



Plan Governance & Administrative Issues Committee Report 23-01

Date: August 29, 2023

To: Plan Governance & Administrative Issues Committee

From: Staff

Subject: 2024 DCP Resource Review

Plan Governance &
Administrative Issues
Committee

Matthew Benham

Neil Guglielmo

Thomas Moutes

Recommendation:

That the Plan Governance & Administrative Issues Committee (Committee) recommend that the Board of Deferred Compensation Administration (Board):

1. Adopt the following Deferred Compensation Plan (DCP) Growth and Expense variable and Fee variable assumptions for use in projecting future DCP Reserve Fund balances:
 - (1) DCP Assets Growth Rate – **5.5%**
 - (2) Net Participation Growth Rate - **3%**
 - (3) Annual Administrative Expenses Growth Rate - **3%**
 - (4) Special Rates Increase Factor: Personnel - **90%**
 - (5) Special Rates Increase Factor: City Attorney - **85%**
 - (6) Stable Value Fund Average Rate of Return - **2%**
 - (7) Participant Fees: Annual Basis Point Charge - **0.09%**
 - (8) Participant Fees: Annual Dollar Cap - **\$115**

2. Approve the following requests to be submitted with regard to the City's FY 2024-25 proposed budget:
 - (1) Add position authority for one Senior Benefits Analyst I position.
 - (2) Add position authority for one Benefits Specialist position.

Discussion:

At its March 20, 2018 meeting, the Board adopted staff's recommendation to convene the Committee on an annual basis to conduct a DCP resource review. This evaluation includes a review of the key assumptions used in forecasting the long-term (ten-year) projection of the DCP Reserve Fund balance and additional considerations related to long-term resource planning for the DCP.

To assist the Committee in its review of recommendations related to key assumptions, staff has developed a supplementary report (**Attachment A**) summarizing the status of key variables used to forecast the long-term projection of the DCP Reserve Fund balance compared to the DCP Target Reserve Fund Balance.

A. Background

All of the DCP’s administrative costs are required to be paid by participant fees. Two accounts are used to pay expenses: a fund held with the DCP Third-Party Administrator (TPA) which acts as a repository for participant fees and from which most DCP expenses are paid; and a fund held within the City, from which travel expenses and equipment purchases are paid.

To maintain stability within the fee structure, the DCP maintains a Reserve Fund balance. The Target Reserve Fund Balance is 50% of annual DCP operating expenses. As of June 30, 2023, the Target Reserve Fund Balance was \$1.7 million compared to the actual balance of \$6.3 million. This balance does not reflect encumbrances/liabilities in the amount of approximately \$893,000 for services through June 30, 2023.

The Committee last conducted a DCP resource review in August 2022. At its **September 29, 2022** meeting, the Board adopted staff’s recommendation to approve the Committee’s recommendations to adopt key assumptions for 2023 to be used in forecasting the long-term (ten-year) projection of the DCP Reserve Fund balance.

B. Annual Review of Reserve Fund Assumptions

Proposed 2024 Reserve Fund Assumptions

Following is a summary of the key assumptions that are used in forecasting the long-term (ten-year) projection of the DCP Reserve Fund balance. The 2023 Reserve Fund assumptions were adopted by the Board at its September 29, 2022 meeting. For 2024, the proposed key assumptions are summarized below.

Variable Description	2023 Assumptions	2024 Proposed Assumptions
Plan Assets Growth Rate	5.5%	5.5%
Net Enrollment Growth Rate	3.0%	3.0%
Administrative Expenses Inflation Factor	3.0%	3.0%
Indirect Costs Rate: Personnel	91.0%	90.0%
Indirect Costs Rate: City Attorney	92.0%	85.0%
Stable Value Fund Average Rate of Return	2.0%	2.0%
Participant Fees: Basis Point Charge	0.09%	0.09%
Participant Fees: Annual Dollar Fee Cap	\$115.00	\$115.00

Recommended actions for 2024 Reserve Fund assumptions are discussed as follows:

- 1. Plan Assets Growth Rate**
2024 Recommendation: 5.5% (No Change)

The projected DCP assets growth rate incorporates both investment gains and participant contributions/rollovers. This projection incorporates future value formulas combining net new contributions and assumed rates of return. The following table

provides average gross growth rates over various time periods, inclusive of both contribution and investment gains.

Average Growth Rates		
Average (Inception to Present)	→	20.1%
Average (1986-2000)	→	36.1%
Last 20 years average (2003-2022)	→	9.9%
Last 15 years average (2008-2022)	→	7.7%
Last 10 years average (2013-2022)	→	8.9%
Last 5 years average (2018-2022)	→	6.6%

The 20-year history includes three significant equity market downturns (2000, 2009, early 2020, and late 2021) and has produced an average annual DCP growth rate of 9.9%. Following a period of strong equity performance in the previous years, market performance over the last five years have trended lower, though the market seems to be rebounding in 2023. Using current assets and participant allocations, the Board’s investments consultant has updated its long-term projected investment rate of return for the DCP, which is 5.7%. Staff has combined that with a future value projection incorporating an assumption regarding average net cash inflows. The resulting forward-looking projection is 6.2%. This projection has increased from 5.9% included in last year’s resource review, though the projection had been marginally decreasing in prior years. As such, staff recommends no changes to the assumption of an annual assets growth rate of **5.5%** over the next ten years, in order to remain conservative in anticipation of any market fluctuations.

2. Net Enrollment Growth Rate
2024 Recommendation: 3% (No Change)

Net annual enrollment growth in the DCP has averaged 2.8% over the last five years, a period primarily characterized by economic uncertainty and workforce volatility from early 2020 through present day. Although the net enrollment average has fallen in recent years, this number appears to be a reasonable predictor of average future long-term growth, particularly as the City has resumed its hiring. Staff recommends maintaining an assumed **3%** average net participation growth rate over the next ten years.

3. Administrative Expenses Inflation Factor
2024 Recommendation: 3% (No Change)

Administrative expenses are primarily driven by staffing costs. This factor considers increases in staffing costs due to inflation and wage increases as well as periods in which positions are vacant. Staff’s recommendation is to maintain the previously adopted **3%** growth rate assumption.

