel Rizzo	Revere	\$56.82	Lost	
3.	Domenic Sarno (I)	Springfield	\$47.23	Won	
4.	Patrick Keefe *	Revere	\$45.08	Won	
5.	Charles Kokoros (I)	Braintree	\$43.09	Lost	
6.	William Tauro	Somerville	\$29.03	Lost	
7.	Stephen Louis DiNatale (I)	Fitchburg	\$27.09	Lost	
8.	Shauna O'Connell (I)	Taunton	\$23.32	Won	
9.	Guillermo Creamer	Worcester	\$21.22	Lost	
10	Edward Correira	Taunton	\$21.12	Lost	

⁽I) = Incumbent *Acting Mayor

Five Winning and Opposed Candidates with the Lowest Per-Vote Average in 2023

Jon Mitchell of New Bedford: \$2.61 Edward Bettencourt of Peabody: \$3.58 Jeannette McCarthy of Waltham: \$3.93 Samantha Squallia of Fitchburg: \$4.78 Michael McCabe of Westfield: \$4.99 Worcester recorded the greatest number of votes cast for mayor, 21,503, in 2023. The city with the fewest number of votes in a contested election was North Adams, with 1,891 votes cast in 2023.

Success Rate for Top Spenders

Traditionally, the candidate who spends the most money wins. The top spender in the 31 contested elections won 22 times in 2023. Nine candidates outspent their opponents and lost in Braintree, Chicopee, Fitchburg, Greenfield, Marlborough, Medford, Revere, Waltham and Woburn.

Top Spender Winning Percentages in Contested Elections:

- 2023: The top spender won 71 percent of the time (22 of 31)
- 2021: The top spender won 71 percent of the time (20 of 28)
- 2019: The top spender won 86 percent of the time (24 or 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 2023, the average winning candidate spent \$98,246, compared to \$50,263 for unsuccessful candidates.

Receipts and Expenditures by Winning and Losing Mayoral Candidates 2023

	Raised	Spent
Winners (33)		
Total	\$2,479,596	\$3,242,126
Average	\$75,139	\$98,246
Unsuccessful (34)		
Total	\$1,446,144	\$1,708,952
Average	\$42,533	\$50,263

Open seats

A total of five contests in 2023 featured open seats in Agawam, Haverhill, Marlborough, Melrose and Pittsfield. Revere's election featured an acting mayor. In 2021, a total of eight contests featured open seats in Boston, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lynn, Newburyport, North Adams, Northampton and Somerville.

Incumbents

In 2023, 27 of the 67 candidates were incumbents. Four incumbents were defeated in 2023 – Charles Kokoros of Braintree, Stephen Louis DiNatale of Fitchburg, Roxann Wedegartner of Greenfield and Scott Galvin of Woburn.

Three incumbents were defeated in 2021 – Yvonne Spicer of Framingham, Sefatia Romeo Theken of Gloucester, and Donald Humason of Westfield. Three incumbents were defeated in 2019 – Stephanie Muccini Burke of Medford, Jasiel Correia of Fall River and Kenneth Gray of Amesbury.

Ten new mayors were elected in 2023 — Christopher Johnson of Agawam, Erin Joyce of Braintree, Samantha Squailia of Fitchburg, Virginia DeSorgher of Greenfield, Melinda Barrett of Haverhill, Christian Dumais of Marlborough, Jennifer Grigoraitis of Melrose, Peter Marchetti of Pittsfield, Patrick Keefe of Revere, and Michael Concannon of Woburn.

Mayoral Campaign Receipts and Expenditures by Incumbency 2023

	Raised	Spent
Incumbents (28*)		
Totals	\$2,226,436	\$3,146,118
Average	\$79,515	\$112,361
Non-Incumbents (39)		
Totals	\$1,699,304	\$1,804,960
Average	\$43,571	\$46,281

^{*}Includes acting Mayor Patrick Keefe of Revere.

Table of all candidates follows.

