



Florida Leads the Nation

Statewide Overview and Taxes

The strength and resiliency of our great state is exemplified by the Florida Leads Fiscal Year 2021-22 budget. Over the course of a tumultuous, unprecedented past year, we asked our State to make incredibly difficult financial decisions to efficiently and effectively respond to the pandemic. Following the science and not letting fear guide us has allowed for families to be with their loved ones, family businesses to innovate and survive, and churches to congregate. Florida's economy is expected to rebound to pre-pandemic levels in Fiscal Year 2021-22, as revenues continue to exceed the latest estimates.

The Florida Leads budget for Fiscal Year 2021-22 totals \$101.5 billion, ensures the State maintains substantial funding in reserves, including General Revenue, to effectively respond to any unforeseen emergency, and continues to prioritize our K-12 education students and teachers, and Florida's environmental resources.

Of the total \$101.5 billion, the General Revenue portion is \$36.3 billion. Florida's total reserves are \$9.5 billion, more than 9 percent of the total budget for the fiscal year, leaving ample resources for any unforeseen circumstances.

\$6.9 billion, or more than 75 percent of the \$9.2 billion total increase over the current year budget, is in federal funds. A majority of the \$6.9 billion increase is due to federal spending authority for funds received by the state for COVID-19 relief.

Taxpayer Savings

Florida is committed to continuing to ease Floridians' tax burden in Fiscal Year 2021-22, enacting a tax package which cuts taxes by \$169 million. Governor DeSantis believes in keeping taxes low to help Florida's future generations. The \$169 million tax cut package includes funding for three sales tax holidays:

- **A 7-day Freedom Week Sales Tax Holiday to Save Florida Families \$54.7 million** – The holiday covers certain outdoor recreation purchases, such as the first \$100 of the sales price of sunglasses, the first \$200 of the sales price of tents, and the first \$500 of the sales price of kayaks or canoes, as well as tickets for events, museums, the arts, and more.
- **A 10-day Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday to Save Florida Families \$69.4 million** – The holiday covers clothing up to \$60, school supplies up to \$15, and the first \$1,000 of a computer



- **A 10-day Disaster Preparedness Sales Tax Holiday to Save Florida Families \$10.5 million** – The holiday covers items needed during disasters including generators priced at \$1,000 or less

Florida Reserves

- \$4.9 billion in unallocated General Revenue
- \$2.7 billion in the Budget Stabilization Fund
- \$1.9 billion in unallocated Trust Funds
- **\$9.5 billion in Total Reserves**

Florida Retirement System

Pension Unfunded Liability – The unfunded actuarial liability (UAL) of the Florida Retirement System (FRS) Defined Benefit Program amounted to \$36.0 billion on June 30, 2020. Based on an actuarial liability of \$200.3 billion and an actuarial value of assets of \$164.3 billion, the program is 82.0 percent funded as of June 30, 2020.

The Fiscal Year 2021-22 Florida Leads budget includes \$59 million to implement the recommendations of the independent actuary and fully fund the recommended contributions to the UAL for state employees. This helps Florida continue to have one of the best funded pension plans in the nation.



Florida Leads on Education

Over the past year, Florida's students, parents and educators faced significant challenges. Despite the obstacles presented by the pandemic, Florida adapted and prevailed. The Governor's bold approach to the pandemic has allowed Florida to be able to continue providing a high quality education for every family and every student. Building on that momentum, this budget provides key investments in our education systems.

Several key investments include:

- \$550 million, an increase of \$50 million, in funding to continue raising the minimum K-12 teacher salary to \$47,500, as well as salary increases for veteran teachers and other eligible instructional personnel.
- \$1.9 billion in funding for early child education, including more than \$408 million for Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK).
- \$22.8 billion in funding, of which \$12.9 billion is in state funding for the K-12 public school system.
 - The appropriated funding covers the costs associated with the current projected enrollment of 2.86 million students and includes a \$464.2 million safety net to ensure school districts have sufficient funding to cover the costs associated with any increased student enrollment.
- The Florida College System is at an historic \$1.3 billion in state operating funding.
- The State University System is at an historic \$2.8 billion in state operating funding.

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)

The budget provides a total of more than \$408 million for Florida's VPK program, a quality, free education initiative, which serves over 158,000 four and five-year olds. VPK prepares each child for kindergarten by building a strong foundation for school and focusing on early literacy skills.

School Readiness

The budget provides increased funding to serve additional children in the School Readiness program, and reward School Readiness providers who participate in program assessments and implement quality improvement strategies.

