FLORIDA
POLICY
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Governor Ron DeSantis' FY 2020-21 Budget Recommendations: Summary by Issue Area

November 2019

Introduction

Governor Ron DeSantis released his fiscal year (FY) 2020-21 budget proposal on November 18, 2019. The proposal totals $91.4 billion, a nominal 0.5 percent increase over the current fiscal year.

While the governor's budget makes some strides to increase investment in areas such as housing, education and the environment, it does little to stem the systemic and long-term inequities underlying the state economy. In critical areas including health care, criminal justice and safety net programs, the governor's budget further entrenches deep cuts that ultimately harm Sunshine State families, children and communities.

In November 2018, Florida Policy Institute (FPI) launched its "Roadmap to Shared Prosperity in Florida," a blueprint for improving economic mobility, health and fiscal stability for families in the Sunshine State.[1] Since then, FPI has analyzed each budget proposal in the context of the roadmap.

→ Does the governor's budget invest in education and health in a way that would unleash Floridians' potential and boost productivity?

The governor's budget includes $603 million in funding for increasing the minimum salary for full-time teachers and $300 million for new incentive programs, the Florida Classroom Teacher Bonus and the Florida School Principal Bonus programs. These programs would be aimed at encouraging longevity among teachers and principals, particularly in low-income districts, contingent on improvements in school grades.

These two investments would have a significant impact, given that Florida ranks 26th for starting teacher salaries and that the state's cuts to teacher pay following the Great Recession were the most severe in the nation. However, the bonus programs continue to rely on the flawed school grading system and do not address the structural inadequacy of the teacher salary scale.

The governor's budget touts record per-pupil K-12 funding of $7,979, an increase of $302 over the current fiscal year. However, as FPI has previously discussed, the increased funding is the result of an accounting shift rather than a true increase.[2] By moving the teacher bonus program into the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), which determines funding for school districts, the per-pupil funding amount is inflated.

Despite Florida's poor health indicators and high rate of uninsured residents, the governor's budget does not expand Medicaid, which would give more than 800,000 low-income uninsured Floridians access to care. The budget proposal also fails to restore a cut to Retroactive Medicaid Eligibility (RME) for non-pregnant adults that went into effect earlier this year. Florida already has one of the highest rates of uninsured residents in the nation, and this cut to RME endangers the health of adults with disabilities and seniors.

→ Does the governor's budget launch public infrastructure projects that would help create jobs, spur growth, promote equity and improve climate resilience?

Investment in Florida's infrastructure — transportation, public buildings and water treatment systems — is key to economic growth. Right now, 9 percent of Florida's roads are in poor condition and the state's schools are 29 years old, on average.[3] In a state prone to hurricanes and floods, it's especially important to have modern, climate resilient facilities.

Instead of investing in infrastructure, many states "cut taxes and have offered corporate subsidies in a misguided approach to boosting economic growth," according to report from the nonpartisan Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP).[4] Tax cuts, notes CBPP, "spur little to no economic growth and take money away from schools, universities, and other public investments essential to producing the talented workforce that businesses need."

The governor's budget continues his commitment to Everglades restoration and water quality improvement initiatives and provides $100 million for the Florida Forever program, which is a critical vehicle for preserving ecologically critical land and preventing future environmental problems. While this is significantly higher than the current year funding of $33 million, Florida Forever has seen nearly a decade of severe cuts – restoring this program to its full potential would take a greater investment.

→ Does the governor's budget include provisions that would help boost family income?

The governor once again makes full funding of the Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Fund a priority in his budget proposal.

Beyond this, the governor's budget does not include any other significant measures to reduce Florida's growing income inequality, nor does it provide targeted benefits to the state's working families. In fact, the proposal cuts funding for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance program, even though benefit levels have remained stagnant for 27 years. Further, the governor's budget proposal under-invests in substance abuse prevention and treatment and work release, further deteriorating key reentry programs for returning citizens.

→ Does the governor's budget contain language that would clean up and modernize the tax code for a strong future?

Florida currently ranks 48th in the nation for tax fairness.[5] The governor's budget proposal does not include measures that would help improve the state's "upside-down" tax system, wherein the people with the lowest household income contribute the greatest share to state and local taxes.

The governor proposes a tax cut package totaling $312 million. This includes an eight-day back-to-school sales tax holiday ($56 million), a 10-day disaster preparedness sales tax holiday ($9 million), and $247.3 million in property tax relief. Normally, property taxes increase as property values go up. The governor has provided property tax relief by reducing the millage (property tax) rate instead of keeping the millage rate constant and capturing the resulting funding increase.

Addressing the sales tax is one way to alleviate Florida's unfair and upside-down tax system, but this approach may not result in much relief for families. Florida's poor ranking on tax fairness is largely driven by the state's heavy reliance on the sales tax for revenue. Lower- and middle-income Floridians pay more in state and local taxes as a share of their incomes than wealthy Floridians. Lower income families spend a greater share of their household budgets on everyday items. Sales tax holidays, while aimed at providing some relief to families, tend to result in minimal benefits.[6] Reforms targeted to Florida's lower-income taxpayers, such as providing a Working Families Tax Rebate, would be much more effective at reaching working families.

What Comes Next in the Budget Process?

DeSantis released his budget proposal early — state law requires the governor to release his or her budget recommendations 30 days prior to the start of legislative session. Although session will begin on January 14, 2020, legislators in the Florida House of Representatives and Senate have already begun working on each chamber's respective proposals. In the months leading up to the start of the session, the Florida Legislature holds "committee weeks," during which committees meet to discuss bills that have been filed and the chambers put together their budget priorities. This process will continue once the Legislature begins session in January, and each chamber will release its own version of the FY 2020-21 budget.

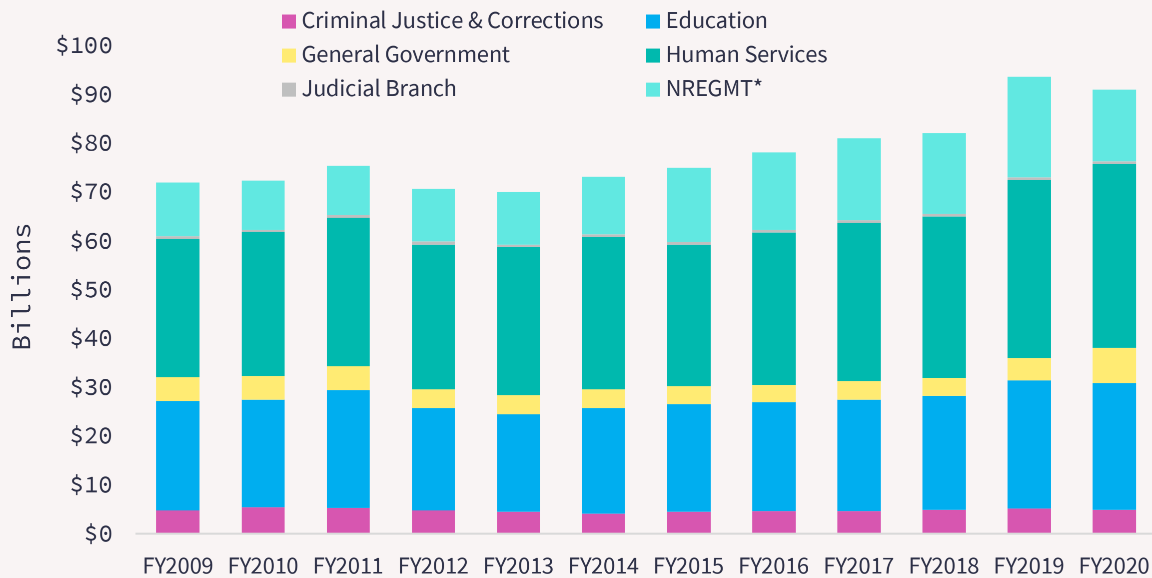
In order to reconcile the two versions of the budget, a conference committee made up of members from each chamber deliberates until a revised, single budget is agreed upon. This budget, called the General Appropriations Act (GAA), is then sent back to the House and Senate for a vote. Upon passage, it is sent to the governor, who has the power to veto specific line items within the budget if he disagrees with them. The Legislature can override vetoes if two-thirds of the members in each chamber vote to do so. Once the budget adoption process concludes, the governor signs the final GAA into law.

