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## Police Funding in the Mountain West, 2020-2022

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## POLICE FUNDING IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST, 2020-2022

Criminal Justice Fact Sheet No. 8 | April 2023

Prepared by: Lana Kojoian, Miguel Soriano Ralston, Annie Vong, Caitlin J. Saladino, and William E. Brown, Jr.

### PURPOSE:

This fact sheet examines data from Third Way’s report “The Red City Defund Police Problem” which provides information on police funding and other metrics on police forces.<sup>1</sup> The original report offers a review of police funding and operating budgets for the 25 largest Democrat-run cities and 25 largest Republican-run cities in the U.S. This fact sheet includes police force data for 10 Mountain West cities (Aurora, CO; Chandler, AZ; Colorado Springs, CO; Denver, CO; Glendale, AZ; Gilbert, AZ; Las Vegas, NV; Mesa, AZ; North Las Vegas, NV; and Phoenix, AZ).

### ABOUT THE DATA:

The original report provides data from FY2021 and FY2022 on city operating budgets (available from city websites). Data were retrieved from police department websites and local news articles and include metrics such as budgets for fiscal year (FY) 2021 and fiscal year (FY) 2022, the percent change in budget over FY2021 to FY2022, population, number of police per capita, police budgets, police force size, dollars spent on police per person, number of homicides, and change in spending on police. Select metrics are presented in this fact sheet. Note that for all figures and tables, cities with one asterisk next to their name indicates that the mayor is affiliated with the Democratic party and cities with two asterisks next to their name indicates that the mayor is affiliated with the Republican party.

### KEY FINDINGS:

1. Of the ten Mountain West cities, Phoenix, AZ (49%) allocated the largest portion of its budget to the police force, while Gilbert, AZ and North Las Vegas, NV (both 6%) allocated the smallest portion of city budget to the police force.
2. The city with the largest increase of funding allocated to police from FY2021 to FY2022 was Mesa, AZ (+12.11%), and the only Mountain West city to decrease its police budget was North Las Vegas, NV (-1.21%).
3. Phoenix, AZ (2,696), Denver, CO (1,450), and Las Vegas, NV (3,000) – the three most populated Democrat-run cities in the Mountain West – employ the highest number of police.
4. Las Vegas, NV (444.05) employed the largest number of police per 100,000 residents with over twice as many than the second largest city in the Mountain West (Denver with 190.78); Gilbert, AZ (107.98) employed the smallest number of police per 100,000 residents.
5. Among Mountain West cities, Phoenix, AZ spent the most per resident on police (\$447.01), compared to North Las Vegas, NV, which spent the least dollars per resident (\$131.67).

Table 1 displays the 10 Mountain West cities and their police budgets for FY2021 and FY2022, as well as the budget percent change between these two fiscal years. Mesa, AZ had the highest percent of change, adding 12.11% or \$25,058,530 to the city’s police budget. North Las Vegas, NV was the only Mountain West city to decrease police

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<sup>1</sup> Jim Kessler and Kylie Murdock. “The Red City Defund Police Problem” (2022). *Third Way*. Retrieved from [www.thirdway.org/report/the-red-city-defund-police-problem](http://www.thirdway.org/report/the-red-city-defund-police-problem)

budget from FY2021 to FY22, reducing 1.21% or \$438,639 from the city’s police budget. The Mountain West city with the largest FY2022 budget was Phoenix, AZ (\$786,708,000) and the city with the smallest was North Las Vegas, NV (\$35,793,557). The three cities with the largest populations (Phoenix, AZ; Denver, CO; Las Vegas, NV) are among the top four largest police budgets between FY2021 and FY2022 and are all run by Democratic mayors. Cities with the largest percentage increases in police budgets from FY2021 to FY2022 (Mesa, AZ and Colorado Springs, CO) are run by Republican mayors. Although identified as Democratic in the original report, the office of mayor for Las Vegas is a nonpartisan position.