- \$72 million, an increase of \$12 million, for the School Readiness Program to reduce the current waitlist. This increase will serve an additional 2,000 students on the waitlist, resulting in a total of 12,000 students served; and
- \$100 million, an increase of \$50 million, in federal funds to increase eligible early learning coalitions' provider reimbursement rates.



In addition, the following initiatives that support early learning are included:

- T.E.A.C.H. – \$10 million for early childhood teacher scholarships;
- Help Me Grow – \$1.8 million 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 million for statewide professional development to improve child care instructor quality;
- Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) – \$3.9 million to deliver high-quality School Readiness curriculum directly to parents so they may strengthen the cognitive and early literacy skills of at-risk children.

In addition to the funding provided through the state budget for early learning, \$635 million from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation (CRRSA) Act and \$2.5 billion from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) were provided to ensure access to childcare and early education services during the pandemic.

Of these ARP funds, over \$166 million will be utilized to provide two \$1,000 relief payments to over 77,000 early learning instructors.

K-12 Public Education

While Florida's K-12 public school system faced an unprecedented school year, Florida's teachers and principals stepped up and found ways to keep our students learning and engaged. That is why Governor DeSantis continues to support and promote initiatives that elevate the teaching profession. Specifically, Governor DeSantis proposed and secured funding to provide full-time classroom teachers and principals a one-time relief payment of \$1,000 and additional funding to continuing raising the minimum teacher salary for full-time public classroom teachers toward the goal of \$47,500.

The budget appropriates \$22.8 billion in total funding for the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), which includes the following increases:

- Increase of \$53 in the Base Student Allocation (BSA);
- Increase of \$20 million, for a total of \$120 million for mental health initiatives;
- Increase of \$50 million, for a total of \$550 million to continue increasing the minimum teacher salary for full-time public classroom teachers to the goal of \$47,500 and provide salary increases to Florida's veteran teachers and other instructional personnel.
- \$464.2 million safety net to ensure school districts have sufficient funding to cover the costs associated with any increased student enrollment.

In addition to the funding provided through the state budget, school districts received over \$2.8 billion from the CRRSA Act and \$6.3 billion from the ARP Act. These funds are available for districts to ensure educational continuity for students and teachers.



Of these ARP funds, over \$215 million will be utilized to provide a \$1,000 relief payment to over 175,000 full-time classroom teachers and over 3,000 principals in our K-12 district schools, charter schools, and the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind.

School Safety

The Florida Leads budget continues to invest in school safety initiatives, continuing the Governor's commitment to ensuring Florida's students and teachers are in a safe and secure learning environment.

- The budget maintains the following school safety initiatives:
 - \$180 million is maintained for the safe schools component of the FEFP.
 - \$120 million, an increase of \$20 million, for the mental health allocation in the FEFP.
 - \$6.5 million, an increase of \$6 million, for the Coach Aaron Feis Guardian Program that will be used to certify and train school guardians and provide a one-time stipend of \$500.
 - \$5.5 million to continue the Youth Mental Health Awareness and Assistance Training.
 - \$640,000 is maintained 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.

Protecting Florida's Jewish Day Schools

To continue to address safety concerns for Florida's Jewish communities, Governor DeSantis secured \$4 million, an increase of \$1.5 million, in funding to hire school safety officers, enhance safety measures, upgrade equipment, facilities and technology; and increase security services to ensure children at Florida Jewish Day Schools can learn in a safe environment. This funding will be available to all eligible Florida Jewish Day Schools to help provide security and counter-terrorism upgrades such as video cameras, fences, bullet-proof glass, alarm systems and other safety equipment.

Promoting Computer Science

The budget maintains \$10 million to get teachers certified to teach computer science courses, and to provide bonuses to teachers who hold educator certificates or industry certifications in computer science.



Closing K-12 Achievement Gaps

\$14.5 million to implement House Bill 7011, which created one seamless and uniform VPK-Grade 8 screening and progress monitoring tool aligned with the newly adopted B.E.S.T. Standards and providing consistent data reporting to help determine personalized interventions for struggling readers and focus areas for statewide professional learning for educators.

\$7.5 million to implement House Bill 419, which prioritized Florida's youngest learners and VPK programs by strengthening the accountability system and utilizing coordinated programs to identify emergent literacy and mathematic skill deficiencies to provide those students intensive interventions.

K-12 Civics Engagement

\$500,000 is provided to continue the Florida Debate Initiative which creates and expands existing speech and debate programs with a focus on civic education.

Higher Education

In higher education, Florida boasts five of the Top 100 public universities in the country, including one in the Top 10, and another in the Top 20, while attaining the lowest tuition in the country for public four-year institutions. Additionally, *U.S. News and World Report* has ranked Florida's higher education system the best in the nation for five consecutive years.