Overview of the Florida State Budget

Like many states, Florida's budget has seen fluctuations over the past several years. After the Great Recession, which began in 2007 and ended in 2009, total appropriations decreased as state revenues constricted. Since then, the total budget has steadily increased. *Figure 1* shows state appropriations — factoring in vetoes and supplemental appropriations as well — between FY 2008-09 and the current fiscal year, broken down by the six major service areas: Education, Human Services, Criminal Justice and Corrections, Natural Resources/Environment/Growth Management/Transportation (NREGMT), General Government and the Judicial Branch.

Figure 1. ANNUAL FLORIDA BUDGET BY YEAR AND SERVICE AREA

Total includes general appropriations, vetoes, and supplemental appropriations. Inflation adjusted, in billions



*Natural Resources/Environment/Growth Management/Transportation

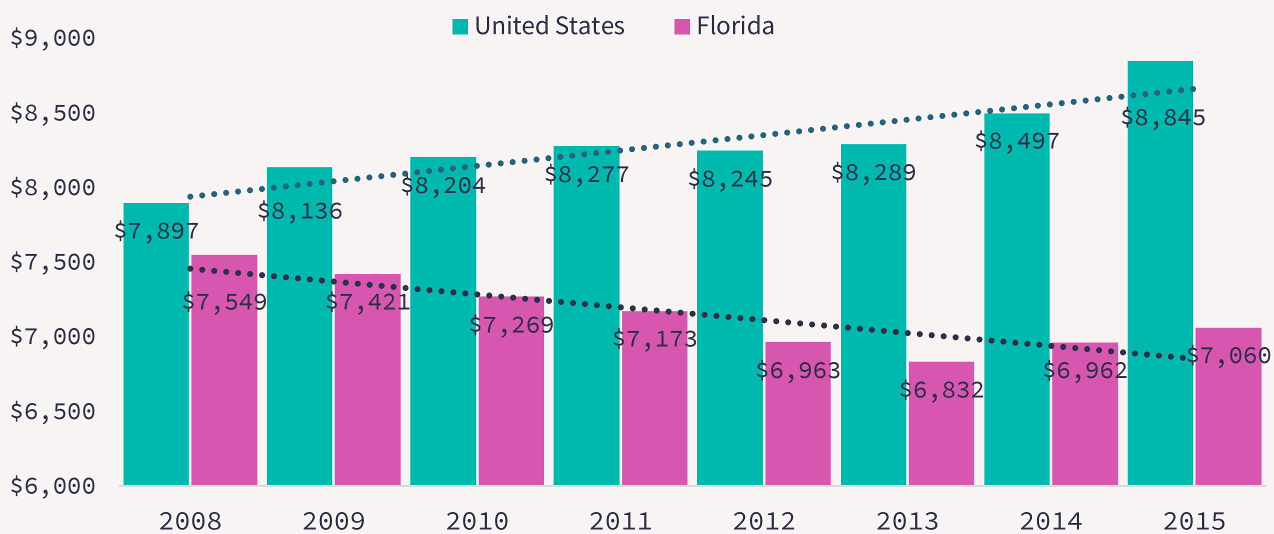
While comparing year-to-year appropriations provides important insights into what direction Florida is moving in, even more valuable is looking at investment over time, factoring in the state's growing population, and comparing Florida to other states along indicators of health and well-being, like the share of uninsured residents. *Figure 2* shows that Florida lawmakers have underinvested in public services every year since the Great Recession; while other states increased their per capita spending as the economy improved, Florida went in the other direction. As a result, Florida ranks 50th among all states for its per capita investment in essential public services.

It's also important to note that the state budget is made up of a few different types of funds, and not all the revenue comes from state coffers. Budget appropriations are funded through the General Revenue Fund, which is where tax revenue is deposited; various state trust funds, which collect revenue specified for a particular purpose; or federal funds.

Additionally, budget and revenue forecasts do not take into account the foregone revenue resulting from state tax expenditures. This "silent spending" has increased substantially since FY 2010, growing on average $780 million each year.[7] In FY 2019-20, silent spending will cost the state $20.5 billion, a number that is likely to continue growing in the coming years.

Figure 2. FLORIDA RANKS 50TH ON INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC SERVICES

Per capita state and local government expenditures, 2008-2015



Source: Tax Policy Center. State and Local Government Expenditures, Per Capita.

Human Services

→ Current Landscape

Florida ranks near the bottom on multiple national rankings of health and wellness. The state has one of the highest rates of uninsured residents in the U.S. and lawmakers have failed to expand Medicaid to more than 800,000 uninsured, low-income residents. Additionally, Florida is experiencing skyrocketing growth of its most medically expensive populations: seniors and people with disabilities. These unique demographics ensure even greater future demands on the state's health care delivery system.

In terms of investment in mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) treatment, Florida lags far behind other states. Adding to the pressure on Florida's already strained community mental health system is the state's very high rate of uninsured people with mental illness. Mental Health America estimates that there will be 461,000 uninsured Florida adults with mental illness in 2020—the sixth highest percentage in the country.[8]

Home- and community-based services (HCBS) are critical in helping Florida's growing senior population age a home and avoid or delay nursing home or other institutional care. Institutional care can take a mental and physical toll on individuals and their families and are more costly to the individual and taxpayers than home- and community-based services. These services are also essential for family caregivers who need to work during the day to help support their loved ones at home. However, enormous HCBS waitlists in the tens of thousands that grow substantially year after year are keeping these services out of reach for many.

→ Budget

HUMAN SERVICES

	FY 2019-20 Budget	Governor's FY 2020-21 Budget Proposal	Difference from FY 2019-20 Budget
Proposed FY 2019-20 Budget	$37,166,014,476	$38,706,992,767	+ $1,049,673,522

The governor's recommended FY 2020-21 Human Services budget is $38.7 billion. Most of this allocation — $27.6 billion — is federal dollars.

While this is a billion-dollar increase over current FY 2019-20 funding, vital services needed to meet Florida's growing population of seniors, persons with disabilities and children continue to be seriously underfunded. Items of particular concern in the governor's proposal include: the continuing policy choice to not expand the Medicaid program; failure to restore retroactive Medicaid eligibility and; lack of funding to reduce the Medicaid Long Term Care program waitlist.

Full Funding for Medicaid Caseload

The proposed budget fully funds the projected 3.8 million Medicaid caseloads in FY 2020-21. It's worth noting that Medicaid enrollment has substantially declined from its peak of 4 million in FY 2016-17.