4. Indirect Costs Rate
2024 Recommendation: 90% (Personnel Department); 85% (City Attorney)

Special Rates are provided by the City Controller for the calculation of indirect costs that are applied to the staffing reimbursements to the Personnel Department and the City Attorney’s Office. The DCP reimburses the Personnel Department for five positions that are fully dedicated to the DCP and two positions at the City Attorney’s Office that partially support the program. For the Personnel Department and City Attorney, the rates

utilized are presently 78.02% and 74.08%, respectively¹. Staff assumed an increase of the indirect cost rate by 2% annually for the next ten years, which produced a projected average ten-year rate of 90% and 85% for Personnel and City Attorney staff, respectively.

Staff also reviewed the historical average of the past ten years. While the City Attorney's rate of 85% tracks closely with its ten-year historical average, the ten-year historical average for the Personnel Department is significantly lower (72%) than the projected assumption (90%). As the reimbursement to the Personnel Department would be a significant cost, staff believes it to be prudent to be conservative in this estimate as the Special Rates from the Controller's Office may fluctuate unexpectedly.

Based on that methodology, staff recommends the adoption of assumed Special Rates of **90%** (from 91%) for Personnel Department reimbursements and **85%** (from 93%) for City Attorney staffing reimbursements.

**5. Stable Value Fund Average Rate of Return
2024 Recommendation: 2% (No Change)**

The Reserve Fund is primarily held within a special account in the DCP Stable Value Fund. The average rate of return for the Stable Value Fund over the past five years (ending 2022) has been 2.21%. Although the U.S. Federal Reserve Board indicates there may be further interest rate increases through the end of 2023, staff recommends maintaining a conservative assumption of **2%**.

**6. Participant Fees
2024 Recommendation: 0.09% Participant Fees; Annual Dollar Cap \$115 (No Change)**

In line with staff's recommendation in the previous Resource Review, staff is not recommending any actions targeted at reducing the projected surplus in the Reserve Fund at this time. As a consequence, no changes are being recommended to decrease participant fees.

C. DCP Reserve Fund Ten-Year Projection

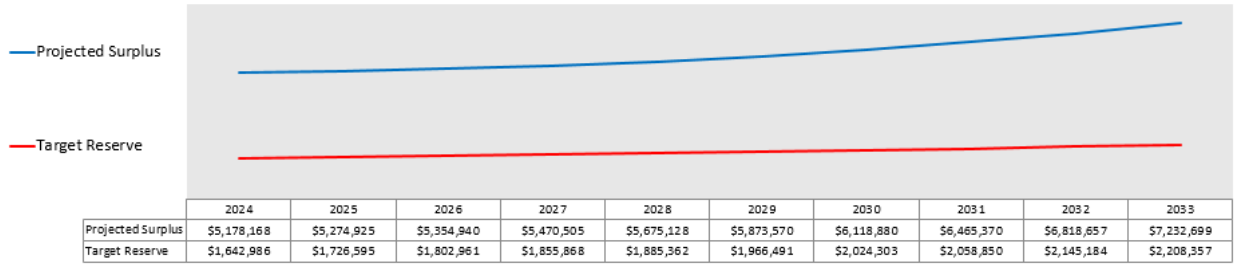
1. Baseline Scenario

Staff has updated its ten-year forecast incorporating DCP data as of June 30, 2023, current expense information, and the proposed key variable assumptions for 2024 as previously discussed. The projected Reserve Fund balance is steadily above the Target Reserve Fund Balance over the ten-year period. This projection is referred to as the "**Baseline Scenario.**"

¹ Cost Allocation Plan (CAP) 45 for 2022-23, Special Rates.

Baseline Scenario

10-Year Projection: Projected Surplus vs. Target Reserve



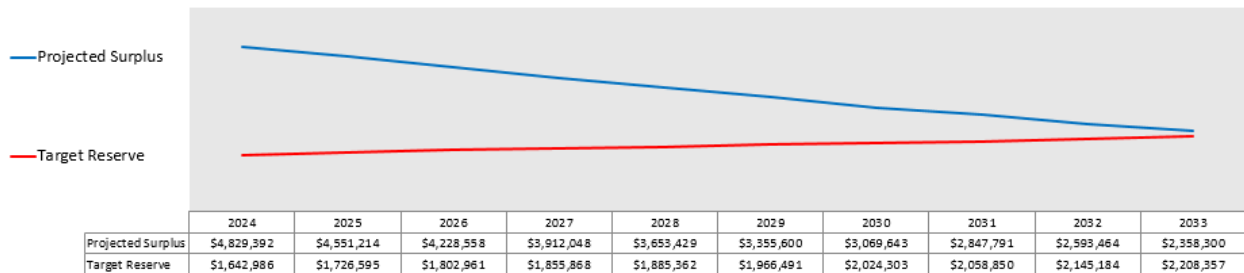
2. 30% Market Decline Scenario

Asset values can fluctuate significantly based on market returns. Market returns in 2023 year-to-date have rebounded from the downturn in 2022, amid continuing concern over inflation rates and recession fears. The most significant market decline occurred in 2008, with a 22% year-over-year decline.

The following chart illustrates a “30% Market Decline Scenario” which incorporates the proposed 2024 variables and a worst-case scenario of a 30% year-over-year decline in DCP assets in 2024. In this scenario, the projected Reserve Fund balance would steadily decline, but not fall below the Target Reserve Fund Balance within 10 years.

30% Market Decline Scenario

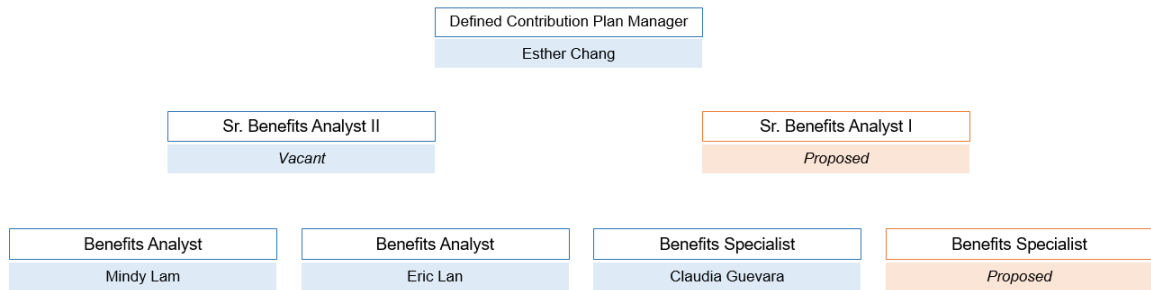
10-Year Projection: Projected Surplus vs. Target Reserve