To continue building on this success, the budget invests an additional \$64.5 million, for a total of \$1.3 billion in state operating funding for Florida's state colleges and an additional \$130 million, for a total of \$2.8 billion for Florida's state universities.

The budget also establishes the Florida Postsecondary Academic Library Network to provide essential library services to Florida College System and State University System institutions. A total of \$20.8 million, including \$9 million to colleges and \$11.8 million to universities, is allocated to provide students with e-resources, technical support, distance learning, and more.

The budget also provides \$200 million, of which up to \$125 million is federal funding, to implement the New Worlds Reading Initiative established in House Bill 3. The initiative aims to deliver books monthly to students who show substantial deficiency in reading.

In addition to the funding provided through the state budget, Florida's higher education institutions received \$1.3 billion from the CRRSA Act and \$2.2 billion from the ARP Act. These funds are available to Florida's public state colleges and universities, eligible private institutions, and eligible technical colleges and centers to utilize to ensure educational continuity for students and teachers.



Holding the Line on Tuition

The Florida Leads budget does not include any tuition increases for Florida's colleges and universities. It is imperative that students and families do not face any additional financial burdens in completing their education.

Performance Funding

The budget includes the following performance funding at career technical centers, state colleges, and state universities:

- \$6.5 million for students earning industry certifications in high-skill, high-demand areas at career technical centers;
- \$14 million for students earning industry certifications in high-skill, high-demand areas at Florida colleges;
- \$25 million in performance funding for state colleges through the 2+2 Student Success Incentive Fund and the Work Florida Student Success Incentive Fund; and
- \$560 million in performance funding for state universities.

Workforce Initiatives

The budget includes nearly \$526 million in state and federal funding to support workforce education programs to ensure Florida students are prepared to fill high-demand, high-wage jobs.

This includes maintaining \$10 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.

Additionally, \$15.6 million is provided to reimburse eligible postsecondary institutions for tuition and related instructional material costs for dual enrolled students.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The budget provides \$126.2 million for Florida's Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

- Bethune-Cookman University received a total of \$16.96 million in operating funds.
- Florida Memorial University received a total of \$7 million in operating funds.
- Edward Waters College received a total of \$7.4 million in operating funds.
- Florida A&M University received an increase of \$2 million, for a total of \$94.8 million.



Education Infrastructure

The budget provides more than \$318.5 million in state funds, and up to \$401.2 million in federal funds, for a total of \$719.7 million education capital outlay funding:

School Safety Grants

- \$42 million for school safety grants is provided to school districts to assist with costs associated with improving the physical security of K-12 school buildings.

Maintenance

- \$182.9 million for public charter school maintenance to fund the necessary infrastructure for public charter schools without utilizing any local funds from school districts.
- \$7.6 million for lab schools.
- \$2.7 million for the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind.
- \$6 million for public broadcasting stations to correct health and safety issues, correct building deficiencies, and complete renovations.

Construction

- Up to \$210.3 million in federal funding to complete the funding for six Special Facility Construction projects, which funds critical infrastructure needs in the following counties:
 - Baker;
 - Bradford;
 - Calhoun;
 - Jackson;
 - Levy; and
 - Okeechobee.
- \$131.4 million for construction projects at the state universities.
 - This is comprised of \$37.8 million in state funds and up to \$93.6 million in federal funds.
- \$123.4 million for construction projects at the state colleges.
 - This is comprised of \$26.1 million in state funds and up to \$97.4 million in federal funds.
- \$46 million in budget authority to the State University System to spend collected student fees on a list of student-approved facility projects.



Florida Leads on the Environment

Florida's environmental resources are the foundation of Florida's communities, economy, and way of life and are critical to our state's prosperity. Upon taking office, Governor DeSantis made the protection of our natural resources a top priority, implementing major reforms to achieve more now for Florida's environment. As a result of the Governor's focused and unparalleled leadership, Everglades restoration and efforts to protect Florida's water resources have seen record funding, and the Fiscal Year 2021-22 budget continues to prioritize our state's treasured natural resources.

The environment remains a key focus of the Florida Leads budget, with significant investments made for Fiscal Year 2021-22. As part of \$4.5 billion in funding to protect our environment, agriculture and natural resources, the budget includes \$2.2 billion specifically for the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Further Protection of our Valuable and Vulnerable Coastlines

Governor DeSantis recognizes the challenges presented by sea level rise, intensified storm events and localized flooding. Upon taking office, Governor DeSantis set forth to develop resilience goals for the state to help protect Florida's coastal communities and fortify its pathway to continued prosperity, and took action, establishing the Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection within the DEP and appointing the state's first Chief Resilience Officer. These actions represented the first tangible step towards strong, coordinated leadership on resiliency.