**Table 1: Police Budget, Percent of Change, FY2021-FY2022**

City/State	Police Budget FY2021	Police Budget FY2022	Police Budget Percent Change from FY2021 to FY2022
Phoenix, AZ*	\$743,792,000	\$786,708,000	+5.77%
Denver, CO*	\$278,172,759	\$297,339,019	+6.89%
Las Vegas, NV*	\$161,142,942	\$168,597,218	+4.63%
Mesa, AZ**	\$206,993,517	\$232,052,047	+12.11%
Colorado Springs, CO**	\$144,179,187	\$158,751,000	+10.11%
Aurora, CO**	\$127,156,044	\$136,764,493	+7.56%
Chandler, AZ**	\$84,957,575	\$88,321,063	+3.96%
North Las Vegas, NV**	\$36,232,196	\$35,793,557	-1.21%
Gilbert, AZ**	\$58,715,270	\$61,716,320	+5.11%
Glendale, AZ**	\$100,355,920	\$106,896,480	+6.52%

Adapted from “The Red City Defund Police Problem.” *Third Way*. [www.thirdway.org/report/the-red-city-defund-police-problem](http://www.thirdway.org/report/the-red-city-defund-police-problem)

Table 2 shows the total budget of the 10 Mountain West cities, how much of the total city budget is allocated to police, and the percentage of the total city budget spent on police. Phoenix, AZ, a city run by a Democratic mayor, allocated the highest percentage of the total city budget to police, spending \$786,780,000, or 49% of the total budget. Colorado Springs, CO (40%) and Denver, CO (20%) had the second and third highest percentage of budgets allocated to police. Colorado Springs, CO is run by a Republican mayor and Denver, CO is run by a Democratic mayor. The cities with the lowest percentage of budget allocation to the police were Gilbert, AZ and North Las Vegas, NV (both 6%).

**Table 2: Total Budget and Police Budget for Mountain West Cities, FY2022**

City/State	Police Budget FY2022	Total Budget FY2022	Percentage of Total Budget Spent on Police Force
Phoenix, AZ*	\$786,708,000	\$1,600,000,000	49%
Denver, CO*	\$297,339,019	\$1,500,000,000	20%
Las Vegas, NV*	\$168,597,218	\$1,537,000,000	11%
Mesa, AZ**	\$232,052,047	\$2,100,000,000	11%
Colorado Springs, CO**	\$158,751,000	\$400,000,000	40%
Aurora, CO**	\$136,764,493	\$918,000,000	15%
Chandler, AZ**	\$88,321,063	\$1,000,000,000	9%
North Las Vegas, NV**	\$35,793,557	\$593,494,538	6%
Gilbert, AZ**	\$61,716,320	\$988,000,000	6%
Glendale, AZ**	\$106,896,480	\$1,244,000,000	9%

Adapted from “The Red City Defund Police Problem.” *Third Way*. [www.thirdway.org/report/the-red-city-defund-police-problem](http://www.thirdway.org/report/the-red-city-defund-police-problem)

Table 3 displays the population of the 10 Mountain West cities, the number of police officers per city, and the dollars spent on police per resident. Las Vegas NV had the largest total number of police officers (3,000), while Gilbert, AZ had the smallest total number of police officers (288). Phoenix, AZ had the highest spending on police per resident (\$447.01), while North Las Vegas, NV had the lowest spending per resident (\$131.67). Glendale, AZ had the lowest population size, but spent the second most on police per person (\$430.47).

**Table 3: Population of Mountain West Cities, Number of Police Officers, and Dollars Per Person, 2022**

City/State	City Population	Police Officers Per City	Dollars Spent on Police Per Resident
Phoenix, AZ*	1,759,943	2,696	\$447.01
Denver, CO*	760,049	1,450	\$391.21
Las Vegas, NV*	675,592	3,000	\$249.55
Mesa, AZ**	548,213	813	\$423.29
Colorado Springs, CO**	495,183	680	\$320.59
Aurora, CO**	393,440	744	\$347.61
Chandler, AZ**	273,102	334	\$323.40
North Las Vegas, NV**	271,849	295	\$131.67
Gilbert, AZ**	266,714	288	\$231.40
Glendale, AZ**	248,325	432	\$430.47

Adapted from “The Red City Defund Police Problem”. *Third Way*. [www.thirdway.org/report/the-red-city-defund-police-problem](http://www.thirdway.org/report/the-red-city-defund-police-problem)