

## Governor DeSantis' Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget

### Statewide Overview

#### Q: How does the Governor's Budget compare to the current year?

- The budget is \$115.6 billion. This is a \$3.0 billion decrease compared to the current year \$118.6 billion budget.
- The General Revenue portion of the budget is \$50.2 billion, which is a 0.8 percent increase over the current General Revenue budget of \$49.8 billion.

#### Q: How many reserve dollars are included in the budget?

- \$4.2 billion in unallocated General Revenue
- \$4.9 billion in the Budget Stabilization Fund
- \$2.3 billion in unallocated Trust Funds
- \$1.0 billion in the Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund
- \$2.2 billion in the Florida Reinsurance Assistance and Optional Reinsurance Assistance Programs
- \$14.6 billion in Total Reserves

#### Q: How many state positions are included in the budget?

- There are 113,026 state positions in the budget. This is a net decrease of 741 FTE over the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget.

#### Q: What trust fund sweeps are included in the Governor's Budget?

- The budget sweeps \$105 million in surplus funds:
  - Department of Environmental Protection
    - \$60 million from the Inland Protection Trust Fund
  - Department of Financial Services
    - \$1 million from the Anti-Fraud Trust Fund
    - \$5 million from the Financial Institutions' Regulatory Trust Fund
    - \$5 million from the Regulatory Trust Fund/Office of Financial Regulation
  - Department of Health
    - \$29 million from the Grants and Donations Trust Fund
  - Department of Business and Professional Regulation
    - \$5 million from the Professional Regulation Trust Fund

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**Q: Does the Governor's Budget provide tax relief to Floridians?**

- The Governor's budget recommends **\$2.2 billion** in tax relief focusing on permanently repealing the business rent tax, creating a new venture tax credit program, renewing four traditional sales tax holidays, and providing additional tax holidays to help keep more money in the pockets of Florida's families.

**Q: How does the Governor's Budget address the Florida Retirement System?**

- For the past six fiscal years, the Governor recommended and the Legislature agreed to fully fund both the normal cost and the unfunded actuarial liability at an additional cost to the state.
- The budget again implements the recommendations of the independent actuary and fully funds both the normal cost and the unfunded actuarial liability.

## Education

### Early Learning

#### **Q: What is the budget for early learning?**

- The budget includes more than \$1.76 billion in funding for our state's youngest learners.

#### **Q: What additional funding is provided for Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)?**

- The budget includes a total of \$431.6 million for Florida's VPK program. This investment maintains the base student allocation for the school year and summer programs at \$3,029 per student and \$2,586 per student, respectively. VPK will prepare approximately 136,000 four and five-year olds for kindergarten.
- The budget also maintains \$4.1 million to continue supporting the VPK Summer Bridge Program for students who score below the tenth percentile on the final administration of the Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring (CPSM) System.
- In addition, the budget includes \$30.1 million in funding for the VPK provider designation differential payments that rewards highly proficient or excellent VPK providers.

#### **Q: How does the budget provide for improvements in the quality of early learning programs?**

- The budget provides funding for the following early learning initiatives:
  - T.E.A.C.H. – \$10 million is provided for early childhood teacher scholarships;
  - Help Me Grow – \$4.5 million is maintained to connect children and families with information, resources, and developmental services to enhance health, behavior, and learning in the development of young children;
  - Teacher Training – \$3.5 million is maintained to ensure quality child care instruction; and
  - Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) – \$3.9 million is maintained to deliver high quality School Readiness curriculum directly to parents so they may strengthen the cognitive and early literacy skills of at-risk children.

#### **Q: What funding is provided for the School Readiness Program?**

- The budget includes \$1.2 billion, an increase of \$18 million, in funding for students participating in the School Readiness Program.
- The budget also includes \$20 million in funding to continue the School Readiness Plus Program that provides support to families who are

transitioning out of being eligible to participate in the School Readiness Program.

### **K-12 Public Education**

#### **Q: Does the budget include an increase in the Base Student Allocation in the FEFP?**

- The budget recommends an increase of \$95 in the Base Student Allocation (BSA) over Fiscal Year 2024-25, of which \$246.7 million of the \$303.3 million in funding generated must be used for salary increase for eligible teachers and other instructional personnel in the manner that best fits the school district's needs.

#### **Q: Does the budget maintain the funding provided in Fiscal Year 2024-25 for salary increases for Florida's teachers?**

- The budget increases the funding provided to increase teacher salaries from \$1.25 billion to \$1.5 billion.
  - Under the proposal, the Governor continues to provide school district's the ability to utilize the increase in their allocation to provide salary increases to eligible teachers and other instructional personnel in the manner that best fits the school district's needs.

#### **Q: What is the budget for K-12 education in the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP)?**

- The budget invests a record \$29.7 billion in total funding for the FEFP. This results in a per-student funding amount of \$9,205, an increase of \$222 over the Fiscal Year 2024-25 second calculation.

#### **Q: How does the Governor's Budget consider the required local effort in the FEFP?**

- The required local millage rate is maintained at the Fiscal Year 2024-25 statewide level of 3.087.

#### **Q: Is there funding for mental health initiatives in the budget?**

- Yes, the budget includes the following mental health initiatives:
  - \$190 million, an increase of \$10 million, in funding for the mental health allocation in the FEFP.
  - \$5.5 million is maintained for the Mental Health Awareness and Assistance Training initiative.