2023 MAYORAL CANDIDATE TOTALS

Candidate	City	Incumbent	2023 Receipts	2023 Expenditures	Balance As of 12/31/23	Winner	Votes	Spending Average Per Vote
Calabrese, Cecilia	Agawam	No	\$17,832.56	\$18,934.37	\$127.16	No	2,713	\$6.98
Johnson, Christopher	Agawam	No	\$30,245.00	\$28,300.67	\$1,944.33	Yes	3,221	\$8.79
Marggraf, Richard	Amesbury	No	\$5,660.32	\$5,543.18	\$17.14	No	1,412	\$3.93
Gove, Kassandra M.	Amesbury	Yes	\$20,244.09	\$20,560.24	\$1,696.38	Yes	2,611	\$7.87
DeSimone, Cathleen	Attleboro	Yes	\$11,202.79	\$13,324.15	\$939.64	Yes	3,662	\$3.64
Zarella, James	Beverly	No	\$14,205.20	\$12,443.97	\$1,761.23	No	3,618	\$3.44
Cahill, Michael	Beverly	Yes	\$26,271.24	\$35,270.50	\$11,292.60	Yes	6,119	\$5.76
Joyce, Erin	Braintree	No	\$77,888.95	\$65,907.85	\$11,981.10	Yes	4,755	\$13.86
Kokoros, Charles	Braintree	Yes	\$92,964.61	\$182,729.10	\$16,633.92	No	4,241	\$43.09
Fontaine, Fred	Brockton	No	\$21,265.84	\$20,715.00	\$1,182.24	No	3,197	\$6.48
Sullivan, Robert	Brockton	Yes	\$68,379.12	\$102,257.46	\$47,836.96	Yes	6,342	\$16.12
Vieau, John	Chicopee	Yes	\$31,434.70	\$45,923.12	\$2,388.10	Yes	5,058	\$9.08
Lopez, Delmarina	Chicopee	No	\$47,725.47	\$50,107.37	\$429.32	No	3,695	\$13.56
Sutter, Samuel	Fall River	No	\$31,626.55	\$43,683.03	\$882.39	No	4,346	\$10.05
Coogan, Paul	Fall River	Yes	\$36,075.01	\$76,372.61	\$32,103.13	Yes	6,744	\$11.32
Squailia, Samantha	Fitchburg	No	\$26,541.22	\$19,604.32	\$11,777.11	Yes	4,099	\$4.78
DiNatale, Stephen Louis	Fitchburg	Yes	\$57,257.68	\$75,299.96	\$14,326.73	No	2,780	\$27.09
Blake, Kimberly	Gardner	No	\$3,865.59	\$3,895.41	\$180.18	No	1,189	\$3.28
Nicholson, Michael	Gardner	Yes	\$17,364.15	\$22,480.17	\$2,739.31	Yes	2,457	\$9.15
Rose, Mary Ellen	Gloucester	No	\$19,846.47	\$19,095.71	\$2,575.40	No	3,006	\$6.35
Verga, Gregory	Gloucester	Yes	\$56,033.02	\$65,649.18	\$7,480.59	Yes	4,805	\$13.66
DeSorgher, Virginia	Greenfield	No	\$18,319.87	\$18,069.48	\$250.39	Yes	3,107	\$5.82
Wedegartner, Roxann	Greenfield	Yes	\$17,962.71	\$21,855.69	\$991.15	No	1,144	\$19.10
Cooper, Guy	Haverhill	No	\$3,156.47	\$5,348.70	\$523.10	No	3,051	\$1.75
Barrett, Melinda	Haverhill	No	\$91,257.16	\$85,742.94	\$12,371.86	Yes	7,117	\$12.05
Mazzarella, Dean	Leominster	Yes	\$29,291.95	\$12,882.69	\$37,765.11	Yes	3,715	\$3.47
Alvarado, Lissette	Malden	No	\$10,041.31	\$9,834.51	\$316.49	No	2,095	\$4.69
Christenson, Gary	Malden	Yes	\$64,954.68	\$84,174.27	\$44,962.05	Yes	5,557	\$15.15
Dumais, Christian J.	Marlborough	No	\$43,889.80	\$40,591.82	\$5,914.32	Yes	3,593	\$11.30
Perlman, Samantha	Marlborough	No	\$58,291.66	\$67,949.73	\$13,254.61	No	3,251	\$20.90
Lungo-Koehn, Breanna	Medford	Yes	\$43,848.80	\$69,537.62	\$20,578.44	Yes	7,399	\$9.40
Caraviello, Richard	Medford	No	\$75,068.32	\$102,754.07	\$2,449.25	No	5,710	\$18.00
Medeiros, Monica	Melrose	No	\$56,518.61	\$55,132.84	\$4,647.50	No	3,809	\$14.47
Grigoraitis, Jennifer	Melrose	No	\$67,217.47	\$67,037.91	\$2,449.82	Yes	5,018	\$13.36
Wicks, Matthew	Methuen	No	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	No	1,199	0
Perry, Neil	Methuen	Yes	\$17,500.00	\$38,010.05	\$14,057.50	Yes	3,107	\$12.23
Moultrie, Richard	New Bedford	No	\$2,496.46	\$2,541.46	\$30.58	No	2,719	\$0.93
Mitchell, Jon	New Bedford	Yes	\$48,606.72	\$13,739.42	\$309,989.94	Yes	5,272	\$2.61
Carsno, Aprilyn	North Adams	No	\$358.00	\$358.00	\$0.00	No	163	\$2.20
Mackey, Jennifer	North Adams	Yes	\$26,534.97	\$17,068.26	\$16,033.56	Yes	1,728	\$9.88
Agneta, Rochelle	Peabody	No	\$770.00	\$368.00	\$402.00	No	1,237	\$0.30
Bettencourt, Edward	Peabody	Yes	\$33,586.00	\$21,736.85	\$77,417.50	Yes	6,065	\$3.58
Krol, John	Pittsfield	No	\$48,949.97	\$52,892.94	-\$75.46	No	3,467	\$15.26

