FLORIDA FY 2023-24
BUDGET: SUMMARY BY
ISSUE AREA

August 2023
# Table of Contents

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** ................................................................................................................................. 4  
**INTRODUCTION: FLORIDA’S HIGH COST OF LIVING COUPLED WITH STAGNANT WAGES IS MAKING IT DIFFICULT FOR FAMILIES TO THRIVE** ................................................................................. 4

**BUDGET & REVENUE OVERVIEW** .................................................................................................................. 9

- **HOW IS THE FY 2023-24 BUDGET FUNDED?** .......................................................................................... 16  
  - About Increased Revenue Collections & Rainy Day Funds ........................................................................... 17  
  - WHAT COMES NEXT IN THE BUDGET PROCESS? ...................................................................................... 19

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** ............................................................................................................... 20

- **CURRENT LANDSCAPE** ................................................................................................................................. 20  
- **BUDGET** ..................................................................................................................................................... 22  
  - **KidCare** .................................................................................................................................................... 23  
  - **Medicaid Expansion** .................................................................................................................................... 23  
  - **Community Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services** ............................................................ 24  
  - **Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS)** ...................................................................................... 25  
  - **Public Health Funding** ............................................................................................................................ 27  
  - **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)** .............................. 27  
  - **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** ................................................................................... 27  
  - **Veterans and the Military** ........................................................................................................................ 29  
  - **Health and Human Services Vetoes** ......................................................................................................... 29

**PUBLIC SAFETY & CORRECTIONS** .............................................................................................................. 30

- **CURRENT LANDSCAPE** ................................................................................................................................. 30  
- **BUDGET** ..................................................................................................................................................... 30  
  - **Department of Corrections** ....................................................................................................................... 31  
  - **Inmate Education** ....................................................................................................................................... 31  
  - **Maintenance and Repairs** .......................................................................................................................... 31  
  - **Health Care** .............................................................................................................................................. 32  
  - **Security and Institutional Operations** ....................................................................................................... 33  
  - **Community Supervision** .......................................................................................................................... 33  
  - **Department of Juvenile Justice** ................................................................................................................ 33

**EDUCATION** .................................................................................................................................................. 35

- **CURRENT LANDSCAPE** ................................................................................................................................. 35  
- **BUDGET** ..................................................................................................................................................... 36  
  - **EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PREK-12 EDUCATION** .................................................................................. 37  
    - **Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten** .................................................................................................................... 37  
    - **School Readiness Program** ..................................................................................................................... 38  
  - **K-12 EDUCATION** ..................................................................................................................................... 39  
  - **HIGHER EDUCATION** .............................................................................................................................. 42  
    - **Florida College System** .......................................................................................................................... 43  
    - **State University System** ........................................................................................................................ 43

---

Report
Student Financial Aid ......................................................................................................................................... 43
Education Vetoes ........................................................................................................................................ 44

GENERAL GOVERNMENT .............................................................................................................................. 45

CURRENT LANDSCAPE ....................................................................................................................................... 45
BUDGET ............................................................................................................................................................. 46
Reemployment Assistance .............................................................................................................................. 46
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) ..................................................................................... 47
Food Deserts ...................................................................................................................................................... 47
Division of Emergency Management ............................................................................................................ 48
Economic Development ................................................................................................................................. 48
Affordable Housing .......................................................................................................................................... 49
Florida Housing Finance Corporation ............................................................................................................. 49
Live Local Act .................................................................................................................................................. 50
Affordable Housing Projects .......................................................................................................................... 52
Housing First Initiatives, Transitional and Permanent Supportive Housing Services, and Rapid Re-Housing .. 52
Community Land Trusts ................................................................................................................................... 53
Housing and Community Development Projects ............................................................................................ 54

NATURAL RESOURCES / ENVIRONMENT / GROWTH MANAGEMENT / TRANSPORTATION (NREGMT) ................... 55

CURRENT LANDSCAPE ....................................................................................................................................... 55
BUDGET ............................................................................................................................................................. 56
Transportation ..................................................................................................................................................... 56
Disaster Planning & Recovery .......................................................................................................................... 58
Department of Environmental Protection ........................................................................................................ 58
Everglades Restoration ..................................................................................................................................... 59
Recreation and Parks ......................................................................................................................................... 59
Water Quality Improvement Grant Program (formerly known as the Wastewater Grant Program) ............ 59
Florida Forever .................................................................................................................................................. 60
Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission .................................................................................................... 61
Red Tide Mitigation .......................................................................................................................................... 62

List of Tables
Table 1. Breakdown and Comparison of the GAA FY 2022-23 and FY 2023-24 ..................................................... 16
Table 2. Health and Human Services Budget ...................................................................................................... 22
Table 3. HCBS Waitlists ......................................................................................................................................... 26
Table 4. Public Safety & Corrections Budget ...................................................................................................... 30
Table 5. Education Budget .................................................................................................................................. 36
Table 6. K-12 Education Budget ......................................................................................................................... 39
Table 7. Student Financial Aid Budget ................................................................................................................ 43
Table 12. General Government Budget ............................................................................................................ 46
Table 13. Area Median Income Limits ................................................................................................................ 51
Table 14. Natural Resources/Environment/Growth Management/Transportation Budget .............................. 56
Table 15. Florida Forever Program Budget, Current and Prior Year .................................................................. 60
List of Figures

Figure 1. Annual Florida Operating Budget by Fiscal Year and Service Area ................................................. 10
Figure 2. Total Trust Fund Revenue from Federal Grants Increased During the COVID-19 Peak Years ............ 11
Figure 3. The Department of Economic Opportunity (DOE) & The Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) Received $96 Billion in Federal Grants in FY 2020-21 .......................................................... 12
Figure 4. Florida Relies Heavily on Sales Tax as a Source of General Revenue Compared to the South and the United States* .................................................................................................................. 14
Figure 5. Florida Ranks 45th On Investment in Public Services ........................................................................ 15
Figure 6. Federal COVID-19 Relief Significantly Bolstered Florida Education Funding .............................. 36
Figure 7. Florida Has Seen a Reduction in Teacher Pay Over the Past Decade ............................................. 40
Figure 8. Florida’s Base Student Allocation Lags Pre-Great Recession Levels When Accounting for Inflation ... 42
Figure 9. Florida Forever Funding .................................................................................................................. 61
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gov. Ron DeSantis signed the fiscal year (FY) 2023-24 budget into law on June 16, 2023. After accounting for $511 million in vetoes, the General Appropriations Act (GAA) totals $116.5 billion, a 5.9 percent increase over the FY 2022-23 budget of $110 billion.¹

INTRODUCTION: FLORIDA’S HIGH COST OF LIVING COUPLED WITH STAGNANT WAGES IS MAKING IT DIFFICULT FOR FAMILIES TO THRIVE

By some economic measures, Florida is booming: the unemployment rate is low at 2.6 percent,² and the state’s gross domestic product (GDP), the value of all the goods and services produced, has increased by 3.5 percent since the fourth quarter of 2022.³ However, a decent quality of life is increasingly out of reach for many Floridians. Skyrocketing inflation in the state — largely fueled by increasing housing costs — and wages that simply cannot keep pace have made the Sunshine State one of the most unaffordable places to live in the United States.⁴ Specifically, the national inflation rate increased by 3 percent between June 2022 and June 2023, while in Florida, the inflation rate has increased by more than double while wages have lagged:

- In the Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach metropolitan area, the inflation rate increased by 6.9 percent from June 2022 to June 2023,⁵ while average hourly earnings decreased by 0.3 percent.⁶
- In the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater metropolitan area, the inflation rate increased 7.3 percent from May 2022 to May 2023,⁷ while average hourly earnings only increased by 1.5 percent.⁸

Compounding rising inflation and stagnant wages, Florida has experienced, and will continue to experience, significant demographic shifts and challenges. For example, between July 2021 and 2022, Florida became the nation’s fastest growing state for the first time since 1957,⁹ adding a total of 416,754 people. This population increase is analogous to adding a city slightly larger than Tampa. The Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR) projects that Florida will gain nearly 4 million new residents by 2040,¹⁰ with a significant increase in the older adult population.¹¹ As the state’s population increases and ages, the demand for public services (e.g., good quality roads, public transit, schools, and water systems) will increase, raising crucial questions about the viability and equity of Florida’s tax code and budgetary choices.
These deep cracks in the foundation of Florida’s economy highlight the inequities that undermine this moment of economic expansion. Without a doubt, while some continue to benefit from the state’s economic success, more and more Floridians are being left out and priced out. Yet, the current moment is also full of promise — due to better than expected economic conditions, policymakers have the resources to make bold investments that could foster shared prosperity for generations. By investing in public services like affordable housing, education, health care, and safety net programs, and offering targeted relief to Floridians struggling to afford the basics, lawmakers can reduce barriers to economic mobility and help families thrive.

Below, FPI evaluates the budget in the context of the “Roadmap to Shared Prosperity in Florida,” the organization’s blueprint for improving economic mobility, health, and fiscal stability for families in the Sunshine State.¹²

Does the budget include meaningful investments in education and health that will foster community well-being?

The passage of HB 1, which expanded private school vouchers to all eligible K-12 students regardless of income, will have far reaching impacts on public school funding long into the future. Funding for this expansion comes from the Florida Education Finance Program, which is the formula used to allocate public school funding. The expansion of vouchers will divert much-needed funds from public schools, and the FY 2023-24 budget does not adequately meet the expected demand for vouchers. The post-veto budget provides a $2 billion appropriation for the Family Empowerment and Tax Credit Scholarships, with an additional reserve provided in the back of the bill for potential cost overruns. This is far less than FPI’s estimate of $4 billion for the total cost of vouchers. Without dedicated revenue or guardrails on the growth of vouchers, funding for K-12 education will erode further.

In early education, however, the FY 2023-24 budget includes a significant increase in funding to expand the School Readiness Program to families with incomes at 200 percent of the federal poverty level or 85 percent of the state median income. This will ensure that more families can participate in and access child care.

Regarding health, the FY 2023-24 budget includes funding to expand eligibility for the state’s health insurance program for children, KidCare. The Legislature raised the income eligibility cap for KidCare from 200 percent of the federal poverty level to 300 percent, which will serve over 42,000 children. Health coverage is crucial for child development as well as long-term health and well-being outcomes. The budget also includes significant increases in funding for community health, behavioral health, and substance use disorder services.
On the other hand, the Medicaid redetermination process for over 5.5 million participants, due to the end of the “continuous coverage” provision passed as a federal COVID-19 relief measure, will have significant impacts on the health insurance landscape in Florida. Many of those who will lose Medicaid eligibility, either due to procedural reasons or because they are no longer income-eligible, will fall into the insurance “coverage gap.”

Lawmakers did not include adequate funding to make an impact on the tens of thousands of individuals on long waitlists for home- and community-based services (HCBS). These services are designed to reduce the chances that Floridians with disabilities and older adults will require long-term institutional care (e.g., nursing homes).

**Does the budget include economic development and public infrastructure projects to help promote quality jobs, spur sustainable growth, and improve climate resilience?**

Investment in Florida’s infrastructure — transportation, public buildings, and water treatment systems — is essential. However, the state’s infrastructure is persistently graded poorly by the American Society of Civil Engineers. It is imperative to have modern, climate-resilient facilities in a state prone to hurricanes and extreme humidity. Overall, the budget includes continued investments in conservation, including a moderate funding increase to the Department of Environmental Protection and $126.2 million in funding for the Florida Forever program, its highest appropriation since the Great Recession. However, while an additional $100 million would have been allocated to Florida Forever, the governor ultimately vetoed that amount.

The Legislature passed HB 5 during the 2023 legislative session, which reorganizes the state’s economic development programs. HB 5 renames the Department of Economic Opportunity to the Department of Commerce, eliminates Enterprise Florida and several economic development incentives, and brings Visit Florida under the umbrella of the Department of Commerce. These programs have long been contested, but it is uncertain if this reshuffling and renaming will result in a new strategic direction or an improved return on investment for the state’s economic development programs.

**Does the budget include provisions to advance shared prosperity by nurturing inclusive communities and building a strong safety net?**

In the area of affordable housing, lawmakers provide funding that far surpasses the FY 2022-23 post-veto budget. While more than $99.8 million is going towards specific affordable housing
development projects, Housing First initiatives, transitional housing services, and Community Land Trusts, there is over $875.2 million allocated to Housing and Community Development-related positions and projects. Ultimately, whether the new housing resulting from these investments alleviates Florida’s housing affordability crisis depends on how many units will be targeted to meet the needs of Floridians with low- and very-low incomes, compared to those with moderate, or “workforce” incomes.

Overall, the GAA does not include adequate funding to ease the unprecedented hardships that continue to grip Florida’s communities in the aftermath of COVID-19. While families still face difficulty putting increasingly more costly food on the table and meeting their day-to-day needs, the FY 2023-24 budget keeps Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) assistance payments at the same level that those payments have been at since 1992. TANF payments have remained stagnant for three decades, and inflation has eroded the payment value significantly. Additionally, the budget does not include needed reforms of Florida’s failing Reemployment Assistance program. However, the budget does fund the analysis and development of a plan for the state to address the “benefits cliffs” that families participating in the TANF or school readiness programs often experience when a modest increase in earnings causes them to be financially ineligible for services that they still need to meet basic needs.

The budget includes increased funding for the Department of Corrections, with additional investment in education for people who are incarcerated. Though there are other increases in funding for the department — for areas such as maintenance and health care — the funding appropriated in the FY 2023-24 budget is not sufficient to overcome the department’s long-standing challenges with an increasing and aging inmate population, insufficient staffing, increasing costs, and fiscal insufficiencies.

**Does the budget contain language to clean up and modernize the tax code for a strong future?**

The tax package (HB 7063) that legislators approved includes new permanent sales tax exemptions, alongside temporary ones, and a new round of sales tax holidays.

The tax package includes permanent tax exemptions for: specified baby and toddler products and clothes; adult incontinence products; oral hygiene products; equipment to produce renewable natural gas; certain agricultural fencing; firearm safety devices; and small private investigative agency services. Considering the state costs (via forfeited revenue) and impacted population, the exemption for baby and toddler products is the most significant change in the package.
To elaborate, Florida is home to approximately 1.1 million children under 5 years of age, and welcomes nearly 600 newborns each day. The sales tax exemption for baby toddler products includes: cribs, strollers, safety gates, monitors, child safety cabinet locks, child carrier seats, breast pumps, baby wipes, changing tables and pads, and clothing marketed for children aged 5 or younger. Together, this will cost about $159 million annually in forgone revenue, but help about 20 percent of households with children present. As mentioned, the tax package also exempts adult incontinence and oral hygiene products. Annually, these exemptions will cost $27.5 million and $39.8 million, respectively, and help offset Florida’s sales tax burden.

Alongside these exemptions, policymakers also passed a series of short-term sales tax holidays, including: two 14-day back-to-school exemptions for school supplies, two 14-day exemptions for disaster preparedness supplies, a seven-day exemption for tools, and a three-month sales tax exemption on purchases for certain recreational activities. These holidays will cost Floridians $550 million, even though only one in five Floridians use them. Conclusively, these exemptions do nothing to clean up the Sunshine State’s tax code.
Although the General Appropriations Act (GAA) includes lump-sum appropriations for the fiscal year, policymakers often include additional appropriations in “back-of-the-bill” sections, which are not included in the GAA total for the pertinent fiscal year. The operating budget, however, does not discriminate between GAA sections — it combines funding and adjustments across all categories to offer a more accurate picture of government spending increases when compared to the GAA alone.

