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New York's Era of Overspending Ends With a Shudder.

After years of heady spending, the budget cuts announced by Mayor Eric Adams last week hit New York City like a punch to the gut: Most libraries would be closed on Sundays. The expansion of the city's signature prekindergarten program would be delayed. So would efforts to improve New York's notoriously dirty streets and keep rats at bay. The city's police force would be pared down in coming years.

Fiscal reality has caught up with a stunned city. The brutal cuts come as Mr. Adams scrambles to fill a \$7 billion budget deficit in the next year. The Citizens Budget Commission, a nonpartisan watchdog group, estimates that the budget gap could be significantly higher, closer to \$10.6 billion. New Yorkers may want to brace themselves. Much deeper cuts to city services could be ahead.

How did the nation's largest city get into this fix? Over the past decade, city government grew significantly, as did the size of its budget. Former Mayor Bill de Blasio hired tens of thousands of workers, expanding government services after years of relative austerity under former Mayor Michael Bloomberg during the Great Recession. Some of this spending went to important investments, like creating the city's free prekindergarten program. Other funds were put to far more questionable use, like a disastrous \$1 billion mental health initiative that never got off the ground. Mr. Bloomberg had also left office with unsettled labor contracts in the city's municipal work force. Mr. de Blasio settled them, giving the workers significant raises.

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The New York Times

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Nov. 24, 2023

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