

House and Senate FY 2020-21 Budget Recommendations: Summary by Issue Area

February 2020

Introduction

The Florida House and Senate Appropriations Committees released their fiscal year (FY) 2020-21 budget proposals on Feb. 6, 2020. The House proposal totals \$91.4 billion, in line with the governor's proposed budget and a nominal 0.5 percent increase over the current fiscal year.¹ The Senate budget totals \$92.8 billion, a 2 percent increase over the current year.

The House and Senate proposals make some increased investments in teacher pay and the environment. However, they diverge in how they fund housing, and both chambers underinvest in many key areas. Neither proposal offers substantive recommendations 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 proposed budgets further entrench deep cuts that ultimately harm Sunshine State families, children, and communities.

Florida Policy Institute's (FPI's) "Roadmap to Shared Prosperity in Florida" is a blueprint for improving economic mobility, health, and fiscal stability for families in the Sunshine State.² FPI has analyzed each budget proposal in the context of the roadmap.

→ Do the House and Senate budget proposals invest in education and health in a way that would unleash Floridians' potential and boost productivity?

The House and Senate budget proposals follow the governor's lead by including, for the first time in a decade, significant funding for increasing teacher salaries. The House provides \$650 million, while the Senate recommends \$500 million. While the funding levels and approaches vary, these 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. In contrast to the governor's proposed budget, the House and Senate proposals also specifically address salary enhancements for veteran teachers.

Despite Florida's poor health indicators and high rate of uninsured residents, neither budget proposal expands Medicaid, which would give more than 800,000 uninsured Floridians with low income access to care. The House and Senate budget proposals also fail to restore a cut to Retroactive Medicaid Eligibility (RME) that went into effect in 2019. 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.

Neither budget proposal moves the needle significantly on the waitlists for services for people with developmental disabilities. Florida has ranked 49th among states in funding for those with developmental

disabilities for years; while the House and Senate proposals both recommend increases, it is not nearly enough to mitigate the extraordinarily long wait times for accessing these services.

→ Do the House and Senate budget proposals 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.”

Both budget proposals are aligned with the governor’s recommended funding for Everglades restoration and water quality improvement initiatives. However, while the Senate recommends \$108 million for the Florida Forever program, a critical vehicle for preserving ecologically critical land, the House only recommends \$20 million. While the commitment to Everglades restoration is a positive step, a failure to adequately fund Florida Forever would significantly hinder conservation efforts and spur future environmental problems. Florida Forever has seen nearly a decade of severe cuts — restoring this program to its full potential would require a much greater investment.

→ Do the House and Senate budget proposals include provisions that would help boost family income?

The Senate once again follows the governor’s lead in recommending full funding of the Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The House, however, proposes only \$147 million for the trust fund, sweeping \$240 million into the General Revenue Fund to support other areas of the state budget. Florida has one of the most severe affordable housing crises in the nation; fully funding the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund is critical for stemming the rising cost of living.

Neither proposal includes any other significant measures to reduce Florida’s growing income inequality, nor do they provide targeted benefits to the state’s working families. In fact, both the House and Senate propose \$115 million in funding cuts for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance program, even though benefit levels have remained stagnant for nearly three decades. Further, while the House and Senate budget proposals provide some increased funds for inmate education and health care, they continue to under-invest in rehabilitative and re-entry programs that provide critical supports for returning citizens.

→ Do the House and Senate budget proposals 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 people with the lowest household income contribute the greatest share to state and local taxes.

Neither the House nor Senate budget proposal directly address Florida’s regressive tax system. Several bills have been introduced in both chambers that call for various tax exemptions, credits, and deductions. As with previous years, the final budget will likely include a tax package that includes some of these proposals.

What Comes Next in the Budget Process?

The House and Senate budget proposals were passed in their respective appropriations committee. Now, the recommended budgets will go to the floor of each chamber so the members of the House and Senate can vote to approve the bills.

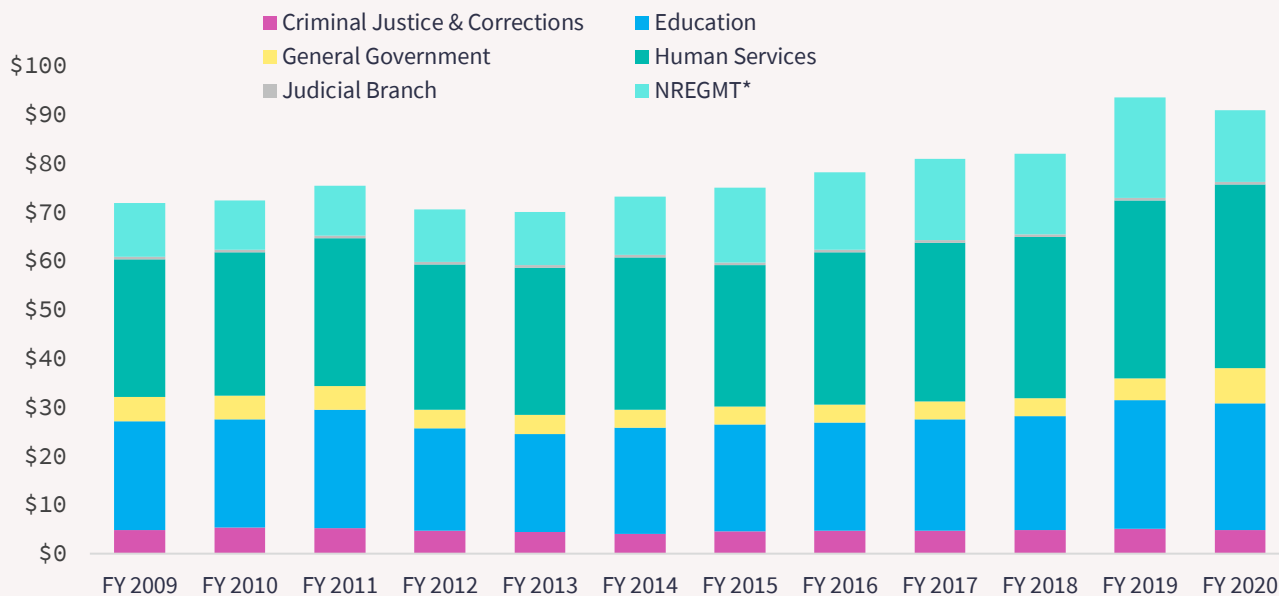
In order to reconcile the two versions of the budget, a conference committee made up of members from each chamber will deliberate until a revised, single budget is agreed upon. This budget, called the General Appropriations Act (GAA), is then sent back to the House and Senate for a vote. Upon passage, 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 will sign 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

