

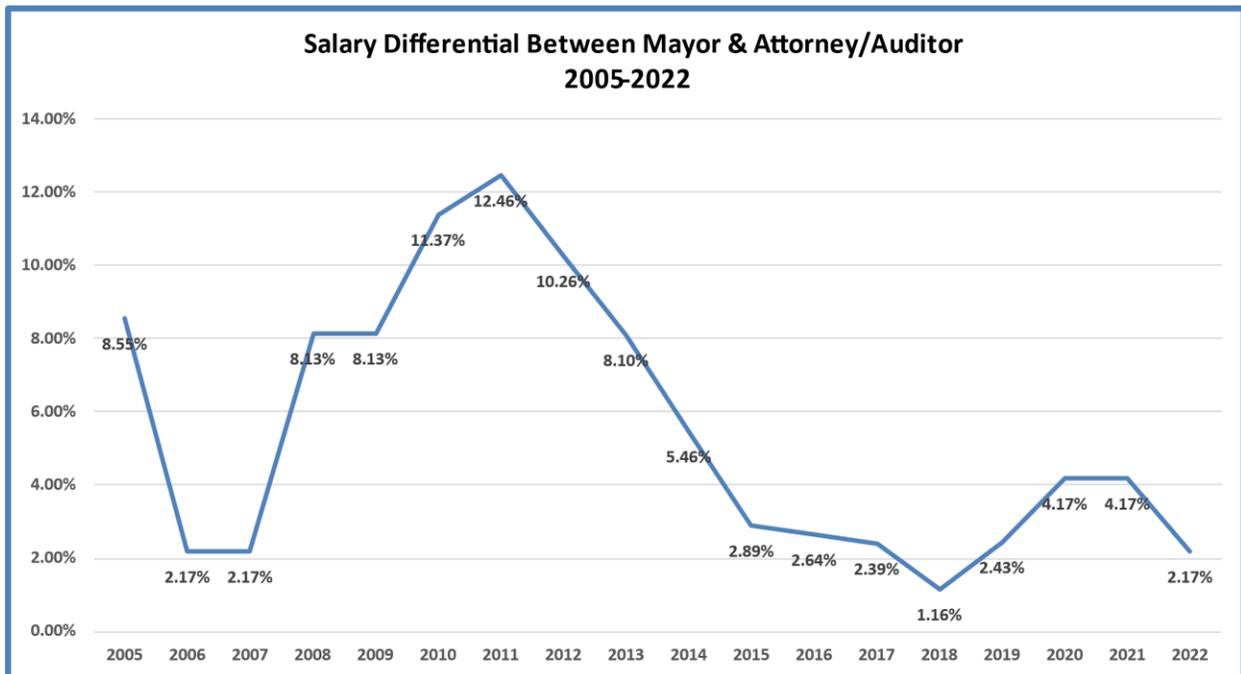
Analysis of base salary for the Mayor, City Council, City Council President, City Attorney and City Auditor suggests that pay for each elected office is largely consistent with the median pay for similar officeholders in peer cities when population is taken into account.

To the extent base salary for the Mayor, City Council, City Council President and City Attorney are not aligned with the median pay for the same or similar offices in peer cities, pay in Columbus is less than the median in other cities, and modest increases in base salary for Columbus officeholders are justified.

While the base salary for each elected office is largely consistent with the median pay for similar officeholders in peer cities, analysis identified what could be described as wage compression when comparing the base salary of the Office of the Mayor to the City Attorney and City Auditor.

The separation in pay between the chief executive and City Attorney and City Auditor is nominal and at a historic low when examining salary history over the last two decades.

Currently, the separation base salary between the Office of the Mayor and City Attorney and City Auditor is approximately 2 percent, down from a high of 12.5 percent in 2011.



This wage compression is a result of a series of years when the Office of Mayor received no increase in base salary, followed by successive years when annual increases in base salary for the City Attorney and City Auditor outpaced those for the Office of the Mayor.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Mayor	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.75%	2.75%	3.00%	1.54%	2.00%
Auditor	2.00%	2.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.75%	2.75%	4.00%	1.47%	1.28%	1.54%	4.00%
Auditor	2.00%	2.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.75%	2.75%	4.00%	1.47%	1.28%	1.54%	4.00%

Citizens' Commission on Elected Official Compensation
Base Salary: Office of the Mayor

The net result is a base salary for the Mayor, City Attorney and City Auditor that is nearly equal despite the significant and disparate responsibilities and powers assigned to Office of the Mayor as the chief executive compared to the City Attorney and City Auditor.