#### **Q: Is there funding for school safety in the budget?**

- Yes, the budget includes the following safety initiatives:

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- \$300 million, an increase of \$10 million, for the safe schools component of the FEFP;
- \$6.5 million is maintained for the Guardian Program that will be used to certify and train school guardians and provide a one-time stipend of \$500;
- \$845,000 in recurring funding is provided for the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool;
- \$3 million is maintained to continue providing a centralized integrated data repository and data analytics resources to improve access to timely, complete and accurate information integrating data from: social media; the Department of Children and Families; the Department of Law Enforcement; the Department of Juvenile Justice; and local law enforcement;
- \$42 million is maintained for public school hardening grants;
- \$6.4 million is maintained to continue providing school districts access to a mobile panic alert system that is capable of connecting multiple first responder agencies;
- \$3.3 million in recurring funding is maintained for fiscally constrained counties to participate in the Florida Safe Schools Canine Program. Funding may be used for the purchase and training of a firearm detection canine;
- \$6.5 million is maintained to implement safe school technology systems; and
- \$5 million is maintained for District Threat Management Coordinators.

**Q: Is security funding for Jewish Day Schools and Preschools included in the budget?**

- Yes, the budget provides \$9 million in funding to hire school safety officers, enhance safety measures, school hardening measures, upgrade equipment facilities and technology, and expenses related to transportation to minimize security exposure of staff, parents, and students to ensure children at Florida Jewish Day Schools and Preschools can learn in a safe environment.
- These schools and Preschools may also be eligible for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program if they meet the criteria for the United States Department of Homeland Security's Nonprofit Security Grant Program.

**Q: Does the budget provide funding for initiatives that promote computer science?**

- Yes, the budget provides \$8.5 million to continue providing professional development and fund costs associated with training for teachers to earn educator certificates or industry certifications in computer science. The initiative also provides bonuses to teachers who earned an educator certificate or industry certification who are teaching computer science courses.

**Q: Does the budget include funding for initiatives that promote civic education?**

- Yes, the budget:
  - Maintains \$1.5 million in funding to expand the Florida Debate Initiative;
  - Provides \$4 million, an increase of \$500,000, in funding to provide support to school districts for the improvement of civic literacy for Florida's students using regional civics literacy captains and coaches;
  - Maintains \$2.8 million in funding for the Civics Professional Development Initiative that will support professional development events focused on the new civics and government standards; and
  - Maintains \$10 million in funding for the Florida Civics Seal of Excellence Program that will allow approximately 2,800 educators to receive a \$3,000 stipend for completing the Florida Civics Seal of Excellence endorsement coursework.

**Q: Does the budget include funding for the Schools of Hope Program?**

- Yes, the budget includes \$20 million, an increase of \$14 million, in funding for the Schools of Hope Program.

**Higher Education**

**Q: Does the budget include any tuition increases?**

- No, the budget does not include any increases in tuition or fees.

**Q: What does the budget include for Florida state colleges and universities?**

- The budget includes state operating funding for Florida's higher education system of \$1.7 billion for Florida colleges, and \$3.9 billion for Florida universities.
- The budget includes a total of \$24.4 million for the Florida Postsecondary Academic Library to provide students with e-resources, technical support, and more. \$11 million is provided to Florida colleges and \$13.4 million to Florida universities.

**Q: Does the budget provide performance funding for workforce education, colleges, and universities? What metrics will be used to distribute the funds?**

- Yes, the budget includes performance funding to reward Florida's career technical centers, Florida College System Institutions, and the State University System institutions for their performance.
- The budget includes performance funding in the following areas:
  - \$10 million in funding for district workforce programs to be allocated based on students earning industry certifications in high-demand areas;

- \$20 million in funding for state colleges to be allocated based on students earning industry certifications in high-demand areas;
- \$30 million for state colleges, through the 2+2 Student Success Incentive Fund and Work Florida Student Success Incentive Fund;
- \$645 million in funding for the State University System. Performance will be based on 10 metrics including: percent of graduates employed or continuing education, median wages of employed graduates, and graduation rates; and
- \$100 million for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified faculty at our state universities.

**Q: Does the Governor’s Budget include funding for the Open Door Grant Program?**

- The budget includes a one-year pause of the \$35 million in recurring base funding to allow the program to use existing revenues as proposed to be reverted and reappropriated.
- The Governor supports the continuation of the Open Door Grant Program and believes such funds are sufficient to support current and impending projects.

**Q: Does the Governor’s Budget include funding for the Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program?**

- The budget includes \$20 million, for the Governor’s Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program to establish or expand pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs for high school and college students. The budget maintains \$5 million in funding for the Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program for individuals who currently hold an associate’s degree and wish to enter the teaching field.

**Q: What does the budget include for Florida’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities?**

- \$17 million in operating funds to Bethune-Cookman University.
- \$7 million in operating funds to Florida Memorial University.
- \$7.5 million in operating funds to Edward Waters University.
- \$115 million in operating funds to Florida A&M University.

**Q: Does the Governor’s Budget include funding for the Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute?**

- Yes, the budget provides funding of \$28 million, an increase of \$7 million, for the Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute to continue providing research and education related to cancer.



## **Student Financial Aid and Assistance**

### **Q: What student financial aid funding does the budget include for private higher education institutions?**

- The budget provides \$126 million for the Effective Access to Student Education (EASE) Grants, which will provide approximately 36,000 eligible private school students with an average of \$3,500 in tuition assistance. And maintains \$9.6 million for the EASE PLUS incentive program that provides an additional award for students enrolled in high-demand programs.