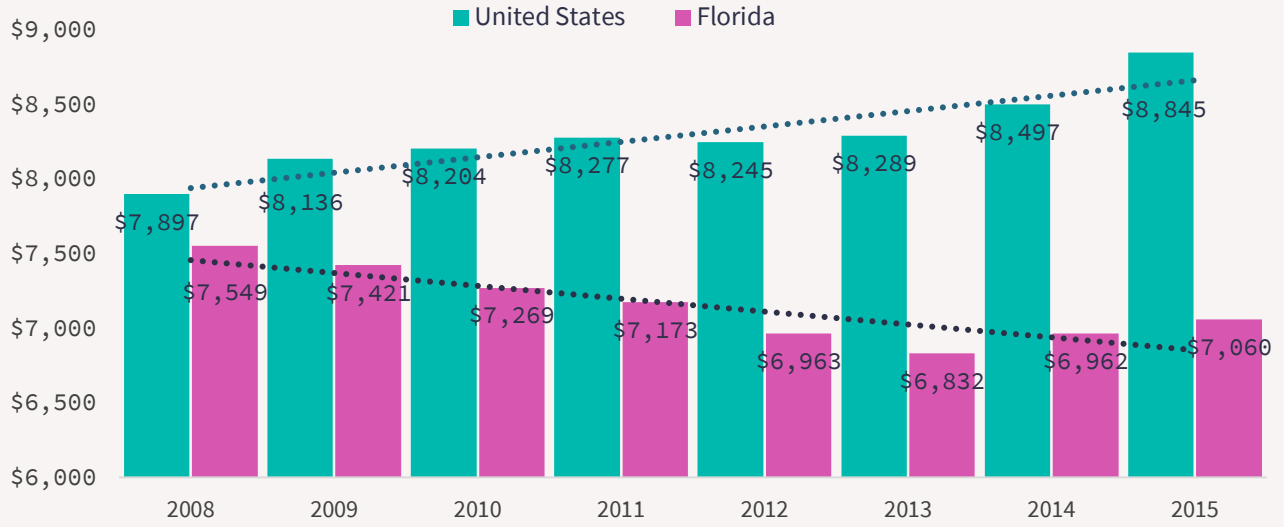
While comparing year-to-year appropriations provides important insights into what direction Florida is moving in, even more valuable is looking at investment over time, factoring in the state’s growing population, and comparing Florida to other states along indicators of health and well-being, like the 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; and federal funds.

Additionally, budget and revenue forecasts do not take into account the foregone revenue resulting from state tax expenditures. This shadow budget has increased substantially since FY 2010, growing on average \$780 million each year.⁶ In FY 2020-21, Florida’s shadow budget will cost the state \$21.5 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.

House and Senate FY 2020-21 Budget Recommendations:

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.⁷ According to the Florida Department of Health, drug overdose deaths more than doubled from 2014 to 2016, with 2,175 deaths in 2014, 2,805 in 2015, and 4,672 in 2016. The state estimates that 94,000 Floridians aged 12 or older had unmet opioid treatment needs in 2015-2016.

Home- and community-based services (HCBS) are critical in helping Florida's growing senior population stay in their homes 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 is more costly to the individual and taxpayers than HCBS. 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 BUDGET				
	FY 2020-21 Budget Proposals			
	Current Year	Governor	House	Senate
Appropriation Amount	\$37,657,319,245	\$38,706,992,767	\$38,772,587,796	\$39,385,755,379
Difference from Current Year Budget		+\$1,049,673,522	+\$1,115,268,551	+\$1,728,436,134

Both chambers propose increases for the Health and Human Services budget — \$38.7 billion for the House and \$39.3 billion for the Senate, exceeding current year funding of \$37.1 billion. The lion's share is allocated to the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA). Federal dollars make up more than 70 percent of both proposals

While this is more than a billion-dollar increase over current year funding, vital services needed to meet Florida's growing population of seniors, people with disabilities, and children continue to be seriously

underfunded. Items of particular concern 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

Both chambers fully fund Medicaid caseloads, which are projected to reach 3.8 million in FY 2020-21. It is worth noting that Medicaid enrollment has substantially declined from its peak of 4 million in FY 2016-17.

KidCare

Both chambers fully fund the projected caseloads in the KidCare programs, Florida Healthy Kids MediKids and Children's Medical Services. Current average monthly enrollment is about 272,000.

Both chambers propose legislation (HB 6031 and SB 348) to eliminate a \$1 million lifetime cap on benefits for children enrolled in the Florida Healthy Kids program. According to a staff analysis, 12 children have been removed from the program because of the cap between 2015 and 2019. The legislation is projected to have a minimal fiscal impact on the state budget.

Retroactive Medicaid

Both chambers fail to restore retroactive Medicaid cuts. While the state would have to invest \$40.1 million in general revenue dollars to restore the cut, 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 of people will face enormous medical debt arising from unanticipated, catastrophic illnesses or injuries that require hospitalization or end-of-life nursing home care.⁸

This cut is set to expire on July 1, 2020, unless the Legislature acts. Last session, in response to criticism that AHCA did not have data to demonstrate the impacts of the cut, the Legislature required the agency to collect the necessary data and file a report. However, AHCA was unable to obtain the data. The Senate has opted to continue this cut in its implementing bill, which sets an expiration date of July 1, 2021. In the interim, AHCA is directed to collect the impact data and report back to the Legislature. The House proposes to make the cut permanent in its health care conforming bill (HB 5021).

Hospital Medicaid Reimbursement

The budget proposals continue the trend of using fluctuating, uncertain supplemental hospital funding to support charity care programs.

Both chambers continue 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 (intergovernmental transfers, or IGTs). 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 House proposes further restrictions on access to LIP funding in HB 5021. The bill would require “essential” providers to contract with all Medicaid managed care plans. This would affect some of the largest hospitals in the state and could eliminate some hospitals from accessing LIP funds, which in turn could jeopardize local governments' capacities to raise the state match through IGTs.

Another item of concern is that more than \$70 million in disproportionate share dollars (DSH) will be cut in May unless Congress acts to restore them. The DSH program distributes millions of combined funding from IGTs and federal dollars, primarily to compensate hospitals that have provided a disproportionate share of Medicaid and/or charity care services. Neither the House nor Senate budget address the contingency of a funding shortfall if DSH dollars are cut.

The Senate proposal also directs AHCA to seek approval from the federal government to establish a “directed payment program for hospitals providing inpatient and outpatient services to managed care enrollees.” Directed payments are another tool that states can use to provide supplemental payments to hospitals. However, federal requirements specify that the payments must not be contingent on the state using IGTs to meet the required match. Notably, a proviso included in the Senate proposal expressly requires that the state share be raised through IGTs.

Medicaid Institutional Care

Both chambers' budgets include significant increases for institutional care. This includes an additional \$38.3 million for an increased rate to be paid to institutional care facilities for people with intellectual disabilities (ICF/DD) who also have severe behavioral disabilities. Rate increases are also proposed for Medicaid nursing home providers — \$44.8 million in the House and \$104.8 million in the Senate.