The budget for Fiscal Year 2021-22 takes the next tangible step to address the challenges of sea level rise, intensified storm events, and localized flooding by establishing the Resilient Florida program. The Resilient Florida program will provide \$100 million per year in grants to state and local government entities to fund projects to adapt regionally significant assets to address the impacts of sea level rise, intensified storms and localized flooding. The budget also includes up to \$500 million for these grants and up to \$100 million for coastal mapping in ARP funds.

Specifically, in Fiscal Year 2021-22, the budget includes \$20 million to close the gap for statewide sea level rise and vulnerability assessments. These funds would allow DEP to grant up to \$100,000 to all remaining coastal counties, coastal municipalities, and inland counties who have not completed vulnerability assessments.

Protecting Florida's 1,300 miles of coastline is critical to our growing economy and quality of life, as millions travel from around the world to visit our world-renowned beaches. The budget includes \$100 million, plus up to \$50 million in ARP funding, in beach nourishment funding to continue addressing Florida's critically eroded shorelines.



The budget includes \$10 million for the Resilient Coastlines Program within the Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection within DEP. This program helps prepare Florida's communities and habitats for changes resulting from sea level rise by providing funding and technical assistance and continuing to promote and ensure a coordinated approach to planning among state, regional and local agencies. The funding for coastal resiliency grants will also help protect Florida's coral reefs which serve as the state's first line of defense from storm surge. They are a major tourism attraction and support emergency sand placement to help fortify coastal areas ahead of storms.

Continued Improvements for Water Quality, Quantity and Supply

In Executive Order 19-12, among other major environmental reforms, Governor DeSantis called for \$2.5 billion to be invested over four years for Everglades restoration and the protection of water resources, an increase of \$1 billion over the previous four years. After two years in office, Florida is over halfway to reaching that goal by securing over \$1.25 billion. The Fiscal Year 2021-22 budget continues this investment, dedicating more than \$625 million for Everglades restoration and the protection of water resources.

The budget includes more than \$415 million for Everglades restoration projects, including \$32 million for Restoration Strategies, \$252 million for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, \$50 million for the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project, and \$81 million for the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program.

This level of funding will put Florida on track to complete the C-44 Reservoir and stormwater treatment area, the C-43 Reservoir, and additional projects over the next two years. These projects will provide 700,000 acre-feet of storage and remove more than 365,000 pounds of total phosphorus annually, a major source of nutrient pollution. The budget includes \$64 million for the EAA Reservoir to continue the momentum of this critical project to reduce harmful discharges and help send more clean water south of the Everglades. The budget also provides up to \$48 million for the C-51 Reservoir and up to \$59 million in federal funding for Everglades Restoration projects.

The budget also includes \$302 million for targeted water quality improvements to achieve significant, meaningful and measurable nutrient reductions in key waterbodies across the state and to implement the initial recommendations of the Blue-Green Algae Task Force. This includes:

- \$277 million for cost-share grant funds for water quality improvements, including septic conversions and upgrades, other wastewater improvements, and rural and urban stormwater system upgrades.
- \$25 million to accelerate projects to meet scientific nutrient reduction goals (called Total Maximum Daily Loads), which may include green infrastructure investments or land conservation to protect our water resources.



The budget also includes up to \$525 million in federal funding for the Wastewater Grant Program for water quality improvements, including septic conversions and upgrades and up to an additional \$20 million in federal funding for Total Maximum Daily Loads.

On top of the investment in targeted water quality improvements, the budget includes \$50 million, and up to \$25 million in ARP funds, to restore Florida's world-renowned springs. This funding may also be used for land acquisition to protect springsheds and is crucial to supporting homeowners and local communities as they work with the state to achieve nutrient reduction requirements.

The budget supports \$25 million investment to improve water quality and combat the effects and impacts of harmful algal blooms, including blue-green algae and red tide. The budget includes the following:

- \$10 million for innovative technologies and short-term solutions to aid in the prevention, cleanup and mitigation of harmful algal blooms.
- \$10.8 million to increase water quality monitoring, support the Blue-Green Algae Task Force, and to improve and maintain the water quality public information portal. This portal is focused on accountability and transparency, providing monitoring data for all of Florida's outstanding springs and key waterbodies, as well as allow the public to track the investment in projects and progress in attaining water quality goals.
- \$4.2 million to continue supporting the Center for Red Tide Research within the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), and to support the Harmful Algal Bloom Task Force and partnerships for mitigation and technology development with a renewed focus on red tide.