D. DCP Future Resource Considerations & Additional Scenarios

Both the Baseline and Market Decline Scenarios indicate surpluses above the target reserve amount over most or all of the period within the ten-year projection. As with the 2023 Resource Review, staff remains cautious of actions to reduce the surplus in the immediate future. Nonetheless, the DCP may face new resource demands in the future, including the following:

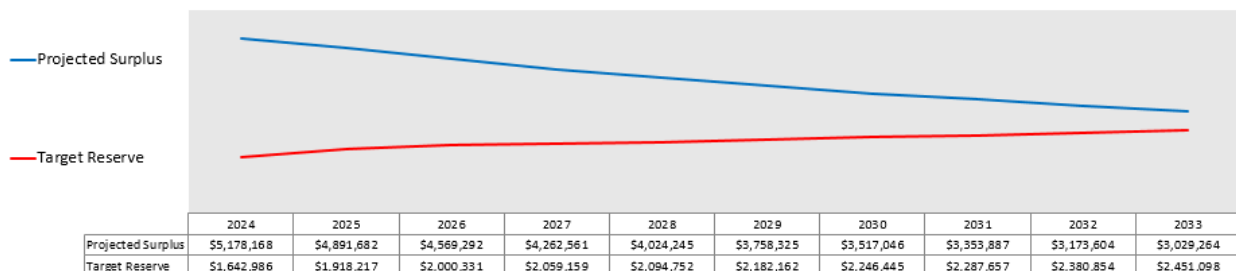
- Staffing** – In 2023, the DCP filled the newly created Defined Contribution Plan Manager position, and is in the process of filling a vacant Senior Benefits Analyst II position. It is recommended that additional staffing resources be added to support the continued growth of the DCP over the next ten years as the program faces an increased workload at all levels. Staff proposes adding one Senior Benefits Analyst I position and one Benefits Specialist position to the program, with the tentative organizational chart as follows:



The Senior Benefits Analyst I position will allow for a more continuous line of succession and knowledge retention, as currently there is an experience and job class level gap between the Benefits Analyst positions and the Senior Benefits Analyst II position. It will also allow more resources to be identified for program enhancements and support for the contracts managed by the program (which doubled in number since 2022), along with the benefit of ensuring the knowledge base for the program is shared among more positions. The proposed Benefits Specialist position would assist the current Benefits Specialist position in better managing the incoming flow of participant forms and requests and payroll processing while creating an opportunity for cross-training and position redundancy. This will help ensure continuity of services should the other Benefits Specialist become unavailable or the position is vacated. The proposed Benefits Specialist position would provide critical day-to-day support in processing participant forms (such as purchase of service credits, accrued leave deferral requests, special catch-up enrollments, etc.) and payroll processing, which require timely review and action and will have the most direct impact on the quality of customer service delivery.

The following scenario illustrates the cost of two additional positions, a Senior Benefits Analyst I and a Benefits Specialist, beginning in fiscal year 2024-25, added to the Baseline Scenario. It is assumed that costs would be further managed in future years by general staff attrition or by filling positions in-lieu with lower-level classifications (which could also be advantageous in providing in-house training to more entry-level employees). These position authorities would allow the program a measure of flexibility to fill positions strategically in the future to meet changing resource needs.

ADDITIONAL STAFFING COSTS SCENARIO
10-Year Projection: Projected Surplus vs. Target Reserve



- Facilities** – At this time, DCP and local contractor staff are working a hybrid telecommute schedule, with certain days in-person at the City Hall office. The DCP continues to consider the options and costs for its facilities, including office space for the

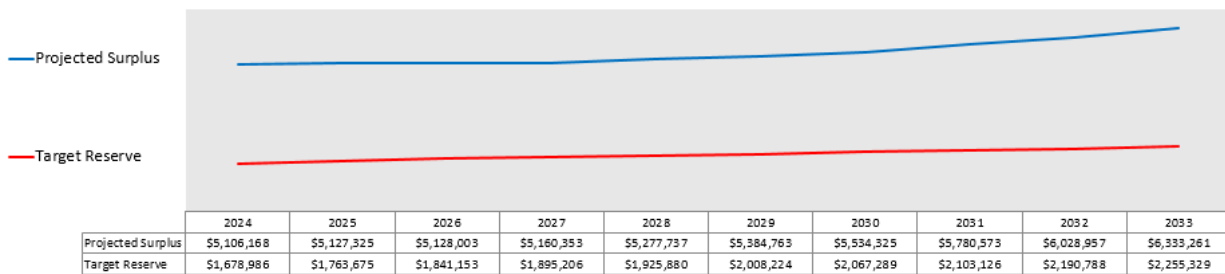
DC Plan Manager and a potential move away from staff’s current location in City Hall. Following is a summary of the current options for consideration.

- City Hall, Employee Benefits Office (current location): Currently, space is available for the existing DCP staff and local counselor needs. There is an available conference room that is identified to be converted to the DC Plan Manager’s office.
 - Leasing and facility costs are included in the DCP’s existing budget and paid to the Personnel Department by way of the indirect costs Special Rate that is applied to the positions fully dedicated to DCP. Should consideration be made to move away from City Hall or Personnel Department space, additional discussions will need to take place with the Personnel Department’s Administrative Services Division to identify whether the indirect costs Special Rate can be modified.
- LAFPP: Staff is in contact with LAFPP to identify appropriate space and explore the ramifications of a lease agreement. LAFPP has indicated that there is space available for immediate DCP needs. A tentative cost of approximately \$3,670 per month has been quoted, which addresses only the direct lease cost and facilities expenses. With consideration to other office and administrative costs, staff initially estimates a rate of approximately \$6,000 per month or \$72,000 annually.
- LACERS: In early 2023, LACERS indicated that it does not have available space for lease at its new building.
- Other City of Los Angeles Space: A formal request would need to be provided to the Office of the City Administrative Officer (CAO) and the General Services Department (GSD). GSD has indicated that they would need to search for a space for a direct lease as there currently is no City-owned space that might be suitable (whether due to availability or the need for facility improvements).

The following scenario models an additional \$72,000 in office and administrative costs for expenses related to facilities beginning in 2024, added to the Baseline Scenario.