KidCare

The proposed budget includes a $71.7 million increase over current-year funding, which covers projected enrollment growth of 30,000 during FY 2020-2021 in all KidCare programs except Medicaid (Florida Healthy Kids, MediKids, Children's Medical Services Plan). There are currently 264,387 children enrolled in these programs.

Retroactive Medicaid

The proposed budget fails to restore retroactive Medicaid eligibility. While it would cost $40.1 million in general revenue, those state funds would leverage an additional $63.5 million in federal funds.

Seniors and adults with disabilities are the target for this cut. Without retroactive Medicaid benefits, thousands will face enormous medical debt arising from unanticipated, catastrophic illnesses or injuries that require hospitalization or end-of-life nursing home care.[9]

Florida lawmakers, in response to criticism that the state Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) does not have data to demonstrate the impacts of this cut, did not make it permanent. Instead, the cut is scheduled to expire on July 1, 2020. AHCA is required to collect data to determine the impact of this cut on beneficiaries and providers and submit a report to the governor and Florida Legislature by January 10, 2020. Notably, the governor made his budget recommendation on this issue without considering the findings of AHCA's upcoming report.

Hospital Medicaid Reimbursement

The proposed budget does not include reductions in Medicaid funding for hospitals. It also continues the $1.5 billion appropriation, including $925 million of federal funding, for the Low-Income Pool (LIP). LIP provides supplemental funding for mainly uncompensated hospital care costs. The required state match is raised by local governmental entities such as counties and hospital taxing districts. In the past, the state has not been able to access the entire $1.5 billion allotment because the full state match portion has not been raised.

In addition, the implementing bill authorizes AHCA to seek approval from federal CMS to establish a "directed payment program for hospitals providing inpatient and outpatient services to managed care enrollees." Directed payments to providers through Medicaid managed care plans are another tool that states can use to provide supplemental payments to hospitals. Federal requirements specify that the payments must: be tied to specific services provided under the managed care contract; advance at least one of the goals under the state's quality strategy; and not be contingent on an agreement to fund through intergovernmental transfers.

Community Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services

The governor recommends increases for specific programs: $2.1 million for an additional 24 forensic community transition beds; $9 million to expand treatment capacity for children aged 11-21; $4 million to expand telehealth services to children in schools; and $2.5 million to increase 211 provider phone and care coordination services. In the education budget, the governor is also proposing a $100 million allocation for school-based mental health services, a $25 million increase over the current-year allocation.

The governor's budget also includes continued funding of $54.8 million to combat the opioid epidemic. This includes more than $20 million in time-limited federal grant funding. When these dollars are exhausted, it will create a funding and treatment "cliff" unless state funds are appropriated to continue the increased service capacity.[10]

Notably, the overall proposed Department of Children and Families (DCF) budget for community substance abuse and mental health services, $769.4 million, reflects a $64 million decrease from the current fiscal year.

Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS)

HCBS for persons with disabilities - The proposed budget includes an additional $56.5 million to serve 1,200 more individuals who are on the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) waitlist. As of June 2019, there are 21,661 on this waitlist. While the funding increase is a step in the right direction, the proposed increase would cover just 5 percent of the individuals on the list. Florida ranks 49th among the states for funding services for persons with developmental disabilities.[11]

HCBS for seniors - The proposed budget includes increases for several key Department of Elder Affairs programs that provide targeted support to at-risk seniors and their families, helping individuals to stay in their homes and avoid institutional care. Three of note are the Alzheimer's Disease Initiative (ADI), Community Care for the Elderly (CCE) and Home Care for the Elderly (HCE) programs.

- ADI provides respite and support services to family caregivers of individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and similar cognitive disorders. An increase of $3 million is proposed to serve 257 more individuals and their family caregivers from the ADI waitlist, which currently sits at 6,780 individuals. This would cover just 3 percent of the individuals on the waitlist.

- CCE provides a continuum of care (e.g. case management, personal care, homemaking, adult day care) to functionally impaired seniors, especially those referred to Adult Protective Services for risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. An increase of $5 million is proposed to serve 594 more of the highest-risk seniors on the CCE waitlist, which currently sits at a staggering 48,537 individuals. This would cover just 1 percent of the individuals on the waitlist.

- HCE provides subsidies to individuals caring for a senior in a private home setting. An increase of $1 million is proposed to serve 242 more of the highest-risk seniors on the HCE waitlist, which currently sits at 8,927 individuals.[12] This would cover services for just 2 percent of the individuals on the waitlist.

The governor's proposal does not include any additional funds to serve more people through the Statewide Medicaid Managed Long Term Care (SMMC LTC) program waitlist. This program provides the most robust package of benefits, enabling people to stay out of nursing facilities and stay in their homes instead. Notably, for every $1.00 the state spends on SMMC LTC, it receives $1.56 in federal reimbursement. This program has the largest waitlist, with 57,970 people as of October 2019.[13]

Medicaid Expansion

The proposed budget fails to include expansion of Florida's Medicaid program, which could benefit more than 800,000 low income uninsured adult Floridians and save lives.[14] Moreover, there is a large and growing body of research that shows Medicaid expansion will save state dollars and provide state budget fiscal gains well beyond the cost of expansion.[15]

Veterans

The governor recommends $154 million in funding for the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA), which assists veterans in accessing benefits and operates long-term care facilities for veterans in Florida. This a more than $20 million increase from the current fiscal year. The proposal includes $18.2 million to staff and complete construction or repairs of two veterans' nursing homes, Ardie R. Copas State Veterans' Nursing Home and Lake Baldwin State Veterans' Nursing Home, as well as $6.7 million for capital improvements for Florida's other state veterans' nursing homes. The budget also recommends providing $1 million to the non-profit organization Building Homes for Heroes, which modifies and builds mortgage-free homes for veterans who have been seriously injured in the line of duty.

In addition to the funding proposed for DVA, the governor also recommends funding other initiatives that support veterans and their families. This includes $420,000 to reinforce the seawall at the Florida National Guard Headquarters, $4.2 million for Florida National Guardsmen seeking post-secondary education, $8.4 million for educational scholarships for children and spouses of deceased or disabled veterans, and $11.4 million for Florida's problem-solving courts, which include veterans' court.

Public Safety & Corrections

→ Current Landscape

Florida's Department of Corrections (DOC) is the third largest state prison system in the country. In fact, Florida's incarceration rate is higher than all of the 13 founding NATO countries: USA, Canada and the 11 European countries. Since 1996, the number of people serving 10 or more years has tripled. As a result, the state has not been able to properly respond to the costs and needs associated with its incarcerated population. Inmates' health costs have significantly increased, which caused the department to experience a major budget deficit in FY 2018-19.

→ Budget

PUBLIC SAFETY & CORRECTIONS

	FY 2019-20 Budget	Governor's FY 2020-21 Budget Proposal	Difference from FY 2019-20 Budget
Proposed FY 2019-20 Budget	$4,860,052,250	$5,029,936,532	+ $169,884,282

Department of Corrections

The governor's budget proposes $2.84 billion for the Department of Corrections (DOC), an increase of $139 million over current-year funding. While this increase is helpful, it falls short of rectifying financial shortfalls the department has experienced in the past few years, especially the $28 million deficit in FY 2018-19. The governor's recommended budget seeks to address two of the most critical issues DOC facilities have been experiencing for the past decade, which are understaffing and a shortage of educational teachers. The proposal fails to adequately fund rehabilitative programs that have experienced the financial brunt of the DOC's budget deficit and the various court mandates that needed to be funded. For example, a significant portion of DOC's budget over last two fiscal years has gone toward funding for treatment of Hepatitis C and mental health, as well as ADA (American Disability Act) compliance. As a result, key re-entry programs were underfunded.