Candidate	City	Incumbent	2023 Receipts	2023 Expenditures	Balance As of 12/31/23	Winner	Votes	Spending Average Per Vote
Marchetti, Peter	Pittsfield	No	\$61,000.88	\$63,056.50	\$4,607.12	Yes	5,816	\$10.84
Mahoney, Anne	Quincy	No	\$99,090.44	\$116,552.06	\$4,848.18	No	8,476	\$13.75
Koch, Thomas	Quincy	Yes	\$619,677.77	\$962,040.51	\$14,670.06	Yes	10,380	\$92.68
Keefe, Patrick	Revere	Acting	\$209,341.11	\$222,315.18	\$27,154.43	Yes	4,932	\$45.08
Rizzo, Daniel	Revere	No	\$245,569.78	\$259,398.36	\$1,023.11	No	4,565	\$56.82
Tauro, William	Somerville	No	\$87,932.79	\$87,927.97	\$4.82	No	3,029	\$29.03
Ballantyne, Katjana	Somerville	Yes	\$82,966.44	\$108,788.55	\$69,395.62	Yes	13,657	\$7.97
Hurst, Justin	Springfield	No	\$150,285.61	\$187,320.65	\$633.38	No	8,945	\$20.94
Sarno, Domenic	Springfield	Yes	\$293,589.41	\$570,398.50	\$24,818.29	Yes	12,077	\$47.23
Correira, Edward	Taunton	No	\$77,998.72	\$77,579.40	\$419.32	No	3,673	\$21.12
O'Connell, Shauna	Taunton	Yes	\$101,452.78	\$123,018.94	\$2,733.02	Yes	5,276	\$23.32
McCarthy, Jeannette	Waltham	Yes	\$28,000.00	\$26,150.92	\$1,849.08	Yes	6,661	\$3.93
Paz, Jonathan	Waltham	No	\$62,695.04	\$59,032.81	\$7,204.89	No	4,576	\$12.90
Mello, Kristen	Westfield	No	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$32.84	No	1,404	0
McCabe, Michael	Westfield	Yes	\$19,207.12	\$22,592.13	\$12,530.67	Yes	4,530	\$4.99
Cowen, Edward	Weymouth	No	\$4,168.68	\$4,168.68	\$0.00	No	1,698	\$2.45
Hedlund, Robert	Weymouth	Yes	\$36,142.00	\$46,077.51	\$15,104.36	Yes	5,086	\$9.06
Concannon, Michael	Woburn	No	\$46,595.00	\$40,128.33	\$8,501.50	Yes	5,534	\$7.25
Galvin, Scott	Woburn	Yes	\$41,610.12	\$52,546.90	\$8,189.19	No	4,153	\$12.65
Coleman, William	Worcester	No	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	No	1,018	0
Creamer, Guillermo	Worcester	No	\$19,363.22	\$20,242.03	\$0.00	No	954	\$21.22
Colorio, Donna	Worcester	No	\$18,802.86	\$37,655.56	\$5,341.07	No	2,919	\$12.90
King, Khrystian	Worcester	No	\$52,763.43	\$55,044.77	\$2,413.56	No	5,906	\$9.32
Petty, Joseph	Worcester	Yes	\$94,937.27	\$93,318.24	\$5,191.26	Yes	10,706	\$8.72