How is The State Budget Broken Down?

The Florida Constitution specifies that the GAA must be broken down into separate sections for each major program area: (1) education enhancement “lottery” trust fund item, (2) education (all other funds), (3) human services, (4) criminal justice and corrections, (5) natural resources, environment, growth management, and transportation, (6) general government, and (7) judicial branch.

The “back of the bill” sections are all remaining sections, outside of the major program area expenditures. These sections typically include employee compensation and benefits, adjustments to the operating budget (for the previous fiscal year), and trust fund sweeps.

The operating budget includes the approved plan of operation consistent with the GAA and other substantive legislation or appropriations approved through the interim budget amendment process. It consists of all funding for the state’s traditional appropriation categories (i.e., Salaries and Benefits, Other Personal Services, Expenses, Aid to Local Government, Operating Capital Outlay, Food Products, Special Categories, Financial Assistance Payments, Data Processing Services, Pension and Benefits, Claim Bills and Relief Acts, Fixed Capital Outlay, and Grants and Aids to Local Governments and Nonstate Entities).

The operating budget in Florida, like in many states, has mostly seen incremental changes over several years, with notable exceptions. Following the Great Recession (beginning with the last quarter of 2007 and ending the third quarter of 2009),21 the state budget stagnated until it dropped 7 percent between FY 2010-11 and FY 2011-12, followed by a smaller decrease the next fiscal year. (See Figure 1.) As the July 2012 Economic Estimating Conference explained, the Great Recession triggered extreme financial and economic stress statewide, leading to sharp declines in state gross domestic
product, personal income growth, and employment. As such, the drop in Florida’s operating budget between FY 2010-11 and FY 2011-12 points to a period of sluggish recovery, continued financial difficulties, and budget cuts. Since then, from FY 2008-09 to FY 2019-20, the state’s operating budget has gradually increased: during this period, the budget had an average annual growth rate of approximately 2 percent. Figure 1 depicts this trend and offers insight across Florida’s six primary service areas.

**Figure 1. Annual Florida Operating Budget by Fiscal Year and Service Area**

After the Great Recession, Florida’s operating budget slowly returned to a period of incremental growth up until FY 2019-20. Thereafter, the state’s operating budget skyrocketed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering FY 2020-21 and FY 2022-23, the budget had a staggering average annual growth rate of approximately 12.5 percent, including significant boosts in Education, General Government, NREGMT, and Human Services.

**Florida’s State Operating Budget Has Been Boosted by Federal Dollars and Assistance Throughout the Pandemic**
The substantial jump in the operating budget is driven by an influx of federal pandemic-related relief dollars and not by increased general revenue collections or investments alone. To elaborate, as a component of the operating budget, Florida’s General Revenue Fund (GRF) accounts for one-third of the entire budget. Through the GRF, legislators have access to undesignated revenue from tax collections that they can appropriate for any government purpose. In contrast, monies designated or earmarked for specific purposes go to state or federal trust funds, which offer less flexibility than the GRF. Consequently, general revenue spending is an indicator of statewide financial sustainability tied to tax collections.

*Figure 2. Total Trust Fund Revenue from Federal Grants Increased During the COVID-19 Peak Years*

General revenue in the operating budget sharply declined by 12 percent following the Great Recession and had an average annual growth rate of about 2 percent through FY 2019-20. In response to the pandemic, between FYs 2020-21 and 2022-23, general revenue had an average annual growth rate of about 6 percent. In comparison, during the same period, the Education Enhancement Trust Fund, made up of earmarked lottery revenue, had an average annual growth rate of 9 percent; and “Other Trust Funds,” which include federal dollars, had an average annual growth rate of 17 percent – almost three times more than GRF changes. Between FYs 2020-21 and
In short, recent operating budget increases are not due to GRF spending. In response to the pandemic, the federal government stepped in to help state governments. As Figure 2 corroborates, federal grants increased from $32 billion in FY 2018-2019 to $41 billion in FY 2019-20, a 30 percent increase. Then, federal grants increased from $41 billion to $125 billion in FY 2020-21, a 204 percent increase. Through these fiscal years, which cover the peak of the pandemic, some key areas that received federal funding include the Department of Economic Opportunity (including critical federal investment to the Unemployment Compensation Benefit Trust Fund), the Agency for Health Care Administration (the bulk of U.S. grants went to the Medical Care Trust Fund, mainly for Medicaid), and the Department of Education. (See Figure 3.) The increase illustrates the key role of the federal government in supporting Florida’s operating budget during the pandemic and ensuring that Florida policymakers could avoid deep budget cuts and reductions to the GRF.

**Figure 3. The Department of Economic Opportunity (DOE) & The Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) Received $96 Billion in Federal Grants in FY 2020-21**
Florida does not have a diversified revenue base

Although federal assistance through FY 2020-21 and FY 2021-22 was substantial, the long-term impact of federal dollars in the operating budget will taper off. For this reason, it is crucial to consider Florida’s ability to fund public services with its own revenue.

As the state’s population continues to increase, change, and age, so will public service demands. Since the early 2000s, Florida’s population has grown by 35 percent, from 16 million in 2000 to 21.5 million in 2020, and it is much more diverse. Additionally, Florida is second in the country in the percent of the population age 65 or older with 21 percent of Floridians falling into this group. By 2030, the Florida Demographic Estimating Conference anticipates 24 percent of Floridians will be age 65 or older (nearly 1 out of every 4 people). This has implications for the relative size of the labor pool, the need for health care services, the modes of service delivery, and overall tax revenue.

Yet, despite significant ongoing demographic changes, Florida has set a trend of collecting and spending less general revenue, via taxes, than most other states, including neighboring states in the Southeast, on a per capita basis. According to the United States Census Bureau’s 2021 Annual Survey of State and Local Government Finances, the Sunshine State collects roughly $2,550 per capita — nearly all other states in the country, except for Alaska and Texas, generate more revenue for public services per capita. There are several reasons why Florida trails the country in per capita tax collections:

- Only local governments (e.g., counties, municipalities, and/or school districts), as opposed to the state, can levy property taxes.
- Since 1924, the state cannot levy personal income taxes.
- In 1984, policymakers made it easier for multistate and multinational corporations to avoid paying corporate income taxes by repealing unitary combined reporting.
- In 2006, policymakers repealed the annual tax on intangible personal property (i.e., stocks, bonds, notes, etc.) and, in doing so, made it harder to tax wealth.

Instead, the state relies heavily on its general sales tax to balance its budget. As Figure 4 shows, Florida collects about $1,540 per capita through its general sales tax; this is approximately $340 more than the U.S. average and between $190 and $670 more than the average in the South. Across the nation, Florida and Texas are the most dependent on general sales taxes; the tax accounts for approximately 61 and 62 percent of their revenue, respectively. Once you factor in excise taxes (i.e., taxes on motor fuel, alcoholic beverages, tobacco), taxes on consumption, overall, account for about 80 percent of Florida’s tax revenue.
Sales taxes notwithstanding, Florida does not tap into the same revenue streams available to other states. Florida's low ranking is an issue because general revenue helps finance education, health and human services, corrections, natural resource management, growth management, transportation projects, and general government operations.

**Figure 4. Florida Relies Heavily on Sales Tax as a Source of General Revenue Compared to the South and the United States**

Florida Lawmakers Have Underfunded Public Services for Over a Decade

Beyond lack of revenue collection, As Figure 5 shows, since 2011, per capita public service expenditures in the Sunshine State have consistently trailed investments made in other parts of the country. From 2011 to 2021, Florida per capita local and state government expenditures had an average annual growth rate of approximately 0.31 percent, compared to 0.82 percent across the

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Southeast and 1.32 percent nationally. Florida trails most of the nation in per capita direct general revenue expenditures in various areas, ranking 45th in total direct government spending, 49th for elementary and secondary education, 49th for higher education, 49th for public welfare, and 38th for highway infrastructure.33

**Figure 5. Florida Ranks 45th On Investment in Public Services**

Finally, state leaders’ conversations about the operating budget, trust fund balances, and per capita general revenue spending do not consider the forgone revenue from tax expenditures. “Silent spending,” FPI’s term for the numerous types of tax expenditures, continues to drain billions of dollars in potential state revenue each year. Total tax expenditures will cost Floridians an estimated $25.3 billion in FY 2023-24. Since FY 2009-2010, the cost of silent spending has increased by 1.7 percent annually.34 Unlike money spent through the state budget process, this shadow budget reflects resources that are “spent” through Florida tax laws. While spending through the state budget takes the form of collecting revenue and appropriating these dollars to be expended, spending through the tax code takes the form of revenue the state forfeits. In either case, the result is the same: public resources are designated, and spent, for a specific purpose.
Lingering Issues with the Tax Code

While Washington, Texas, and Florida, which do not have state income taxes, have average to low taxes overall (as measured by per capita collections), they are far from “low tax” for families and workers paid moderate to low wages. As the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy explains, due to their disproportionate reliance on sales and excise taxes, states like Washington, Texas, and Florida heavily tax families and workers who earn moderate to low incomes. In other words, these states are among the most regressive, which means that people who are living below the poverty level pay the largest share of their household income in taxes.

While Washington, Texas, and Florida, which do not have state income taxes, have average to low taxes overall (as measured by per capita collections), they are far from “low tax” for families and workers paid moderate to low wages.

Florida has the third-most regressive tax code in the country. This is due to a history of decisions that have shifted and solidified an outsized tax responsibility onto households of low to moderate income, who are disproportionately Floridians of color. Twentieth-century decisions to turn away from tax policy based on a person’s ability to pay and toward a tax code that benefits wealthy and predominantly white residents have inhibited Floridians’ prosperity and exacerbated income and race inequity.

How is the FY 2023-24 Budget Funded?

Upon receiving the budget from the Legislature, Gov. DeSantis vetoed $150 million from Education, $14.6 million from Health and Human Services, $16 million from Criminal Justice and Corrections, $257 million from NREGMT, $70 million from General Government, and $2 million from the Judicial Branch, for a total of $511 million in vetoes. The post-veto budget amounts to $116.5 billion, an increase of $6.5 billion, or 6 percent, over the FY 2022-23 budget. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. Breakdown and Comparison of the GAA FY 2022-23 and FY 2023-24

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR-TO-YEAR BUDGET COMPARISON</th>
<th>GAA FY 2022-23</th>
<th>GAA FY 2023-24</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Revenue Fund (% of Total Appropriations)</td>
<td>$41,820,000,000 (38%)</td>
<td>$46,065,000,000 (40%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Revenue Fund (GRF) Difference from Previous Year</td>
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<td>+$4,245,000,000</td>
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As Table 1 shows, legislators have access to the General Revenue Fund (GRF) and various state and federal trust funds to pay for the final GAA. The GRF comprises undesignated revenue from tax collections and accounts for 40 percent of the post-veto GAA. Additionally, 35 percent of the post-veto budget relies on federal dollars, and the other 25 percent is earmarked for specific state trust funds (e.g., lottery revenue goes to education).

### About Increased Revenue Collections & Rainy Day Funds

As mentioned earlier, between FY 2020-21 and FY 2022-23, revenue collections, fueled by the economy healing from the pandemic and boosted by major federal relief efforts, have been strong. (See callout box.)

With the passage of the budget, state reserves are roughly $15.3 billion, $6.8 billion of which is unallocated general revenue. Policymakers can use this money when recessions or other unexpected events cause revenue to fall or spending to rise. Furthermore, ample reserves can help reduce economic harm during crises.

In Florida, policymakers keep the following reserves:

- **$8.5 billion in Unallocated General Revenue Fund and Trust Funds.** The Unallocated General Revenue Fund consists of $6.8 billion surplus general dollars, with some needed to meet GRF appropriations and adjustments throughout the fiscal year. State trust funds have a surplus of $1.7 billion.

- **$4.1 billion in the Budget Stabilization Fund (BSF).** Policymakers can only use the BSF to offset a declared deficit or provide funding for an emergency. Consequently, policymakers have limited access to the BSF.

- **$2.2 billion in Reinsurance Assistance and the Florida Optional Reinsurance Assistance Programs.** In 2022, the Florida Legislature held special sessions to address property insurance. During a special session held in May, policymakers passed Senate Bill 2-D (2022D),

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Trust Funds (% of Total Appropriations)</th>
<th>$28,955,000,000 (26%)</th>
<th>$29,444,000,000 (25%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>State Trust Funds Difference from Previous Year</td>
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<th>Federal Trust Funds (% of Total Appropriations)</th>
<th>$39,225,000,000 (36%)</th>
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<td>Federal Trust Funds Difference from Previous Year</td>
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<th>Total Appropriations</th>
<th>$110,000,000,000</th>
<th>$116,516,000,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difference from Previous Year</td>
<td>+$6,516,000,000 (+6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
which created the Reinsurance to Assist Policyholders Program to offer reinsurance (i.e., insurance for insurance companies to cover losses they may not be able to in the event of a mass catastrophe) at affordable rates with the requirement that insurance companies offer rate decreases to policyholders. Then, in December, policymakers passed SB 2-A (2022), which created the Florida Optional Reinsurance Assistance Program to offer insurance companies different layers of reinsurance coverage from the state.

- **$500 million in the Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund (EPRF).** In 2022, policymakers created the EPRF within the executive office of the governor (see Senate Bill 98, 2022). Money specifically appropriated to the fund is available as a primary funding source for the governor to prepare or respond to a disaster (declared by the governor as a state of emergency) that exceeds regularly appropriated funding sources.

Policymakers should consider that the unique conditions that have boosted Florida’s sales tax collections and, by extension, historic reserves, are unlikely to repeat. During the early years of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Consumer spending shifted from services (which are mostly sales tax exempt) to goods (mostly subject to the state’s general sales tax).
- Personal income growth shot up, especially in 2021, due to the flow of federal dollars into households and businesses.
- Workers returning to their jobs and others leveraging the tight labor market into better paying opportunities during FY 2021-22 helped personal income growth remain strong, even as federal relief measures faded.
- Regarding inflation, the immediate response to inflation is an increase in sales tax collections due to higher prices. Persistent inflation conditions, however, ultimately suppress collections as consumers begin to spend more money on non-taxable necessities.

As Floridians had more personal income to spend on goods, it is not surprising that the state economy expanded and general sales tax collections increased. For more context, in FY 2019-20, Florida's Gross Domestic Product (GDP, i.e., all goods and services produced or exchanged within the state) slumped -0.2 percent. GDP then grew at 4.0 percent in FY 2020-21 and expanded at almost double that rate (6.9 percent) in FY 2021-22. The Florida Economic Estimating Conference (held July 21, 2023) reports that the state’s GDP expanded 3.0 percent in FY 2022-23, and it projects 2.5 percent growth in FY 2023-24, followed by 1.7 percent growth in FY 2024-25.
WHAT COMES NEXT IN THE BUDGET PROCESS?

The FY 2023-24 budget took effect on July 1, 2023. To reverse any of the governor’s line-item vetoes, the House and Senate would have to reach a two-thirds majority vote in the upcoming session.