Inmate education - The governor's budget recommends a total of $39 million for basic education skills, $6 million over current year funding. It also proposes creating 17 positions for academic education and 17 for wellness specialists. Hiring and retaining quality teachers has been a persisting issue for the department, and in the past few years, some facilities did not have even one teacher.

Maintenance and repairs - The budget includes $14.9 million for maintenance and repair projects at correctional facilities: $9 million of that is allocated for major renovations and improvements for major institutions, and the remaining $5.96 million is for renovation of mental health facilities. Support facilities, specifically mental health facilities, are funded at $1.4 million in the governor's proposal.

Health care - The budget includes $567 million for inmate health care services. Funding for Hep C treatment , however, is **not** included in the governor's proposal, due to the state's ongoing court appeal that seeks to challenge an existing court mandate that requires treatment for all inmates who have been diagnosed with Hep C, regardless of the stage of their diagnosis. Notably, the current-year budget had allocated $84.9 million for Hepatitis C treatment. The governor's recommended budget also includes $8.8 million in non-recurring funds for mental health care under Disability Right Florida.

Operations – The proposed budget includes $89.7 million to assist with staffing issues. Part of this funding would go toward implementing a new retention step plan — proposed by DOC's Secretary — for correctional officers, correctional probation officers and inspectors. The governor's budget provides a $1,500 pay increase at two years of service, and $2,500 at five years of service. Furthermore, these funds will support FTEs to launch a pilot project to convert institutions from a 12-hour shift to an 8.5-hour shift.

Community supervision - Community supervision would receive $235 million under the governor's proposal, a $12 million increase over current-year funding. However, programs like transition rehabilitation support and community substance abuse prevention and evaluation are funded at slightly less than FY 2019-20 levels.

Department of Juvenile Justice

The governor's FY 2020-21 budget proposal includes $592 million for the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), slightly less than FY 2019-20.

The governor recommends additional funding for detention centers and non-secure residential commitments, for total funding of $125 million and $129 million, respectively.

Also included in the governor's budget is $608 million and six positions for DJJ's Office of Health Services (OHS) to conduct on-site clinical assessments for 55 of DJJ's residential programs. Furthermore, the budget provides $4.2 million to ameliorate staffing and evidenced-based services in all residential facilities.

DeSantis' FY 2020-21 budget slashes funding for delinquency prevention and diversion programs, allocating $80.4 million, an $8.3 million cut. Diversion programs have been effective as an alternative to juvenile arrests. They provide innovative and hands-on approaches to help divert at-risk kids from delinquent behavior. Additionally, diversion programs offer great fiscal benefits for the state in the long run. A cut to these funding programs would have a sizable impact on communities across the state.

Education

EDUCATION	FY 2019-20 Budget	Governor's FY 2020-21 Budget Proposal	Difference from FY 2019-20 Budget
Proposed FY 2019-20 Budget	$26,014,741,729	$26,992,253,759	+ $977,512,030

Early Childhood and Pre-K-12 Education

→ Current Landscape

In the wake of the Great Recession, many states cut education funding dramatically after state and local revenues plummeted. While many states have rebounded, Florida's investment per-pupil remains 22.7 percent beneath pre-recession levels, after adjusting for inflation. State and local combined funds for Florida's primary and secondary (PreK-12) education dropped $2,767 per pupil from 2008 to 2016, inflation adjusted.[16]

→ Budget

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)

VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGARTEN	FY 2019-20 Budget	Governor's FY 2020-21 Budget Proposal	Difference from FY 2019-20 Budget
Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Total	$402,280,371	$415,043,173	+ $12,762,802
VPK Per-Pupil School Year Funding	$2,437	$2,486	+ $49

Florida voters passed a constitutional amendment in 2002 that mandated the state provide free, quality, universal voluntary pre-Kindergarten. The program pays for three hours of educational programming a day to four- and five-year-old children. There is no income eligibility; in fact, 77 percent of eligible four-year-old children in the state attend VPK, one of the highest participation rates in the country.[17] However, many families find themselves struggling to pay for the remainder of each day's services. Florida's per student VPK spending ranks 41st out of the 43 states that offer free VPK.[18] Three hours a day is hardly enough for robust, quality education for children.

The governor's proposed budget invests an additional $12.8 million in the VPK program, as part of a total recommended budget of $415 million for the program.

DeSantis has acknowledged the state's dismal outcomes with the VPK program and promised to improve performance.[19] This increase certainly is a step in the right direction. However, even with the base allocation increase of $49, it is still below the base student allocation in FY 2005-06, the first year of the program. Moreover, if the base allocation had kept up with inflation, it would have amounted to $3,293 today.

School Readiness Program

SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM			
	FY 2019-20 Budget	Governor's FY 2020-21 Budget Proposal	Difference from FY 2019-20 Budget
School Readiness Program Total	$760,877,228	$760,877,228	$0

Florida's School Readiness Program offers financial assistance to low-income families for early education so parents can work and their children will be prepared for school. The program is only available to families with income below 150 percent of the federal poverty level, and most counties have waiting lists for participation.

The governor's budget proposal maintains current-year funding levels for the School Readiness Program at $760.9 million. Between FY 2018-19 and FY 2019-20, funding for this program increased by $70 million. This was a welcome infusion for childcare advocates, who have drawn attention to the program's long waiting lists and uneven provider quality.

K-12 Education

K-12 EDUCATION			
	FY 2019-20 Budget	Governor's FY 2020-21 Budget Proposal	Difference from FY 2019-20 Budget
K-12 Total State Funding - FEFP	$12,450,345,660	$13,242,638,800	+ $792,293,140
K-12 Total State Funding – Non-FEFP	$426,511,969	$334,100,530	- $92,411,439
K-12 Total Local Funding	$9,398,184,607	$9,659,919,103	+ $261,734,496
K-12 per-pupil spending	$7,672	$7,979	+ $307
K-12 base student allocation	$4,279	$4,329	+ $50

K-12 SELECT PROGRAMS	FY 2019-20 Budget	Governor's FY 2020-21 Budget Proposal	Difference from FY 2019-20 Budget
K-12 Best and Brightest Teacher Bonuses	$284,500,000	$0	- $284,500,000
Florida Classroom Teacher Bonus Program	N/A	$290,687,400	+ $290,687,400
Florida School Principal Bonus Program	N/A	$9,352,500	+ $9,352,500
Florida Classroom Teacher Compensation Program	N/A	$602,282,686	+ $602,282,686
K-12 Mental Health Assistance Allocation	$75,000,000	$100,000,000	+ 25,000,000
K-12 Schools of Hope	$40,000,000	$0	- $40,000,000
K-12 Gardiner Scholarships	$147,901,004	$172,756,005	+ $24,855,001
K-12 Community Schools	$7,435,571	$7,180,571	- $255,000
K-12 Turnaround Schools Supplemental Services	$45,473,810	$45,473,810	$0

The governor's proposal:

- **Funds the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) at $13.2 billion for K-12 public education — an increase of 6 percent over FY 2019-20 — resulting in per pupil funding of $7,979.** This is an increase of $307 over FY 2019-20, which includes a $50 increase in the base student allocation. the most flexible spending for schools. There is, however, an important caveat. Prior to the current fiscal year, the Best and Brightest Teacher program was not counted toward these figures. In the current year budget, the Best and Brightest Teacher program was moved into the FEFP portion of the K-12 budget, increasing the per-pupil funding amount by $99. While the Best and Brightest Teacher program is eliminated in the governor's budget proposal, the new teacher and principal bonus programs are included in the FEFP portion of the K-12 budget. Significantly, legislators can easily inflate the total per pupil spending amount by arbitrarily shifting which programs count under the FEFP total.