### **Q: What other state funded scholarship programs are in the budget for Student Financial Aid?**

- The budget includes funding for the following state scholarship programs:
  - Florida Student Assistance Grant – Public Full and Part Time: \$236 million
  - Florida Student Assistance Grant – Private: \$23.6 million
  - Florida Student Assistance Grant – Postsecondary: \$6.4 million
  - Florida Student Assistance Grant – Career Education: \$3.3 million
    - The maximum award of the above four Florida Student Assistance Grants is \$3,260.
  - Children and Spouses of Deceased or Disabled Veterans: \$25 million
  - Florida Work Experience: \$1.6 million
  - Rosewood Family Scholarships: \$256,747
  - Florida Farmworker Scholarship Program: \$272,151
  - Honorably Discharged Graduate Assistance Program: \$1 million
  - Randolph Bracy Ocoee Scholarship Program: \$305,000
  - Dual Enrollment Scholarship: \$18 million
  - First Responder Scholarship Program: \$10 million
  - Out-of-State Law Enforcement Equivalency Reimbursement Program: \$1 million

### **Q: What does the budget include for the Bright Futures Scholarship?**

- The budget includes a total of \$632 million for the Bright Futures Scholarship Program.
  - Funding ensures the Florida Academic Scholars award will continue to cover 100 percent of tuition and fees and the Florida Medallion Scholars award will continue to cover 75 percent of tuition and fees for qualifying students, for all semesters, including summer.
    - However, a Florida Medallion Scholar enrolled in an associate degree program at a Florida College System institution is eligible for an award equal to the amount necessary to pay 100 percent of tuition and fees.



- Funding ensures Gold Seal Vocational Scholars awards and Gold Seal CAPE Scholars awards will continue to be awarded to eligible students enrolled in a career education or a certificate program.

### **Education Infrastructure**

#### **Q: How are Public Education Capital Outlay Funds (PECO) utilized in the budget?**

- The August 2024 Public Education Capital Outlay Estimating Conference identified the cash amount available for appropriation from the PECO Trust Fund for Fiscal Year 2025-26 to be \$795.5 million.
- The PECO program addresses educational facility construction and fixed capital outlay needs for school districts, state colleges, state universities, and other public education programs.
- The budget includes \$795.5 million in funding for capital initiatives funded through PECO:
  - **Special Facility Construction**
    - \$191.8 million for Special Facility Construction projects for Baker, DeSoto, Holmes, Union, Gilchrist, Hendry, and Wakulla counties.
  - **Maintenance**
    - \$239.8 million for public charter school maintenance;
    - \$143.9 million for maintenance at the state colleges;
    - \$143.9 million for maintenance at the state universities;
    - \$8 million for state university construction;
    - \$10 million for lab school maintenance;
    - \$7 million for the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind maintenance;
    - \$7.6 million for Public Broadcasting projects;
    - \$1.5 million for the Division of Blind Services; and
    - \$42 million for the School Safety Grant Program.

## Environment

### **Q: What does the Budget include toward Governor DeSantis' new goal of \$3.5 billion investment in Everglades and water resources by Fiscal Year 2026-2027?**

- The budget includes more than \$1.5 billion for Everglades restoration and protection of water resources. This includes:
  - \$805 million for Everglades Restoration;
  - \$550 million for targeted water quality improvements, including TMDLs;
  - \$60 million for an Alternative Water Supply grant program;
  - \$20 million for a Water Supply Grant Program in Northwest Florida;
  - \$50 million for Springs projects; and
  - \$85 million for water quality monitoring and to combat harmful algal blooms including blue-green algae and red tide.

### **Q: How does the budget specifically address water quality improvements?**

- The budget includes \$550 million for targeted water quality improvements:
  - \$275 million for the expanded Water Quality Improvement Grant Program for projects to construct, upgrade or expand wastewater facilities, including septic to sewer conversions, stormwater management projects, and agricultural nutrient reduction projects.
  - \$100 million for the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) Protection Program for priority projects to reduce excess nutrients and improve water quality in the IRL.
  - \$80 million for the Lower Kissimmee Basin Stormwater Treatment Area project.
  - \$50 million will focus specifically on achieving the Department of Environmental Protection's scientific nutrient reduction goals, called Total Maximum Daily Loads, as part of the plans set forth in adopted Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs).
  - \$20 million for wastewater and storm water projects that address water quality impairments and coral reef restoration in Biscayne Bay.
  - \$25 million for the Caloosahatchee River Watershed for priority projects to reduce excess nutrients and improve water quality.
- On top of this investment, the budget includes \$50 million for projects to restore Florida's world-renowned springs.

### **Q: How much is in the budget for Everglades Restoration?**

- The budget provides more than \$805 million for Everglades Restoration. This funding includes:
  - \$613 million for Everglades Restoration, including the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan including the C-43 Reservoir.

- \$64 million for the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Reservoir project.
- \$50 million for projects in the Lake Okeechobee Watershed.
- \$78 million for dispersed water management and public private partnerships to provide additional water storage.