Following the start of FY 2023-24, the Florida Legislature will have to summarize the fiscal and budgetary information pertinent to the new fiscal year. The “Fiscal Analysis in Brief” will include graphical depictions and detailed listings of appropriations, fund sources, nonrecurring issues, vetoed items, financial outlooks, and legislation affecting revenue. Similarly, by September 15, 2023, the Legislative Budget Commission is required to issue a “Long-Range Financial Outlook (Three-Year Plan)” detailing fiscal strategies for the state and its departments to assist the Legislature in making budget decisions for the upcoming session.
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Florida ranks near the bottom on health insurance coverage for children and adults.\(^{45}\) Florida also ranks near the bottom on multiple national rankings of health and wellness.\(^{46}\) Lawmakers have failed to expand Medicaid to more than 700,000 uninsured, low-income residents, and because of this, one in five Floridians lives in a coverage gap, meaning they make too much money to receive Medicaid, and too little money to qualify for Marketplace insurance.\(^{47}\) This contributes to the growing racial health gap, exacerbating health disparities in communities of color.\(^{48}\) This is especially significant as Florida has started a process known as the “Medicaid Unwind,” which refers to the ending of continuous insurance coverage that required states to allow individuals on Medicaid to keep their health insurance during the pandemic without having their eligibility checked.\(^{49}\) This “continuous coverage” was one of the provisions of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FCCRA) that was passed by Congress in 2020. Broadly, this act provided billions of dollars in additional funding for states to help with the increased Medicaid caseloads. In 2023, Congress signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) that ended the continuous coverage requirement, and started to phase out the additional funding that Florida has received for its Medicaid program over the last several years.

As Florida undergoes the unprecedented task of checking over 5.5 million individuals’ eligibility for Medicaid, concerns that Floridians would lose coverage due to procedural reasons, not necessarily because they are no longer eligible, have unfortunately come to fruition. During the first month of Medicaid unwinding, 65 percent of those who lost their health insurance coverage did so because of administrative issues (e.g., a state agency not being able to contact an individual, or an individual being unaware they needed to update their information after a change of residence).\(^{50}\)

Florida also lags far behind other states in investments for mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) treatment. In early February 2023, 32.3 percent of adults in Florida reported symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder, and trends from 2022 suggest that, among individuals who report these symptoms or disorders, 24 percent have unmet needs for counseling and therapy.\(^{51}\) Adding to the pressure on Florida’s already-strained community mental health system is the state’s very high rate of uninsured people with a mental illness. Mental Health America estimates there are 393,000 uninsured Florida adults with mental illness — the 11th-highest percentage in the country.\(^{52}\) Additionally, 12 Floridians die each day due to opioid overdoses,\(^{53}\) and the most recent Medical Examiners Commission Drug Report shows that from 2020 to 2021, the total drug-related deaths in Florida increased by 10 percent.\(^{54}\) As deaths continue to rise, Florida’s over-burdened system...
continues to add thousands of individuals to waitlists for community mental health and SUD services. In effect, those currently seeking help do not often receive it in time.

In addition to waitlists for community mental health and SUD, the demand for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) continues to grow. These services are provided to elderly and disabled Floridians who primarily stay in their homes and seek to delay or avoid institutional care, which can take a mental and physical toll on individuals and their families. The current landscape projects that Florida’s senior population will continue to grow, while other data shows that 1 in 4 adults in Florida has a disability. Furthermore, by 2030, the Florida Demographic Estimating Conference anticipates 24 percent of Floridians will be age 65 or older, increasing the demand for these health care services. However, enormous HCBS waitlists in the tens of thousands grow substantially year after year, keeping these services out of reach for many.

Recognizing the increased demands for HCBS during the pandemic, the federal government, through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) offered states a one-year (April 1, 2021-March 30, 2022) 10 percent increase in the federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) for these services. An increase in the FMAP means that the state was given additional funding for certain Medicaid expenditures for HCBS. The one-year spending deadline was recently extended through March of 2024. The increased federal funds must supplement current state funding to enhance, expand, or strengthen HCBS. Florida has received conditional approval from the federal government for its HCBS spending plan and has already solicited applications from providers. Overall, thanks to the federal increase, Florida is set to receive an additional $1 billion for these services.

Concerning the well-being of children and families, policymakers continue to allow the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program to languish. Florida’s TANF program, the state’s core safety net program for providing families with children the means to meet basic needs, does an inadequate job of reaching and assisting families struggling to make ends meet. For every 100 families with income below the federal poverty level, only 13 receive TANF cash assistance. If TANF today reached the same share of families as it did in 1996, at least 55 out of every 100 would receive TANF cash assistance in Florida. Since 1996, fewer families receive TANF cash assistance and, when adjusted for inflation, Florida’s TANF benefit levels have dropped 45 percent.

Fortunately, through the FY 2023-24 budget, the Legislature has appropriated $11 million to CareerSource Florida to analyze and develop a plan to address benefit cliffs in the TANF and School Readiness programs. Families participating in these programs often become ineligible for services.
— or face a benefit cliff — after they experience a modest increase in earnings, even though they are still in need of assistance. This is an extraordinary opportunity for the state to take a deep dive into the efficacy and adequacy of cash assistance payments in Florida’s TANF program and update its woefully outdated payment standards. CareerSource is required to submit its plan to state officials by October 1, 2023.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are a critical safety net for the 12 percent of Floridians who participate in the program, often after experiencing hardships such as loss of income, divorce, or a medical crisis. Yet, policymakers are taking only a few steps to address food insecurity statewide, provide public assistance recipients with meaningful benefit levels, and/or educate and train public assistance recipients with the skills they need to get and keep good-paying jobs. On a positive note, the budget does include $7.7 million to assess food insecurity throughout the state, which could serve as a stepping stone for developing solutions to proactively address hunger in Florida in future years. Most of the appropriation for this study comes from federal funds.

**BUDGET**

**Table 2. Health and Human Services Budget**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES BUDGET</th>
<th>FY 2023-24 Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FY 2022-23 Budget</strong></td>
<td><strong>House</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriation Amount</td>
<td>$48,844,402,903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference from Previous Year Budget</td>
<td>-$2,041,302,903</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total Health and Human Services (HHS) budget is $47.2 billion, a decrease of $1.6 billion from the FY 2022-23 budget. (See Table 2.) Within HHS, Florida’s Medicaid program, which is administered by the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), accounts for approximately $34.5 billion (73 percent) of the entire HHS budget — roughly 7 out of every 10 dollars in the HHS budget end up going to AHCA for Medicaid-related expenditures. AHCA uses most of these Medicaid funds, about $25.6 billion, for the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care program, which is responsible for providing care to over 4 million beneficiaries. Finally, more than 68 percent of the Medicaid budget is financed through federal funding.
Due to COVID-19, the federal government gave Florida an enhanced FMAP to support higher caseloads, which led to an increase in Medicaid funding and, consequently, an increase in the HHS budget during the pandemic. Now that these provisions are being phased out, Florida’s Social Services Estimating Conference expects a 3 percent decrease in total funds necessary for the Medicaid Program in FY 2023-24, from $37 billion to $35.9 billion. Of those funds, the federal share decreases by 12.6 percent, from $23.9 billion to $20.9 billion, while state spending would increase by 14.4 percent, from $13 billion to approximately $15 billion. Furthermore, the number of people enrolled in the Medicaid program is expected to decrease by 14 percent in FY 2023-24, from 5.5 million people to 4.7 million people, approximating pre-pandemic levels and funding.

KidCare

The budget fully funds caseloads in the KidCare programs (Florida Healthy Kids, MediKids, and Children’s Medical Services) at $563 million. This is a major increase from last year’s KidCare budget of $495 million. This is due to the Legislature’s decision to raise the income eligibility levels for the program, increasing the number of children who can be served. Broadly, this new legislation raises the income cap from 200 percent FPL to 300 percent, which will provide state covered subsidized health insurance to 42,073 children who would have otherwise had to pay full premium payments, which can be a barrier for families who seek care. This bill is expected to increase state expenditures by approximately $10 million in recurring general revenue, and federal expenditures by $24.7 million. In addition to increased costs due to higher caseloads, the administrative start-up cost for the program in FY 2023-24 is expected to be $800,000 in non-recurring funds for third-party contracted services to implement the new eligibility tiers. Furthermore, implementation is expected to cost $525,522 annually for enrollee services based on the projected enrollment increase. Within the budget itself, the Legislature outlines that $6 million from the General Revenue Fund and $14.6 million from the Medical Care Trust Fund are provided to increase the income eligibility threshold for coverage under the Florida KidCare program for this year.

Medicaid Expansion

Policymakers failed to include in the budget funding that would expand Florida’s Medicaid program, even though doing so could benefit more than 800,000 uninsured adult Floridians and save lives. A large and growing body of research shows that Medicaid expansion would save state dollars and provide fiscal gains well beyond the cost of expansion. A recent analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that Medicaid expansion in Florida would generate an additional $5 billion in federal funding if the state chose to adopt the measure in 2023. In addition to the $5 billion, ARPA offers an additional financial incentive for states to expand their Medicaid programs. Specifically, through the ARPA incentive, the state would draw down an additional $2.8 billion in federal funding over the first two years of implementation. There is no deadline to take advantage of
Even though expansion would cost the state approximately $125 million in 2023, these costs would largely be offset by the additional federal funding and economic and health benefits that the state would see in the long-term.

Community Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services

The Department of Children and Families administers funding for community mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) services (collectively referred to as behavioral health services) through seven not-for-profit regional managing entities. This funding is directed to their safety net program serving uninsured or underinsured people. A substantial portion of funding supporting this safety net program comes from two federal block grants: the Community Mental Health Block Grant and the Community Substance Abuse Block Grant.

This year, the total $1.5 billion budget for community mental health and SUD services exceeds the FY 2022-23 budget by $409 million. Many of the allocations in this year’s budget have increased as the state has adopted a new triennial plan for the delivery of mental health and substance abuse services. The plan emphasizes that there is a growing need to improve access to and delivery of these services in Florida. The budget includes additional non-recurring block grant funding due to federal COVID relief; specifically, $67.7 million for community mental health services and SUD services. According to the GAA, these funds are designed to support a wide range of behavioral health treatment and recovery support services to reduce crime, overdoses, suicides, and unemployment and help break the cycle of hospitalization, homelessness, and incarceration among the most vulnerable Floridians.

The budget also contains “special categories” that include grants and aid for specific mental health and substance use projects. Notably, the final GAA includes $41.6 million in general revenue for Community Action Treatment (CAT) teams that provide community-based services to children ages 11 to 21 with a mental health or co-occurring substance abuse diagnosis. This is an increase of $10.9 million from last year’s budget as the state plans to add 30 new CAT Teams between now and 2026.

When the non-recurring dollars are exhausted, it will create a funding and treatment “cliff” unless policymakers appropriate state funds to continue the increased service capacity.

Additionally, the budget includes $386.7 million, mainly from the General Revenue Fund, for projects housed within different mental health treatment centers such as the Apalachee Center located in Tallahassee and LifeStream Behavioral Center located in Central Florida. This is an increase of $107 million compared to the previous budget.
Moreover, the budget includes a $534.1 million appropriation to community substance abuse services,\textsuperscript{86} a 108 percent increase over last year’s budget of $256 million.\textsuperscript{87} This major increase in funds can partially be attributed to new money that the state has received as part of a high-profile lawsuit against pharmaceutical companies for wrongful conduct that contributed to the opioid crisis in Florida.\textsuperscript{88} As a result of this lawsuit, Florida will receive more than $3.1 billion over the next 17 years to “abate or remedy the opioid epidemic.” Additional funds in this category include a $10 million recurring appropriation in general revenue for pregnant women who need residential treatment, outpatient treatment with housing support, outreach, detoxification, child care and post-partum case management. The budget also authorizes $13 million in general revenue to support the Family Intensive Treatment (FIT) team model designed to help families with parental substance abuse.

Although some of these funds for mental health and substance abuse services are recurring and receive funding each year, policymakers continue to rely on substantial non-recurring funds for recurring needs. Specifically, there are over 75 contracted projects in Florida that are currently funded to provide a wide range of mental health and substance abuse services throughout the state in local communities, and all are funded on a year-to-year basis.\textsuperscript{89} When the non-recurring dollars are exhausted, it will create a funding and treatment “cliff” unless policymakers appropriate state funds to continue the increased service capacity. This creates uncertainty for providers on their capacity to keep delivering services and uncertainty for consumers as to whether they will have access to ongoing treatment.

Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS)

Massive waitlists and slight annual increases for HCBS have left thousands of Floridians languishing without care for years. Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the demand for HCBS has increased substantially, especially among older, homebound adults. Investing more in these programs now can help offset taxpayer costs in the long term. Usually, as older adults wait to receive services, they spend down what little savings they have, gradually becoming eligible for Medicare. At this stage of life, health care is the most expensive. Investing in preventative HCBS programs can reduce the need for other more costly services, such as institutional care.

Current waitlists include all seniors/people with disabilities who have been screened, and determined to need services, by the appropriate Aging and Disabilities Resource Center or the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD).

Funding allocations for FY 2023-24 will only marginally reduce the number of people on these waitlists. The budget includes:
• **$79.6 million to serve approximately 1,498 individuals on the APD waiver waitlist.**[^90]
  There are 23,372 individuals on the waitlist.[^91] APD provides a wide array of medical, social, behavioral, and residential services to individuals whose daily lives are severely hindered by a developmental disability present before adulthood.

• **$4 million to take approximately 333 people off the Alzheimer’s Disease Initiative (ADI) waitlist.**[^92] The ADI waitlist stands at 16,152 Floridians.[^93] ADI is a Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) program that provides respite and support services to family caregivers of individuals living with Alzheimer’s disease and similar cognitive disorders. The waitlist has grown since last year by 4,875 people, and the budget for this waitlist has been cut by $8 million compared to FY 2022-23.[^94]

• **$2 million to take approximately 220 people off the waitlist for the Community Care for the Elderly (CCE) program.**[^95] This is $7 million dollars allocated to reducing this waitlist from last year. The CCE program waitlist stands at 78,057 Floridians,[^96] which is 13,362 more individuals than FY 2022-23. CCE is a DOEA program that 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.

• **$3 million to take approximately 1,340 people off the waitlist for the Home Care for the Elderly (HCE) waitlist.**[^97] HCE is a DOEA program that provides subsidies to individuals caring for seniors in a private home setting. Last year, there was no funding for this waitlist, but it has grown by 4,057 individuals from FY 2022-23, bringing the total to 19,784 people waiting to be served.[^98]

### Table 3. HCBS Waitlists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of HCBS</th>
<th>Size of Waitlist*</th>
<th>Budget Amount FY 2023-24 (millions)</th>
<th>Individuals Served</th>
<th>Individuals not served via current budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) waiver</td>
<td>23,372</td>
<td>$79.6</td>
<td>1,498</td>
<td>21,847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alzheimer’s Disease Initiative (ADI)</td>
<td>16,152</td>
<td>$4.0</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>15,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Care for the Elderly Program (CCE)</td>
<td>78,057</td>
<td>$2.0</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>77,837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Care for the Elderly Program (HCE)</td>
<td>19,784</td>
<td>$3.0</td>
<td>1,340</td>
<td>18,444</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Waitlist numbers accessed via the Florida Council on Aging.[^99] Estimates for how many additional people will be served are based on the estimated cost of $9,090 per individual for CCE and $12,006 per individual for the Alzheimer’s Disease Initiative.[^100] APD numbers are based on what Gov. DeSantis is using as a cost per person estimate in his proposed budget: that is $53,125 per person. HCE numbers are based on the estimated costs of $2,238 per individual.[^101]
Public Health Funding

The FY 2023-24 budget continues to fund the Florida Department of Health at $3.9 billion. This is $490 million (approximately 14 percent) more than last fiscal year’s budget. This includes $1.1 billion for county health departments, which is not a significant difference from last fiscal year’s $1 billion allocation.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a federally funded program that provides healthy food and one-on-one nutrition counseling to low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum mothers, along with infants and children under the age of five at nutritional risk. Although WIC participation of eligible families has been on a steady decline in recent years, participation in WIC is estimated to increase by about 7,000 people in Florida from March 2022 through March 2023. The FY 2023-24 budget appropriates $423 million for WIC, almost $172 million more than in FY 2022-23. This funding comes exclusively from the federal government.