FACILITY COSTS SCENARIO

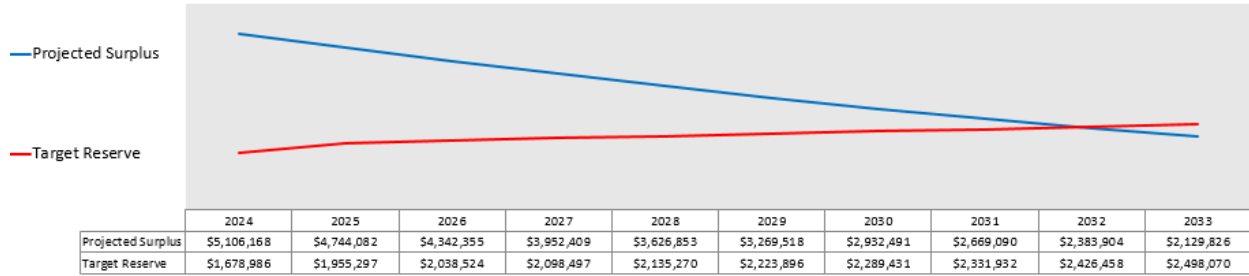
10-Year Projection: Projected Surplus vs. Target Reserve



The following projection illustrates the outlook for both additional staffing and the new facility costs, added to the Baseline Scenario.

ADDITIONAL STAFFING & NEW FACILITY COSTS SCENARIO

10-Year Projection: Projected Surplus vs. Target Reserve




Though the Projected Surplus dips under the Target Reserve beginning in 2032, it is noted that this projection assumes all positions are continually and fully occupied, in addition to other assumptions that are conservative for purposes of this review. Actual costs can be managed more closely during the quarterly reviews of the Reserve Fund with updated long-term projections.

- 3. Program Services and Features** – Adding new DCP programs and services may result in higher ongoing program costs in the future, such as:
- Investment Advice
 - Fiduciary Liability Insurance
 - Plan Audit (though an amount has been budgeted, the required amount may increase in future years should the scope of the audit increase)


While these enhancements have been postponed due to the increased workload stemming from the City and Department of Water and Power (DWP) payroll system conversions and anticipated post-conversion issues, should the additional positions be approved, more staffing resources will be available to move these enhancements forward. These new services do represent additional potential resource costs over the next ten years that are not yet accommodated in the current projection. Should resources become available to address these matters in 2024, an updated projection will be developed and provided to the Board as part of the quarterly reimbursements and Reserve Fund reviews and updated projections.

E. Summary and Recommendations

Staff recommends that the Committee forward to the Board recommendation to adopt the proposed 2024 Reserve Fund assumptions as outlined in this report and approve the request for additional position authorities to be submitted for the City's FY 2024-25 proposed budget.

Submitted by: 

 Mindy Lam, Benefits Analyst

Reviewed by: 