**Q: What does the budget do to address harmful algal blooms and discharges from Lake Okeechobee?**

- The budget includes more than \$85 million to specifically address algae blooms and red tide, including:
  - \$20 million for innovative technologies and short-term solutions to address algae blooms. This includes the harmful algal blooms and emergency red tide grant programs to help local governments to clean up their beaches and coastal areas to minimize the impacts of red tide to residents and visitors.
  - \$50 million for harmful algal blooms mitigation to implement water quality treatment technologies to combat harmful algal blooms in Lake Okeechobee.
  - \$4.2 million for the FWC Center for Red Tide and to support the Harmful Algal Bloom Task Force.
  - \$10.8 million for increased water quality monitoring, a water quality public information portal, and to support the Blue-Green Algae Task Force to focus on expediting progress toward reducing adverse impacts of blue-green algae blooms.
- Additionally, the budget invests \$550 million for targeted water quality improvements and \$805 million for Everglades Restoration, which continues investment in the C-43 reservoir, which will provide more than 55 billion gallons of water storage east of Lake Okeechobee. These projects will help reduce nutrient loading and provide critical water storage.

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funding for water storage south of Lake Okeechobee?**

- The budget includes \$232 million for several water storage projects, many of these around Lake Okeechobee, which will collectively provide nearly 190 billion gallons of water storage once completed. Examples of these projects include:
  - \$90 million to continue the C-43 Reservoir, which will provide 55 billion gallons of water storage to protect estuaries.
  - \$78 million for dispersed water management, which will provide more than 24 billion gallons of water storage when projects are operational.
  - \$64 million for the EAA Reservoir, which will provide a minimum of 78 billion gallons of water storage when complete.

**Q: What does the budget do to address water supply needs?**

- The budget provides \$60 million for an alternative water supply grant program to help communities plan for and implement vital conservation, reuse and other alternative water supply projects.
- The budget also provides \$20 million for the Water Supply Grant Program for Northwest Florida to assist with the area's unique water source constraints.

**Q: How much does the budget include for land acquisition?**

- The budget contains \$130 million for the Florida Forever Program, including:
  - \$100 million for Florida Forever through DEP's Division of State Lands;
  - \$15 million for the Florida Communities Trust component of Florida Forever for funding to local governments and eligible non-profit environmental organizations for the acquisition of community-based parks, open space and greenways that further outdoor recreation and natural resource protection needs; and
  - \$15 million for the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP), which provides competitive recreational grants to local governments for the acquisition and/or development of land for public outdoor recreation. In addition, springs protection and water quality improvement projects may include land acquisition to protect water resources.

**Q: How much does the budget include for the Rural and Family Lands Program for conservation easements?**

- The budget provides \$100 million in recurring to protect important agricultural lands through the acquisition of permanent agricultural land conservation easements.

**Q: How does the budget address hardening Florida's coastlines?**

- The budget provides more than \$261 million for the Resilient Florida Program, which will assist local governments with coastal infrastructure projects, in addition to protection of coral reef health.
- Coastal protection projects, include:
  - \$100 million for beach restoration projects;
  - \$7 million for removal of tires and other waste currently posing a threat to coral reefs;
  - \$1.4 million for Florida's Coastal Zone Management Program.

**Q: Does the budget dedicate any additional funding to coral reef restoration?**

- The budget includes \$11.2 million to implement Florida's Coral Reef Restoration and Recovery Initiative to restore 25 percent of Florida's Coral Reef by 2050.

**Q: How much is included in the budget for beach restoration?**

- The budget includes \$100 million, an increase of \$50 million, for statewide beach restoration to continue to address Florida's critically eroded shorelines and restore beaches and shorelines impacted by the 2024 Hurricanes.

**Q: How much is included in the budget for state parks?**

- The budget dedicates \$69 million to infrastructure improvements and resource management for the award-winning Florida State Park system.

**Q: How much does the budget provide for waste management?**

- The budget includes the following for waste management:
  - \$195 million – Underground Petroleum Storage Tank Cleanup
  - \$7 million – Dry Cleaning/Site Cleanup
  - \$4 million – Hazardous Waste/Site Cleanup

**Q: Does the budget include funding for springs restoration?**

- The budget provides \$50 million for springs protection and restoration projects.

**Q: How does the budget address removing invasive Pythons from the Everglades?**

- The budget includes more than \$3 million for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to remove pythons from the Everglades. Pythons are an invasive species that disrupt the natural food chain balance and have no natural predators, causing them to multiply without impediment and further threaten endangered species.

**Q: What is in the budget for wildfire prevention?**

- The budget provides more than \$45 million for wildfire prevention efforts.
  - \$13.3 million for replacement of wildfire equipment
  - \$32 million for land management and wildfire suppression activities

**Q: How much does the budget provide for the Citrus Industry?**

- \$21 million for citrus, including:
  - \$8 million for Citrus Research
  - \$6 million for the Citrus Health Response Program (CHRP)
  - \$5 million to support consumer awareness efforts
  - \$2 million to support research and production of disease resistant trees.

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**Q: How does the budget use Land Acquisition Trust Fund dollars?**

- The budget provides more than \$1.4 billion of Land Acquisition Trust Fund dollars as provided in the Constitution and Florida Statute. This includes continued funding for Florida Forever, beach renourishment, everglades restoration, and improving Florida's Springs. Additionally, funds will be used in the Debt Reduction Program to fully retire outstanding debt obligations for Florida Forever and Everglades bonds.

## Transportation and Economic Development

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funding for affordable and workforce housing?**

- The budget includes a total of \$506.2 million to fully fund affordable and workforce housing. This includes \$227.7 million for the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) Program and \$178.5 million for the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP), and \$100 million for the fourth year of the Hometown Heroes Housing Program, which helps make homeownership more affordable for eligible frontline community workers and other Florida families.