WIC holds the promise of a healthier future for low-income infants and children in Florida. The program is associated with better overall health outcomes for infants and children nutritionally at risk. The WIC program is also associated with reducing low-birth-weight rates and improving fetal and cognitive development. In addition to giving low-income children access to a more nutritious diet, WIC plays a role in improving school performance. However, unless the participation of eligible families in the program continues to rise, that promise will not be realized.

Ensuring that WIC participation continues to increase requires funding of collaborative strategic planning by lawmakers, state agencies, and health professionals, alongside eligible families, to explore impediments to participation and effective workable solutions. Because many otherwise eligible families are still not being served despite a modest increase in participation, Florida policymakers should be investing general revenue funds to explore specific reforms and analyze barriers that keep eligible families from participating in the program.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
The TANF program 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.

The FY 2023-24 budget includes an appropriation of $123.5 million for TANF cash assistance payments. Although this is an increase of $7.2 million over last year’s appropriation, the additional money is intended to cover payments for a larger caseload rather than to increase payment levels for individual families.

Florida lawmakers have kept TANF payments at the same level for over three decades. As a result, inflation has eroded the payment value by 45 percent. The maximum TANF benefit for families in Florida ($303/month for a family of three) is under 85 percent of the poverty level, which is not enough for families to make ends meet.

Compared to the assistance that Florida provides to children for out-of-home care, lawmakers provide little financial help to children cared for in their own homes. Last year, the 2022 Legislature, using TANF money, increased payments to people caring for children who have been removed from their parents under court order. However, neither the 2022 nor 2023 Legislatures increased TANF cash benefits to parents who need help to keep their families together.

Although increasing the money available to care for children who need help the most is a good investment, laws that only provide for better care of children after they are removed from their parents are the antithesis of family-friendly policies. Unless Florida lawmakers act, TANF benefits for families will only continue to fall further below the poverty line — to the detriment of children whose most basic needs go unmet.

Due to stagnant cash assistance levels, Florida’s TANF program 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. Lawmakers should increase TANF payment levels to meet children’s basic needs in families with low income.

The budget does not include adequate investment in meaningful support 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 must 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 attend the program. 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.

Veterans and the Military

The FY 2023-24 budget increases funding for the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA), which assists veterans in accessing benefits and operates long-term care facilities for veterans in Florida, from $171 million to $201 million.

The budget also includes a 158 percent increase in funding for the Department of Military Affairs (DMA). For FY 2023-24, lawmakers appropriate roughly $194 million for DMA, which is $118.7 million more than last year’s appropriation, $75.3 million. Much of this increase is due to an almost $100 million hike in appropriations for the Florida State Guard, including $38.1 million to buy an aircraft, $22.7 million for equipment storage, and $10 million for a state guard building. As part of DMA’s appropriation, the Legislature also funds the National Guard Tuition Assistance Program at just over $5 million, roughly the same as the previous fiscal year’s funding level. The program assists National Guard members who are seeking undergraduate or certain postgraduate degrees.

Health and Human Services Vetoes

The governor vetoed $5.6 million for projects housed within the Department of Children and Families. Some of the vetoes that will impact health include:

- $1.1 million for the Pinellas County Urban League’s Center for Trauma, Recovery, Wellness, and Healing Justice, which seeks to promote health equity and social justice through comprehensive services and care for survivors of violent crimes.
- $350,000 toward children’s mental health services at Camp Boggy Creek.
- $500,000 towards improving mental health and substance use and abuse among post-partum women who lack access to care through Hispanic Unity of Florida.
- $6.2 million toward projects housed within the Department of Health, including a $2.9 million rejection of funds for the University of South Florida to develop new tools to reduce opioid overdoses.
- $850,000 for mobile medical units to provide rural health care access to underserved citizens of Taylor, Madison, Jefferson, Wakulla, Gadsden, Liberty, Franklin, and Leon counties.
- $733,757 for the expansion of the Cayuga Centers Healthy Steps Program, which provides early intervention, screening, and support to assist parents in raising their infants and toddlers in a healthy, positive manner.
FY 2023-24 Final Post-Veto Budget:

PUBLIC SAFETY & CORRECTIONS

CURRENT LANDSCAPE

The Florida Department of Corrections (DOC) is the third largest state prison system in the country with an annual budget of almost $3.3 billion.\(^\text{129}\) In fact, Florida’s incarceration rate is higher than all 13 founding North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries: the 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 adequately responded to the costs and needs associated with its incarcerated population. Inmates’ health costs have significantly increased, which caused the department to experience a significant budget deficit in FY 2018-19.

However, due to the impact of COVID-19, Florida’s prison population experienced a substantial drop in FY 2020-21.\(^\text{130}\) Despite the decrease, the DOC continued to face major challenges. Former DOC Secretary Mark Inch has reported that the department is in “crisis” with several vacant security posts, a severe staff shortage, and insufficient funds to fully cover the salaries of all authorized positions.\(^\text{131}\) Other challenges arise because as Florida’s elderly prison population continues to increase (with 29 percent of the population aged 50 years or older), so will health care costs, outside hospital visits, in-house treatments, and bed space needs.\(^\text{132}\) Alongside personnel shortages and an aging prison population, the DOC is also facing aging infrastructure, litigation, and unprecedented turnover rates (the department expects 30 percent of staff to turnover in FY 2023-24).\(^\text{133}\)

According to a report from the state Criminal Justice Estimating Conference, Florida’s prison population is projected to be 88,467 by the end of FY 2023-24 and gradually reach 93,382 by the end of FY 2027-28.\(^\text{134}\) Consequently, the challenges the DOC is grappling with will undoubtedly intensify unless the Legislature enacts the appropriate measures to provide relief.

BUDGET

Table 4. Public Safety & Corrections Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC SAFETY &amp; CORRECTIONS BUDGET</th>
<th>FY 2023-24 Budget</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY 2022-23 Budget</td>
<td>House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriation Amount</td>
<td>$5,387,513,926</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

floridapolicy.org
Department of Corrections

The FY 2023-24 budget increases funding for the DOC to $3.3 billion,\textsuperscript{135} which is roughly $318 million more than the FY 2022-23 funding level. The department has been dealing with the increasing need to ensure staff safety, fill up various vacancies, and upgrade transportation/building infrastructure. The FY 2023-24 GAA does not include substantial relief for the most critical issues the DOC facilities have been experiencing for the past decade, such as understaffing and maintenance. However, the GAA does make significant funding improvements for education.

\textit{Inmate Education}

The FY 2023-24 budget recommends $84.5 million for basic education skills,\textsuperscript{136} which is nearly double the amount that the previous FY 2022-23 budget recommended. For years, hiring and retaining quality teachers has been a persistent issue for the DOC. The FY 2023-24 GAA aims to improve educational, career, and technical education programs within the DOC by allocating funds to hire 215 new full-time staff members. Currently, upon release, nearly seven out of ten returning citizens report unmet academic programming needs.\textsuperscript{137} The department’s explanation is that it “does not have adequate resources to meet the academic educational need of the inmate population.” Ultimately, nearly doubling the previous budget is a crucial step in the difficult task of addressing serious educational and vocational programming gaps.

\textit{Maintenance and Repairs}

Ahead of FY 2022-23, the Florida Legislature proposed $1 billion for maintenance and repair projects at correctional facilities, a drastic increase compared to the FY 2021-22 budget of $207 million. The Legislature’s budget included a $645 million appropriation to build a 4,500-bed correctional institution, and $195 million for the construction of a 250-bed hospital unit for elderly people.\textsuperscript{138} Ultimately, the governor vetoed these plans and signed a budget for maintenance and repairs of $193 million — a $14 million cut compared to the previous year. Ahead of FY 2023-24, the Florida Legislature did not resurrect their previous plans for a 4,500-bed correctional institution nor the 250-bed hospital unit for elderly people. The FY 2023-24 GAA — which the governor signed without any maintenance repair project vetoes — totaled $198 million, an almost 3 percent increase compared to the previous year, but still below the FY 2021-22 levels.\textsuperscript{139}
The FY 2023-24 budget for maintenance and repair is not enough to address the critical improvements that the DOC has been waiting on to help with a deteriorating building infrastructure and an aging population, which has mounting health complications. Seventeen of the state’s institutions were built prior to 1980 and all are in dire need of modernization, such as electrical upgrades, windows, locking controls, plumbing systems, and roofs. Moreover, only 153 out of the DOC’s 639 housing units have air conditioning, which creates unbearable living conditions during Florida’s summers. Finally, people are spending more time in prison due to Florida’s 85 percent rule, which requires that incarcerated people complete 85 percent of their sentence. This has led to a large elderly population that requires specialized health care.

Health Care

The budget also includes $677 million for inmate health care services, a $110 million (or 20 percent) increase compared to the previous year’s $568 million budget. Almost the entire increase (about $107 million) is for contracted statewide inmate health care services.

It is worth mentioning that in the past three years, the state won a court appeal that sought to challenge an existing court mandate that required treatment for all inmates who have been diagnosed with Hepatitis C, regardless of the stage of their diagnosis. Specifically, a judge ruled that the state can delay treatment for those who are in the early stages of their diagnosis. Following the decision, in FY 2020-21, the governor vetoed $28 million for Hepatitis C treatment for individuals who have been diagnosed and are at level F0-F1, or the early stage of their diagnosis.

STAT, a site known for journalism about health, medicine, and life sciences, has listed Florida as one of the eight worst states in the nation when it comes to treating Hepatitis C in prison. Consequently, Hepatitis C was the cause of death for at least 130 people in Florida prisons from 2014 to 2019. While the high death count is likely due to the size of Florida’s correctional system, the state also has a long history of denying people access to Hepatitis C cures. At the same time, as of January 2021, more than 1,100 men and women in Florida's prison system were known to have cirrhosis or permanent liver damage. Furthermore, Florida’s state and federal correctional institutions hold the most prisoners in the country living with HIV, and also the highest percentage with HIV of any prison system in the country. In short, health care in Florida’s correctional facilities is and will continue to be a significant challenge.
Security and Institutional Operations

The GAA includes an allocation of $1.6 billion for all four types of custody operations:

- adult male custody ($960 million, a 7 percent increase over FY 2022-23),\(^{148}\)
- adult and youthful offender female custody ($103 million, a 12 percent increase),\(^{149}\)
- male youthful offender custody ($54 million, a 12 percent increase),\(^{150}\) and
- specialty correctional institution ($629 million, a 9 percent increase).\(^{151}\)

The budget also includes $8.5 million to increase the salaries of correctional officers who are in privately-operated correctional facilities.\(^{152}\) Furthermore, there is a $2.5 million appropriation to offer enhanced in-prison and post-release recidivism reduction programs at three correctional facilities.\(^{153}\) Unlike FY 2022-23, the FY 2023-24 budget does not include additional funds for the department to continue its retention step plan, which involves the department converting shifts for correctional officers, correctional probation officers, and inspectors from 12 hours to 8.5 hours.\(^{154}\)

Community Supervision

Community supervision is a part of community corrections where some who are justice-involved are serving their time out in the community under the supervision of probation officers. Community supervision receives approximately $258 million in the budget,\(^{155}\) about a $15 million increase over the previous year’s funding level of $243 million. Additionally, the budget includes a $31 million investment in community substance abuse prevention and evaluation,\(^{156}\) a 5.1 million (or 19 percent) increase over the previous year.

Department of Juvenile Justice

The Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) receives $665 million in the budget,\(^{157}\) roughly $58 million more than FY 2022-23 funding of $606 million. Lawmakers continue to mandate a comprehensive statewide review with the goal of developing benchmarks across counties, which support the DJJ’s strategic goals of “preventing and diverting more youth from entering the juvenile justice system, providing appropriate and less restrictive community-based sanctions and services, reserving serious sanctions for youth who pose the greatest risk to public safety, and focusing on rehabilitation.”\(^{158}\) Per the latest report,\(^{159}\) among the top needs for counties across the state, gaps exist in:

- individual/family and mental health/substance-abuse services (58 percent of counties reported this need),
- respite care and transitional housing services (54 percent of counties reported this need),
• job-related services and life skills such as services to break the cycle of poverty, parenting classes, and job training (48 percent of counties reported this need),
• structured activities/preventions programs (43 percent of counties reported this need), and
• mentoring (40 percent of counties reported this need).

Relatedly, the budget includes almost $150 million for detention centers.\textsuperscript{160} Community supervision receives $6.7 million in additional funds,\textsuperscript{161} for a total allocation of $105 million. The post-veto GAA includes $4.2 million to help the department provide alternative services to youth who are at risk for commitment,\textsuperscript{162} and another $3.7 million to offer vocational and educational services that would support at-risk youth in their transition from residential commitment programs to the community.\textsuperscript{163}

The FY 2023-24 budget includes $106 million for delinquency prevention,\textsuperscript{164} an increase over the previous $102 million budget. This is a step in the right direction, but it is worth noting that the governor vetoed $1.3 million from delinquency prevention, including four legislative initiatives to reduce and prevent juvenile crime.\textsuperscript{165}
CURRENT LANDSCAPE

The 2023 legislative session was marked by enormous upheaval for students, parents, educators, and communities. There were bills that created universal vouchers for all students regardless of income (HB 1, 2023), expanded prohibitions on instruction of gender identity and sexual orientation (HB 1069, 2023), made provision for charter schools to share in locally generated capital outlay funds (HB 1259, 2023), and lowered term limits for school boards from 12 years to eight (HB 477, 2023).

Problems exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic persist and full recovery has been uneven. Not all child care centers reopened or reopened at full capacity due to staffing shortages and COVID-related shutdowns. Schools similarly have struggled with shortages among teachers and support staff, such as bus drivers. Critical shortages of special educators, which predated the pandemic, are still severe.

In 2020 and 2021, the federal government passed three relief laws that infused the state's child care and education system with billions of supplemental dollars to support the needed response to the pandemic and address revenue drops. Between the 2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES), the 2020 Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA), and the 2021 American Rescue Plan (ARPA), Florida K-12 and higher education systems received $16.1 billion, with $3.3 billion allocated for early learning and child care.

Of the state's Education Stabilization Funds, comprised of dollars from CARES, CRRSA and ARPA, $11.1 billion (68.4 percent) had been expended as of May 31, 2023. (See Figure 6.) Not surprisingly, 99 percent of CARES funds, the earliest federal relief package, have been expended for elementary and secondary schools (ESSER funds) and workforce development (GEER funding). Plans to allocate the remaining ESSER funds are fully approved by the United States Department of Education (USDOE). Funding was also made available for non-public schools under the CRRSA (EANS funds), of which 59 percent has been expended.

Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF), which combine CARES, CRRSA and ARPA funds, were awarded directly to institutions in both the Florida College System and State University System (SUS). Ninety-four percent of this $4.6 billion in funding has been expended to date. (See Figure 6.)
Figure 6. Federal COVID-19 Relief Significantly Bolstered Florida Education Funding

Total Florida allocations for education funds across CARES, CRRSA, and ARP Acts of 2020 and 2021 (in billions)


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BUDGET

Table 5. Education Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATION BUDGET</th>
<th>FY 2023-24 Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>FY 2022-23 Budget</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appropriation Amount</td>
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<td>Difference from Previous Year Budget</td>
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EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PREK-12 EDUCATION

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 for four- and five-year-old children. There is no income eligibility and 68 percent of eligible four-year-old children in the state attend VPK, one of the highest participation rates in the country. However, many families find themselves struggling to pay for the remainder of each day’s services. While Florida ranks high in access to child care, the state ranks 43rd in the nation for its per-student VPK spending ($2,245). 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. Most of the funding comes from the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) in addition to general revenue and other federal funds. In FY 2022-23, funds were allocated to expand School Readiness eligibility to families with income up to 200 percent of the poverty level if local match dollars are provided. These funds were again allocated for FY 2023-24, and again were non-recurring. Even pre-pandemic, many Florida families were unable to access School Readiness vouchers to assist with the ever-increasing cost of child care. In FY 2021-22, there were 8,490 children on the waiting list in any given month.

The pandemic has dramatically altered the landscape for child care in the state and the nation. Many of Florida’s centers shut their doors in spring of 2020 and then reopened with support of CARES Act dollars administered through the state, which prioritized serving children of first responders and paying providers according to enrollment instead of attendance, girding against the worst predictions about the sector from early in the pandemic. Child care advocates still worry about the fiscal pressure due to drops in enrollment, which have yet to rebound, and are hopeful the state continues to support providers in a flexible manner. The Division of Early Learning (DEL) has already distributed $1.3 billion of the total appropriation for CARES, CRRSAA supplemental and ARPA Discretionary and Supplemental child care support dollars, a total of $3.3 billion.

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

The total allocation for VPK in the budget is $126 million less than it was in FY 2022-23. A one-time allocation of $100 million from the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) boosted the base
student allocation for the 2022-23 school year, in order to increase wages of VPK staff to a minimum of $15 per hour, as passed by the Legislature in 2022. Historically, only general revenue has been used to fund VPK. The back of the bill also includes a reversion of $20 million from the CCDBG, with $15 million going to the general revenue fund and $5 million going to the VPK base student allocation for the 2022-23 school year.}

While the overall allocation for VPK is lower in the FY 2023-24 budget, the base student allocation per pupil funding level increased to $2,941 for the 2023-24 school year and $2,511 for the summer program for 2023-24. There is also an increase in the summer base student allocation, attributable in part to $5 million dollars allocated in the back of the bill for the 2022-23 school year. The decrease in the overall allocation is due to projections that the state’s VPK enrollment — estimated to be 140,532 for 2022-23 at the February estimating conference — is expected to decrease minimally in the 2023-24 school year. There has been a continued decline in VPK participation since 2013-14, which was accelerated during the pandemic. This decline has since slowed, but the state’s population of 4-year-olds continues to rise. Decreases in the availability of providers or in the number of VPK classrooms are a likely contributor and will be the focus of the estimating conference before their next meeting.

The budget includes a $34 million increase in the School Readiness Program, which provides much needed and requested access to the program overall and reduces waiting lists. Non-recurring funds in the amount of $30 million will be available to expand eligibility to families at 200 percent of the federal poverty level or 85 percent of the state median income so that more families will be eligible. Local Early Learning Coalitions (ELCs) must provide matching local funds to draw down this allocation.

Another effort to address waiting lists is to provide the Division of Early Learning the authority to reallocate School Readiness dollars from ELCs that do not have eligible children on the waiting list to those that do. The FY 2023-24 budget includes $77 million to further expand access to School Readiness using federal CCDBG funds. These funds are to be placed in reserve pending the submission of detailed spending plans outlining how the funds will be used to support expansion. While the expansion is much needed, the use of non-recurring funds means that the sustainability of the added capacity is not guaranteed. Other important expenditures occur in the back of the bill, many of which reauthorize already allocated federal COVID-19 relief dollars. From these funds,
$750,000 has been allocated to the Office of Economic and Demographic Research a study of the cost of care of School Readiness.\textsuperscript{185}

**K-12 EDUCATION**

Provisioning 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 revenue plummeted.

Increasing teacher pay has been a focus of policymakers over the last few years, and the budget includes much-needed funds to boost educator pay. Though Florida has made progress with starting teacher pay and is now ranked 16th nationwide, the state still ranks 48th in the nation for its average teacher pay of $51,230.\textsuperscript{186} In the FY 2023-24 budget, there is an additional $200 million for teacher salaries, bringing the total teacher salary allocation to $1.1 billion.\textsuperscript{187} However, when accounting for inflation, greater investment is needed, as teacher pay declined by 14.5 percent in Florida between 2014 and 2023. (See Figure 7.)

**Table 6. K-12 Education Budget**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K-12 Education Budget</th>
<th>FY 2022-23 Budget</th>
<th>Post-Veto GAA FY 2023-24</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>K-12 Total State Funding – FEFP</strong>\textsuperscript{188}</td>
<td>$13,553,672,086</td>
<td>$14,515,440,292</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>K-12 Total State Funding – Non-FEFP</strong>\textsuperscript{189}</td>
<td>$485,043,652</td>
<td>$566,486,725</td>
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<td><strong>K-12 Total Local Funding</strong>\textsuperscript{190}</td>
<td>$10,740,219,713</td>
<td>$12,251,172,665</td>
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<td><strong>K-12 Per-pupil Spending</strong>\textsuperscript{24}</td>
<td>$8,143</td>
<td>$8,648</td>
<td>+505</td>
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<td><strong>K-12 Base Student allocation</strong>\textsuperscript{191}</td>
<td>$4,587</td>
<td>$5,140</td>
<td>+553</td>
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</table>
In FY 2023-24, schools received 37.27 percent of their funds from state funds, 48.74 percent from local sources (including the Required Local Effort portion of Florida Education Finance Program [FEFP] funds), and 13.99 percent from federal sources. The FEFP is the funding formula that combines federal funding, state general revenue and local tax dollars and allocates them on a per student basis and accounts for student grade level, the district they live in, whether they have a disability and other factors to ensure equitable distribution of education funding.

The budget includes:

- **$2 billion in FEFP funds for Family Empowerment and Florida Tax Credit Scholarships.** This contrasts with the $1.4 billion expended in FY 2022-23. An additional $350 million is also appropriated in the back of the bill to establish an Education Stabilization Fund for potential cost overruns associated with the expansion of vouchers. It should be noted that new to HB 1 is the requirement that all the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship funds, estimated at $850 million, must be expended before spending any money from FEFP on vouchers. However, this allocation — along with the Florida Education Estimating Conference's
projections on the growth of vouchers — significantly underestimates the likely increase in demand for vouchers. With the expansion of eligibility to all K-12 school-aged students, regardless of income, FPI and the Education Law Center estimate a much higher fiscal impact: $4 billion. These funds will be diverted from public schools to private schools in FY 2023-24. As vouchers continue to increase, there will continue to be a significant impact on public school budgets.

- **$961 million in additional dollars for the state’s portion of the FEFP funding.** Local funding also increased, as did per pupil spending and the base student allocation (BSA), which increased by 12.1 percent. The BSA is the most flexible spending bucket for schools and has been considered the best measure for comparing year-to-year K-12 funding. This year, the funding formula changed and eliminated some of the “categoricals.” These funds were then added to the BSA to make it appear higher. However, while there appears to be increased flexibility in spending those funds afforded to school districts, there is still underlying statutory language that was not eliminated. In other words, these changes remove the categories to which the funds are assigned but do not remove mandates that prescribe how the funds are spent. For this reason, comparing the current year’s BSA to 2022-23 and prior years is not an apples-to-apples comparison. Increases to the BSA are critical, given the state’s ranking of 37th in per pupil expenditures. However, the BSA still lags when adjusted for inflation. (See Figure 8.) The BSA for FY 2007-08 would equal $5,951 in today’s dollars as compared to the 2023 BSA of $5,139.

- **$250 million in additional dollars to increase teacher pay.** This is in addition to the recurring $802 million for the Teacher Salary Increase Allocation, bringing the total to $1.1 billion. These funds have to be spent on increasing full-time teacher salaries, including certified pre-K teachers, to a minimum of $47,500. This is important because Florida continues to lose qualified educators and needs greater investment in teachers to be able to recruit and retain K-12 faculty. While progress has been made in increasing new teacher pay, increasing the average teacher salary is necessary to address the needs of veteran educators. Such funding improves the quality of life for teachers and their families and increases stability in the workforce, which enhances the academic success of all students, especially children and youth of color, who are disproportionately and adversely affected by teacher turnover.

- **A continued increase in funding for Mental Health Assistance.** The budget allocates $160 million, an increase of $20 million over the previous allocation, for mental health services provided at K-12 schools. These are much-needed services considering the declining mental well-being of teens and young adults and increases in suicide attempts.
HIGHER EDUCATION

The more educated a state's populace is, the higher the median wage.206 This makes sense on an individual level: the median wage for someone with a bachelor's degree ($78,560) was roughly 2.1 times that of someone with a high school diploma alone ($38,310) in 2021.207 Investments in higher education also make sense at the community level: the larger the supply of highly-skilled workers, the more attractive the community is to high-wage employers.208 Indeed, Florida's public higher education system charges relatively low tuition. Recently, U.S. News and World Report ranked Florida number 1, in part due to low tuition.209 Higher education appropriations have increased and have now returned to pre-2008 recession levels in most states, including Florida. The increase in appropriations, and the decrease in student enrollment,210 have resulted in an increase of 20 percent between 2017 and 2021 in per-student expenditures in inflation adjusted dollars.211
Florida College System

The Florida College System (FCS) saw a more than $200 million increase over FY 2022-23. 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.212 As was noted in this report’s K-12 Education section, the budget does not reflect the pandemic relief funds allocated for higher education under CARES, CRRSA or ARPA, collectively known as Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) funds. Those funds were provided directly to the institutions of higher education. The total allocation of HEERF funds in Florida is $4.6 billion, 94 percent of which has been expended as of May 31, 2023. (See Figure 7 above.)

State University System

State University funds decreased by more than $1 billion over FY 2022-23 levels. This decrease is due to a one-time $1.8 billion reduction in funds for universities from the Education and General Student and Other Fees Trust Fund due to the dissolution of this fund.213,214

Student Financial Aid

Table 7. Student Financial Aid Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT FINANCIAL AID BUDGET</th>
<th>FY 2023-24 Budget</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FY 2022-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bright Futures (Merit-based scholarships)215</td>
<td>$620,881,057</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Aid (Specialty scholarships, matches, and loans)216</td>
<td>$373,244,659</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Student Financial Aid</td>
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<td>Difference from Previous Year Budget</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the budget includes a $9 million increase in financial aid. While, Bright Futures, Florida’s merit-based scholarships, saw a decrease in funding, other financial aid was increased substantially.
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 scholarships like Florida’s Bright Futures.\(^{217}\) Indeed, in its 23-year history, the share of Bright Futures grants going to Black students has never exceeded 7 percent.\(^{218}\) As such, the continued emphasis on merit-based scholarships as they are currently awarded could be a further barrier to students with low income from the higher education system, adding yet another barrier to economic mobility and shared prosperity in Florida.

**Education Vetoes**

The governor vetoed a total of $150.5 million in education allocations. The largest share of vetoes, 68.8 percent, was in allocations to capital outlay projects. Most of these were member projects. Additionally, $2.1 million was vetoed for pay increases for teachers working in juvenile justice education programs.\(^{219}\)
Florida continues to fall behind in promoting economic security and self-sufficiency for residents struggling to make ends meet. The erosion of the state's safety net leaves families experiencing hard times with few, if any, resources to meet their basic needs, even in the state's Reemployment Assistance (RA) program, commonly referred to as Unemployment Insurance (UI). Florida is among the states that provide the fewest unemployed workers with help for one of the shortest lengths of time and at one of the lowest benefit levels.

Florida’s RA program has been broken for years, focusing more on reducing program costs than providing an adequate benefit for unemployed workers. The program was significantly scaled back in 2011. Since then, the program has ranked at or near the bottom on nearly every indicator of a robust program. In fact, Florida ranks an average of 44th in its 2022 UI recipiency rate, which looks at the proportion of jobless workers who receive benefits. This particularly disadvantages Black Floridians, who have an unemployment rate of 4.3 percent, compared to the state average of 2.6 percent. Hispanic Floridians have an unemployment rate of 3 percent and white Floridians have an unemployment rate of 2.5 percent. However, the budget does include funds for comprehensive RA reforms, and lawmakers even decrease the appropriation for RA by $7.8 million.

Adding to the economic strain, Florida also ranks 1st in cost-burdened renters (those who pay more than 30 percent of their monthly income for housing) and severely-cost-burdened renters (those who pay over 50 percent of their monthly income for housing). Fortunately, lawmakers allocated more than $99.8 million in specific affordable housing development and housing related projects some funded through Health and Human Services and Criminal Justice and Corrections funding. However, there is still uncertainty about the development units' affordability and how many units there will be.
Florida’s RA program does not provide adequate support to Floridians who lose jobs through no fault of their own. The program provides one of the lowest benefit levels in the country, forcing applicants to wait a week before they qualify and capping aid at $275 a week. Additionally, the program restricts the maximum number of weeks that a worker can get help to 23 and makes it harder overall for people with low earnings to qualify. Although the influx of unemployment assistance applications during COVID-19 shined a light on the program’s insufficiencies, Florida’s RA program has been riddled with these problems for over a decade. Yet the FY 2023-24 budget does not include additional funding for comprehensive reforms to the RA program.

### Florida’s Reemployment Assistance Program Remains in Dire Need of Reform

Lawmakers do not address in the FY 2023-24 budget the following ongoing issues with Florida’s RA program:

- the mandate that most households file their unemployment claims electronically;
- the limitation on the number of weeks that claimants can get assistance;
- the imposition of a wait week before eligible claimants can start getting assistance;
- excessive monetary eligibility requirements that make claimants ineligible for assistance;
- the lack of an alternative base period; and
- the need to increase the taxable wage base and tax rate to fully fund Florida’s RA system.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The budget does not include increased transportation expense funding for SNAP recipients in the Employment and Training (E&T) program. Most SNAP 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 one of their biggest barriers.²²⁷

The impact on recipients who 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.