 Esther Chang, Defined Contribution Plan Manager



CITY OF *Los Angeles*
DEFERRED COMPENSATION PLAN

2024 DCP BUDGET & RESOURCE REVIEW

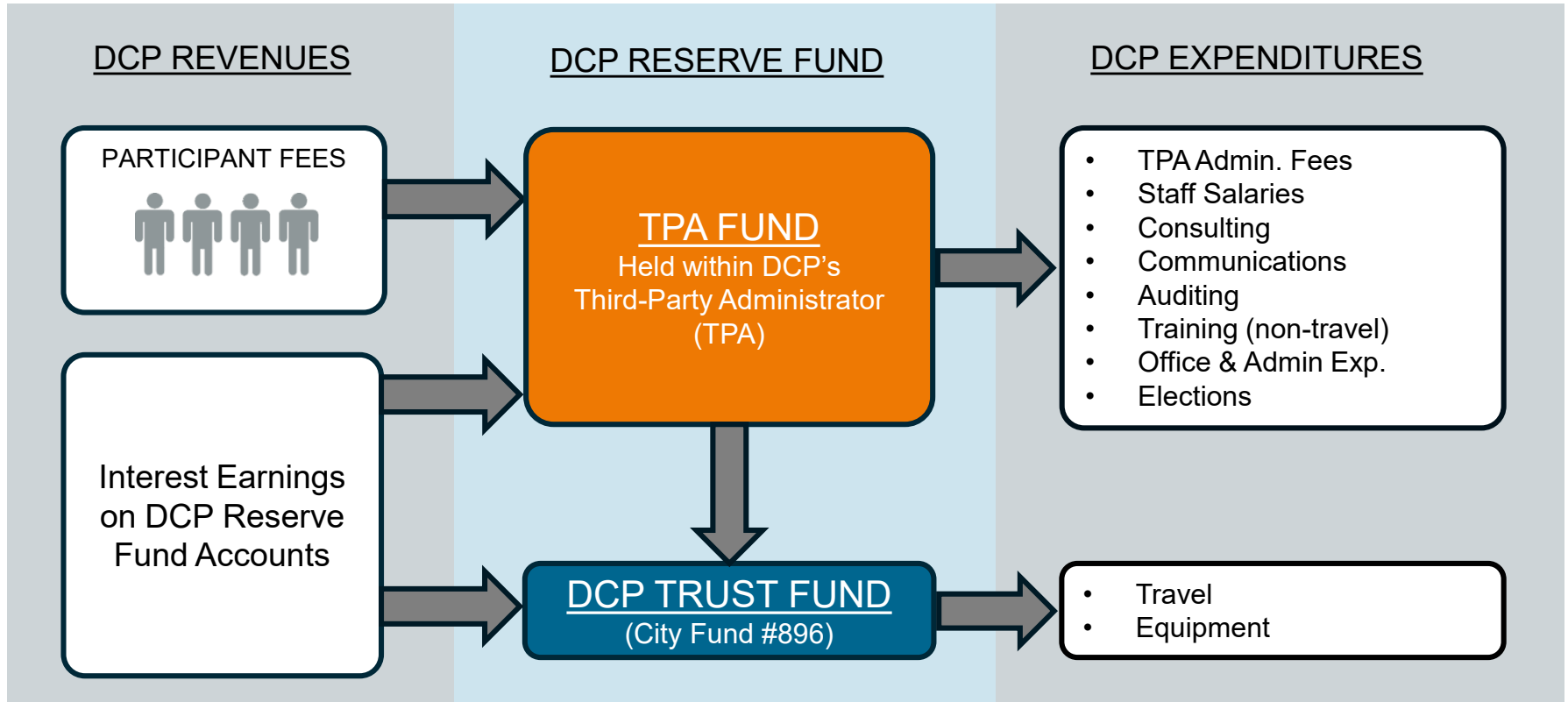
August 29, 2023



FLOW OF FUNDS: OVERVIEW

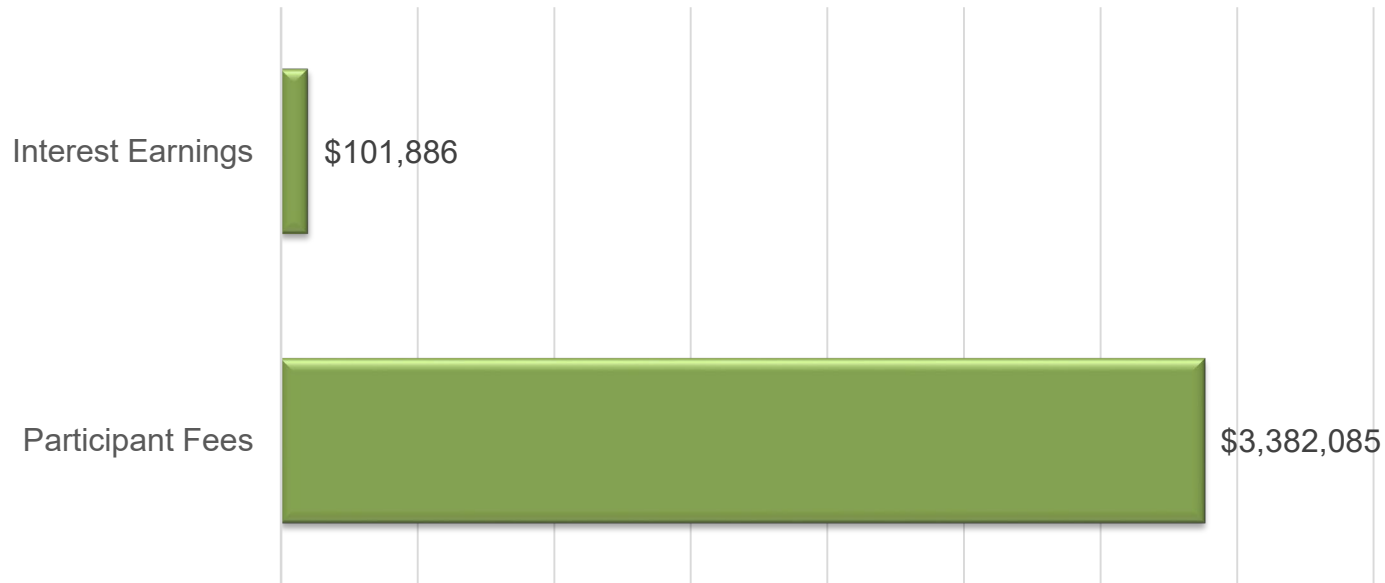
Pursuant to Los Angeles Administrative Code (LAAC) Division 4, Chapter 14, all Deferred Compensation Plan internal administrative costs are required to be paid by participant fees. Two accounts are used to pay expenses: (1) an account held with the Third-Party Administrator (TPA), which acts as a repository for participant fees and from which most DCP expenses are paid; and (2) pursuant to LAAC Division 5, Chapter 92, a “Deferred Compensation Plan Trust Fund,” held within the City, from which education-related travel and equipment purchases are made. Together, these two accounts comprise the DCP Reserve Fund (“Reserve Fund”).

-- BDCA Governance Policies/Bylaws, Section 5





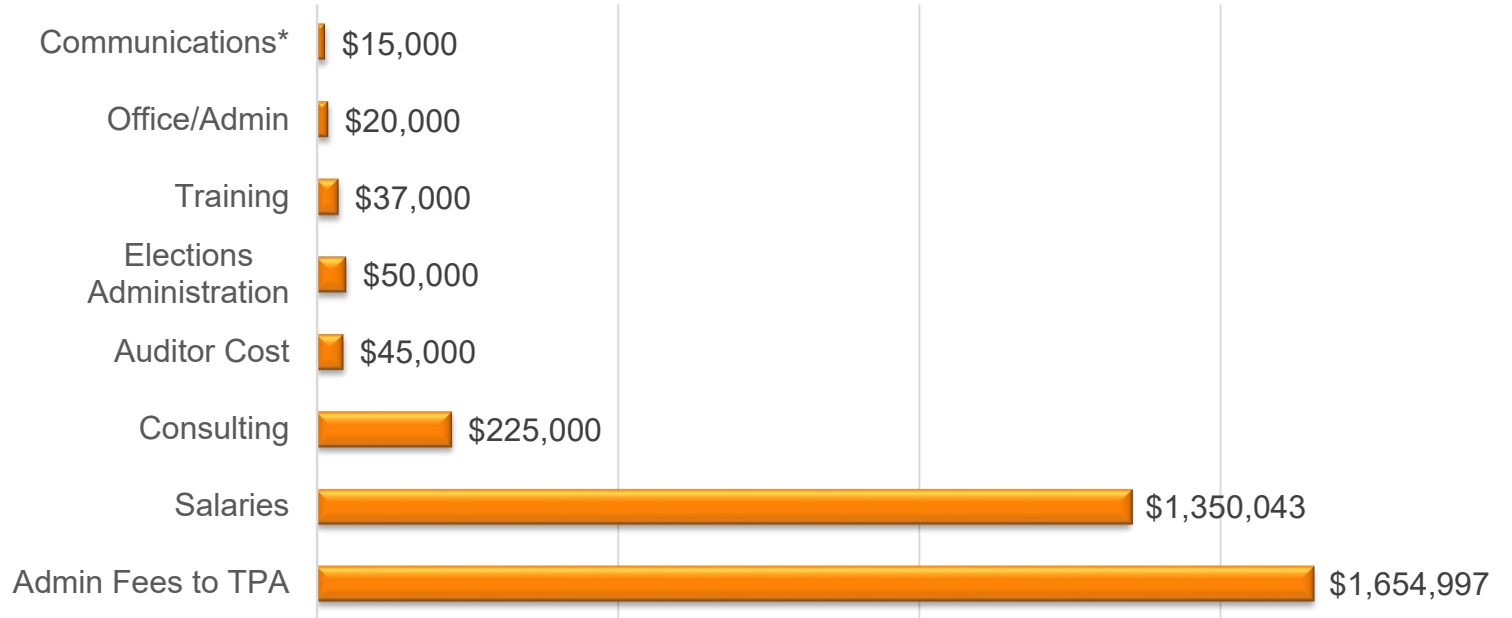
PROJECTED 2024 REVENUES



Projected 2024 Revenues - \$3.5 million



PROJECTED 2024 EXPENDITURES



*Note: Projected Expenditures are reflective of adopted budget items in 2023 with exception to the Communications estimate, which is based on a 5-year average of actual expenditures from this budget category.