**Q: What does the budget include for emergency management?**

- The budget includes \$1.24 billion in federal and state funding for open federally declared disasters, so the state can continue to respond and recover from these disasters, as well as mitigate the impact of any future disasters or emergencies.

**Q: Does the budget include Job Growth Grant funds to support Florida's continued economic recovery and development?**

- The budget includes \$75 million for the Job Growth Grant Fund to support local infrastructure and job training projects targeted towards economic recovery and development.

**Q: How much funding is in the budget to promote Florida tourism?**

- The budget includes \$80 million to continue the vital state marketing and promotion efforts of VISIT FLORIDA.

**Q: Is there funding in the budget to help recruit law enforcement officers to work in Florida?**

- The budget includes \$23 million for another round of bonus payments for law enforcement officers who are new to the profession in the state, including those relocating from other states. This initiative will provide bonus payments of up to \$5,000 to eligible law enforcement officers.

**Q: What is included in the Governor's Budget to help Florida's rural areas grow and prosper?**

- \$25 million for the Rural Infrastructure Fund, to support local rural infrastructure projects such as roads, storm and wastewater systems, and telecommunications facilities.
- \$91.9 million for the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) to assist small county governments in repairing or rehabilitating county bridges, paving unpaved roads, addressing road-related drainage improvements, resurfacing



or reconstructing county roads, or constructing capacity or safety improvements to county roads.

- \$27.5 million for the Small County Resurfacing Assistance Program (SCRAP) to assist small county governments in resurfacing or reconstructing county roads.
- \$72.3 million for the County Incentive Grant Program (CIGP) to provide grants to counties to improve transportation facilities located on the State Highway System or to relieve traffic congestion on the State Highway System.

**Q: Does the budget include Community Development Block Grant funds for hurricane recovery and mitigation?**

- The budget includes \$150 million in federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds directed toward local hurricane recovery and hardening efforts throughout the state. These funds include several CDBG programs, including CDBG Disaster Recovery Program for all named hurricanes since 2017 and CDBG Mitigation Program.

**Q: What is in the budget to help ensure safe and secure elections in Florida?**

- The budget includes \$18.8 million for state-level election oversight activities, with a focus on cybersecurity enhancements to Florida's election system. This amount includes:
  - \$2.5 million for Florida Voter Registration System modernization.
  - \$1 million for voter signature verification.

**Q: What is the total budget for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for Fiscal Year 2025-26?**

- The budget includes \$14.8 billion for the Department of Transportation. Of this amount, \$13.8 billion goes toward the Transportation Work Program which supports transportation and infrastructure projects throughout the state.
- This investment will provide for the retention or creation of approximately 367,000 jobs. Every dollar invested in transportation is estimated to result in a return of over \$4 in user and economic benefits to Florida's residents and businesses. Additionally, this helps to diversify Florida's economy.

**Q: What Florida transportation initiatives are supported in the budget?**

- The budget provides \$13.8 billion for the Transportation Work Program, used for the construction and maintenance of Florida's roads, bridges, rails, seaports and other public transportation systems that grow the state's economy and improve the quality of life for our citizens. This includes:
  - \$5.7 billion for highway construction and maintenance to include 115 new lane miles.
  - \$1.6 billion in resurfacing to include 2,647 lane miles.

- \$120.7 million in seaport infrastructure improvements, to ensure Florida's ports continue to have capacity while the rest of the nation struggles from supply chain backups at seaports.
- \$345.4 million for aviation improvements.
- \$954.7 million in scheduled repairs for 43 bridges and replacement of 21 bridges.
- \$200.1 million investment in rail and transit projects.
- \$252.2 million for safety initiatives.
- \$258.9 million for community trail projects and \$49.4 million for the SunTrail Network.
- The budget also includes \$25 million to provide grant funding for development projects for vertiports, inland ports, seaports, intermodal logistic centers, and fuel pipelines,

**Q: What is the Moving Florida Forward Plan?**

- With the highest net in-migration of any state in the nation, Florida has experienced increased road congestion since 2019. The Moving Florida Forward Plan is a traffic congestion relief plan championed by Governor DeSantis to accelerate the development and completion of important transportation infrastructure projects. To date more than \$4.6 billion has been invested in Moving Florida Forward, and under the plan the Florida Department of Transportation is planning to resurface 80 lane miles and add 54 lanes in Fiscal Year 2025-26.

**Q: Is there funding for cultural and historic grants?**

- The Governor's budget includes \$27 million for cultural and museum grants, requiring all awarded grants to be for activities and programs that are family friendly and suitable for all age groups. The 2025-26 funding also prioritizes funding for projects that support America 250 and the celebration of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

## Health and Human Services

### **Q: Does the Governor's Budget include support for Cancer Research?**

- The Governor's budget provides an historic level of state funding for the fight against cancer with over \$266.9 million to advance cancer research initiatives. This includes \$60 million for the Florida Cancer Innovation Fund, dedicated to fostering groundbreaking research inspired by emerging ideas, trends, and promising practices, acting as a catalyst for further scientific exploration. Additionally, historic funding of \$132.5 million is designated for the Casey DeSantis Cancer Research Program to fund competitive grants, alongside a \$30 million increase to launch the Cancer Connect Collaborative Incubator, a new project aiming to build greater research capacity across Florida with an initial focus on pediatric cancer research.