Food Deserts

Floridians still have not fully recovered from the impact of COVID-19 on their ability to put food on the table, particularly in areas where it is difficult to buy affordable, nutritious food. This is due, in part, to the pandemic’s effect on the capability of food-insecure people to afford the rising costs of food or travel to full-service grocery stores or farmers markets. In the U.S. Census Bureau’s bi-weekly survey collecting data on the effects of the pandemic on people’s lives, about 12 percent of households in Florida that reported on their food sufficiency for June 7, 2023, through June 19, 2023, say that they often or sometimes did not have enough to eat in the past week.²²⁸ Families with children fare even worse for the same time period, with 15 percent of reporting households saying that their families often or sometimes did not have enough to eat in the past week.²²⁹

The budget includes $9 million in funding for Feeding Florida,²³⁰ which supports the state’s network of food banks. This appropriation includes a mandate that 30 percent of all food commodities distributed by Feeding Florida must be fresh Florida products. Lawmakers also appropriate $3.4 million for Feeding South Florida’s Family Sustenance Inflation Mitigation Program,²³¹ $2 million for Feeding Rural North Florida,²³² $2.5 million for Feeding Tampa Bay’s facility,²³³ and $8.4 million in federal funds for emergency feeding organizations,²³⁴ among other anti-hunger efforts. Further, the
budget includes $9 million for Farm Share,\textsuperscript{235} which distributes food to families in need, food entities, and community partners, the same amount appropriated in the FY 2022-23 budget.

However, the governor vetoed $795,000 in funding for the Treasure Coast Food Bank’s Career Readiness and Workforce Training Program Expansion\textsuperscript{236} and $400,000 in funding for the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, which would have helped fund the National Association of Letter Carriers annual national food drive.\textsuperscript{237} Both projects were designed primarily to combat food insecurity.

\textbf{Division of Emergency Management}

In FY 2022-23, lawmakers appropriated $12 million in interest from funds received for COVID-19 recovery to the Department of Transportation to “facilitate the transfer of [undocumented immigrants] out of the state,” including subcontracting to private transportation companies to do so.\textsuperscript{238} Despite national outcry,\textsuperscript{239} the Legislature made this initiative permanent (the “Unauthorized Alien Transport [UAT] Program”) in the 2023 special session,\textsuperscript{240} rehousing the program within the Division of Emergency Management. In the regular session, the Legislature passed a sweeping anti-immigrant law, SB 1718.\textsuperscript{241} Which included an additional $12 million in funding to the UAT program.

\textbf{Economic Development}

The state’s economic development programs have been contested in recent years, with the governor, House, and Senate proposing widely varying funding levels — and in some cases, recommending that funding for certain programs be eliminated — during each of the past few legislative sessions.

The Legislature passed HB 5 (2023), an act relating to economic programs, which reorganizes Florida’s economic development programs. It eliminates Enterprise Florida, the state’s public-private economic development partnership that has faced scrutiny for several years,\textsuperscript{242} and brings its functions under the Department of Economic Opportunity, which will be renamed as the Department of Commerce. Enterprise Florida must transition its functions to the Department of Commerce by December 1, 2023. The bill renames the Division of Strategic Business Development to the Division of Economic development, which will be responsible for business attraction, retention, finance development, and trade. HB 5 also eliminates 15 incentive programs, including the entertainment industry tax credit, Florida Small Business Technology Growth Program, New Markets Development Program, and the Microfinance Loan Program. HB 5 also moves Visit Florida, the state’s tourism and marketing agency, under the purview of the Department of Commerce as a “direct support organization,” along with the Florida Sports Foundation.
Under HB 5, lawmakers appropriate $5 million in recurring funds and 20 positions to implement the provisions of the bill. This appropriation is not reflected in a specific line item in the FY 2023-24 budget. The Division of Strategic Business Development, however, does receive a boost of funding and staffing in the FY 2023-24 budget, and it will be the agency that will carry out the main functions of Enterprise Florida. The Division of Strategic Business Development is appropriated $401.7 million, and allocated 41 positions, compared to $133.3 million and 22 positions in the FY 2022-23 budget.

The budget includes $75 million for the Job Growth Grant Fund, which is a program that provides discretionary funds that the governor can use toward targeting job training projects or for public infrastructure. The value of this program has been debated since it was established in a 2017 special session and funding has fluctuated significantly from year to year. The Job Growth Grant fund received $50 million in FY 2022-23.

Affordable Housing

In the area of affordable housing, the budget includes funding that far surpasses the FY 2022-23 budget. Much of the additional funding is going toward specific affordable housing projects, Housing First Initiatives, Transitional and Permanent Supportive housing, and a Community Land Trust.

Florida Housing Finance Corporation

In the state of Florida, affordable housing projects are funded through loans available from the state, along with the grants and tax credits through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The loans from the state are under the purview of the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC). There are two types of loans: (1) the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) program provides loans to private developers, and (2) the Statewide Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) program provides loans to local governments. These programs are funded through a portion of the documentary stamp tax. After funding is allocated to the Land Acquisition Trust Fund (for conservation purposes), State Transportation Trust Fund (for transportation projects), and then State Economic & Development Trust Fund (for employment purposes), 5.62 percent of documentary stamp tax collections go to the State Housing Trust Fund and 6.25 percent go to the Local Government Housing Trust Fund. Then, around 6.84 percent of the remaining funds go to the Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which is split 70/30 between the Local Government Housing Trust Fund and the State Housing Trust Fund. The State Housing Trust’s portion of the funding is available as loans through the SAIL program, and the Local Government Housing Trust’s
portion is available for the same under SHIP. The FHFC is also in charge of programs like Hometown Heroes, which provides loans to qualifying first-time homebuyers.

Unlike in the FY 2022-23 budget, in the FY 2023-24 budget, lawmakers do not specify the amounts of funds coming from the Local Government Housing Trust Fund or the State Housing Trust Fund. The only time that either is mentioned is in the back of the bill, where $77 million and $33 million are allocated to the trust funds, respectively, directly from general revenue, to offset revenue loss estimates. This lack of transparency makes it difficult to assess the flow of funds through SHIP and SAIL and the effectiveness of the allocations.

While the FHFC and “Housing and Community Development” funding are listed under the General Government section of the budget, there is a great deal of funding that comes from the Health and Human Services section and some from the Criminal Justice and Corrections section. The reason for this is that affordable housing is a broader issue than multi-family and single-family development projects. Homelessness prevention and alleviation is just as much a part of housing as it is of health and safety. Many programs recognize that the individuals and families they serve cannot attain success without having a safe, stable, and secure place to lay their head at night. As such, this section compiles all housing-related appropriations across the FY 2023-24 budget.

Live Local Act

The Florida Legislature passed the Live Local Act during the 2023 regular session. The purpose of the law is to increase housing supply through the private market through the SAIL program. It specifically targets housing for Florida’s “workforce,” or those with moderate incomes making 80 percent to 120 percent area median income, or AMI. The more than $223.1 million in additional funding will increase housing stock and opportunities for those in the moderate income-bracket. This is because between 60 and 80 percent of the units built under the SAIL program are for moderate income households. Developers can also set aside a portion of units (either 20 percent or 40 percent, depending on each development’s funding sources) for units targeted to households at or below 50 percent AMI. Table 13 demonstrates the low and high ends of HUD-defined county AMIs. It is important to note that while HUD-defined AMIs are used for many housing projects (especially those combining state loans with federal funds), cities and other localities can have their own AMI for certain project purposes.
**Table 9. Area Median Income Limits**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA MEDIAN INCOME LIMITS: A SIMPLIFIED BREAKDOWN</th>
<th>1-Person Household</th>
<th>2-Person Household</th>
<th>3-Person Household</th>
<th>4-Person Household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50% AMI</td>
<td>$22,500 - $38,000</td>
<td>$25,700 - $43,400</td>
<td>$28,900 - $48,850</td>
<td>$32,100 - $51,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60% AMI</td>
<td>$27,000 - $45,600</td>
<td>$30,840 - $52,080</td>
<td>$34,680 - $58,620</td>
<td>$38,520 - $65,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80% AMI</td>
<td>$36,000 - $60,800</td>
<td>$41,120 - $69,440</td>
<td>$46,240 - $78,160</td>
<td>$51,360 - $86,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120% AMI</td>
<td>$54,000 - $91,200</td>
<td>$61,680 - $104,160</td>
<td>$69,360 - $117,240</td>
<td>$77,040 - $130,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Shimberg Center for Housing Studies, “HUD Income and Rent Limits,” University of Florida, (2023), [http://fhousingdata.shimberg.ufl.edu/income-and-rent-limits/results?nid=1#florida-housing-income-limits-2023](http://fhousingdata.shimberg.ufl.edu/income-and-rent-limits/results?nid=1#florida-housing-income-limits-2023). The income limits represent the lowest county amounts ($) compared to the highest county amount (Monroe); there are 48 counties that fall in the middle and there are smaller geographical areas (e.g., cities) that an AMI can be pulled from.

To illustrate how AMI limits play into housing affordability, consider the scenario of a single parent of one child (2-Person Household). In a less prosperous county, they would have to make between $41,120 and $61,680 a year to afford the average unit created by the Live Local Act and for the “set aside” units described above, they would need to make $25,700 to $30,840 annually. In a more expensive county, that same single parent would have to be making $43,400 for the least expensive set-aside; $52,080 for the next cheapest set aside; or between $69,440 and $104,160 to be able to afford one of the more widely built workforce units constructed under SAIL.

While Live Local will create some housing for the state’s most vulnerable households, it is not specifically aimed to serve the households with the lowest income, nor does it ensure that housing will remain affordable for the long term. In order to maximize profits, private housing developers will likely attempt to ensure that housing developments remain affordable for the shortest possible period. Affordability periods typically range from 15 to 50 years, but can run longer. Local governments, however, are required by their comprehensive plans to meet the housing needs of their current and future residents, and as such, would be better suited to utilize extended affordability periods to ensure long-term affordability for a broader range of income levels. Putting more funding into SHIP would thus help to prevent another affordable housing and homelessness crisis when the private developments end their affordability periods.
Affordable Housing Projects

Lawmakers allocated over $40.2 million for specific affordable housing development projects in the FY 2023-24 budget. This is over $20.3 million more than the funding allocation from FY 2022-23 for similar projects. The majority of these funds, 72.9 percent, fall under the Health and Human Services section of the budget. This is because housing and human services are often inextricable when vulnerable populations are discussed. The projects specifically funded through services help house veterans, people with disabilities, and people living with HIV or AIDS. Offering specific services to these individuals and families can help them attain and maintain safe and secure housing.

Housing First Initiatives, Transitional and Permanent Supportive Housing Services, and Rapid Re-Housing

The FY 2023-24 budget appropriates more than $1.4 million for Housing First initiatives and over $56.8 million for Transitional Housing services, Permanent Supportive Housing Services, and Rapid Re-Housing. Both also surpass FY 2022-23 levels at $874,000 and over $12.8 million, respectively. Because all these types of programs involve services ranging from case management and counseling to employment services and treatment programs, much of the funding comes from Health and Human Services.

Most of these programs operate under the same ideals of Housing First - an assistance approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness. It is based on the belief that people must meet their basic needs like food and shelter before they can properly or reliably address less immediate needs like obtaining employment, budgeting, or addressing issues with substance use. It also promotes choice and empowerment that can help bolster future independence. In fact, Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Re-Housing are two ways to implement this approach. Of the specific projects marked for Housing First in the budget, $936,000 of the over $1.4 million is funded under Health and Human Services. The remaining $500,000 in projects funded through General Government maintains the same funding level as the FY 2022-23 budget.

Over $56.8 million in the FY 2023-24 budget is allocated to specific projects focused on Transitional Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Rapid-Rehousing programs through Health and Human Services and/or Criminal Justice and Corrections. The Criminal Justice portion of the funding is for Transitional Housing for returning citizens with no home to go to. There are also jurisdictions that offer diversion programs whose participants might require assistance covered by
any of the three housing programs mentioned. The same can be found in the over $12.8 million allocated for similar programs in FY 2022-23.²⁶⁰

What Are the Different Types of Housing Programs Funded in the FY 2023-24 Budget?

**Transitional Housing:** Temporary housing combined with supportive services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The goal is to create and bolster support and stability for the client(s) to attain and maintain permanent housing. These projects can cover housing costs and the related program services for up to two years. A written lease is required.

**Permanent Supportive Housing:** Housing in which housing assistance is combined with supportive services to assist individuals and/or families with at least one member (any age) with a disability to attain stable housing.

**Rapid Re-Housing:** Provides short-term rental assistance and services with the following goals in mind: help people obtain housing quickly, increase their self-sufficiency, and stay housed afterwards. There are no required preconditions (e.g., income, employment, sobriety, or a clean criminal record) and the services and resources provided are usually specific to the needs of the client(s).


**Community Land Trusts**

The budget includes an over $1.3 million allocation to NW Florida Affordable Housing for a Community Land Trust (CLT).²⁶¹ This was not funded at all in the FY 2022-23 budget. Community Land Trusts are based on an affordable housing model where a community-based non-profit owns parcels of land and has the power to purchase more. Often focusing on single-family housing, the non-profit will provide a 99-year ground lease that a homeowner can enter, purchasing the home without having to pay for the land beneath it. These houses are cheaper, which means they can be attainable for families who normally could not afford a home. Reducing the price of the home can also lower the price of housing in the area if enough CLT-controlled land and homes are there. Some
CLTs (like Bright Community Trust) have started building multi-family housing on these parcels of land. With enough affordable multi-family housing being created, neighboring rental rates can be driven down to compete. It is a powerful form of housing decommodification which has been gaining popularity as rental rates rise all over the country.²⁶²,²⁶³

**Housing and Community Development Projects**

Under the Department of Economic Opportunity, the Division of Community Development provides planning and economic development assistance to counties and municipalities, as well as services for Floridians who need assistance achieving self-sufficiency.²⁶⁴ Furthermore, within the division, the Office of Long-Term Resiliency supports communities following disasters by addressing long-term recovery needs for housing, infrastructure, workforce training, mitigation, and economic development. Lawmakers allocate $855.8 million for community development, a 275 percent increase ($627.7 million) over FY 2022-23.

Compared to the FY 2022-23 budget, the increase is mainly due to $721.4 million federal funds, a $555.4 million or 335 percent increase over the previous $166 million appropriation. Specifically, the FY 2023-24 GAA includes $362.6 million for disaster recovery and relief efforts funded through federal grants.²⁶⁵ This will provide the Department of Economic Opportunity (now the Department of Commerce) the authority to expend federal funds to address immediate recovery efforts in areas impacted by presidentially declared disasters.²⁶⁶ Also, the budget allots $100 million federal dollars (available through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) to lay the foundation for the “Prosperity Through a Connected Florida” initiative.²⁶⁷ The appropriation will finance a comprehensive five-year action plan outlining Florida’s broadband availability and affordability, incorporate the Florida Digital Adoption and Use Plan,²⁶⁸ and serve as a benchmark for adopting strategies, goals, and measures to successfully connect Floridians.²⁶⁹

The FY 2023-24 budget also includes $118.6 million in general revenue funds, a $72 million (or 154 percent) increase over the previous $46.7 million appropriation. Most of these funds (63 percent or $89 million) are for member development projects.²⁷⁰ Relatedly, the governor only vetoed a total of $16.5 million worth of member development projects, whereas the previous fiscal year he vetoed $57.2 million. Besides member development projects, the budget approves $20 million from the General Revenue Fund to finance the Rural Infrastructure Fund (RIF),²⁷¹ a reimbursement grant program created to facilitate planning, preparing, and financing of infrastructure projects in rural communities.²⁷²
CURRENT LANDSCAPE

In a disaster-prone state like Florida, investment in environmental conservation efforts and updated state infrastructure is of utmost importance. Such investments are particularly important in South Florida, where climate equity and gentrification are growing issues of concern. The rising sea levels have made higher elevation properties more desirable to investors and developers, putting families with low income who reside in these regions at risk of being displaced.\textsuperscript{273} Sprawl and overdevelopment threaten Florida’s sustainability, yet the 2023 legislature passed a law that disincentivizes everyday Floridians from challenging local development changes.\textsuperscript{274}

As a hurricane-prone state, Florida needs infrastructure and protection in place to mitigate damage from natural disasters. Not only do they impact tourism revenue, but natural disasters also cause economic and physical devastation within impacted communities, as the state faced last year with Hurricane Ian. In its three-year long range financial outlook, the state identified “natural disasters, especially major hurricanes” as a significant threat to Florida’s economic stability.\textsuperscript{275} Cleanup costs and keeping the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund and Citizens Property Insurance Corporation well-funded are just some of the fiscal challenges major storms bring.

