



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **Controller Hollins Identifies \$72 Million Overtime Surge, Cites Audit as Next Step Toward Practical Solutions and Fiscal Stewardship**

**HOUSTON** — Houston City Controller Chris Hollins today released a new analysis showing that overtime spending in the Solid Waste, Police, and Fire departments is projected to exceed budgeted levels by more than \$72 million in Fiscal Year 2025.

This development comes as Houston works to address a \$330 million structural deficit, reinforcing the need for continued focus on transparency, accountability, and financial resilience.

“This level of overtime spending represents a significant budget challenge, but identifying the problem is the first step to solving it,” said Controller Hollins. “We’ve conducted our planned audits to enable us to move from conversations about the issue to solutions that help restore stability, strengthen services, and build long-term trust in how the City manages taxpayer dollars.”

This comes at a time when the City has also announced a hiring freeze, further underscoring the urgency of identifying sustainable ways to manage staffing-related costs, including overtime.

Despite prior efforts—including staffing incentives, updated equipment, and expanded contract services—overtime costs across all three departments have continued to rise. Fire overtime alone is projected to exceed its FY25 budget by \$42.7 million, Police by \$26.1 million, and Solid Waste by \$3.1 million—with each department surpassing budgeted overtime every month this fiscal year.

To address this, the Controller’s Office will initiate a targeted audit of overtime practices and budget execution within the Solid Waste, Police, and Fire departments. This work is part of the broader FY25 Audit Plan, which was released in early March.

The audit will:

- Evaluate whether internal controls and payroll procedures ensure the appropriate use and accurate payment of overtime in accordance with City policies

- Identify the root causes behind escalating overtime and assess how it is managed across departments
- Deliver practical, actionable recommendations to reduce unnecessary spending while maintaining service quality and compliance

“Transparent, proactive leadership will continue to guide our actions and next steps,” Hollins said. “We flagged this trend only weeks ago, and we’re already taking action. As the City’s financial watchdog, my role requires more than calling out the problem—it’s to help fix it. That means bringing forward practical solutions that protect Houston’s financial future, strengthen services, and preserve access to the resources our communities depend on.”

To learn more, visit [www.houstoncontroller.org](http://www.houstoncontroller.org).

**ABOUT CITY OF HOUSTON CONTROLLER’S OFFICE:**

Established in 1903, the City of Houston Controller’s Office is the cornerstone of financial oversight and accountability for America’s fourth-largest city. With a mission to uphold Houston’s fiscal integrity and protect resident’s tax dollars, the office oversees a broad spectrum of the City’s financial operations, including its budget, investments, and debts. Committed to transparency and fiscal responsibility, the Controller’s Office is key to maintaining the economic vitality of Houston, contributing to its status as a thriving metropolis for its diverse community.

**ABOUT CONTROLLER CHRIS HOLLINS:**

Chris Hollins, serving as Houston’s City Controller since January 2024, brings a dynamic approach to City governance and financial management. With a rich background in legal practice and management consulting, coupled with innovative leadership as Harris County Clerk, Hollins is dedicated to enhancing the city’s fiscal practices and community engagement. Educated at Morehouse College, Yale Law School, and Harvard Business School, Hollins’s commitment to accountability and service excellence drives his mission to build a financially resilient Houston. Residing in the Third Ward with his family, his work is deeply informed by his strong community ties.

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