The budget includes up to \$40 million for the alternative water supply grant to help communities plan for and implement vital conservation, reuse and other alternative water supply projects. DEP will continue to engage local governments, industry, universities and water management districts to identify and research all viable alternative water supply sources and is working to provide an assessment of funding needs critical to supporting Florida's growing economy.

Investing in Clean Lands and Air

The budget includes \$89 million for the cleanup of contaminated sites with a focus on promoting redevelopment of these areas once cleanup has been completed. Working with federal and local partners, cleanup and redevelopment of these sites will ensure Florida's new businesses and growing communities can safely develop and our economy can continue to grow. Specific investments include:

- \$75 million for Petroleum Tanks Cleanup;
- \$11 million for Dry Cleaning Solvent Contaminated Site Cleanup; and
- \$3 million for Hazardous Waste Contaminated Site Cleanup.



The budget includes up to an additional \$50 million in federal funding for the Petroleum Tanks Cleanup Program and up to \$100 million for Piney Point mitigation efforts.

The budget also includes \$30 million for the implementation of the State Mitigation Plan for the \$166 million Volkswagen Clean Air Act settlement. The plan addresses diesel emission reduction, including funds for electric vehicle infrastructure and electric buses.

A Commitment to Florida's Prized Properties and Waters

The budget includes \$152 million to protect our prized properties and waters in Florida. This funding will ensure all Floridians have access to enjoy our pristine natural environment, while protecting these unique natural resources and investing in the management of our state-owned lands.

As land acquisition is vital to both our economic growth and environmental protection, the budget includes \$100 million for the Florida Forever Program, the state's premier conservation and recreation land acquisition program for the Division of State Lands to acquire land with a focus on protecting our water resources for Floridians and visitors. \$2 million is also included for the Florida Forever – Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program, which provides grants for acquisition or development of land for public outdoor recreation use or to construct or renovate recreational trails. This funding will fund the entire small project priority list (\$50,000 maximum per project) of eligible projects. The budget also includes up to \$300 million in funding to protect wildlife corridors.

Florida's State Parks won the National Gold Medal a record four times for having the best park system nationally. The budget dedicates \$50 million to infrastructure improvements and resource management with the goal of maintaining this high standard, and ensuring all visitors and residents alike have access to these prized properties for generations to come.

Investing in Florida's Agriculture

The budget includes \$1.8 billion for Florida's agricultural industry. In order to preserve Florida's iconic citrus industry, the budget invests \$27.7 million for citrus research, the Citrus Health Response Program and for consumer awareness marketing efforts. Additionally, recognizing the importance of effectively combatting wildfires, the budget includes \$7.6 million for wildfire suppression equipment, \$5.6 million to replace firefighting aircraft and \$4 million for road and bridge maintenance to allow for better access for land management and wildfire suppression activities.



Florida Leads on Transportation and Economic Development

It was only one year ago that Florida, like the rest of the United States, was grappling with the best approach to managing the economic challenges brought on by the pandemic. However, unlike several other states which kept their economies locked down for many months, Governor DeSantis followed the science and allowed Florida to take the steps needed to safely reopen businesses and resume normal activities. The result has been an economic recovery in our state that is the envy of the nation, with a steadily decreasing unemployment rate, a growing labor force, and hundreds of thousands of available jobs for Floridians.

Building on Florida's continuing economic reemergence from COVID-19, the Florida Leads budget provides significant resources for transportation and economic development. Key investments will be made in job growth, workforce training, affordable housing, roads and other infrastructure, tourism marketing, and rural economic development.

Ensuring Housing Availability and Affordability for Florida's Families

Since he took office, Governor DeSantis has remained committed to ensuring that significant resources are available for the state's affordable housing programs. The budget provides \$209.2 million to fund workforce and affordable housing programs. This amount includes \$62.5 million for the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) Program, and \$146.7 million for the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP). These programs are administered by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) from a portion of the revenues received from documentary stamp taxes on real estate transfers.

The SAIL Program, funded by the State Housing Trust Fund, provides low-interest loans on a competitive basis to affordable rental housing developers. SAIL funds serve to bridge the gap between primary financing and the total cost of the development. This allows developers to obtain the full financing needed to construct or rehabilitate affordable multifamily units.

The SHIP Program, funded by the Local Government Housing Trust Fund, provides funds to local governments as an incentive to create partnerships that produce and preserve affordable homeownership and multifamily housing for very low, low and moderate income families. SHIP dollars may be used to fund emergency repairs, new construction, rehabilitation, down payment and closing cost assistance, impact fees, construction and gap financing, mortgage buy-downs, acquisition of property for affordable housing, matching dollars for federal housing grants and programs, and homeownership counseling.