Yet, Florida’s infrastructure is already in dire need of repair, and environmental threats only target these weak points. From 2010 to 2020, Florida faced 22 extreme weather events, resulting in an estimated $100 billion in state costs.\textsuperscript{276} The American Society of Civil Engineers gave Florida an overall grade of “C” in its 2021 Infrastructure Report Card (the same as four years ago), with even lower grades on indicators like coastal areas, dams, levees, schools, and stormwater.\textsuperscript{277}

The state 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.”\textsuperscript{278} Not only do natural disasters impact tourism, but they also cause economic and physical devastation within impacted communities, as the state recently faced with Hurricane Ian.
The governor vetoed $29 million from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT); this is 81 percent less than the governor’s FY 2022-23 FDOT vetoes of $150 million. Moreover, FDOT received a $2.6 billion funding increase, 21 percent above the prior-year level. The increase is much needed given that Florida’s infrastructure is also in dire need of repair. Florida’s public transportation system has long been ranked as one of the worst in the country. Despite spending more on highways than many neighboring states, Florida has one of the worst highway systems in the nation, with high fatalities and commute times compared to other states.\textsuperscript{279} The state’s response has often been to build more toll roads — like the M-CORES project, which was disparaged by advocates in recent years — although the environmental and economic implications of such projects remain concerning.\textsuperscript{280}

The governor vetoed $85.4 million and $5.3 million from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)’s 2023-24 budgets, respectively. This included some funds for local water projects and state parks.\textsuperscript{281} Despite these vetoes, both the DEP and FWCC received modest funding increases, 7 and 8 percent above prior-year levels. Investing fully in all 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.

**BUDGET**

*Table 10. Natural Resources/Environment/Growth Management/Transportation Budget*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NATURAL RESOURCES/ENVIRONMENT/GROWTH MANAGEMENT/TRANSPORTATION BUDGET</th>
<th>FY 2023-24 Budget</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Senate</th>
<th>GAA</th>
<th>Post-Veto GAA FY 2023-24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriation Amount</td>
<td>$18,640,093,480</td>
<td>$21,605,000,000</td>
<td>$21,913,600,000</td>
<td>$22,669,800,000</td>
<td>$22,412,352,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference from Previous Year Budget</td>
<td>+$2,964,906,520</td>
<td>+$3,273,506,520</td>
<td>+$4,029,706,520</td>
<td>+$3,772,259,385</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Transportation**

The post-veto FY 2023-24 GAA allocates $15.2 billion for FDOT. Approximately 97 percent is funded through different state trust funds (e.g., the State Transportation Trust Fund).\textsuperscript{282} In comparison to the
previous year, the FY 2023-24 budget allocates $2.6 billion more — a 21 percent increase — for transportation needs. Furthermore, 94 percent of the entire FY 2023-24 transportation budget (i.e., $14.3 billion) is for the five-year work program. In addition to the $14.3 billion for the work program, Section 215 (found at the back-of-the-bill) of the FY 2023-24 GAA appropriates $4 billion nonrecurring general revenue dollars for the Moving Florida Forward Plan meant to offer congestion relief across the state.283,284

The five-year work program is an ongoing process that prioritizes funding for upcoming transportation system improvements over a five-fiscal-year period.285 According to the Florida Department of Transportation,286 the work program is “based on a balanced financial plan which maximizes available revenue sources and achieves equitable geographic distribution … it is developed through extensive coordination with local governments, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, regional planning groups, and Florida citizens.” Per the latest adopted work plan, from FY 2023-24 through FY 2027-28, nearly $26.1 billion state funds, plus an additional $11.6 billion from tolls and turnpike fees, alongside $22.2 billion federal funds, $4.7 billion local funds, and $1.7 billion in bonds and other financing will go toward transportation system improvements.287

The state’s ongoing investment in its transportation system is important considering the need of regular maintenance and preservation, which improves safety, reduces operating costs, delays the need for costly reconstruction or replacement, and protects Floridians’ investment in infrastructure.288 To this end, Florida law requires FDOT to ensure that, at a minimum:

- 80 percent of the pavement on the State Highway System meets department standards,289
- 90 percent of department-maintained bridges meet standards, and
- 100 percent of the acceptable maintenance standard on the State Highway System.

While FDOT consistently meets the state’s maintenance requirements, this still leaves up to 20 percent of the pavement on the State Highway System and 10 percent of bridges below standard. Moreover, as FDOT acknowledges, “uncertainties about future conditions like new and emerging technologies, financial and economic outlooks, environmental and weather events, and the demographics, needs, and values of Florida’s communities create stressors and risks to our transportation system.”290 Concerning revenue, as vehicles become more fuel efficient and electric and alternative-fuel markets grow, tax revenue at gas pumps will decline, resulting in a projected decrease in current transportation funding. Concerning demographic changes, as Florida’s population increases, so will issues with safety, congestion, and accessibility.
Beyond the FY 2023-24 GAA, policymakers also passed laws that drew public attention and will impact transportation broadly. For example, policymakers approved HB 1191, which authorizes FDOT to undertake demonstration projects using phosphogypsum (PG), a byproduct of fertilizer production, in road construction material. The bill also requires the department to conduct a study to evaluate the suitability of the material. The bill does raise concerns given that PG “contains uranium, thorium and radium and can emit radon, which can cause cancer, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [EPA].”\textsuperscript{291} The bill gives FDOT less than a year to complete the demonstration and study. HB 1191 may run into legal challenges given that federal law prohibits PG use in road construction and that alternative-uses must be approved by the EPA.\textsuperscript{292} It is also worth mentioning that the governor vetoed a $950,000 general revenue appropriation that would have been used for a Central Florida pilot plant project for PG reclamation.\textsuperscript{293}

Disaster Planning & Recovery

The post-veto FY 2023-24 GAA appropriates over $2.8 billion in federal and state funding for Emergency Prevention, Preparedness, and Response to provide disaster relief and recovery, more than $1 billion more than the previous funding level.\textsuperscript{294} Most of this appropriation comes from the federal government. However, the governor vetoed roughly $10 million of the funding, including money for Chattahoochee’s Emergency Management Building and the City of Bradenton’s Public Safety Operations Center.

Department of Environmental Protection

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) administers most of the vital environmental activities in the state, including Everglades restoration and protection, Florida Forever/land conservation, state park operations, preserving Florida’s coastlines, mitigating pollution, and monitoring air and water resources.

Compared to prior-year funding, the 2023-24 GAA includes nominal increases in funding to the DEP, adding $238 million (about a 7 percent increase) and 30 net positions spread across half a dozen DEP programs. This small investment remained despite $85.4 million in direct DEP vetoes. Notably, DEP vetoes were much higher last year but so were funding increases; as
such, these vetoes could hit programs and staff harder this fiscal year.

**Everglades Restoration**

The Everglades remains one of the most endangered natural resources, despite nine million Floridians relying on it for their water supply. Governor DeSantis has made supporting this vital area a key priority, and this year, the long-awaited (yet divisive) Everglades Agricultural Area reservoir project broke ground. The budget includes an over $640 million allocation to Everglades restoration and protection, a 9 percent increase compared to FY 2022-23 funding. Notably, this includes significant increases to grants for local governments and organizations engaged in Everglades restoration (36 percent increase to $478.5 million) and protection (17 percent increase to $86.1 million). No Everglades funding was vetoed.

**Recreation and Parks**

Overall, the Recreations and Parks program budget significantly decreased from last year’s appropriations, with State Park Operations facing severe cuts and Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas seeing moderate boosts. Specifically, the FY 2023-24 budget cuts $244.4 million (56 percent) from prior-year State Park Operations funding. However, last year, the legislature added significant funding in this area to address backlogged facility improvements, so this simply brings the division back in line with typical funding. The rest of the cut is primarily from the governor vetoing $9.3 million for 18 local park projects.

Conversely, the Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas division received a moderate funding boost of $58.5 million above prior-year funding. This represents a 14 percent increase and is coupled with eight new staff positions. These additions are primarily for year-three funding of the state’s Resilient Florida program. Created in 2021, Resilient Florida seeks to address detrimental flooding and sea level rise, primarily via grants to local governments.

**Water Quality Improvement Grant Program (formerly known as the Wastewater Grant Program)**

Founded in 2020 as the wastewater grant program, the Water Quality Improvement Grant Program was created to help communities improve their water supply, including mitigating nutrient runoff
from waste, storms, and agricultural sites. Excessive nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen are harmful to both humans and the environment.

The FY 2023-24 budget reflects a $75 million increase (60 percent) over prior-year funding to this vital anti-pollution program. This generous appropriation of $200.7 million matches the House’s recommendation this session.

_Florida Forever_

Florida Forever is an indispensable program that allows the state to acquire and preserve ecologically important land and prevent future environmental problems. It officially began in 2001 after landmark legislation (Preservation 2000) authorized $300 million in bonds for 10 years to support “the largest land acquisition program of its kind in the United States.” Since then, 870,000 acres of conservation land have been managed by the program. Additional legislation, like 2014’s Amendment 1 (passed by voters), designated new funding from the documentary stamp tax and expanded the duration of Florida Forever’s bonds through 2040.

The 2023-24 budget allocates $126.2 million to the Florida Forever program, but this includes a $100 million veto and deviates significantly from what either chamber originally proposed (See Table 15). A 14 percent increase over previous year funding, this remains the highest appropriation to the program in 15 years.

_Table 11. Florida Forever Program Budget, Current and Prior Year_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FLORIDA FOREVER PROGRAM BUDGET</th>
<th>FY 2023-24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY 2022-23 GAA</td>
<td>House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriation Amount</td>
<td>$110,721,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference from Previous Year Budget</td>
<td>+ $140,511,119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Funding for Florida Forever was appropriated in full until 2008, when it was then significantly reduced or eliminated (See Figure 9). Recent upticks are encouraging and exceed the $100 million floor that advocates have called for, yet still fall short of the $300 million in funding called for in the 2001 and 2014 legislation.

floridapolicy.org
Moreover, bills were introduced in both chambers that would have extended Florida Forever bonds until 2054, limited sweeps from program funds into other areas, and set annual funding between $300 million and $350 million. Unfortunately, the bills did not pass, nor did similar proposals in 2022 or 2021.

**Figure 9. Florida Forever Funding**

![Graph showing Florida Forever Funding]

Funding has not recovered since the Great Recession. But it has increased in recent years.


**Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**

Since 1999, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (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.
Compared to the prior year’s funding, the 2023-24 GAA nominally increases funding to the FWC, adding $36 million (an 8 percent increase), primarily to the Marine Fisheries and Habitat and Species Conservation programs. Added Marine Fisheries funding is largely allocated to continuing Deepwater Horizon oil spill cleanup, restoring the Apalachicola Bay, and for the FWC to plan an artificial habitat (e.g., reef) in Monroe County. New Habitat and Species Conservation funding is appropriated to land acquisition and management, lake restoration, new motor vehicles, and added staff.

This marginal investment and 29 net positions persevered despite $5.3 million in FWC vetoes, which exceed last year’s. Nearly all of these added positions are for the Law Enforcement and Habitat and Species Conservation programs. Vetoed projects would have benefitted animal facilities, improved local boat ramps, and supported wildlife studies and lake restoration.

Red Tide Mitigation

Red tide (a.k.a. harmful algae bloom) is an abnormal concentration of microscopic plantlike organisms on state coasts that presents a threat to tourism, wildlife, and the health of Floridians. Even at low concentrations, red tide is harmful to people and fish, causing respiratory and skin irritation in the former and potential death in the latter. Concentrations were especially high this spring along Florida’s west coast and some local governments canceled beach activities as a result.

Appropriations for red tide mitigation is divided between the DEP and FWC. The 2023-24 budget adds $9.5 million (a 36 percent increase) to red tide mitigation over current-year funding. This brings red tide funding to $35.9 million, matching the Senate’s 2023-24 proposal. The House proposal would have cut funding by $15.5 million (a 59 percent decrease), which was ill-advised amid recent spikes in red tide that could negatively impact Floridians, wildlife, and tourism.
Florida Policy Institute includes appropriations plus vetoes in the funding amounts cited for fiscal year budgets (the current year and previous fiscal year budgets). Except for Figure 1, FPI does not include adjustments and supplemental funding in calculations of funding levels.


5 Federal Reserve Economic Data, “Average Hourly Earnings of All Employees: Total Private in Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL (MSA),” June 2023, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/SMU1233100050000003.


9 The methodology for calculating the “over $117.7 million” statistic was to search for the following terms: “Chronic,” “Development,” “Foster,” “Home,” “Homeless,” “Housing,” “Multi,” “Permanent,” “Residence,” “Residential,” “Shelter,” “Single,” “Transitional,” “Veteran,” “Workforce,” and “Youth.” See, Endnote 51 for an itemized list of special projects found under these terms.


28 According to Governor DeSantis’ annual General Revenue Reports found in the Framework for Freedom (Fiscal Year 2023-24) website (http://frameworkforfreedombudget.com/content/Current/reports/Receipts-As-Per-Capita-Amounts.pdf), per capita tax collections for FY 2023-24 are $1,809. However, to make comparisons between Census Geographies, the present analysis used data from the Census Bureau’s 2021 Annual Survey of State and Local Government Finances, adjusted for inflation to the first half of 2023, used population statistics from the Census, and determined per capita tax collections to be $2,550.

29 FPI analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau’s “Annual Survey of State and Local Government Finances” (2020). For population statistics, FPI uses data from the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2020) and the Florida Office of Economic & Demographic Research.


32 Here, the South conforms to the United States’ Census Bureau’s Geographic Levels (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/economic-census/guidance-geographies/levels.html). Accordingly, Census regions and divisions are groupings of states that subdivide the United States. The Census divides the South (region) into the South Atlantic (Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia...
and West Virginia), East South Central (Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee), and West South Central (Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas).


34 The Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR) compiles a list of all tax expenditures as part of the Florida Tax Handbook. For this analysis, FPI compiled all past tax handbooks, adjusted the figures for inflation. See http://edr.state.fl.us/content/revenues/reports/tax-handbook/.


42 “Governor Ron DeSantis Signs Framework for Freedom Budget: Budget Highlights.”

43 “Governor Ron DeSantis Signs Framework for Freedom Budget: Budget Highlights.”

44 “Governor Ron DeSantis Signs Framework for Freedom Budget: Budget Highlights.”


48 Gideon Lukens and Breanna Sharer, “Closing the Medicaid Coverage Gap Would Help Diverse Groups and Narrow Racial Disparities,” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, June 14, 2021


Line item 2316.