- **Dedicates $602 million to increasing the base pay of teachers.** The governor's proposal would set the minimum salary for teachers at $47,000, an increase of about $10,000. Florida currently ranks 26th in the nation for starting teacher pay, and this boost would have a significant impact. However, it would not create a more equitable salary structure for veteran teachers. Rather, the governor proposes new incentive programs to encourage longevity among teachers and principals.

- **Creates two new bonus programs: the Florida Classroom Teacher Bonus Program and the Florida School Principal Bonus Program.** These two programs would replace the Best and Brightest Teacher program. They would provide a greater incentive to teachers and principals in low-income districts, and the amount of the bonus would depend on improvements in school grades. Though this is an investment in teacher compensation, it does not address the fundamental inequity in the teacher salary structure. By not creating a new structure, and continuing to rely on school grades, these new programs do not fully address concerns that the rising the starting salary for teachers will cause "pay compression," where salaries do not increase with experience.

- **Includes an increase in local funding from property tax revenue of $159 million.** The proposed increase reflects rising property values; however, the budget reduces the millage (property tax) rate instead of keeping the rate constant and capturing the resulting funding increases, and so the $159 million only includes the additional property tax revenue from new construction.

  State funding for education comes from the General Revenue fund (sales and other taxes), the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund (lottery proceeds) and other trust funds. In nominal dollars, $7,979 in per pupil funding would be the highest on record in Florida. However, when adjusted for inflation, the amount spent in FY 2007-08 would equal $8,524 in today's dollars. Florida's spending on K-12 education has yet to rebound to its pre-recession level.

- **Does not fund the Schools of Hope program.** The governor proposes a one-year elimination of recurring funding, but states that there is $262.4 million in carry-forward funding available for this program.

Higher Education

→ Current Landscape

Researchers have found that the more educated a state's populace is, the higher the median wage.[20] This makes sense on an individual level: in Florida, the median wage for someone with a bachelor's degree ($66,301) was roughly 2.4 times that of someone with a high school diploma alone ($27,522) in 2017.[21] It also makes sense at a community-level: the larger the supply of highly-skilled workers, the more attractive the community is to high-wage employers.[22]

In Florida, higher education funding per student is 13.5 percent below what it was in 2008, when adjusted for inflation.[23]

→ Budget

Florida College System

FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM (FSC)		
	Governor's FY 2020-21 Budget	Final FY 2019-20 Budget (Post-Vetoes)
Performance Based Incentives (for Industry Certificates)	$14,000,000	$14,000,000

Student Success Incentives	$40,000,000	$30,000,000
College Dual Enrollment, Instruction Materials	$550,000	$550,000
Last Mile College Completion Program	$1,500,000	$0
FSC Program Fund	$1,220,486,024	$1,210,224,583
Commission on Community Service	$983,182	$983,182
Total State Support	$1,277,519,206	$1,255,757,765

The governor's recommended budget:

- **Increases overall funding for the Florida College System (FCS) by $21.8 million, for a total of $1.28 billion.** This represents a 2 percent increase in state funding support for Florida's colleges over FY 2019-20. A recent TaxWatch report found that the FCS is a great investment for the state, students and the economy, infusing $9 into the economy for every $1 spent on FCS.[24]

- **Adds $1.5 million in funding to create The Last Mile College Completion Program.** This program would annually award the cost of in-state tuition and fees to Florida residents in good academic standing at FSC institutions who are within 12 credits or fewer of completing their undergraduate degree (associate or baccalaureate). The award is meant to close the gap between students' existing financial aid (excluding loans) and remaining tuition costs.

- **Maintains performance incentives for industry certificates at $14 million.** FCS, formerly known as Florida's community colleges, has a renewed focus on offering high-demand industry certificates. This program pays Florida's colleges $1,000 for each high-demand certificate conferred.

- **Increases Student Success Incentive funding to $40 million.** This program area supports three initiatives:

    - Adds $10 million in funding to reward FCS institutions for facilitating student access to and completion of dual enrollment programs.

    - Maintains $20 million in funding for "2+2" programs, partnerships between state colleges and universities to allow college students who graduate with an associate degree to transition to a four-year university to finish a baccalaureate program in the remaining two years.

    - Maintains funding of $10 million for "Work Florida" Incentive Fund, which helps local colleges better align their career education offerings with regional workforce demands and high-paying job growth.

State University System

STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM		
	Governor's FY 2020-21 Budget	Final FY 2019-20 Budget (Post-Vetoes)
State University System (SUS) – State Funding Support	$3,192,133,336	$3,155,832,501
State University System – Funding from Tuition and Fees	$1,957,486,926	$1,957,486,926
Total SUS Funding	$5,149,620,262	$5,113,319,427

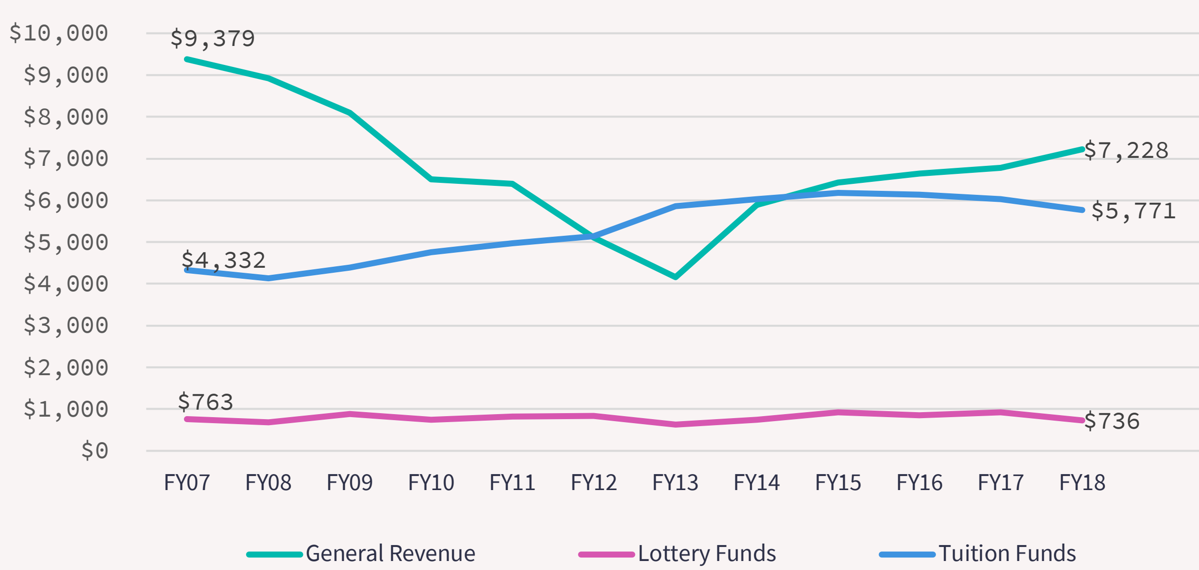
The governor's recommended budget:

- **Provides $3.19 billion in state support for university operating expenses.** This represents a 1 percent increase over the FY 2019-20 budget. However, general revenue support for the State University System has yet to rebound to pre-recession levels. (See *Fig.3.*)

- **Keeps tuition and fees constant.**

Figure 3. GENERAL REVENUE SPENDING ON FLORIDA'S UNIVERSITIES

University spending per student (FTE) by source, adjusted for inflation (2018 dollars).



