

Dodgers shatter MLB's spending record at \$515 million

BY RONALD BLUM
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NEW YORK — The Dodgers shattered Major League Baseball's spending record with a combined \$515 million in payroll and luxury tax last year en route to their second straight World Series title, according to final figures compiled by the commissioner's office, and Los Angeles is projected for the highest total again in 2026.

Los Angeles' 2025 spending included records for payroll at \$345.3 million and tax of \$169.4 million for a total of \$514.6 million. Despite several contracts discounted to reflect deferred payments, the Dodgers' total was seven times the \$68.7 million payroll of the Miami Marlins, the lowest-spending team, and more than the payrolls of the bottom six clubs combined.

Spending by the Dodgers last year topped the previous high of \$430.4 million by the 2024 New York Mets — and Los Angeles' total didn't include the \$6.5 million signing bonus given pitcher Roki Sasaki as part of a minor league contract.

The Mets and Dodgers combined to spend \$948.3 million. The ratio of the five highest spenders to the five lowest increased from 3.6 in 2021 to a record-high 4.7 last year.

The Dodgers in 2025 ended the Mets' three-year streak as the top payroll, boosted by \$8.5 million in earned bonuses by retiring ace Clayton Kershaw.

Los Angeles' total would have been about \$71 million higher but for the use of deferred money for seven players that resulted in discounting for their payroll calculations. Shohei Ohtani

counts at \$28.2 million because \$68 million of his \$70 million salary last year isn't due until 2025.

The Mets finished second in payroll at \$342.1 million and with tax had a total spend of \$433.7 million.

In the first five seasons after owner Steve Cohen bought the team, the Mets spent \$1.44 billion without winning a title: \$1.11 billion in payroll and \$320 million in tax.

Both the Mets and Dodgers exceeded the previous record-high payroll set by the 2024 Mets at \$333.3 million.

Los Angeles is projected as of MLB's opening-day figures to lead in 2026 spending with a \$323.3 million payroll for its 40-man roster and a \$163.7 million tax for a \$487.1 million total. The Mets began with a record payroll at \$358.4 million and have a projected tax of \$124.1 million for a \$482.5 million spend.

Cleveland has the lowest opening day 40-man payroll this year at \$75.5 million.

Total spending, based on regular payrolls, rose 3.1% to \$5.32 billion last year from \$5.16 billion in 2024 and has

increased 31.3% in four seasons under the current labor contract from \$4.05 billion in 2021.

Those figures do not include the \$50 million annual pre-arbitration bonus pool that began in the 2022 collective bargaining agreement or allocations for benefits, which are included in MLB's luxury tax payrolls.

Among luxury tax payrolls, eight teams began 2026 over the \$244 million tax threshold. The Dodgers (\$415.2 million), Mets (\$379.2 million) and New York Yankees (\$339.6 million) were followed by Toronto (\$319.5 million), Philadelphia (\$315.2 million), Boston (\$263.7 million), San Diego (\$260.1 million) and Atlanta (\$247.9 million).

The Chicago Cubs started \$25,000 under and Detroit \$2.5 million below. Payrolls increase and decrease during the season due to trades and roster moves.

The Yankees finished 2025 with the third-highest regular payroll at \$301.5 million, followed by Philadelphia (\$291.9 million), AL champion Toronto

(\$253.1 million), Houston (\$236.4 million) and Texas (\$229.9 million).

Four of the top five spenders reached the playoffs, except the Mets, along with teams whose payrolls ranked ninth, 10th, 12th, 15th, 17th, 22nd, 23rd and 25th.

The Dodgers boosted payroll the most in 2025 at \$744 million. Other teams with big 2025 increases were Detroit (\$61.9 million), Baltimore (\$60.2 million to \$165.6 million), San Diego (\$45.6 million to \$217.6 million), Philadelphia (\$42.8 million) and Toronto (\$34.7 million).

Fifteen teams cut payroll from 2024 to 2025, led by the Chicago White Sox (by \$66.1 million to \$87.9 million), St. Louis (\$39.3 million to \$139.1 million), Miami (\$29.4 million to \$68.8 million) and San Francisco (by \$28 million to \$182.9 million). The Cardinals have further slashed payroll to \$102.3 million on opening day this year, and that includes about \$47.4 million attributable to trades involving three players

no longer with the Cardinals: Nolan Arenado, Sonny Gray and Willson Contreras.

The Yankees cut payroll by \$9.4 million from 2024 to 2025 and have raised it to \$302.8 million this year.


Eleven teams topped \$200 million in 2025, matching the record set in 2023. Five teams were below \$100 million, one more than the record-low in 2024.

Regular payrolls for last year are based on 2025 salaries, earned bonuses and prorated shares of signing bonuses and non-cash compensation for 40-man rosters. Deferred salaries and bonus payments are discounted to present-day values, and termination pay, option buyouts and cash

transactions among clubs are accounted for.

MLB calculated the average salary as of Aug. 31, the last day before active rosters expanded to 26, at \$4,611,595. The players' association, using a slightly different methodology, arrived at \$4,721,393.

Luxury tax is based on payrolls with average annual values that include benefits and the pre-arbitration bonus pool. The players' association doesn't think tax payments should be used in measuring disparity because half the tax money goes to a commissioner's discretionary fund distributed among teams eligible to receive revenue-sharing money which have grown their non-media local revenue.



LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Elizabethtown Board of Zoning Adjustment will hold public hearings on Tuesday, May 5, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. at the City Council Chambers, 212 W. Dixie Ave., Elizabethtown, Kentucky. The hearings will be held to consider the following:

A conditional use permit request to allow a non-owner occupied short term rental for property located at 1317 Farmingdale Dr. Hearing No. 2026-BZA-22

A conditional use permit request to allow a non-owner occupied short term rental for property located at 1315 Farmingdale Dr. Hearing No. 2026-BZA-23

A conditional use permit request to allow a non-owner occupied short term rental for property located at 1313 Farmingdale Dr. Hearing No. 2026-BZA-24

A conditional use permit request to allow a non-owner occupied short term rental for property located at 605 Balmoral Dr. Hearing No. 2026-BZA-25

A conditional use permit request to allow a non-owner occupied short term rental for property located at 411 Lexington Ave. Hearing No. 2026-BZA-26

A conditional use permit request to allow a non-owner occupied short term rental for property located at 323 Strawberry Ally. Hearing No. 2026-BZA-27

A variance request to reduce secondary front yard setback from 25' to 15' At 226 West Poplar Hearing No. 2026-BZA-28

A variance request to reduce the secondary front yard setback from 40' to 20' and the side yard setback from 20' to 5' at 701 North Mulberry Street Hearing No. 2026-BZA-29

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Notice is hereby given that the City of Elizabethtown will receive sealed bids for the Commerce Drive Gas Main Relocation project at the office of the City Clerk, City Hall, 3rd floor, 200 West Dixie Avenue, P.O. Box 550, Elizabethtown, Kentucky 42702 until **10:00 AM local time on Wednesday, April 29th, 2026**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. The successful bidder shall provide performance and payment bonds, proof of insurance and licenses as specified. Digital plans, specifications, and bid forms may be obtained from the City's Engineering Department. (270-763-4218). Digital plans and specifications will be provided at no charge.

The scope of the project generally consists of providing all labor, equipment, materials, supplies, tools and supervision necessary to install approximately 2,500 LF of 8" natural gas main.

The City of Elizabethtown reserves the right to reject any and all bids or to let the contract as a whole or for any part, and to waive any informalities or irregularities in the bids received.

/s/ Jeffrey H. Gregory, Mayor

Attest: Jessica Graham, City Clerk

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