### **Q: How much does the budget include for Behavioral Health Services?**

- The Governor's budget provides more than \$151.4 million in funding to support behavioral health services. This includes \$135.5 million to support the state-operated mental health treatment facilities with operational costs and staffing contracts to address the greater than 15-day forensic waitlist. The Governor's budget also provides funding to support community forensic residential treatment beds for preadmission diversion and discharge services for patients committed to a state mental health treatment facility. Community residential beds seek to reduce forensic commitments to the state mental health treatment facilities, treat and stabilize individuals, restore competency, reduce jail recidivism, and connect patients to the appropriate level of care after discharge.

### **Q: Does the Governor's Budget include any initiatives related to the Opioid Settlement Agreement?**

- The budget includes \$175.8 million from the Opioid Settlement Agreement. These funds support the Opioid Recovery Office to oversee the settlement funds and a Graduate Medical Education program to increase the number of residents in areas such as addiction medicine, addiction psychiatry, and pain medicine. These funds also invest in other initiatives that provide treatment, services, and supports to individuals with substance abuse issues as well as prevention.

### **Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funding for children who receive services through the Child Welfare System?**

- The budget includes more than \$114.2 million to support those served by the child welfare system. Funding will support foster parents and caregivers and expand access to post-adoption supports provided to young adults adopted

from the dependency system. In addition, 38.6 million is provided to implement a new Community Based Care (CBC) funding model. The model aims to incentivize efficiency and enhance the effectiveness of CBC operations while focusing on prevention, family preservation, and achieving permanency.

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funding for seniors?**

- The budget includes an additional \$6 million, for a total of \$73.1 million, to serve additional seniors as part of the Alzheimer's Disease Initiative (ADI). This further strengthens Florida's position as a national leader in the provision of care for those with the disease and their families. ADI provides support for caregivers and individuals diagnosed or suspected of having Alzheimer's disease or other related memory disorders that interfere with daily living activities.
- Additionally, \$15 million is provided, for a total of \$130 million, to increase services through the Community Care for the Elderly Program and the Home Care for the Elderly Program. Funding will provide additional support for seniors at risk for out-of-home placement. These services and support include adult day care, respite for caregivers, home delivered meals, and minor home modifications allowing them to continue to live in their homes.

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funding for individuals served through the Agency for Persons with Disabilities?**

- The budget provides \$93.7 million in new funding to allow additional individuals to be served through the Agency for Persons with Disabilities' waiver program.
- The budget also provides \$38.4 million for the continuation of the pilot project created in 2023 aimed at providing comprehensive services to individuals with developmental disabilities.
- The budget also includes \$300,000 to support the planning and development of a new waiver aimed at providing targeted services for adults with unique abilities that are entering adulthood.

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funding for Veterans?**

- The budget invests \$15.3 million for capital improvements for the State Veterans' Nursing Homes. The budget also continues a \$2 million investment, helping veterans and transitioning service members in developing valuable skills, secure employment, and start businesses, while providing Florida employers with a reliable source of trained and experienced professionals.

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include additional funding for Human Trafficking?**

- The Governor's budget includes \$1 million to launch two pilot programs aimed at preventing human trafficking and delivering specialized, comprehensive support to children at risk. Unlike existing services that primarily assist children already identified as victims, these pilot programs are designed to intervene before trafficking occurs. By targeting children with high-risk indicators and employing data-driven strategies, the pilots seek to identify and support vulnerable youth at an early stage.

## Public Safety

### **Q: What is the recommended budget for public safety?**

- The Governor's budget recommends an additional \$506.9 million for necessary investments in public safety, including funding for safer and more modern correctional facilities, combatting the illegal entry of drugs into our state, support for the court systems, and information technology enhancements.

### **Department of Corrections**

### **Q: Does the Governor's Budget cut funding for the Department of Corrections?**

- No. The budget recommends an additional \$329.9 million above base to improve officer retention, increase inmate programming, make correctional facilities safer, enhance inmate mental health services, and make technology upgrades.

### **Q: Does the Governor's Budget provide any funding for maintenance and repair?**

- Yes. The budget includes \$7 million to address the environmental deficiencies at department facilities, including improvements/repairs to water/wastewater treatment systems at Wakulla Correctional Institution.

### **Q: Does the Governor's Budget address the growing contraband issue in state prisons?**

- Yes. The budget includes \$3 million for a variety of security equipment, including drone detection systems, dart-fired electronic immobilization devices (DFEID), and mobile command trailer equipment.

### **Q: Does the Governor's Budget provide funding to improve the safety of correctional probation officers (CPOs)?**

- Yes. The budget includes \$761,175 to provide satellite phones to correctional probation officers in rural, fiscally constrained counties.

### **Q: Does the Governor's Budget provide funding for technology upgrades?**

- Yes. The budget includes \$5 to continue the modernization of the 40-year-old Offender Based Information System (OBIS).
- The budget also includes \$10 million to invest in a legacy application technology restoration plan to allow for updates to critical systems that provide efficient workflows of inmate processing, care, and security.

### **Department of Juvenile Justice**

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget provide any funding for maintenance and repair?**

- Yes. The budget includes \$10 million for general repairs and security maintenance projects.
- The budget also includes \$2.3 million for the site preparation of the new Broward County Regional Juvenile Detention Center in Broward County.

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget enhance education provided to juveniles in the care of the Department?**

- Yes. The budget includes an additional \$4 million, for a total of \$31 million, to continue the unified education system across the Department's 37 residential programs that was created in Fiscal Year 2023-2024. The Florida Scholars Academy provides various educational opportunities and trade skills in high-demand occupations. With this total investment, the Florida Scholars Academy will be fully financed for operational needs.