Disaster Recovery/Emergency Management

One critical aspect of Florida's economic success has been its ability to plan for, respond to, and recover from significant disasters like hurricanes. The Florida Leads budget provides significant funding for disaster recovery/mitigation and emergency management, including:

Division of Emergency Management

- **Open Federally Declared Disasters – Funding to Communities/State Operations**

\$1.6 billion in federal and state funding is provided so that communities/state can respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies as well as mitigate against future disasters or emergencies.

- \$187 million in state match is provided for the non-federal state cost share associated with authorized federal funding to eligible local and state recipients for reimbursement of the response and recovery cost, as well as state management costs relating to federally declared disasters.
- The budget includes \$326 million to continue Florida's response efforts for the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **State Emergency Operations Center**
 - Up to \$100 million for the construction of a new State Emergency Operations Center.

Department of Economic Opportunity

- **Community Development Block Grant**

The budget includes 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 the CDBG Mitigation Program.

- **Revolving Loan Fund Program**

The budget includes funds to support the Rebuild Florida Revolving Loan Program in areas affected by Hurricanes Irma and Michael. This program, supported by an award from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, assists businesses with disaster related economic changes, and can be used to address capital needs and help businesses implement plans for resiliency to protect against future storms.

- **Reemployment Application System**

The budget includes \$36 million for modernization of Florida's Reemployment Assistance application system, which includes moving to a cloud-based computing system and customer enhancements and up to \$56.4 million for the



modernization of the Department of Economic Opportunity's Reemployment Assistance CONNECT System.

- **Pandemic First Responders**

The budget includes \$208.4 million for a one-time relief payment of \$1,000 to Florida's First Responders for their sacrifices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Consumer-first Workforce System**

In support of legislation that will comprehensively overhaul Florida's workforce development system, the budget includes up to \$100 million for the Consumer-first Workforce system and \$2 million for project planning and analysis necessary to implement the consumer-first workforce system.

Economic Recovery and Development

As Florida is now well on its way to full economic recovery from the pandemic, it is more important than ever to maintain targeted investments in programs that support the creation of good jobs for Floridians and promote key Florida industries like tourism. The Florida Leads budget provides substantial funding for such initiatives, including:

- \$74 million for the Job Growth Grant Fund to support local infrastructure and job training projects targeted towards economic recovery and development. This includes \$24 million in unspent funds from Fiscal Year 2019-20 and up to \$50 million to support local infrastructure and job training projects targeted towards economic recovery and development.
- \$75 million for VISIT FLORIDA's marketing programs to continue showcasing that Florida is once again open and safe for tourists from throughout the U.S. and the world. This includes \$50 million in State funds and up to \$25 million from federal funds to conduct activities that support and fund Florida's tourism industry and its recovery from COVID-19 through promotion and marketing activities, services, functions, and programs.

Rural Recovery and Development

Among its many economic advantages, Florida's rural areas represent a tremendous opportunity to establish a model for growth and prosperity in a changing 21st century economy. The Florida Leads budget continues the state's commitment to developing economic growth opportunities in rural areas, including:

- \$5 million for the Rural Infrastructure Fund to support local rural infrastructure projects such as broadband, roads, storm and wastewater systems, and telecommunications facilities in Hurricane Michael affected counties.
- \$1.17 million for the Rural Community Development Revolving Loan Program to provide local governments with access to financial assistance to further promote the economic viability of Florida's rural communities.
- \$1.5 million to develop geographic information system maps of broadband Internet availability throughout the state. Legislation was passed in 2020



establishing an Office of Broadband within the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) to increase the availability and effectiveness of broadband internet throughout the state, specifically in small and rural communities. In 2021, the Governor signed legislation to further support this effort, including the creation of a Broadband Opportunity grant program.

Ensuring Fair, Free, and Safe Elections

Florida has become known as a national leader in conducting fair and accurate elections. The Florida Leads budget provides resources needed to ensure our future elections are safe from cyber threats and are conducted with the utmost integrity.

- The budget includes \$16.7 million for state-level election oversight activities, with a focus on cybersecurity enhancements to Florida's election system. This amount includes:
 - \$3 million for the Supervisors of Elections to continue cybersecurity initiatives and improvements to their systems.
 - \$2 million for Election Legacy Hardware for security improvements and enhancements in election technology.

Supporting Florida Arts and Culture

The Florida Leads budget includes funding for the arts and culture communities:

- \$2 million for the Library Cooperative Grant Program dedicated to sharing library resources, other resource sharing activities and related training.
- \$23.2 million for Cultural and Museum Grants to provide funding for the entire list of 515 projects.
- Up to \$30 million from federal funds to conduct an expedited supplemental grant funding process for capital projects at facilities in Florida that highlight the contributions, culture, or history of African-Americans.