Community Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services

The Senate proposes significantly more dollars for the Department of Children and Families' community substance abuse and mental health program — \$826.8 million, compared to \$750 million in the House budget. However, unlike the House, the Senate budget proposal includes a line item of \$57.1 million of federal funding through the State Opioid Response Grant, contingent on the federal award of these funds.

Both chambers provide budget authority to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to spend \$6.5 million of a federal grant for drug overdose surveillance. The Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee Chair's budget proposal provides budget authority to spend the remaining \$12.4 million balance of the State Opioid Response Grants mainly on medication assisted treatment (MAT). When dollars are exhausted under these federal grants, it will create a “funding cliff” unless state funds are appropriated to continue the increased service capacity.⁹

Both chambers' HHS budgets include a \$4 million increase for students to access mental health services in schools through telehealth. Additionally, there is a \$100 million appropriation in the education budget for school-based mental health services, a \$25 million increase over current year funding.

Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS)

HCBS for Persons with Disabilities

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) provides a wide array of medical, social, behavioral, and residential services to individuals whose daily life is severely hindered by a developmental disability that was present before adulthood. Both the House and Senate recommend increases to serve additional Floridians on the APD waitlist, but the amounts proposed differ widely.

The Senate proposes an additional \$30.2 million to enroll an unspecified number of individuals, while the House suggests \$56.5 million to serve an additional 1,600 individuals deemed to be “in crisis,” according to the Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee Chair's budget proposal. While the House’s recommendation is much more significant than the Senate’s, there are currently more than 21,000 individuals on the APD waitlist; as such, even \$56.5 million would only reach 7 percent of those waiting to access services. For years, Florida has ranked 49th among states in funding for people with developmental disabilities.¹⁰

HCBS for Seniors

Several key Department of Elder Affairs programs provide targeted support to at-risk older adults and their families, helping individuals 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. While both the Senate and House propose increases above current funding levels, the House proposes significantly more than the Senate for all three programs.

The proposed funding, however, would only marginally reduce the waitlists for these programs, which have left hundreds of thousands of Floridians languishing without care for years. Investing more in these programs now can help offset taxpayer costs in the long-term. As people spend down what little savings they have while on the waitlists for these services, their assets will become low enough to qualify for Medicaid — at a life stage when health care is the most expensive. Legislators concerned about Medicaid spending and costly institutional care should prioritize investing in these preventative HCBS programs.

- ADI provides respite and support services to family caregivers of individuals living with Alzheimer’s disease and similar cognitive disorders. As of December 2019 (the latest data available)¹¹, the ADI waitlist sits at 6,973 individuals. The House proposes an increase of \$3.6 million to serve 310 more individuals (4 percent of the waitlist), while the Senate proposes just half of that — \$1.8 million to serve 158 more individuals (2 percent of 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. The CCE waitlist sits at a staggering 48,570 individuals. The House proposes an increase of \$3.5 million to serve 416 more individuals, while the Senate proposes an additional \$3.2 million to serve 382 more individuals. Both proposals would only reduce the CCE waitlist by a slim 1 percent.
- HCE provides subsidies to individuals caring for a senior in a private home setting. The HCE waitlist sits at 9,653 individuals. The House proposes an increase of \$1 million to serve 243 more individuals (3 percent of the waitlist), while the Senate proposes just \$600,000 to serve 146 more individuals (2 percent of the HCE waitlist).

Neither the current-year budget, nor the FY 2020-21 proposed budgets by the House, Senate, and governor recommend any additional funds for the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care 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 dollar the state spends on SMMC LTC, it receives \$1.56 in federal reimbursement. This program also has the largest waitlist, with 57,962 Floridians as of December 2019.

HCBS WAITLISTS				
Type of HCBS	Size of Waitlist*	Number of People Served with Increased Funding in Proposed Budgets		
		Governor	House	Senate
Alzheimer’s Disease Initiative	6,973	257	310	158
Community Care for the Elderly Program	48,570	594	416	382
Home Care for the Elderly Program	9,653	243	243	146

* Waitlist numbers accessed via the Florida Council on Aging. Estimates for how many additional people would be served under House and Senate proposals are based on the House’s estimated cost of \$8,418 per individual for CCE; \$4,119 per individual for HCE and \$11,654 per individual for the Alzheimer’s Disease Initiative.

Medicaid Expansion

The proposed budgets fail to include expansion of Florida's Medicaid program, which could benefit more than 800,000 uninsured adult Floridians with low income and save lives.¹² 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.¹³

Veterans and the Military

The Senate recommends funding the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA), which assists veterans in accessing benefits and operates long-term care facilities for veterans in Florida, at \$162 million, roughly \$30 million more than current-year funding. Among the projects funded in the Senate budget are \$6 million in additions and improvements to veterans homes, \$2 million for the maintenance and repair of nine state veteran’s homes, and \$2.5 million for contract projects serving veterans, such as the Florida Veteran Helpline and the Veterans Entrepreneur and Training Services (VETS), which helps veterans with business ventures.

The House recommends funding the DVA at approximately \$150 million, which is \$18 million over the current funding level. The House budget includes \$985,000 for contracted services, including \$600,000 for K9s for Warriors, as well as \$1 million for the VETS program. By comparison, the governor had proposed \$154 million in funding for DVA.

The House and Senate also propose to fund the National Guard Tuition Assistance (NGTA) program¹⁴ at just over \$3 million, which is about \$500,000 less than the current funding level. NGTA assists National Guard members who are seeking undergraduate or certain postgraduate degrees. In contrast to both chambers, the governor’s budget recommended funding NGTA at \$4.2 million.

House and Senate FY 2020-21 Budget Recommendations:

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 BUDGET	FY 2020-21 Budget Proposals			
	Current Year	Governor	House	Senate
Appropriation Amount	\$4,860,052,250	\$4,860,052,250	\$4,931,097,776	\$4,961,841,187
Difference from Current Year Budget		+\$169,884,282	+\$71,045,526	+\$101,788,937

Department of Corrections

The Senate and House budget proposals recommend \$2.8 billion and \$2.7 billion, respectively, for the DOC, and the governor's proposed budget included an increase of \$139 million over current-year funding. While these increases are helpful, they fall short of rectifying financial shortfalls the department has experienced in the past few years, especially the \$28 million deficit in FY 2018-19. The recommended budgets seek to address a few of the most critical issues DOC facilities have been experiencing for the past decade, which are understaffing, health care, and a shortage of educational teachers. The proposals fail to adequately fund rehabilitative programs that have experienced the financial brunt of the DOC's budget deficit. 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 (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance as ordered by a court mandate. As a result, key re-entry programs were underfunded.

Inmate Education

The Senate budget recommends a total of \$37.7 million for basic education skills, whereas the House budget allocates \$38.8 million. The Senate and House budgets both offer a sizable increase of 4.7 and 5.8 percent, respectively, over current year funding. This increase is important because 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. The governor's budget reflected these needs and also proposed to create 17 positions for academic education and 17 for wellness specialists.