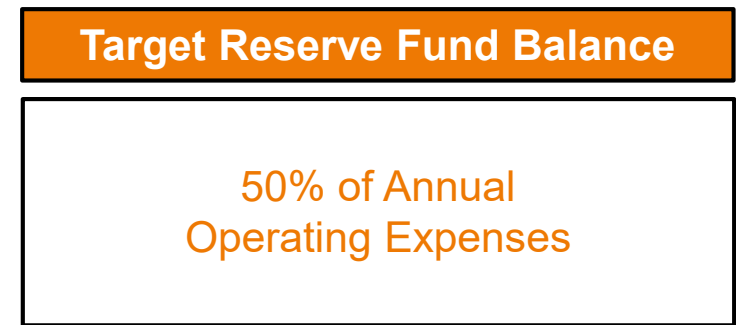
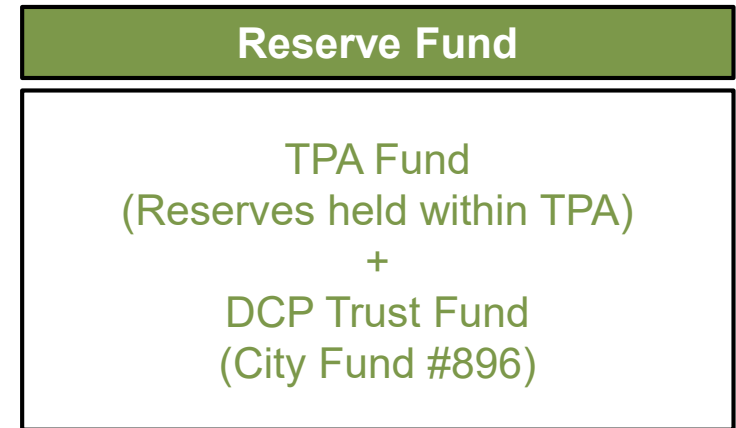
Projected 2024 Expenditures - \$3.4 million



TARGET RESERVE FUND BALANCE

- The adopted Target Reserve Fund Balance is 50% of annual operating expenses (projected to be **\$1.7 million** in 2024).
- As of 6/30/23, the Reserve Fund balance was **\$6.3 million**.*
- Projected Revenues and Expenses are based on Key Assumptions adopted by the Board at its September 29, 2022 meeting.

* This balance does not reflect encumbrances/liabilities in the amount of approximately \$893,000 for services through 6/30/2023.





2023 RESERVE FUND KEY ASSUMPTIONS

<i>Expenses Inflation Adjustment Factor</i>	<i>Net Enrollment Adjustment Factor</i>	<i>Plan Asset Growth Adjustment Factor</i>	<i>Stable Value Fund Interest Rate Assumption</i>	<i>Basis Points Charged Against Participant Accounts</i>	<i>Fee Cap</i>
3.0%	3.0%	5.5%	2.0%	0.09%	\$115

<i>Personnel Avg. Special Rate</i>	<i>City Attorney Avg. Special Rate</i>
91 %	93%

These assumptions were last approved by the Board on September 29, 2022.



2024 KEY ASSUMPTIONS

Plan Assets Growth Rate

Current: **5.5%**
No change

Where Applied:

Total overall growth rate for DCP assets.

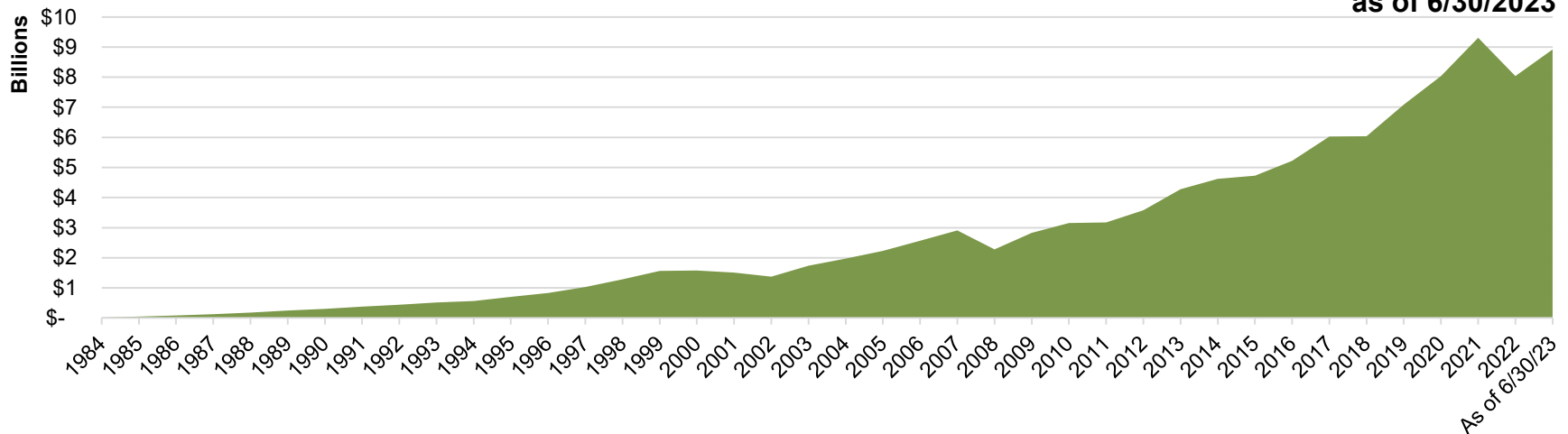
Considerations:

5, 10, 15, and 20-year growth rate trends higher than assumption.

Market volatility in recent years does not necessarily indicate future performance.

Plan Assets in Billions - Inception to Present

Current: **\$8.9 billion**
as of 6/30/2023





2024 KEY ASSUMPTIONS

Plan Assets Growth Rate

Historical and Projected Growth Rates*	
Last 20 years average (2003-2022) -->	9.9%
Last 15 years average (2008-2022) -->	7.7%
Last 10 years average (2013-2022) -->	8.9%
Last 5 years average (2018-2022) -->	6.6%
Projected Investment-Only Rate of Return (Mercer)	5.7%
Projected Total (Investments + Contributions) Annual Growth Rate -->	6.2%

*Historical averages through previous year end (12/31/22).