Infrastructure

Florida is currently home to over 21 million people and welcomes millions of visitors each year. Being able to move everyone from place to place quickly and effectively depends on developing and maintaining a world class transportation infrastructure. The Florida Leads budget includes \$10.3 billion for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). This investment will provide for the retention and creation of more than 148,200 jobs. Every dollar invested in transportation is estimated to result in a return of up to \$4 in user and economic benefits to Florida's residents and businesses, and also helps diversify Florida's economy.

Within this amount the budget provides \$9.44 billion for the State Transportation Work Program, which is an ongoing five-year plan for the implementation and completion of transportation infrastructure projects. These projects include 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. Within the budget the Work Program includes:

- \$2.8 billion for highway construction to include 210 new lane miles.
- \$1 billion in resurfacing to include 2,689 lane miles.
- \$110.6 million in seaport infrastructure improvements.
- \$325.9 million for aviation improvements.
- \$515.9 million in scheduled repairs for 89 bridges and replacement of 18 bridges.
- \$704.3 million investment in rail/transit projects.
- \$172.2 million for safety initiatives.

In addition to the \$9.44 billion, up to \$2 billion in federal COVID-19 relief funding is appropriated to the State Transportation Fund to be used as follows:

- \$1.75 billion for State Highway System project, and
- \$250 million for port operation grants.



Florida Leads on Health and Human Services

As Floridians continue moving forward, Governor DeSantis hopes that all Floridians continue to lead vital, healthy and productive lives and will continue to help those in greatest need. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic we have seen Floridians and their families struggle with the impacts on employment, health and welfare of their loved ones. The budget supports strategies to reduce minority morbidity and mortality and increases child welfare funding to improve the lives of children in the Child Welfare System. This budget continues to support those who struggle with behavioral health needs and includes additional funding to continue fighting the opioid epidemic. Additionally, this budget prioritizes persons with disabilities and ensures that our veterans are cared for.

Improve Health Outcomes

Governor DeSantis is committed to improving health disparities within the State of Florida. This budget includes \$9 million in funding to support the Office of Minority Health and Health Equity to develop strategies aimed at advancing health equity and reducing disparities among the minority population in Florida. This office will continue coordinating with community based programs to improve and eliminate these disparities.

The budget also includes an additional \$239.7 million for post-partum care for women throughout the state. By extending post-partum coverage from 60 days to 12 months, this will ensure better care and services for both the mother and baby.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse

The budget invests \$137.6 million in funding to provide community based services for adults and children with behavioral health needs. Also, the budget includes funding to expand Florida's 211 network and provides additional telehealth services for children in rural counties to ensure that individuals receive the services they need. Additionally, this funding will improve safety for staff and residents at state mental health treatment facilities.

Child Welfare

The budget invests \$134.7 million in funding for children and families who receive services through the child welfare system. This investment includes an additional \$12.4 million for maintenance adoption subsidies and adoption incentive benefits for state employees to provide post adoption supports for children who are adopted out of the child welfare system. Additionally, the budget includes funding for community based services, support for foster parents, early intervention efforts for substance affected infants, support for youth in the independent living program and funding to continue streamlining the Florida Child Welfare System.



Human Trafficking

The budget provides \$14.1 million in funding for services to individuals who are victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. For those in need, this funding provides counseling, case management, and support to assist in securing stable housing and employment.

Employment Opportunities

As Florida continues to move forward, the budget funds an additional \$4.1 million to provide employment opportunities for approximately 2,000 individuals with behavioral health needs and intellectual disabilities and will assist approximately 500 veterans with mentoring, training and networking throughout the state.

Seniors

Throughout the pandemic Governor DeSantis has continued to put Seniors First. The budget includes an additional \$14 million to enhance the lives for our seniors. The funding provides services to individuals and caregivers impacted by Alzheimer's Disease and will allow approximately 700 people and their families to receive supportive care and respite services. Funding is also provided to allow approximately 800 people to receive services through the Community Care for the Elderly program by receiving case management services and other types of assistance so that seniors can remain in their homes.

Veterans

Governor DeSantis is continuing his commitment to honor our veterans who have courageously served our country. Florida continues to be the most veteran friendly state with 1.5 million veterans residing in Florida. The budget provides \$25.2 million for capital improvements, equipment updates, staffing needs and medical costs and other necessary services for nursing home residents at our state run veteran's nursing homes.