Source: FPI analysis of State University System of Florida data. Unlike Figure 2, does not include college system data.

Student Financial Aid

STUDENT FINANCIAL AID			
	FY 2019-20 Budget	Governor's FY 2020-21 Budget Proposal	Difference from FY 2019-20 Budget
Bright Futures (Merit-based scholarships)	$595,143,167	$618,196,265	+ $23,053,098
Student Financial Aid (Need-based aid)	$280,398,215	$280,909,579	+ $511,364
Other Aid (Specialty scholarships, matches, and loans)	$46,356,041	$52,795,068	+ $6,439,027
Total Student Financial Aid	$921,897,423	$951,900,912	+ $30,003,489

The budget proposal:

- **Increases the total student financial aid budget by $30 million, for a total of $951.9 million.** While need-based financial aid funding is increased by roughly a half million dollars over the current-year budget, the majority of the financial aid budget increase is due to an additional $23 million for the merit-based Florida's Bright Futures Scholarship Program. While the funding increase is certainly a positive step, the governor's goal "that every student, regardless of zip code or family circumstances, should be afforded the same opportunities to succeed in the classroom"[25] is tempered by his relegation of need-based aid funding to less than half the level of merit-based scholarship aid.

  Research shows that students of color from low-income households are more likely to face barriers to academic success during their K-12 years, which can then cause them to miss the mark for merit-based scholarships[26] like Florida's Bright Futures. As such, this budget recommendation could further marginalize low-income students from the higher education system, adding yet another barrier to their economic mobility and the shared prosperity of all Floridians.

Education Facility Construction

→ Current landscape

Funding for school capital expenses, like construction, repairs and technology improvements, have not rebounded from the deep cuts after the recession.[27] Florida's state and local investment in capital expenses remain 71 percent below 2008 levels, after accounting for inflation, which is the second largest cut in the nation. The lack of funds has come at a cost — the Florida Chapter of the American Society for Civil Engineers gives the infrastructure of the state's schools a D+ for quality.[28]

→ Budget

EDUCATION FACILITY CONSTRUCTION	FY 2019-20 Budget	Governor’s FY 2020-21 Budget Proposal	Difference from FY 2019-20 Budget
Education Fixed Capital Outlay	$1,356,078,729	$1,388,001,957	+ $31,923,228

The governor’s FY 2020-21 budget recommends $1.39 billion for Education Fixed Capital Outlay, an increase of $320 million over current-year funding.

Education fixed capital outlay funds are used to build public schools, colleges and university buildings, and pay for debt service. The primary funding for these fixed capital outlays, which are the appropriations for the construction and maintenance of buildings, comes from the Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Fund (PECO), which is made up of revenue from the gross receipts tax (sales tax on gas and electricity) and the tax on communication services (landline phone, cable, satellite and cellular phone services). Historically, this revenue has been used for issuing bonds. From FY 1992-93 to FY 2010-11, the state used the PECO funds to issue bonds for capital projects totaling $12.1 billion; however, during then Governor Rick Scott’s tenure, only one PECO bonding project was approved. Governor DeSantis’ budget proposal continues this trend and does not take the option to leverage PECO funds to bond for education projects.

The governor’s education infrastructure budget specifically addresses the need to ensure school safety by improving school buildings and campuses. The governor recommends $75 million for school safety grants to assist school districts with enhancing the physical security of K-12 buildings, which reflects an increase of $25 million over current funding. Similarly, although not considered fixed capital outlay, DeSantis’ proposal provides $2.5 million to Jewish Day Schools for additional security needs such as alarm systems and bulletproof glass.

General Government

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

	FY 2019-20 Budget	Governor's FY 2020-21 Budget Proposal	Difference from FY 2019-20 Budget
Proposed FY 2019-20 Budget	$7,166,014,476	$6,011,432,593	- $1,154,581,883

Economic Security & Self Sufficiency

→ Current Landscape

Florida is falling behind when it comes to promoting economic security and self-sufficiency for residents who are struggling. The erosion of the state's safety net leaves families who are experiencing hard times with few, if any, resources to meet their basic needs.

Florida's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, the state's core safety net program for providing families with low-income a temporary means to meet basic needs, does a poor job of reaching families who have fallen on hard times. For every 100 families with income below the federal poverty level, only about 13 receive cash assistance from TANF — 42 fewer than in 1996. Adjusted for inflation, Florida's TANF benefit levels are down more than 37 percent since 1996. Although the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program (SNAP), which provides assistance for families to put food on the table, is an important thread in the state's safety net, SNAP and TANF combined still put families below 30 percent of the poverty level. At the same time, the state is doing little to either address food insecurity in food deserts across the state or provide recipients of public assistance with meaningful education and training to empower them with the skills and education they need to get and keep good-paying jobs in today's workforce.

Also putting a strain on residents is the lack of affordable housing in Florida. The state ranks 47th in the nation for its availability of affordable housing, with only 26 affordable and available housing units for every 100 extremely low-income households.[29] The continued sweep of the Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Fund has contributed to this shortage. Between FY 2001-02 and FY 2019-20, more than $2.6 billion was taken from the fund and moved into the general revenue stream to support other appropriations.

→ Budget

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

The governor's FY 2020-21 budget reduces funding for TANF by more than $5.8 million. TANF cash assistance was funded at $132 million for FY 2019-20, an amount that was already inadequate to meet the basic needs of children in families with low income. Although Florida's TANF caseload has fallen, it is past time for Florida to raise benefit levels instead of cutting the program due to decreased participation.

TANF helps families with very-low income make ends meet by providing them cash assistance to pay for subsistence needs like toothpaste, diapers, rent and utilities. While DCF included a reduction in TANF as a potential cut in its annual “Priority Listing of Agency Budget Issues for Possible Reduction in the Event of Revenue Shortfalls for Legislative Budget Request Year” exercise for FY 2020-2021,[30] DCF itself cautions against implementing the cut because of the adverse impact on critical safety net programs and services, which are already operating at capacity.

Florida has kept TANF payments at the same level for almost three decades. The maximum TANF benefit for families in Florida — $303/month for a family of three — is only about 17 percent of the poverty level,[31] which is not enough for families to get by on. Inflation has eroded this payment value by almost 40 percent.[32] In fact, TANF benefit levels in the Sunshine State are about 27 percent of fair market rents, and even if a family receives both SNAP and TANF, those benefits combined keep the family under 47 percent of the poverty level.[33]

Florida’s TANF program, because of its stagnant cash assistance levels, is not fulfilling its intended purpose of promoting economic self-sufficiency and providing families the temporary help they need in hard times to keep their children out of foster care.