Maintenance and Repairs

The Senate budget includes \$189 million for maintenance and repair projects at correctional facilities, which is \$9.6 million more than the House budget, and an overall increase over the current-year budget. Out the \$189 million, the Senate provides \$10 million for constructing and equipping Lake Correctional Institution Mental Health Facility, which aligns with the governor's proposed \$11.9 million for a new 600-bed mental health hospital at Lake Correctional. However, the House's budget did not include any funds for this project.

Health Care

The Senate budget allocates \$594 million for inmate health care services and the House includes \$595 million, a 4.9 percent increase over current funding. While both proposed budgets allocate special funds (\$28 million) for Hepatitis C treatment, they are well below the current year funding of \$84.9 million.

It is important to highlight that the governor's recommended budget did not include funding for Hepatitis C treatment. This is 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 Hepatitis C, regardless of the stage of their diagnosis.

Operations

Both budgets include \$546 million for operations. 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 Senate appropriates \$29 million specifically to help launch a pilot project that would convert correctional officers' 12-hour shift to an 8.5-hour shift.

Community Supervision

Under the proposed budgets, community supervision would receive \$226 million from the Senate and \$224 million from the House. While both budgets provide a significant increase over the current year — 6 percent and 5 percent, respectively — they still propose roughly \$10 million less than the governor's recommendation.

Substance abuse programming would receive a 10 percent cut in funding under the Senate budget and a very slight increase from the House compared to the current year budget.

Department of Juvenile Justice

The Senate and House budgets include \$581 million and \$575 million for the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), significantly less than current year funding as well as the governor's FY 2020-21 recommended budget.

Both proposed budgets cut funding for detention centers by up to \$1.7 million, whereas the governor's proposed budget increased it by roughly \$4 million.

Both budgets decrease funding for community supervision. While the Senate budget provides \$2.7 million for non-residential programming, the House budget proposes a \$4.4 million cut.

Similar to the governor's FY 2020-21 proposed budget, the House and Senate budgets slash funding for delinquency prevention, allocating \$81 million, which is \$9 million less than current-year funding. 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.

House and Senate FY 2020-21 Budget Recommendations:

EDUCATION

EDUCATION BUDGET				
	FY 2020-21 Budget Proposals			
	Current Year	Governor	House	Senate
Appropriation Amount	\$26,014,741,729	\$26,992,253,759	\$26,613,693,908	\$26,767,475,475
Difference from Current Year Budget		+\$977,512,030	+\$598,952,179	+\$752,733,746

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRE-K-12 EDUCATION

→ Current Landscape

Florida voters passed a constitutional amendment in 2002 that mandated the state provide free, quality, universal voluntary pre-Kindergarten (VPK). 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.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ Three hours a day is hardly enough for robust, quality education for children.

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 majority of funding comes from the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). The program is available to families with income below 150 percent of the federal poverty level, and most counties have waiting lists for participation.

→ Budget

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)

VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGARTEN BUDGET				
	FY 2020-21 Budget Proposals			
	Current Year	Governor	House	Senate
Appropriation Amount	\$402,280,371	\$415,043,173	\$412,750,785	\$404,033,453
Difference from Current Year Budget		+\$12,762,802	+\$10,470,414	+\$1,753,082

VPK Per-Pupil School Year Funding	\$2,437	\$2,486	\$2,486	\$2,437
Difference from Current Year Per-Pupil School Year Funding		+ \$49	+ \$49	\$0

The House VPK budget proposal, like the governor’s budget, includes enough funding for an increase of \$49 per pupil. The VPK Estimating Conference, which met in January 2020, predicted that VPK enrollment would fall slightly by 1,140, which explains the difference in total funding. The Senate proposal includes a \$1.8 million increase, which would keep per-pupil funding constant.

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 BUDGET				
	FY 2020-21 Budget Proposals			
	Current Year	Governor	House	Senate
Appropriation Amount	\$760,877,228	\$760,877,228	\$760,877,228	\$760,877,228
Difference from Current Year Budget		\$0	\$0	\$0

The Senate, House and governor’s budget proposals maintain 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 through a federal funding increase of the CCDBG. This was a welcome infusion for childcare advocates, who have drawn attention to the program’s long waiting lists and uneven provider quality.

For the School Readiness Program, all three budget proposals include a new carve out of \$30 million in matching funds for expanding eligibility up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level, as long as income does not exceed 85 percent of the state median income. While expanding program eligibility is an important step in improving the impact of the program, none of the proposals increased total funding levels to implement an expanded program.

K-12 EDUCATION

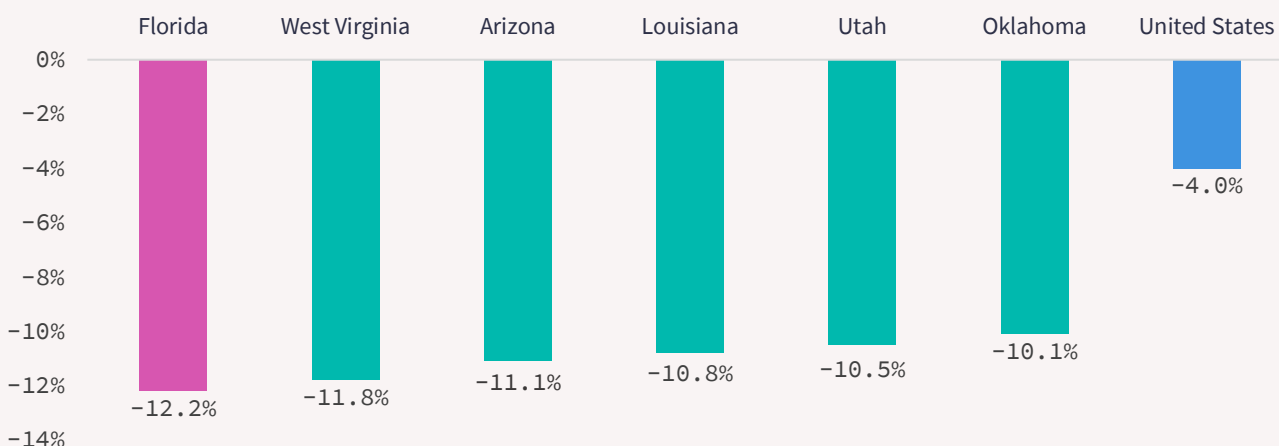
→ Current Landscape

Providing a quality education to all of Florida’s students is a core constitutional responsibility of state government and critical to economic growth. Adequate state funding for education provides the foundation for students to compete in an ever-changing economy, and it helps to attract highly qualified teachers and maintain the equity and fairness of Florida’s education system.

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.¹⁷ This funding shortage has significantly suppressed teacher salaries — Florida’s average teacher pay currently ranks 46th in the nation. Florida cut teacher pay more than any other state since the start of the Great Recession. (See Figure 3.)