Line item 1590

Line items 197-223
65 Line Items 197-215
68 Office of Economic & Demographic Research, Social Services Estimating Conference, Medicaid Caseloads and Expenditures, Executive Summary, February 20 and 23, March 1, 2023
69 Line items 176-181
71 “CS/CS/HB 121 Florida KidCare Program Eligibility: Final Bill Analysis.”
72 Line items 176-181
79 Line Items 366-387A
81 Line item 383.
82 Line Item 372.
83 Florida Department of Children and Families, ”Triennial Plan for the Delivery of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services State Fiscal Years 2023-2024 and 2025-2026”, 2023 https://www.myflfamilies.com/sites/default/files/2023-
Line Item 373.

Line Item 367 https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2022/5001/BillText/er/PDF

Line Item 375

Line Item 369, GAA 2022 https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2022/5001/BillText/er/PDF


Line Item 378

Line item 241. Estimate is based on what Gov. DeSantis is using as a cost per person estimate in his proposed budget: $53,125 per person.


Line item 401.


Line item 402.

Florida Department of Elder Affairs, “Wait List/ Priority List for Services,” February 24, 2023, https://fcoa.starchapter.com/images/APCL_WaitlistOutput24Feb2023.pdf (This is also the source for the ADI numbers.)

Florida Department of Elder Affairs, “Wait List/ Priority List for Services,” February 24, 2023, https://fcoa.starchapter.com/images/APCL_WaitlistOutput24Feb2023.pdf (This is also the source for the ADI numbers.)


Line items 432-567.

GAA, 2022 Line Items 423-552

Line Items 499-511


Line item 471.


108 Id.


110 Line item 361.


112 Section 414.095 (10), Fla. Stat. (2022)


114 Because of TANF’s block grant structure, Florida is allowed to redirect money that otherwise could be spent on income support for families to a broad range of other activities, such as child welfare and pre-K. Azevedo-McCaffrey and Saafawi, 2022. While these programs are laudable, Florida now spends only about 19 percent of its federal and state TANF funds on cash assistance to TANF families. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Florida TANF Spending, 2021, https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/tanf_spending_fl.pdf.

115 The Florida Legislature, CS for SB 7034 as Enrolled, 2022, https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2022/7034/BillText/er/PDF. Because of that increase, many households with children in out-of-home care can now receive as much as $621.77 per child per month, depending on the child’s age. And, unlike parents who are doing their best to care for their children themselves, benefits of many of the children in out-of-home care are automatically subject to annual cost of living increases.


117 Line items 568-597.

118 Line Items 3051-3108

119 Line Item 3106

120 Line Item 3098

121 Line Item 3098A

122 Line Item 3066


124 The Florida Senate, Local Funding Initiative Request, Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (SF 1357) https://www.flsenate.gov/PublishedContent/Session/FiscalYear/FY2023-24/LocalFundingInitiativeRequests/FY2023-24_S1357.PDF

125 The Florida Senate, Local Funding Initiative Request Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (SF 1673) https://www.flsenate.gov/PublishedContent/Session/FiscalYear/FY2023-24/LocalFundingInitiativeRequests/FY2023-24_S1673.PDF
The Florida Senate, Local Funding Initiative Request Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (SF 3167)
https://www.flsenate.gov/PublishedContent/Session/FiscalYear/FY2023-24/LocalFundingInitiativeRequests/FY2023-24_S3156.PDF

The Florida Senate, Local Funding Initiative Request Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (SF 2265)
https://www.flsenate.gov/PublishedContent/Session/FiscalYear/FY2023-24/LocalFundingInitiativeRequests/FY2023-24_S2265.PDF

The Florida Senate, Local Funding Initiative Request Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (SF1471)
https://www.flsenate.gov/PublishedContent/Session/FiscalYear/FY2023-24/LocalFundingInitiativeRequests/FY2023-24_S1471.PDF

Florida Department of Corrections, Strategic Plan & Annual Report, 2021-2024,

Florida Department of Corrections, 2021-2024.

Department of Corrections, “Long Range Program Plan: Fiscal Years 2023-24 through 2027-28,” Florida Fiscal Portal, September 30, 2022, p. 11,

Department of Corrections, “Long Range Program Plan: Fiscal Years 2023-24 through 2027-28,” Florida Fiscal Portal, September 30, 2022, p. 4,

Office of Economic and Demographic Research, Criminal Justice Estimating Conference, 2023,
http://edr.state.fl.us/content/conferences/criminaljustice/executivesummary.pdf.

Department of Corrections, “Long Range Program Plan: Fiscal Years 2023-24 through 2027-28,” Florida Fiscal Portal, September 30, 2022, p. 81,

See FY 2022-23, line item 684A

Department of Corrections, “Long Range Program Plan: Fiscal Years 2023-24 through 2027-28,” Florida Fiscal Portal, September 30, 2022, p. 12,

In 2011, the Florida Legislature directed DOC to privatize inmate health services.


See FY 2022-23 GAA, page 145.

See “Juvenile Justice, Department Of” section, FY 2023-24 GAA section, pages 207-208


Line 82 (Chapter 2022-156).

Section 45.

Section 50.

Line item 79.

Section 50.


Line 79.


Line 77.

Section 52.


Line 80.

Lines 5, 6 and 80.

Lines 82-105 minus vetoes.

Florida Senate “Public School Funding, the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) Fiscal Year 2023-24, SB2500 Conference Report 5/2/2023,” https://www.flsenate.gov/PublishedContent/Session/2023/Conference/7/RelatedDocument/FEFP%20205-2-23_1185.pdf.

Line 80.


Categoricals are categories of funding that are added to the Base Student Allocation to ensure equitable distribution of education funding. Eliminated categoricals include such things as Teacher Classroom Supply Assistance, Reading Instruction Allocation, and the Turnaround Supplement Services. The funds from the seven eliminated categoricals have been added to the Base Student Allocation which effectively increases the BSA. However, many categoricals have legislative requirements that dictate how funds are used and in what amounts. Thus, while the BSA has increased the flexibility is limited because of the statutory constraints.

HB 5101 https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2023/5101/BillText/er/PDF


Line 80.


Line items 5 and 80.


213 Line 143.


215 Line 3.

216 Lines 4, 59-73, 74-75.


219 Sections 45 and 50.


222 Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, “Employment and unemployment Data Release”

223 Line items 2306-2315


225 Line Items 243A (SF 1313/HF 565 and SF 2859/HF 2022); 315 (SF 2983/HF 836, SF 1576/HF 442, and SF 2828); 350 (Rapid Re-Housing & Homelessness Prevention Challenge Grants); 352 (Homeless Housing Assistance Grants); 354 (SF 2072/HF 1850, SF 2280/HF 205, SF 1614/HF 155, and SF 1565/HF 574); 365A (SF 2280/HF 205, SF 2072/HF 1850, SF 2549/HF 200, SF 3070/HF 2210, and SF 2926/HF 1260); 378 (SF 2150); 387A (SF 1065/HF 608, SF 2199/HF 203, SF 1196/HF 2291, SF 1236/HF 815, and SF 1215/HF 967); 479 (HOPWA); 593A (SF 2404/HF 386 and SF 2853/HF 682); 595A (SF 1226/HF 1604 and HF 2156); 1214A (SF 1484/HF 1797 and HF 620); 1336A (SF 1254); 2336A (SF 2692/HF 698 and SF 2691/HF 739); and 345A (SF 2912/HF 11, SF 2844/HF 129, SF 1572/HF 2254, SF 2692/HF 698, SF 1066/HF 161, SF 1553/HF 197, SF 1260/HF 416, SF 2473/HF 236, SF 2691/HF 739, SF 2961/HF 307, and SF 1441/HF 44) of the post veto GAA. The type of projects: Affordable housing developments; Housing First initiatives (including programs that provide Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Re-Housing); Transitional Housing programs; and funding for a Community Land Trust.


FPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, “Table 1. Food Sufficiency for Households, in the Last 7 Days by Select Characteristics, Food Sufficiency and Food Security Tables, Week 58: Household Pulse Survey: June 7, 2023-June 19,” 2023, July 12, 2023, https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/hhp/2023/wk58/food1_week58.xlsx. Note, for the analysis, FPI discounted the total number of “did not report” households from the total and then proceeded to estimate the percentage of reporting households who expressed “sometimes not enough to eat” or “often not enough to eat” in the last 7 days.

FPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, “Table 2. Food Sufficiency for Households with Children, in the Last 7 Days by Select Characteristics, Food Sufficiency and Food Security Tables, Week 58: Household Pulse Survey: June 7-June 19, 2023,” July 12, 2023, https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/hhp/2023/wk58/food2_week58.xlsx. Note, for the analysis, FPI discounted the total number of “did not report” households from the total and then proceeded to estimate the percentage of reporting households who expressed “sometimes not enough to eat” or “often not enough to eat” in the last 7 days.

Line items 1589 and 1591A.

Line item 354.

Line item 1595A

Line item 2341A.

Line item 1592.

Line items 1591 and 1591A.

Line item 2297.

Line item 1589A.


Fla SB 6B (2023).


See post-veto GAA, section 197.


Section 243 of the back-pages of the post-veto FY 2023-24 GAA.


Florida Housing Finance Corporation, “Income Limits, (2023),” https://www.floridahousing.org/owners-and-managers/compliance/income-limits. (A list of income limits for various housing grant programs are listed here)
Line Items 243A (SF 2859), 479 (HOPWA), 595A (HF 2156), 2336A (SF 2691), and 2341A (SF 2912, SF 1572, SF 1066, SF 1553, SF 1260, SF 2473, SF 2691, SF2961, and SF 1441) of the post-veto GAA.

Line Items 403A (HB 3505); 471 (HOPWA); and 2286A (HB 3041, SF 2086, HB 2607, and SF 1619) from the FY 2022-23 Budget.

Line Items 243A (SF 2859), 479 (HOPWA), and 595A (HF 2156) of the post-veto GAA.

Line Items 354 (SF 1614), 593A (SF 2404), and 2341A (SF 2844) of the post-veto GAA.

Line Items 243A (SF 1313); 315 (SF 2983, SF 1576, and SF 2828); 350 (Rapid Re-Housing & Homelessness Prevention Challenge Grants); 352 (Homeless Housing Assistance Grants), 354 (SF 2072, SF 2280, and SF 1565); 365A (SF 2280, SF 2072, SF 2549, SF 3070, and SF 2926); 378 (SF 2150); 387A (SF 1065, SF 2199, SF 1196, SF 1236, and SF 1215); 593A (SF 2853); 595A (SF 1226); 1214A (SF 1484 and SF 2179); and 1336A (SF 1254) of the post-veto GAA.

Line Items 576A (HB 3041) and 2286A (HB 3123) of the FY 2022-23 Budget.

Line Items 247A (HB 2937); 315A (HB2231, HB 4317, SF 1249, and HB 4463); 328C (HB 2903); 348 (Homeless Housing Assistance Grants); 350 (HB 4097, HB 3667, and HB 2103); 361B (HB 4661); 361C (HB 2971); 361E (HB 9041); 372 (HB 3239); and 1304A (HB 2747) of the FY 2022-23 Budget.

Line Items 243A (SF 2859), 479 (HOPWA), and 595A (HF 2156) of the post-veto GAA.

Line Items 354 (SF 1614), 593A (SF 2404), and 2341A (SF 2844) of the post-veto GAA.

Line Items 243A (SF 1313); 315 (SF 2983, SF 1576, and SF 2828); 350 (Rapid Re-Housing & Homelessness Prevention Challenge Grants); 352 (Homeless Housing Assistance Grants), 354 (SF 2072, SF 2280, and SF 1565); 365A (SF 2280, SF 2072, SF 2549, SF 3070, and SF 2926); 378 (SF 2150); 387A (SF 1065, SF 2199, SF 1196, SF 1236, and SF 1215); 593A (SF 2853); 595A (SF 1226); 1214A (SF 1484 and SF 2179); and 1336A (SF 1254) of the post-veto GAA.

Line Items 576A (HB 3041) and 2286A (HB 3123) of the FY 2022-23 Budget.

Line Items 247A (HB 2937); 315A (HB2231, HB 4317, SF 1249, and HB 4463); 328C (HB 2903); 348 (Homeless Housing Assistance Grants); 350 (HB 4097, HB 3667, and HB 2103); 361B (HB 4661); 361C (HB 2971); 361E (HB 9041); 372 (HB 3239); and 1304A (HB 2747) of the FY 2022-23 Budget.


Id.

Line Items 243A (SF 1313); 315 (SF 2983, SF 1576, and SF 2828); 350 (Rapid Re-Housing & Homelessness Prevention Challenge Grants); 352 (Homeless Housing Assistance Grants), 354 (SF 2072, SF 2280, and SF 1565); 365A (SF 2280, SF 2072, SF 2549, SF 3070, and SF 2926); 378 (SF 2150); 387A (SF 1065, SF 2199, SF 1196, SF 1236, and SF 1215); 593A (SF 2853); 595A (SF 1226); 1214A (SF 1484 and SF 2179); and 1336A (SF 1254) of the post-veto GAA.

Line Items 247A (HB 2937); 315A (HB2231, HB 4317, SF 1249, and HB 4463); 328C (HB 2903); 348 (Homeless Housing Assistance Grants); 350 (HB 4097, HB 3667, and HB 2103); 361B (HB 4661); 361C (HB 2971); 361E (HB 9041); 372 (HB 3239); and 1304A (HB 2747) of the FY 2022-23 Budget.

Line Items 2336A (SF 2692) and 2341A (SF 2692) of the post-veto GAA.


Line Item 2335


Line Item 2328


Line Item 2341A

Line Item 2342. The appropriation also includes $5 million from the State Economic Enhancement and Development Trust Fund.


Fla SB 540 (2023).


Line items 1988-2099.
293 Line Item 1774B
294 Line items 2672-2710.
297 Line items 1667; 1685-1686; 1691; 1725; 2062
298 Line items 1732-1755B

Line item 1797A  
Laws of Florida, Ch. 2022-156, p. 297; Ch. 2023-239, p. 298.

Line items 1798, 1800-1801, 1809, 1811, 1813, 1816-17, 1819-20.


L.O.F., Ch. 2020-150.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection, “Water Quality Improvement Grant Program,” 2023, https://floridadep.gov/wra/wra/content/water-quality-improvement-grant-program


L.O.F., Ch. 2022-156, line items 1651, 1653, 1662, 1665, 1671; Ch. 2023-239, line items 1693, 1695, 1702, 1705, 1712.


L.O.F., Ch. 2023-239, line items 1641, 1642, 1796. Line item 1472A was vetoed under the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, which would have gone to Florida Forever’s Rural and Family Lands Protection Program.

The General Appropriations Acts passed in 2023-24 and earlier allow sweeps from the land acquisition trust fund within the Department of Environmental Protection (which includes Florida Forever funding). See section 53 of SB 2502, Implementing the 2023-24 General Appropriations Act.

SB 928 (2023) proposed $300 million annually and HB 559 (2023) proposed up to $350 million annually; both would have extended program bonds through 2054.


Fla SB 1480, HB 1173, HB 1211, HB 1561. (2021).


Line items 1948-1961


Ch. 2023-239 L.O.F., line items 1683; 1684; 1688; 1705A; 1984; 1985.

SB 2500 (2023-24), line items 1683; 1684; 1688; 1705A; 1984; 1985.


Florida Policy Institute