The governor’s recommended budget also neglects to adequately invest in meaningful supports for TANF recipients to improve their education or build skills for stable employment. In the TANF program, most recipients who do not have a disability are required to participate in the TANF Employment and Training (E&T) program as a condition of eligibility unless they have a good reason to be excused. Nonetheless, many Floridians in TANF E&T either do not get the targeted education and training necessary to boost their employability or they lose their assistance when significant obstacles, such as lack of child care, health problems and transportation, keep them from being able to follow through.[34] The program should provide robust work supports targeted to the needs of the individual family instead of terminating cash assistance when barriers are insurmountable or subjecting participants to cookie-cutter E&T assignments.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Governor DeSantis recommends reducing transportation expense funding for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients in the E&T program by more than $400,000.[35]

To receive SNAP in Florida, most recipients who do not have a disability or are not raising minor children are required to work or participate in the E&T program, which is intended to help recipients gain the skills they need to get and keep a job. If E&T participants need help with transportation, Florida provides up to $25 monthly. This amount is insufficient for many of the SNAP recipients who travel back and forth to work or training. Thousands of recipients lose their SNAP as a sanction when barriers such as lack of access to transportation prevent them from participating in E&T. In 2016, as many as 58 percent of SNAP recipients — 360,000 people — who were referred to E&T in Florida lost their assistance due to nonparticipation in SNAP E&T. Notably, transportation was their biggest barrier.[36]

The governor states that his reduction would not impact the number of SNAP participants receiving help with transportation. However, the impact on recipients who either cannot participate in E&T due to high transportation costs or lose their SNAP as an E&T sanction due to lack of transportation is anything but minimal: they will have no way to put food on the table for their families and no opportunity to take part in

E&T. Florida lawmakers should raise the $25 cap on transportation services so that all SNAP recipients have the chance for E&T.

Governor DeSantis also recommends allocating $2 million[37] for a pilot program in Osceola and Orange counties to implement a SNAP E&T third party partnerships pilot project to provide job-driven training for SNAP participants who need additional skills, training or work experience necessary for economic self-sufficiency. In third party partnerships, the United States Department of Agriculture reimburses 50 percent of the cost for services that partners provide to SNAP recipients, which maximizes federal funding of much needed skills-focused training for decent jobs that pay a living wage in today's labor market.

Food Deserts

Governor DeSantis' proposed budget does not include funding to help solve Florida's food desert problem. "Food deserts" are parts of the country without access to stores or farmers markets that sell healthy food.[38] These areas are more likely to be located in low-income neighborhoods. Dozens of areas in the Sunshine State qualify as food deserts.[39] According to a study commissioned by the State of Florida, people living in food deserts are more likely to die prematurely from certain cancers, diabetes, stroke and liver disease than people who have ready access to healthy food.[40]

In FY 2019-2020, Governor DeSantis vetoed a local pilot project to subsidize transportation to grocery stores for 1,000 people living in food deserts.[41] While details about the pilot project that Governor DeSantis vetoed are insufficient to evaluate its value, food deserts in Florida are a very real problem and warrant a holistic approach to solve. Among other things, public-private partnerships are needed to encourage more grocery stores and farmers markets in underserved areas, as well as mobile markets and corner stores that sell fruits and vegetables at a reasonable price. SNAP benefit levels should be raised to allow struggling families to buy more nutritious food than they currently can afford. Right now, the average SNAP benefit per person per meal is only $1.37 in Florida. Similarly, Florida should adjust TANF payments, which currently are so low that most families can barely pay their rent or utility bills, much less spend any of that assistance on food.

At a minimum, the governor's food desert veto in FY 2019-2020 could have been a springboard to a comprehensive dialogue about collaborative strategies to solve the state's food desert dilemma. His recommended budget for FY 2020-2021 misses the opportunity to start that long-overdue conversation.

Economic Development

The governor's recommendations for the state's primary economic development programs mostly maintain the status quo from the current fiscal year. One funding increase that the governor proposes is $10 million for the Job Growth Grant Fund, from $40 million in the current fiscal year budget to $50 million in the governor's proposal. The fund has been contentious since it was established in a 2017 special session. It was established as a compromise when the House wanted to eliminate Enterprise Florida and other economic development incentives.

Funding for Visit Florida, the state's tourism and marketing agency, promises to be another point of difference between the various budget proposals. The governor proposes maintaining the current-year $50 million funding level. However, in the past few budget cycles, the House and Senate have both proposed significantly reducing funding for this agency. Funding for Visit Florida had been cut by $26 million between FY 2018-19 and the current year, resulting in a 34 percent reduction in staff. Furthermore, Visit Florida was supposed to "sunset" on October 1, 2019. In the last legislative session, a bill was passed to extend this deadline to July 1, 2020. Unless legislators pass legislation to extend this deadline again, the agency could close its doors at the end of the current fiscal year.

The state's economic development public-private partnership, Enterprise Florida, has been a source of contention over the past few years, facing severe scrutiny over its use of public funds. The governor proposes $16 million for Enterprise Florida, which maintains the funding level for the past two fiscal years. The House had proposed eliminating funding for Enterprise Florida in its past two budget proposals.

The governor also proposes $250,000 to market the state's 427 Opportunity Zones, which were created as part of the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act passed in 2017. Opportunity Zones are intended to be a vehicle to spur investment in underserved communities by providing tax breaks on capital gains to investors who pool these gains into funds that invest in designated low-income areas. While this program is ostensibly aimed at generating economic activity and growth in these communities, the legislation creating Opportunity Zones did not include sufficient provisions to ensure that investments would truly benefit residents of these areas, instead of furthering gentrification.

Affordable Housing

The governor's FY 2020-21 proposal reflects his commitment to fully funding the Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Fund in his FY 2019-20 recommendations. The budget recommends $387 million to address the state's affordable housing crisis. Despite the governor's recommendation to preserve dollars earmarked for affordable housing, the current-year budget only allocates $200.8 million for this purpose, which falls short in significantly addressing the ongoing affordable housing crisis.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING				
	FY 2019-20 Budget	FY 2019-20 Budget Sweeps	Governor's FY 2020-21 Budget Proposal	Difference from FY 2019-20 Budget
Local Government Housing Trust Fund	$111,560,000	$115,000,000	$119,800,000	+ $8,240,000
State Housing Trust Fund	$89,040,000	$10,000,000	$267,200,000	+ 178,160,000
Total Housing Support	$200,600,000	$125,000,000	$387,119,800	+ $186,519,800

The Sadowski Housing Trust Fund supports two programs for expanding the availability of affordable housing:

- **The State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program**, which is administered by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) and distributes funds to local governments for the creation and preservation of affordable homeownership and multifamily housing. The governor's budget proposes $267.2 million for this program and recommends that a minimum

20 percent of the housing units developed through this funding to be set aside for persons with special needs, persons with developmental disabilities, and the elderly.

- **The State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) Program**, which is also administered by FHFC and provides low-interest loans to developers for affordable housing development. The governor's budget allocates $119.8 million for this program and advises that local governments use that fund to prioritize hurricane recovery efforts.

While the $123.6 million appropriated in FY 2018-19 and the $200.6 million in FY 2019-20 provided substantial increases, it is worthwhile to keep in mind that a significant portion of these increases had gone specifically for areas impacted by Hurricane Michael.

