


# How Much Did Robert Mueller's Investigation Cost? Report Cost Millions but Not As Much As Trump Has Claimed

 [newsweek.com/how-much-robert-mueller-investigation-cost-report-1372575](https://www.newsweek.com/how-much-robert-mueller-investigation-cost-report-1372575)

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After a lot of waiting, special counsel Robert Mueller delivered his investigation's report to the Justice Department late Friday afternoon, according to Attorney General William Barr.

There will certainly be a lot to explore in the hours, days and weeks to come. But among the questions surrounding the probe has been its cost to American taxpayers. The short answer: We don't know the *exact* figure quite yet. But we can try to project it.

The latest spending filing from Mueller's team came in December 2018 and covered April 1, 2018, to September 30, 2018. In that period, the special counsel's office spent roughly \$4.6 million. About \$2.9 million of that was on salary and benefits. The office also reported that \$942,787 was spend on rent, communications, and utilities; about \$580,000 on travel; and just over \$300,000 on contractual services.

That \$4.6 million in direct spending brought the total amount—when added to the figures from the prior two reports—to \$12.3 million. But the special counsel's office has also tracked other, complementary spending from the Justice Department—something it says it was not legally required to do—that, it says, doesn't cost taxpayers additional money because the resources would have been spent elsewhere if the investigation did not exist.

These Department of Justice component expenses came to \$3.9 million in the latest filing, which brings the total to nearly \$13 million over the life of the investigation.

So, in total, according to the latest filing in December, Mueller has spent just over \$25 million if you include all costs. And, again, that amount tracks spending through September 2018. Mueller's team has tracked its spending in sixth-month increments, and it has been roughly six months since September. So, with that in mind, we can try to project the total costs. Mueller has spent roughly \$6.5 million to \$10 million in total costs in each period. Therefore, it would stand to reason the cost of the probe might come to between \$31 million and \$35 million.

Special counsel Robert Mueller leaves after a closed meeting with members of the Senate Judiciary Committee on June 21, 2017. His investigation has cost more than \$25 million, in both direct and indirect costs. Alex Wong/Getty Images

Speaking with *Newsweek* ahead of the report's delivery to Barr, Kathleen Clark, a government ethics expert and a law professor at Washington University in St. Louis, said it appeared Mueller was carrying out his investigation properly.

"I'm impressed with a lot of things I've read with how Mueller has conducted this investigation," she said. She later added that it seemed he was operating within the rules and norms of the Justice Department.

She noted that Ken Starr's Whitewater investigation was controversial in how it was conducted. Starr's probe of President Bill Clinton ultimately cost taxpayers about \$70 million.

President Donald Trump has complained on more than one occasion about the cost of the probe, which he has repeatedly called "a witch hunt," and inflated the spending numbers. He tweeted in November: "When will this illegal Joseph McCarthy style Witch Hunt, one that has shattered so many innocent lives, ever end—or will it just go on forever? After wasting more than \$40,000,000 (is that possible?), it has proven only one thing—there was NO Collusion with Russia. So Ridiculous!"

However, others have argued that the Mueller probe cost nothing at all (or practically nothing) because it seized assets worth about \$20 million to \$40 million.

Clark said that prosecutors have to use discretion in what they pursue and that a risk with any special investigation is overusing resources to chase down one crime or another. "We don't try to uncover all crimes. Prosecutors use discretion," Clark said.

Later she added, "I think that what we've seen with the Mueller investigation so far is serious crimes getting charged."