Historical Plan Assets Inception to Present		
Year	Assets	% Change
1984	\$17,990,298	N/A
1985	\$48,584,697	170%
1986	\$84,762,277	74%
1987	\$126,921,243	50%
1988	\$180,395,336	42%
1989	\$249,105,465	38%
1990	\$303,691,355	22%
1991	\$378,018,448	24%
1992	\$441,306,161	17%
1993	\$516,401,147	17%
1994	\$564,392,235	9%
1995	\$702,779,928	25%
1996	\$831,689,383	18%
1997	\$1,029,129,147	24%
1998	\$1,285,271,264	25%
1999	\$1,564,440,301	22%
2000	\$1,578,565,882	1%
2001	\$1,508,545,448	-4%
2002	\$1,373,444,396	-9%
2003	\$1,737,260,679	26%
2004	\$1,973,665,625	14%
2005	\$2,230,031,810	13%
2006	\$2,566,734,158	15%
2007	\$2,909,282,960	13%
2008	\$2,279,918,897	-22%
2009	\$2,828,435,629	24%
2010	\$3,154,860,910	12%
2011	\$3,174,274,111	1%
2012	\$3,578,684,906	13%
2013	\$4,277,754,120	20%
2014	\$4,622,493,622	8%
2015	\$4,726,682,745	2%
2016	\$5,221,905,502	10%
2017	\$6,027,047,090	15%
2018	\$6,037,310,346	0%
2019	\$7,087,584,205	17%
2020	\$8,035,190,777	13%
2021	\$9,307,962,971	16%
2022	\$8,035,340,110	-14%
As of 6/30/23	\$8,919,031,562	n/a
Projected end of 2023*	\$9,140,003,415	14%

*Projected 2023 outcome based on current Key Assumption of 5.5%, applied to Q3 and Q4 of 2023.



2024 KEY ASSUMPTIONS

Net Enrollment Growth Rate

Current: 3.0%
No change

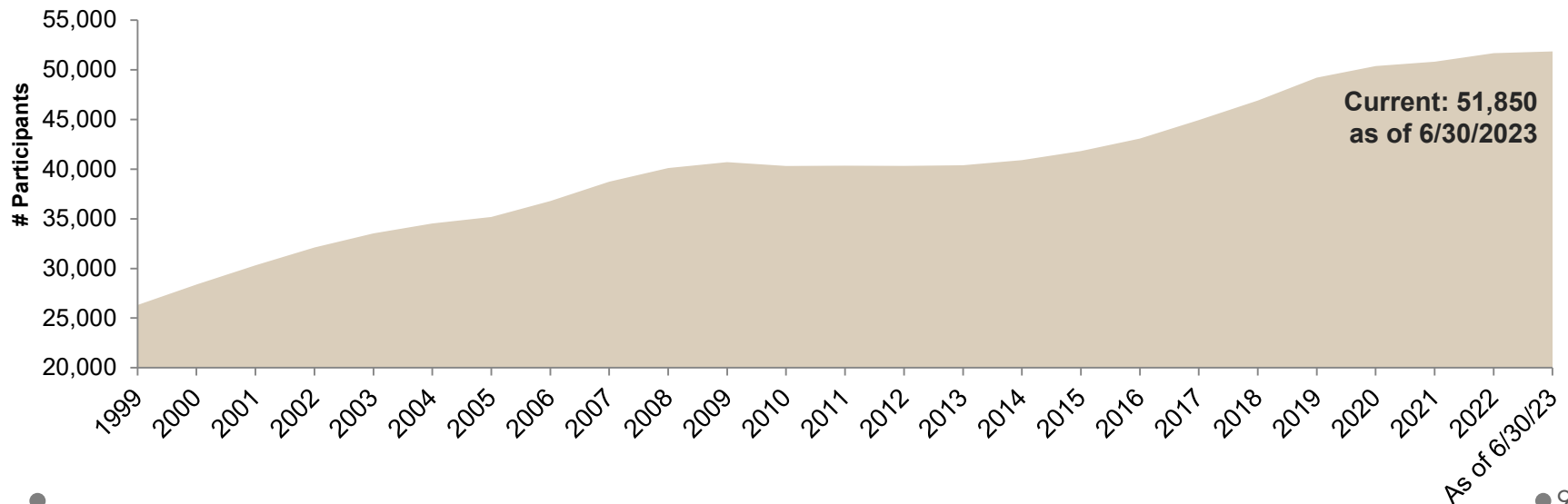
Where Applied:

Estimated growth rate of the number of participant accounts

Considerations:

There was slowed hiring and increase of retirements and other separations since 2020, though hiring activity seems to be resuming in 2023.

Historical DCP Participation - 1999 to Present





2024 KEY ASSUMPTIONS

Net Enrollment Growth Rate

Historical Growth Rates*	
Last 20 years average (2003-2022) -->	2.4%
Last 15 years average (2008-2022) -->	2.0%
Last 10 years average (2013-2022) -->	2.5%
Last 5 years average (2018-2022) -->	2.8%

*Historical averages through previous year end (12/31/22)

HISTORICAL NET ENROLLMENT		
Year	Participants	% Change
1999	26,319	-
2000	28,382	7.8%
2001	30,315	6.8%
2002	32,109	5.9%
2003	33,528	4.4%
2004	34,528	3.0%
2005	35,182	1.9%
2006	36,784	4.6%
2007	38,733	5.3%
2008	40,106	3.5%
2009	40,702	1.5%
2010	40,316	-0.9%
2011	40,348	0.1%
2012	40,325	-0.1%
2013	40,389	0.2%
2014	40,906	1.3%
2015	41,818	2.2%
2016	43,076	3.0%
2017	44,938	4.3%
2018	46,904	4.4%
2019	49,209	4.9%
2020	50,377	2.4%
2021	50,814	0.9%
2022	51,674	1.7%
<i>As of 6/30/2023</i>	<i>51,850</i>	<i>n/a</i>
Projected end of 2023*	52,625	1.5%

*Projected 2023 outcome based on current Key Assumption of 3%, applied to Q3 and Q4 of 2023.



2024 KEY ASSUMPTIONS

Administrative Expenses Inflation Factor

Current: **3.0%**
No change

Where Applied: Salary, consulting, communications, training, auditing, and office and administrative costs.