Figure 3. FLORIDA CUTS TO AVERAGE TEACHER PAY HIGHEST SINCE GREAT RECESSION

Percent change in state average K-12 teacher pay, inflation adjusted, FY 2009–2018



Source: "Ranking of the States 2017 and Estimates of School Statistics 2018," NEA Research, National Education Association, April 2018.

→ Budget

K-12 EDUCATION BUDGET

	FY 2020-21 Budget Proposals			
	Current Year	Governor	House	Senate
K-12 Total State Funding - FEFP	\$12,450,345,660	\$13,242,638,800	\$13,087,360,203	\$12,980,459,216
K-12 Total State Funding - Non-FEFP	\$426,511,969	\$334,100,530	\$352,828,996	\$401,811,214
K-12 Total Local Funding	\$9,398,184,607	\$9,659,919,103	\$9,663,218,892	\$9,664,141,523
K-12 per-pupil spending	\$7,672	\$7,979	\$7,874	\$7,837

K-12 base student allocation	\$4,279	\$4,329	\$4,329	\$4,320
K-12 SELECT PROGRAMS				
	FY 2020-21 Budget Proposals			
	Current Year	Governor	House	Senate
K-12 Best and Brightest Teacher Bonuses	\$284,500,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Florida Classroom Teacher Bonus Program	N/A	\$290,687,400	\$0	\$0
Florida School Principal Bonus Program	N/A	\$9,352,500	\$0	\$0
Florida Classroom Teacher Compensation Program	N/A	\$602,282,686	\$650,000,000	\$500,000,000
K-12 Mental Health Assistance Allocation	\$75,000,000	\$100,000,000	\$100,000,000	\$100,000,000
K-12 Schools of Hope	\$40,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$0

The House proposal:

- Funds the state’s portion of the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) at \$13.1 billion for K-12 public education — an increase of 5 percent over current-year funding — resulting in per-pupil funding of \$7,874.** This is an increase of \$202, 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 has been eliminated, the new teacher salary funding is included in the FEFP portion of the K-12 budget in both chambers’ proposals. Significantly, legislators can easily inflate the total per pupil spending amount by arbitrarily shifting which programs count under the FEFP total.

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, \$7,874 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.

- Dedicates \$650 million to increasing teacher pay.** For the first time in more than decade, the House, Senate, and governor’s budget proposals all include significant funding for teacher salary increases instead of bonus programs. However, each proposal takes a different approach. The House proposal would eliminate teacher bonus programs and instead dedicate \$650 million towards salary enhancements, \$500 million of which would be dedicated solely to increasing the minimum base pay

for teachers to at least \$50,000. School districts could use the remaining \$150 million to increase veteran teacher pay. Notably, both funding streams prioritize classroom teachers; districts could only use the funds to increase pay for other staff, such as literacy coaches and guidance counselors, after sufficient entry-level salaries were achieved for teachers.

The Senate proposal:

- **Funds the state’s portion of the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) at \$13.0 billion for K-12 public education — an increase of 4 percent over current-year funding — resulting in per-pupil funding of \$7,837.** This is an increase of \$165, which includes a \$41 increase in the base student allocation, the most flexible spending for schools.
- **Dedicates \$500 million to increasing teacher pay.** The Senate proposal would eliminate teacher bonus programs and instead dedicate \$500 million towards salary enhancements dedicated solely to increasing the minimum base pay for teachers and other full-time instructional personnel, including certified prekindergarten teachers, to at least \$47,500. Each district would be able to use 20 percent of their share of the appropriation for raising overall pay, to include veteran teachers.

Both proposals:

- **Include an increase in local funding from property tax revenue of \$159 million.** The proposed increase reflects rising property values; however, the proposals reduce 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. This is in line with the governor’s proposal.
- **Do not fund the Schools of Hope program.** Both the House and Senate propose a one-year elimination of recurring funding; there is \$262.4 million in carry-forward funding available for this program. The governor’s budget proposal similarly does not fund the program.
- **Fund Mental Health Assistance at \$100 million, an increase of \$25 million.** These funds would go toward mental health services provided at K12 schools. The governor proposed the same increase.

HIGHER EDUCATION

→ Current Landscape

Researchers have found that the more educated a state’s populace is, the higher the median wage.¹⁸ 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 2017.¹⁹ 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.²⁰

In Florida, higher education funding per student is 13.5 percent below what it was in 2008, when adjusted for inflation.²¹

→ Budget

Florida College System

FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM BUDGET				
	FY 2020-21 Budget Proposals			
	Current Year	Governor	House	Senate
Performance Based Incentives (for Industry Certificates)	\$14,000,000	\$14,000,000	\$14,000,000	\$14,000,000
Student Success Incentives	\$30,000,000	\$40,000,000	\$40,000,000	\$30,000,000
Total State Support	\$1,255,757,765	\$1,277,519,206	\$1,277,714,158	\$1,288,683,265

The House proposal:

- **Increases overall funding for the Florida College System (FCS) by \$22 million, for a total of \$1.28 billion.** This represents a 2 percent increase in state support for Florida’s colleges over the current funding level. 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 dollar spent on FCS.²²
- **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.

The Senate proposal:

- **Increases overall funding for the Florida College System (FCS) by \$33 million, for a total of \$1.29 billion.** This represents a 3 percent increase in state support for Florida’s colleges over current funding levels.
- **Maintains funding level for Student Success Incentive at \$30 million.** The Senate funding:

- Maintains \$20 million in funding for “2+2” programs.
- Maintains funding of \$10 million for “Work Florida” Incentive Fund.

Both proposals:

- **Maintain 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.

State University System

STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM BUDGET				
	FY 2020-21 Budget Proposals			
	Current Year	Governor	House	Senate
State University System (SUS) – State Funding Support	\$3,155,832,501	\$3,192,133,336	\$3,140,100,099	\$3,215,226,722
State University System – Funding from Tuition and Fees	\$1,957,486,926	\$1,957,486,926	\$1,957,486,926	\$1,957,486,926
Total SUS Funding	\$5,113,319,427	\$5,149,620,262	\$5,068,082,515	\$5,211,256,952

The House proposal:

- **Provides \$3.14 billion in state support for university operating expenses.** This represents a 0.5 percent decrease compared to the current funding level. This cut is proposed even though general revenue support for the State University System has yet to rebound to pre-recession levels. (See *Figure 4.*)

The Senate proposal:

- **Provides \$3.22 billion in state support for university operating expenses.** This represents a 2 percent increase over current-year funding.