### **Department of Law Enforcement**

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funding to combat the trafficking and sale of narcotics in Florida?**

- Yes. The budget includes \$10 million to continue to support law enforcement efforts to combat the opioid epidemic affecting Florida's communities by expanding the State Assistance for Fentanyl Eradication (S.A.F.E.) in Florida Program for the third year. The funds have and will continue to assist local law enforcement in combatting the illicit trafficking and sale of fentanyl within Florida. Funds will be provided to FDLE to be distributed to local agencies.

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funding to address Election Crimes?**

- Yes. The budget includes \$1.8 million and 9 FTE to address increased workload needs for the Election Crime Unit due to a rise in petition fraud referrals related to several constitutional amendment initiatives proposed prior to the 2024 general election.

### **Department of Legal Affairs**

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funding for technology upgrades at the Department of Legal Affairs?**

- Yes. The budget includes \$6.1 million to continue the I.T. modernization program for the Department of Legal Affairs.



### **Justice Administrative Commission**

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funding for the Guardian Ad Litem program?**

- Yes. The budget includes \$901,994 and 12 FTE to ensure children who are victims of crime will continue to be represented by Victim Advocates. These positions were previously funded by federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grants, but those grants have been reduced.

### **State Courts System**

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funding for construction?**

- Yes. The budget provides \$8.7 million for the construction of the 6th District Court of Appeals courthouse. The budget also includes \$2.3 million for security upgrades at the 5th District Court of Appeals courthouse.

## General Government

### Financial Services

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funds for the FLAIR Replacement project, PALM?**

- Yes, \$39 million is included to continue the PALM project at the Department of Financial Services.

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funds for the My Safe Florida Home program? How many homeowners will this serve?**

- Yes, \$100 million in recurring funding is provided for mitigation grants to continue to harden Florida homes and an additional \$9 million for inspections and grant administration. This will provide a minimum of 10,000 mitigation grants annually.
- An additional \$480 million is also included in the back of the bill for the current year to include an additional \$450 million for mitigation grants and \$35 million for inspections and administration. This will provide a minimum of 45,000 mitigation grants.

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funds to support Urban Search and Rescue Teams throughout the state?**

- Yes, \$5.2 million is included to provide training and equipment to Florida's specialized fire-based teams, including 1,200 members across 8 Urban Search and Rescue task forces, 18 Hazardous Materials Teams, and 8 Mobile Emergency Communications Teams, that are essential for responding to disasters.

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funding for the Florida State Fire College?**

- Yes, the budget includes \$3.2 million to complete the roof replacement project on multiple buildings, and \$95,000 for a new tractor to be used for training and maintenance.

### Military Affairs

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funding for repairs and maintenance of Florida National Guard facilities?**

- Yes, the budget includes \$13 million to support ongoing maintenance and repairs at readiness centers throughout the state, which are used year-round for training and operations of the Florida National Guard.

**Q: What is the Revitalization and Modernization Program (REVAMP) at the Department of Military Affairs and why is it necessary?**

- REVAMP is a multi-year initiative, supported by year three funding of \$5.5 million, to renovate all 63 Florida National Guard readiness centers throughout the state. Major renovations are necessary to address failing infrastructure, life safety and ADA code compliance, and improved security to ensure the safety of our guardsmen and visitors.

**Q: Which readiness centers will be renovated as part of REVAMP in year three?**

- Year three will provide major renovations to the Starke, Palmetto and Cocoa Readiness Centers, all of which were last renovated more than 18 years ago.

**Q: What does it mean for Camp Blanding to be a Level 2 facility and why does it currently not meet those standards?**

- The National Guard ranks each of its facilities as Level 1-5 Training Centers (Level 1 being the highest standard) based on the types of training and facilities utilized at each location. Most of Florida's existing facilities are categorized between Level 5 and Level 3. Camp Blanding is currently the only location categorized as a Level 2 facility, meaning it supports simultaneous training for 5,000 to 11,999 guardsmen. Currently, Camp Blanding does not have the infrastructure to support this level of training, with only 3,000 beds and small live-fire and multi-purpose ranges and training facilities available.

**Q: What happens if Camp Blanding continues to not meet Level 2 facility standards?**

- Although Camp Blanding currently retains its Level 2 status, a continuing failure to meet federal standards may soon result in the removal of the facility's Level 2 status at a federal level and a potential reduction in the current Florida National Guard force allocation, which reduces the overall readiness of our Florida National Guard.

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget fund new readiness centers for the Florida National Guard?**

- Yes, the budget includes \$18 million in state matching funds to construct a readiness center in Gainesville that will house approximately 175 guardsmen.
- The budget also includes \$42 million to complete the construction of both the Immokalee and Zephyrhills Readiness Centers. These two facilities combined will provide training space for 350 guardsmen.

- \$500,000 in state matching funds are also recommended to design a new Special Forces Readiness Center at Camp Blanding that will house up to 150 guardsmen.

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget fully fund the National Guard tuition assistance program?**

- Yes, the budget includes \$7.2 million, a \$2 million recurring increase, to provide tuition assistance to all applicable Florida National Guardsmen pursuing higher education.
- In addition, \$2 million in nonrecurring funds are included in the back of the bill to support additional guardsmen in the current year.