More than $2 billion has been swept from the Sadowski trust fund since FY 2002, resulting in 94,000 foregone affordable housing units.[42] The Sadowski Coalition estimates that full funding in FY 2020-21 would result in more than 30,000 jobs and $4.4 billion in positive economic impact.[43]

Natural Resources / Environment / Growth Management / Transportation (NREGMT)

NATURAL RESOURCES/ENVIRONMENT/GROWTH MANAGEMENT/TRANSPORTATION

	FY 2019-20 Budget	Governor's FY 2020-21 Budget Proposal	Difference from FY 2019-20 Budget
Proposed FY 2019-20 Budget	$14,728,172,340	$14,097,889,21	- $630,283,125

→ Current Landscape

In a disaster-prone state like Florida, investment in environmental conservation efforts and updated state infrastructure are of the utmost importance. Such investments are particularly important in South Florida, where climate equity and climate gentrification are growing issues of concern.[44] The rising sea levels have made higher elevation properties more desirable to investors and developers, putting low-income families who reside in these regions at risk of being displaced.[45]

A study by the Office of Economic and Demographic Research noted that "hurricanes, tropical storms and other shocks have a negative effect on the attractiveness of the state to visitors and state tax revenues. Depending on the magnitude of the shock, the state may need to spend additional dollars to restore the beaches while also experiencing reduced revenues."[46] Not only do natural disasters impact tourism, they also cause economic and physical devastation within impacted communities.

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) gave Florida an overall grade of "C" in its 2016 Infrastructure Report Card, with even lower grades on indicators like coastal areas, drinking water, schools and stormwater.[47] Moreover, while the governor claims that "Florida has one of the best transportation systems in the country,"[48] the reality is that the state is in dire need of increased funding and long-term planning, especially with regard to public transportation. According to the ASCE scorecard, a nominal 2 percent of commutes to work in Florida were made via public transit, which points to low quality and availability.

Florida lawmakers have also siphoned trust fund monies meant for environmental protection since the Great Recession, even after voters approved a ballot measure in 2014 that required 33 percent of the net revenue collected from the excise tax on documents to be put into the Land Acquisition Trust Fund. Other ongoing issues in the state include toxic algae blooms, red tide and erosion of beaches. Another recent concern is the Department of Environmental Protection's decision to allow exploratory oil drilling into the Panhandle's Apalachicola River floodplain, one of the state's most vital freshwater sources for millions of Floridians.[49]

→ Budget

Transportation

The governor's budget recommends $9.9 billion for the Department of Transportation (DOT), funded through the State Transportation Trust Fund. Specifically, $8.8 billion is recommended for the Transportation Work Program, which comprises the following projects:

- $2.8 billion for highway construction to include 52 new lane miles.
- $865.7 million in resurfacing to include 2,057 lane miles.
- $119.7 million in seaport infrastructure improvements.
- $323.9 million for aviation improvements.
- $436.2 million in scheduled repairs of 57 bridges and replacement of 18 bridges.
- $686 million to invest in rail/transit projects.
- $212.9 million for safety initiatives.

Moreover, the DOT is launching a Five-Year Work Program, which outlines transportation projects for the next five years, budgeted at $9.7 billion. The FY 2019-20 budget allocated $45 million in initial funds. This program is the result of SB 7068, a controversial bill that was heralded by former Senate President Bill Galvano. It created the Multi-Use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES), an aggressive plan to expand the highway system in rural areas of the state by creating three new toll roads and other transportation and economic initiatives. It also provides funding for other programs, including: the Small County Road Assistance and Small County Outreach Programs, which rehabilitate and repair roads and bridges in rural areas; and the Transportation Services for Transportation Disadvantaged Program, which provides services for low-income individuals who are living with disabilities, especially seniors.

It is important to note that the governor's budget does not specifically include funding for M-CORES; however, it does allow for a debt authorization to support the implementation of the program.

Disaster Planning & Recovery

DeSantis proposes $1.4 billion for the Division of Emergency Management (DEM) in federal and state funding for disaster relief and recovery, including $195 million in assistance to leverage the work associated with state disaster-related operations.

The governor's budget specifically recommends $25 million for a Hurricane Michael Recovery Grant Program to repair, replace and harden infrastructure, as well as to improve emergency services and assist local governments with unfunded losses. To help members of the military and their families, the governor recommends $6.2 million to rebuild the Panama City Armory, which was damaged by Hurricane Michael. DeSantis also proposes $750,000 to replenish the state's stockpile of water available for survivors the first two days after a disaster.

Additionally, the governor recommends $747.4 million for the Department of Economic Opportunity's (DEO's) Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program, which provides federal funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for disaster relief. CDBG-DR supports a broad range of activities, such as repair of low- and moderate-income housing; construction of affordable new rental units; workforce training; grants for business owners; and assistance for new Floridians from Puerto Rico. DEO's funding specifically includes $40 million for a Revolving Fund Program to help small businesses recover from Hurricane Michael.

Further, the governor's budget almost $50 million in funding under grants from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to provide relief to fishing communities and remove marine debris.

As mentioned in the introduction, the budget includes a 10-day tax-free holiday for disaster preparedness supplies, which would cover purchases such as modestly priced self-powered radios and lights, tarps, tie-down kits, batteries and generators. The proposal also includes funding for electric vehicle charging infrastructure at public and private locations along hurricane evacuation routes. Although the governor also proposes to fund a $1.2 million study of the evacuation needs of the Sunshine State in future disasters, conspicuously absent from the governor's budget is immediate funding specially targeted to assist in the necessary evacuation of low-income Floridians and other vulnerable populations who rely on public transportation in a declared emergency or disaster.

Environment

Across the board, the governor's budget proposes significant increases in funding for environmental projects, especially those falling under the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), which would receive an additional $234.4 million in FY 2020-21. The proposed budget continues to allocate funds for Florida's natural resource preservation and restoration, specifically focused on the Everglades and water quality. The governor reports in his summary of the final budget that more than $625 million is allocated for the Everglades and water quality, but it is unclear which exact budget line items and projects are included in this total.

The governor's recommended FY 2020-21 budget:

- **Includes approximately $322 million for Everglades protection and restoration.** An additional $1 million is proposed to allow the Fish and Wildlife Commission to eradicate Burmese pythons from the Everglades, an invasive species that threatens to impede the rich biodiversity of the region that makes it so unique and critical to the state.

- **Maintains $20.8 million for developing innovative technologies to combat algae blooms and continue establishing a Blue-Green Algae Task Force.**

- **Increases funding for State Parks Operations by $18.9 million.** The majority of this increase is allocated to renovating and repairing deteriorated park facilities, as well as building new infrastructure.

- **Continues to fund the DEP's Resilient Coastlines Program at over $5.5 million, though this reflects a modest decrease from FY 2019-20 levels**. This program aims to prepare coastal communities for sea level rise, coral reef erosion, and other long-term effects of major storms, pollution, and climate change. Just a few years ago, Florida received a D+ from the American Society of Civil Engineers for management of its coastal areas.[50]

- **Adds $67 million to the Florida Forever Program.** This is a critical program that allows the state to acquire and preserve ecologically important land and prevent future environmental problems. While this would bring program funding to $100 million, advocates argue even that figure is far too low. (The Florida Forever Act was passed in 1999, authorizing $300 million in bonds for 10 years to support conservation efforts. Funding was appropriated in full until 2008, when it was then significantly reduced or eliminated. The FY 2018-19 funding level of $100.8 million was the largest amount of funding in a decade.)

FLORIDA FOREVER PROGRAM

	FY 2019-20 Budget	Governor's FY 2020-21 Budget Proposal	Difference from FY 2019-20 Budget
Total Florida Forever Budget	$33,000,000	$100,000,000	+ $67,000,000

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