Both proposals:

- **Keeps tuition and fees constant.**

Student Financial Aid

STUDENT FINANCIAL AID BUDGET				
	FY 2020-21 Budget Proposals			
	Current Year	Governor	House	Senate
Bright Futures (Merit-based scholarships)	\$595,143,167	\$618,196,265	\$651,776,770	\$651,776,770
Student Financial Aid (Need-based aid)	\$280,398,215	\$280,909,579	\$280,921,887	\$281,155,257
Other Aid (Specialty scholarships, matches, and loans)	\$46,356,041	\$52,795,068	\$51,560,795	\$51,560,795
Total Student Financial Aid	\$921,897,423	\$951,900,912	\$984,259,452	\$984,492,822

The House proposal:

- Increases the total student financial aid budget by \$62 million, for a total of \$984.3 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 \$56.6 million for the merit-based Bright Futures Scholarship Program. This is a boost compared to the governor's request because of an increase in the projected number of Bright Futures awards for FY 2020-21; in December 2019, the Education Estimating Conference released its projection that the number of expected awards had increased by 6.9 percent.

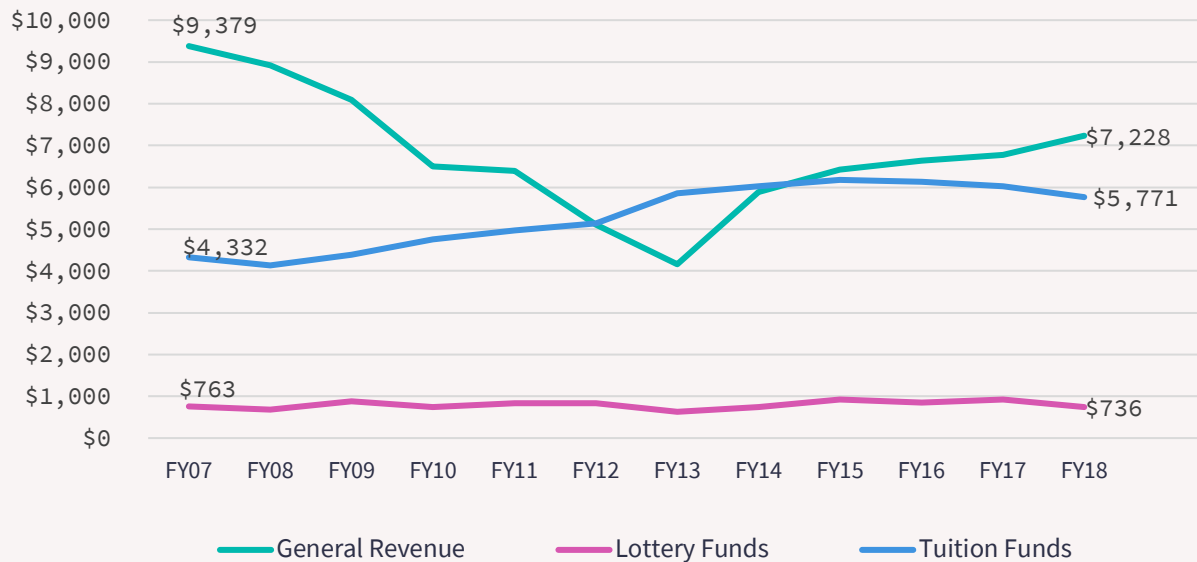
Research shows that students of color from households with low income are more likely to face barriers to academic success during their K-12 years, which can then cause them to miss out on merit-based scholarships²³ like Florida's Bright Futures. As such, this budget recommendation could further marginalize students with low income from the higher education system, adding yet another barrier to their economic mobility and the shared prosperity of all Floridians.

The Senate proposal:

- Increases the total student financial aid budget by \$62.2 million, for a total of \$984.5 million.**

Figure 4. GENERAL REVENUE SPENDING ON FLORIDA'S UNIVERSITIES BELOW PRE-RECESSION LEVELS

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



Source: FPI analysis of State University System of Florida data. Does not include college system data.

EDUCATION FACILITY CONSTRUCTION

→ Current landscape

Funding for school capital expenses, like construction, repairs, and technology improvements, has not rebounded from the deep cuts after the recession.²⁴ 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.²⁵

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.

→ Budget

EDUCATION FACILITY CONSTRUCTION BUDGET				
	FY 2020-21 Budget Proposals			
	Current Year	Governor	House	Senate
Debt Service	\$1,108,421,653	\$1,057,518,938	\$1,051,503,210	\$1,051,503,210
Maintenance, Repair, Remodeling: Charter Schools	\$158,209,945	\$173,901,770	\$169,600,000	\$169,600,000
Maintenance, Repair, Remodeling: Public schools, colleges, universities	\$0	\$136,501,257	\$0	\$0
School Safety Grant Program	\$0	\$75,000,000	\$50,000,000	\$0
Total other projects	\$311,814,699	\$226,140,377	\$204,889,738	\$331,651,000
Total Proposed FY 2020-21 Budget	\$1,578,446,297	\$1,669,061,342	\$1,475,991,948	\$1,562,103,210

Governor DeSantis has continued the trend of opting not to leverage PECO funds to bond for education projects; no projects were bonded in the current fiscal year and the governor did not propose bonding for the FY 2020-21 budget. Similarly, neither the House nor the Senate budget proposals include bonding.

The House proposal:

- **Decreases the total fixed capital outlay budget by \$102.5 million, for a total of \$1.48 billion.** Of this total, \$1.05 billion is earmarked to pay for debt service on bonding--\$56.9 million less than current year funding
- **Zeroes out project funding for state universities and colleges, which are currently funded at \$105.2 million and \$11.3 million, respectively.**
- **Appropriates \$50 million for school safety grants to assist school districts with enhancing the physical security of K-12 buildings.** The governor had recommended \$75 million.

The Senate proposal:

- **Decreases the total fixed capital outlay budget by \$16.3 million, for a total of \$1.56 billion.** Of this total, \$1.05 billion is earmarked to pay for debt service on bonding, \$56.9 million less than current year funding.
- **Opts not to fund school safety grants within the Fixed Capital Outlay budget; instead allocates \$42 million in the K12 non-FEFP budget for school hardening grants.**

Both proposals:

- **Fund *only* charter schools for maintenance, repair and remodeling.** Both chambers' proposals include \$169.6 million for maintenance and repair of charter schools without specifying any such funding for public schools, colleges, or universities. The current-year budget also only funds charter schools for maintenance, while the governor's proposal included \$136.5 million for public schools, colleges, and universities. The divergence is important to note given the extreme need for repair and maintenance of Florida's public schools, as noted above.