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget continue the Joint Enlistment and Enhancement Program (JEEP)? Are there any recommended changes to the Program?**

- Yes, the budget reappropriates funds in the current year to continue to support JEEP next year.
- The Governor's budget also expands the scope of JEEP in the Implementing Bill, allowing the department to provide up to a \$5,000 retention bonus to guardsmen who re-enlist for a minimum of three years. This is in addition to the \$1,000 recruitment bonus authorized in the current program.

**Q: What is the new Florida National Guard Health Insurance Reimbursement Program and why is it necessary?**

- The Program is a new initiative in the Governor's budget to reimburse Florida guardsmen for the cost of their individual premium for federal health insurance, TRICARE Reserve Select.
- The Program aims to increase the overall operational readiness and availability of the Florida National Guard personnel for all state and federal missions.

**The Florida State Guard**

**Q: What is the Florida State Guard?**

- The Governor's budget recommends the continuation of the Florida State Guard, which is a volunteer organization, under the purview of the Governor, to assist in emergencies.
- Specifically, the State Guard support units related to search and recovery, medical, logistics, communications, and other support functions that are needed during responses to hurricanes, natural disasters, and other emergencies.

**Q: How many soldiers are currently in the Florida State Guard?**

- Currently, there are 620 soldiers in the Florida State Guard, with 250 anticipated to attend entry level training in February. The Florida State Guard continues to receive membership applications and plans to conduct additional entry level training throughout the 2025-26 fiscal year for up to 700 additional soldiers for a goal of 1,500 soldiers by the end of the 2025-26 fiscal year.

**Q: Why does the Florida State Guard need an additional \$62 million in the current year?**

- All the funding provided to date, including the positions, have been nonrecurring; therefore, a large portion of the \$62 million is to support the annual cost of current operations. This includes the operation of maritime vessels and aircraft acquired over the past two years, as well as the annual cost of monthly, quarterly, and annual training and new soldier entry training.
- The remaining funding is for additional maritime vessels, ground transportation, and other equipment needed for emergency response missions.

**Q: When was the Florida State Guard activated in the calendar year 2024?**

- The Florida State Guard activated 730 soldiers across seven emergencies during the calendar year 2024. Activations included: Unnamed Winter Storm, Pembroke Pines Tornados, Operation Lone Star, Operation Vigilant Sentry, and Hurricanes Debby, Helene, and Milton.

**Management Services**

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funding to maintain state facilities?**

- Yes, the budget includes \$58 million to provide employees and visitors at state-owned office buildings with a safe and efficient working environment.
- The budget also includes \$3 million to complete roof replacements for critical infrastructure at the Florida State Fire College.

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funding for new state buildings?**

- Yes, the budget includes \$57 million for phase one of a new office building and parking structure in the Capital Circle Office Complex in Leon County. The facility will consolidate approximately 1,000 employees from aged and inefficient facilities, resulting in an overall state footprint reduction.

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget proposal make changes to health benefits for state employees?**

- The budget makes improvements to the weight management pilot program to increase active engagement in the wellness program component to ensure participants are learning how to live a healthy lifestyle beyond the assistance of medication. The improvements also allow participants whose body mass index falls below the criteria to continue to access the wellness program component the following year for continued support. Additionally, the budget includes a transfer of \$348 million from General Revenue to the State Employees Health Insurance Trust Fund to cover projected needs.

**Q: How much in savings have been achieved through the Shared Savings Program in the State Group Health Insurance plan?**

- Since 2019, Bundled Surgical Services have saved the state \$37 million and resulted in employee rewards in the amount of \$5.6 million.
- Since 2019, Transparency Services have saved the state \$33.3 million and resulted in employee rewards in the amount of \$9.2 million.

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include initiatives to help reduce the growth in the cost of the State Employees Health Insurance Program?**

- Yes, the budget includes a \$2 million investment to provide a mobile app-based benefits navigation and engagement platform to assist members in accessing their benefits and increasing participation in cost saving programs and high-value care. To ensure value to the State, the service is required to have a guaranteed return on investment and be based on a per-engaged user cost structure.

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funding to assist local governments with Emergency 911 systems?**

- Through a current year investment of nearly \$19 million, all local government Public Safety Answering Points are being upgraded to allow the transfer of an emergency call from one local, multijurisdictional, or regional E911 system to another. The Governor's budget includes \$1.8 million in recurring funds for fiscally constrained counties to help cover increased operational and maintenance costs attributed to the upgrades.

**Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funding to address the increasing number of cyber threats?**

- Yes, the budget includes \$67.5 million in various state agencies for security, training, and resiliency resources. While Florida has improved its cybersecurity posture in recent years, it is vital to continue to invest in modern

cybersecurity initiatives to maintain pace with the ever-evolving technology landscape to ensure Floridians' sensitive information and critical infrastructure are protected.

### **Public Employee Relations Commission**

#### **Q: Why does the Governor's Budget include pay increases for the Public Employee Relations Commission hearing officers?**

- The budget includes \$600,000 to increase the salaries of the Public Employee Relations Commissions' (PERC) hearing officers to \$151,958 to better recruit and retain highly qualified candidates and reduce the pay disparity between its staff and the Division of Administrative Hearings' judges, who do similar functions.

### **Revenue**

#### **Q: Does the Governor's Budget include funding for fiscally constrained counties?**

- Yes, the budget includes \$73.5 million to provide twenty-nine counties with an offset to reductions in ad valorem tax revenue attributed to homestead and conservation land exemptions and includes \$68,000 to provide Hardee County aerial photographs to ensure all real property in the county is correctly valued.