Considerations:

- Cost of living increases may be below this rate over near and mid-term.
- Positions may be filled at lower level than budgeted position authority.
- Actual communications, training, and office and administrative costs are often lower than budgeted amounts.



2024 KEY ASSUMPTIONS

Indirect Costs Rate

Current: Personnel – **91%**, City Attorney – **93%**
Proposed: Personnel – 90%, City Attorney – 85%

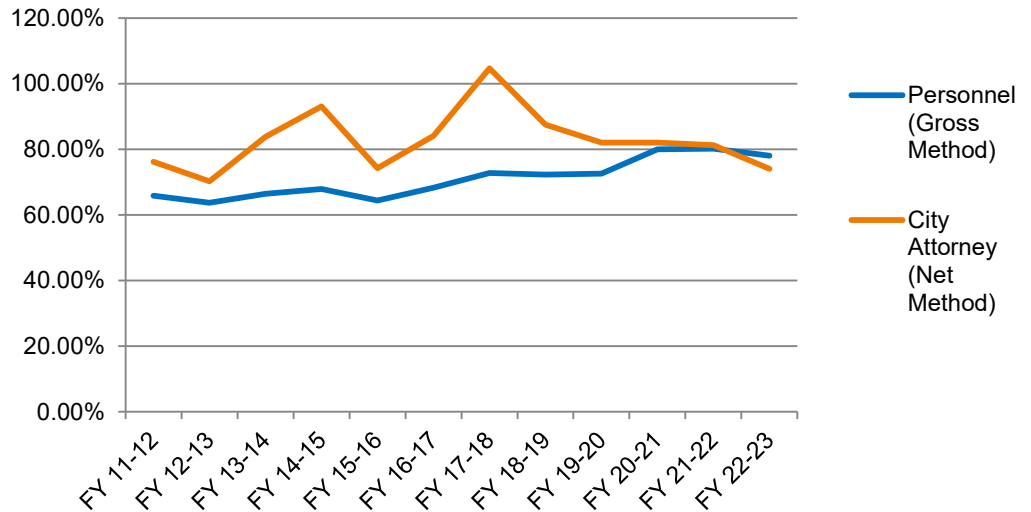
Where Applied:
Considerations:

Applied to salary reimbursements to the Personnel Department and City Attorney’s Office. Rates fluctuate from year-to-year. Proposed updates to assumptions are based on a projection of 2% annual increases to the current Indirect Costs Rates, resulting in a projected average ten-year rate of 90% and 85% for Personnel and City Attorney staff, respectively.

Historical Indirect Salary Rates*

Fiscal Year	Personnel (Gross)	City Attorney
FY 11-12	65.86%	76.17%
FY 12-13	63.73%	70.19%
FY 13-14	66.48%	83.83%
FY 14-15	67.91%	93.09%
FY 15-16	64.39%	74.25%
FY 16-17	68.29%	84.04%
FY 17-18	72.75%	104.67%
FY 18-19	72.24%	87.45%
FY 19-20	72.57%	81.99%
FY 20-21	79.97%	82.05%
FY 21-22	80.18%	81.26%
FY 22-23	78.02%	74.08%
10-Yr Avg	72.28%	84.67%
5-Yr Avg	76.60%	81.37%

Indirect Costs Rates* FY 11-12 to Present



*Indirect costs rates are determined by the Office of the Controller each fiscal year. The latest published Rate is **Special Rate 45** for FY 22-23.



2024 KEY ASSUMPTIONS

Stable Value Fund

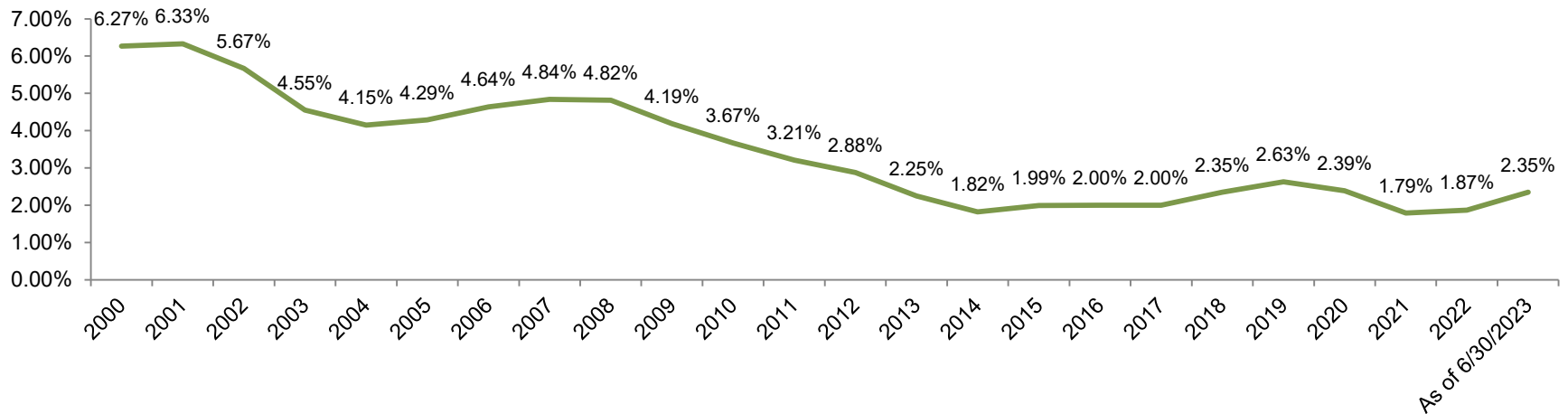
Average Rate of Return

Current: 2.0%
No change

Where Applied:
Considerations:

Estimated interest earnings of the Reserve Fund.
Annual return over last five years (ending 2022) averaged 2.21%.
U.S. Federal Reserve Board may increase interest rates.

Historical Annual Return - 2000 to Present





2024 KEY ASSUMPTIONS

Participant Fees

Current:

Basis Point Charge: **0.09%**
Annual Dollar Fee Cap: **\$115**
No change

Where Applied: Fee of 0.09% is assessed quarterly (0.0225%) against participant account balances, up to annual maximum dollar fee cap of \$115.

Considerations:

- Reductions to Third-Party Administrator (TPA) fees have created structural long-term savings. In September 2022, fees paid to the TPA were reduced from \$32.00 to \$30.00 per participant account.