House and Senate FY 2020-21 Budget Recommendations:

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

→ 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 39 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 46 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.²⁶ 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

GENERAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET				
	FY 2020-21 Budget Proposals			
	Current Year	Governor	House	Senate
Appropriation Amount	\$7,166,014,476	\$6,011,432,593	\$6,060,300,262	\$6,443,515,092
Difference from Current Year Budget		- \$1,154,581,883	- \$1,105,714,214	- \$722,499,384

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Although the governor’s FY 2020-21 budget proposal recommended a reduction in TANF funding by more than \$5.8 million, both the House and Senate propose to reduce TANF funding to \$115 million, which is \$17 million less than the current year’s appropriation. TANF cash assistance was funded at \$132 million for the current fiscal year, 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 2020-21,²⁷ 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,²⁸ which is not enough for families to get by on. Inflation has eroded this payment value by almost 40 percent.²⁹ In fact, TANF benefit levels in the Sunshine State are about 25.5 percent of fair market rents, and even if a family receives both SNAP and TANF, those benefits combined keep the family under 46 percent of the poverty level.³⁰

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 FY 2020-21 recommended budgets from the governor, House, and Senate also neglect 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 health problems or lack of child care and transportation, keep them from being able to follow through.³¹ 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

The governor recommended reducing transportation expense funding for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients in the E&T program by more than \$400,000,³² although neither the House nor Senate budgets expressly call for a similar cut.

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.³³

The governor stated 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.

DeSantis also recommended allocating \$2 million³⁴ 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.

Energy Assistance

Both the Senate and House propose to maintain funding for the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) at its current level of \$2 million.³⁵ WAP makes energy-saving repairs to the homes or apartments of low-income Floridians who need help weatherizing their residences to reduce energy costs. Similarly, both budgets also recommend funding of the Low-Income Housing Assistance Program (LIHEAP) at \$16 million, the same as LIHEAP's current-year funding level. LIHEAP helps low-income families pay for home heating and cooling costs.³⁶

Food Deserts

There is no funding in the House, Senate, or governor's proposed budgets for FY 2020-21 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.³⁷ These areas are more likely to be located in low-income neighborhoods. Dozens of areas in the Sunshine State qualify as food deserts.³⁸ 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.³⁹

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.

The FY 2020-2021 recommended budgets of the House, Senate, and governor all miss the opportunity to start a long-overdue conversation about collaborative strategies to solve the state's food desert dilemma.

Transparency in Agency Contracts

Government transparency is important to ensure that lawmakers and state agencies are accountable to taxpayers. To that end, both the House⁴⁰ and Senate⁴¹ implementing bills prohibit state agencies from entering into contract service agreements that limit disclosure to either chamber. While this is a step forward, this prohibition should be permanently adopted by statute instead of authorized year-by-year, and it should be

enlarged to allow access to members of the public. All Floridians, not just those in elected office, deserve to know where and how every cent of state money is spent.

Reemployment Assistance

The Reemployment Assistance (RA) program is a critical thread in the safety net for hard working Floridians. Sadly, Florida's RA program, which helps workers who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own make ends meet while they look for work, is consistently at or near dead last in rankings among states of the proportion of jobless workers receiving benefits.⁴² Yet, nothing in either the House or Senate budget proposals expressly funds initiatives to reverse Florida's long-standing inability to improve access to the RA program. To the contrary, both the House and Senate budgets reduce appropriations for RA by almost \$2 million, down from \$97 million in last year's budget to \$95.5 million.

Economic Development

While the governor's recommendations for the state's primary economic development programs mostly maintained the status quo from the current fiscal year, the House and Senate differ significantly. One funding increase that the governor proposed was \$10 million for the Job Growth Grant Fund, from \$40 million in the current fiscal year budget to \$50 million. The Senate provides \$20 million for this fund, while the House once again eliminates funding for this program. 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, also varies significantly between the three budget proposals. The governor proposed 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. For FY 2020-21, the Senate proposes \$26.5 million, while the House provides no funding. 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 Oct. 1, 2019. In the last legislative session, a bill was passed to extend this deadline to July 1, 2020. A bill has been proposed in the Senate (SB 362) to extend the authority of Visit Florida until Oct. 1, 2020. If this bill does not pass, 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 also been a source of contention over the past few years, facing severe scrutiny over its use of public funds. All three budget proposals include \$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 proposed \$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. Neither the House nor Senate budgets include this funding; however, bills have been introduced in both chambers (SB 1612 and HB 1429) to create additional state incentives for Opportunity Zones.

Opportunity Zones were 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 families with low income, or specifically target census tracts that are in fact underserved, instead of furthering gentrification. Studies of past programs that also targeted investments based on census tract data, such as the Enterprise Zone program, found that they did not create any significant economic activity.⁴³ Furthermore, an examination of four states that have estimated the impact of their Opportunity Zone programs — Georgia, Main, Oregon, and Wisconsin — has shown that the programs had a negative effect on state revenue.⁴⁴

Affordable Housing

Following the governor’s lead, the Senate budget proposal for FY 2020-21 fully funds the Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Fund at \$387 million. The House proposal, however, only allocates \$147 million, which is notably less than the current year level of \$200.8 million. By “sweeping” funds out of the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund and into the General Revenue Fund, the House falls short in significantly addressing the ongoing affordable housing crisis.

SADOWSKI HOUSING TRUST FUND				
	FY 2020-21 Budget Proposals			
	Current Year	Governor	House	Senate
Local Government Housing Trust Fund	\$111,560,000	\$119,800,000	\$103,000,000	\$267,200,000
State Housing Trust Fund	\$89,040,000	\$267,200,000	\$44,000,000	\$119,800,000
Total Funding Sweeps	\$125,000,000	\$0	\$240,000,000	\$0
Total Housing Support	\$200,600,000	\$387,119,800	\$147,000,000	\$387,000,000

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 proposed \$267.2 million for this program and recommended that at least 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 allocated \$119.8 million for this program and advised that local governments use that fund to prioritize hurricane recovery efforts.

Lawmakers increased funding for affordable housing in FY 2018-19 and FY 2019-20, to \$123.6 million \$200.6 million, respectively. But it is worth noting that a significant portion of these increases had gone specifically for areas impacted by Hurricane Michael.

More than \$2.6 billion has been swept from the Sadowski Trust Fund since FY 2002, resulting in 94,000 foregone affordable housing units.⁴⁵ 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.⁴⁶

House and Senate FY 2020-21 Budget Recommendations:

**NATURAL RESOURCES / ENVIRONMENT / GROWTH
MANAGEMENT / TRANSPORTATION (NREGMT)**

→ **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 gentrification are growing issues of concern.⁴⁷ 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.⁴⁸

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.”⁴⁹ 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.⁵⁰ Moreover, while the governor claims that “Florida has one of the best transportation systems in the country,”⁵¹ 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 like red tide and beach erosion. 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.⁵²

→ **Budget**

NATURAL RESOURCES/ENVIRONMENT/GROWTH MANAGEMENT/TRANSPORTATION BUDGET				
	FY 2020-21 Budget Proposals			
	Current Year	Governor	House	Senate
Appropriation Amount	\$14,728,172,340	\$14,097,889,21	\$14,395,033,601	\$14,671,166,224
Difference from Current Year Budget		-\$630,283,125	-\$333,138,739	-\$57,006,116

Transportation

The Senate and House propose \$10.2 billion for the Department of Transportation (DOT), funded through the State Transportation Trust Fund. Specifically, \$9 billion is recommended for the Transportation Work Program that would fund the launching of DOT's Five-Year Work Program.