Persons with Disabilities

The budget provides an additional \$95.6 million to allow approximately 1,900 individuals on the waitlist to be served through the Agency for Persons with Disabilities waiver program. This program supports people with intellectual disabilities to be able to live, learn and work in their communities. Lastly, the budget includes \$18.3 million for a new level of reimbursement for Intermediate Care Facilities to serve individuals who have severe maladaptive behavioral needs.



Florida Leads on Public Safety

Florida has been blessed to have courageous and selfless first responders that continue to keep the needs of our communities first. The Florida Leads budget not only affirms our continued commitment to the protection and safety of Floridians but also uniquely responds to the labor, service, and dedication of our state's public safety professionals. And with the commitment made to public safety, including funding for safer correctional facilities and evidence-based prevention programs for at-risk youth, Governor DeSantis is proud that Florida has seen a drop in crime rate for 49 consecutive years.

Enhancing Florida's Crime Databases

FDLE is responsible for maintaining a variety of databases that law enforcement uses daily to investigate crimes and apprehend criminals. The budget invests more than \$25.1 million for these databases, including:

- \$11.5 million to continue the transition to incident-based crime reporting (FIBRS); and
- \$13.6 million to centralize criminal justice data and make it more transparent to the public.

Safer Correctional Facilities

The budget includes \$17.4 million and 220 FTE to continue transitioning Correctional Officers from a 12-hour shift to an 8.5-hour shift.

Expanding Reentry Programming

The budget includes \$4 million to increase inmate reentry programming which includes:

- \$1 million to expand career and technical education programs to better meet the vocational training needs of the inmate population and current job market demands; and
- \$3 million to continue the Continuum of Care Program for enhanced offender rehabilitation at private correctional facilities.

Improving Correctional Infrastructure

The budget includes \$21 million to make critical repairs and renovations to correctional and juvenile facilities. This investment in Florida's infrastructure enhances the safety and security of Florida's correctional and juvenile officers, inmates, and youth.

At-Risk Youth Programs and Prevention Services

Effective prevention programs reduce the likelihood that a child will have future involvement with the juvenile justice system. The budget includes more than \$12.9 million to fund prevention programs for at-risk youth. This includes funding for the following programs:



- **Youth Challenge Program** – \$5.8 million for a residential program at Camp Blanding that provides 16–18-year-olds who withdraw or are removed from school with opportunities such as high school credit recovery, career-technical education, and life preparation classes.
- **Mentoring Initiatives** – \$7.1 million for the Department of Education to contract with mentoring programs throughout the state.

Supporting Military and Their Families

The budget provides \$28 million for Florida’s military presence and families, which funds the State’s support of military research and development. This includes:

- \$2 million for the Florida Defense Support Task Force
- \$1.75 million for the Defense Infrastructure Program
- \$7.2 million for armory maintenance
- \$2 million for military base protection, including additional security measures for National Guard armories
- \$4.1 million to support Florida National Guardsmen seeking higher education degrees
- \$11 million to support scholarships for children and spouses of deceased or disabled veterans

National Guard Expansion

As Florida’s population continues to grow and emergency response needs become more frequent, it is essential to continue to grow the number of service members available for response. In order to recruit approximately 450 new service members, the Florida Leads budget includes up to \$50 million in ARP funding to build two new Florida National Guard armories in Immokalee and Zephyrhills.

Second District Court of Appeal Courthouse

The budget provides \$50 million for the construction of a 2nd District Court of Appeal Courthouse in Pinellas County.

Problem-Solving Courts

- Problem-solving courts, such as drug courts, mental health courts, and veterans’ courts, address the root causes of the criminal justice system’s involvement through specialized dockets, multidisciplinary teams, and a non-adversarial approach. The budget provides more than \$11.4 million to continue the operation of problem-solving courts throughout the state.



Florida Leads on General Government

Governor DeSantis is committed to modernizing Florida's business operations, which includes updating facilities to better improve accessibility and working environments, automating of business processes, enhancing outdated information technology systems and protecting the state against cybersecurity threats.

Maintaining and Improving the Florida Facilities Pool

It is essential that the State of Florida provides safe and efficient working environments at state owned buildings. The budget invests more than \$65 million in the Florida Facilities Pool which will improve life safety issues, address Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance and address needed building updates.

Modernizing Florida's Business Processes

The budget invests \$2 million in the Department of Management Service's Florida Digital Service to automate state functions through Robotic Process Automation which will reduce processing and wait times for claims and application review for services that many Floridians depend on.

Safeguarding Florida against Cybersecurity Threats

The budget invests \$37.5 million in various state agencies to enhance information technology security measures and controls statewide to help protect Florida against the ongoing and evolving nature of cyber threats that can compromise critical state resources and sensitive information.