The Mayor of Columbus is a “strong Mayor,” and the City Charter confers all executive and administrative powers to the Office of the Mayor, including appointment of departmental directors and establishment of the City budget, including the budgets for all City departments, the Civil Service Commission, Columbus Public Health, City Council, City Attorney, City Auditor and municipal court.

The Mayor advances legislation to Council required to maintain operations of the City and is charged with implementing laws ordained by City Council. The Mayor holds veto power over Council and has the power to declare a state of emergency and make expenditures outside legislative purview in times of crisis. The authority of the chief executive was highlighted during the pandemic and underscored during periods of civil unrest when emergency powers were exercised.

The chief executive is balanced by the powers of the legislative branch (City Council) with additional checks provided by the City Auditor. The City Attorney serves as legal counsel to the Mayor and is the chief lawyer for the City of Columbus. While each branch of government holds important responsibilities, and each serves as a check and balance on the other, the span and scope of responsibilities and duties are not equal.

Below, you will find the annual budget and employee count for each elected office. This chart serves as one simple but very clear example of the responsibilities of the Office of Mayor as compared to City Council, City Attorney and City Auditor.

	Total Operating Budget	Total Employees	% Budget
Mayor	\$ 2,021,623,961	7980	96.5%
City Council	\$ 5,126,612	44	0.24%
City Attorney	\$ 14,007,196	129	0.67%
City Auditor	\$ 15,212,667	119	0.73%
City Treasurer	\$ 1,502,649	9	0.07%
Municipal Court - JUDGES	\$ 22,015,304	221	1.05%
Municipal Court - CLERK	\$ 14,468,329	171	0.69%
	\$ 2,093,956,718	8673	100.0%

The above helps to illustrate how the Mayor serves as the chief executive of the City and, similar to a chief executive officer in the private sector, is ultimately responsible for the entirety of the enterprise. The City Attorney and City Auditor serve important roles in support of the Mayor and the City but are more equivalent to the chief legal and chief financial officers within a corporation. And, like the private sector, it would be customary for the chief executive to be compensated commensurate with the responsibilities assumed as the leader of the organization.

The separation in base salary between the chief executive and other executive leaders or elected officeholders holds true at other levels of government as well.

The President of the United States earns more than the Speaker of the House, Attorney General and Treasury Secretary. While it can be argued the salaries for these elected and appointed offices do not reflect the responsibilities afforded to each, the separation in pay serves as recognition of the significant and inherent difference in the responsibilities afforded to the chief executive.

The same is true in state government in Ohio. The following is a listing of base salary for Ohio elected officeholders, with the governor serving as the chief executive.

- Governor of Ohio, DeWine, **\$165,230**, ([2022](#))
- Ohio Auditor of State, Keith Faber, **\$122,060**, ([2022](#))
- Auditor General of Ohio, Dave Yost, **\$122,060**, ([2022](#))
- Ohio State Senate, **\$67,492** ([2022](#))
- Ohio State Representatives, **\$67,492** ([2022](#))

The above illustrates separation in base salary between the chief executive and other elected and appointed officials at the state and federal levels, and historically, the same has been true of City government in Columbus. Not only has there been separation between the Mayor, City Attorney and City Auditor, there is a separation and distinction made between the base salary for Councilmember and Council President. The base pay for Council President reflects the additional powers granted by the City Charter and the additional responsibilities that come with being the leader of City Council. At present, the pay differential between the Council President and Councilmember is approximately 18 percent.

In addition to the significant additional powers and responsibilities afforded to the Office of the Mayor, it should be noted that the Mayor is the only City of Columbus officeholder in Columbus expressly prohibited from holding outside employment, effectively limiting the ability to earn additional income.

There is no prohibition for the City Attorney or City Auditor from being employed elsewhere and, historically, individuals holding these positions have supplemented their income through other work.

Further, while the City Attorney is required to be a licensed attorney in the state of Ohio, there are no prerequisites to be elected Auditor or Councilmember. Thus, it is a misconception that an individual must meet certain qualifications beyond those required for Office of the Mayor to hold the Office of the City Auditor or serve as a Councilmember. A college degree is not even required to serve on City Council.

Taking into account the rationale outlined above, it is recommended the Citizen's Commission on Elected Official Compensation set compensation for the Office of the Mayor in a way that creates separation in base pay between the Office of the Mayor and the Office of the City Attorney and City Auditor. Further, this separation should reflect more historic norms in compensation for these positions and the present separation between the Council President and Councilmember.

It is recommended that the Commission adjust the future pay for Office of the Mayor, City Attorney and City Auditor to create a separation in base pay equal to 10-20 percent, beginning in 2026 and through the remainder of the period for which the Commission is setting base pay.