The Five-Year Work Program transportation plan is budgeted at \$9.7 billion, which includes funding for the new Multi-Use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES). The FY 2019-20 budget allocated \$45 million in initial funds for this program, and the M-CORES plan calls for \$90 million in FY 2020-21. This will be allocated through the Five-Year Work Program. M-CORES are the result of SB 7068, a controversial bill that was heralded by former Senate President Bill Galvano. M-CORES is 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 Disadvantaged Program, which provides services for individuals with low income who are living with disabilities, especially seniors.

M-CORES has been critiqued by environmental and community advocates. The more than 330 miles of proposed toll roads would endanger over 52,800 acres of undeveloped land, which includes sensitive animal habitats as well as critical ecosystems such as wetlands, springs and aquifer recharge areas. The economic benefit to rural communities is also in question, as the new roads would encourage more unsustainable sprawl development.⁵³ Additionally, Florida's existing infrastructure, including roads, public transit, and bridges is already in need of maintenance and repair – the American Society of Civil Engineers gives Florida a "C" grade in its Infrastructure Report Card.⁵⁴ Funding our existing infrastructure and making meaningful investments in our rural communities in areas such as education, health care, and conservation would have a much more significant economic impact and return for the state.

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

Disaster Planning & Recovery

The House and Senate propose roughly \$3 billion in federal and state funding for the Division of Emergency Management (DEM) to provide disaster relief and recovery, down from the current funding level of more than \$4 billion. The governor's proposal allocated approximately \$3.5 billion for DEM, slightly more than either the House or Senate, but still less than current-year funding.

The current year budget included a 10-day tax-free holiday for disaster preparedness supplies, which covered purchases such as modestly priced self-powered radios and lights, tarps, tie-down kits, batteries, and generators. A bill has been introduced in the Senate (SB 524), which would provide a similar tax-free holiday in FY 2020-21.

In addition to DEM funding, the Senate's proposed budget specifically allocates \$40 million for loans to small businesses impacted by Hurricane Michael, as well as \$8.6 million for Hurricane Michael-related historical preservation projects.

The House allocates \$15 million to fund the Hurricane Housing Recovery Program for Hurricane Michael damage. Funds may be used to, among other things, repair or replace housing, including manufactured homes; pay insurance deductibles; relocate manufactured homes; buy building materials for home repair and construction; assist with payment for security and utility deposits as well as temporary storage of household furnishings; and prevent foreclosure and eviction.

The House also provides \$10 million to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation to assist Floridians with down payment and closing cost payments as part of its Homebuyer Loan Program for those purchasing a home to be used as a primary residence in the Hurricane Michael-impacted counties of Bay, Jackson, Gulf, Calhoun, Gadsden, Washington, Liberty, Franklin, Wakulla, Taylor, and Holmes.

D-SNAP

The House proposal earmarks \$100,000 for a pilot project in Bay and Walton Counties to modernize the delivery of Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program (D-SNAP)⁵⁵ benefits through mobile technology. D-SNAP is a program administered by DCF on the state level and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on the federal level to help people without adequate income and resources put food on the table after a disaster. Examining efficient ways to deliver D-SNAP after a disaster makes sense. However, the details⁵⁶ of this particular pilot require further consideration of several unique factors, such as fiber network outages that hinder delivery of broadband and mobile phone service to affected regions after a disaster, as well as individual service limitations or data caps that may frustrate use of smartphones to transact D-SNAP business.

Environment

The Senate and House proposals vary in terms of support for environmental programs, especially regarding the Florida Forever program and threats to the state's water supply. Investing in these areas is key to protecting the state's natural resources and unique ecosystem, mitigating the effects of climate change, and keeping the state's drinking water safe and plentiful for the growing number of Florida residents and visitors.

Compared to current-year levels:

- **The Senate increases investment in Florida Forever, while the House significantly reduces funding.** The Senate proposal would bring program funding to more than \$100 million, which is more than the governor recommended. However, advocates argue that even the Senate's figure is far too low. Moreover, the House is only budgeting \$20 million, nearly 40 percent below current funding. Florida Forever is a critical program that allows the state to acquire and preserve ecologically important land and prevent future environmental problems. 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 BUDGET

	FY 2020-21 Budget Proposals			
	Current Year	Governor	House	Senate
Appropriation Amount	\$33,000,000	\$100,000,000	\$20,000,000	\$108,000,000
Difference from Current Year Budget		+\$67,000,000	-\$13,000,000	+ 75,000,000

- The House and Senate budgets closely match the governor’s proposed Everglades funding of approximately \$320 million.** Both proposals prioritize supporting the rich biodiversity of the region that makes it so unique and vital to the state, following the governor’s lead on Everglades funding. Current funding is higher than it has been in recent years, thanks in part to the governor making it a priority. The Everglades is one of the most endangered natural resources, yet nearly 1 in 3 Floridians rely on it for their water supply.⁵⁷
- The Senate significantly reduces Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) funding for countering red tide and related algae blooms.** While both the House and governor’s proposals maintain \$20.8 million in funding for the statewide water quality monitoring portal, combatting “red tide” and blue-green algal blooms, and supporting the Blue-Green Algae Task Force, the Senate budget would reduce this funding by 24 percent. This would severely limit the state’s ability to address the detrimental effects of algae blooms on Florida’s coastlines and water supply, which have been amplified by climate change.
- The Senate and House expand Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) funding.** Both the Senate and House propose over \$10 million in increased FWC funding, which would bring the FWC budget to approximately \$405 million. However, the governor’s proposal recommended even more, at \$418 million. For the past 20 years, the FWC has coordinated the state’s fish and wildlife research, enforced hunting and fishing laws, and addressed nuisance species and loss of animal habitat. The FWC is central to managing the rich array of Florida’s natural species, including nearly 600 land animals and 700 native marine and freshwater fish.⁵⁸
- The Senate and House proposals maintain current funding of \$50 million for springs restoration and \$50 million for beach projects.** Florida has more than 1,000 springs,⁵⁹ but development and pollution severely restrict their water quality and flow. Restoring the springs is pivotal to protecting Florida’s marine life, as well as preserving the natural beauty that millions of state residents and visitors of the springs admire each year. Beach project funding supports DEP’s work to address erosion of nearly 420 miles of the state’s beaches, just over half of which have been restored since the state allocated designated funding in 1998. Continuing these efforts is pivotal to managing the damages of climate change and keeping Florida’s coastal tourism industry thriving. Just a few years ago, Florida received a D+ from the American Society of Civil Engineers for management of its coastal areas.⁶⁰

¹ FPI considers FY 2019-20 appropriations, plus vetoes, as part of current-year funding. FPI does not include adjustments and supplemental funding in calculations of current-year funding levels.

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