

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

[STATE OVERVIEW]

The Freedom First Budget totals \$109.9 billion, an increase of \$8.3 billion over current year, and makes historic investments in education, the environment, and law enforcement.

Of the total \$109.9 billion, the General Revenue portion is \$41.8 billion, an increase of \$5.4 billion over current year. Florida's total reserves for Fiscal Year 2022-23 are estimated at over \$16 billion, 15 percent of the total budget for the fiscal year.

With revenue collections in excess of \$2.7 billion over the official January estimates, Fiscal Year 2021-22 reserves are an historic \$20.8 billion. This does not consider any overages for June 2022.

To maintain strong fiscal responsibility, Governor Ron DeSantis vetoed a record amount of more \$3.1 billion. This is double last year's vetoes, ensuring Florida is not overspending and is well positioned to weather any Biden induced economic recession.

[TAX RELIEF]

The Freedom First Budget includes multiple tax holidays to allow hard working Floridians to keep more money in their pockets. The Budget provides over \$1.24 billion in tax relief, including the following tax holidays:

- Lowers the price of gas in Florida by 25.3 cents per gallon with a \$200 million gas tax holiday.
- Creates a fourteen-day tax holiday from July 25 through August 7, 2022, for clothing, shoes, backpacks, and school supplies, for a total of \$100 million of tax relief.

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

- Removes the sales tax on diapers and baby clothes for the 2022-23 fiscal year, for a total of \$120 million of tax relief.
- Creates a three-month tax holiday on children's books, currently running through August 14, to save Florida families \$3.3 million.
- Creates a tax holiday for disaster preparedness from May 28 through June 10, 2022, for supplies such as flashlights, radios, tarps, batteries, and fire extinguishers, for a total of \$25.6 million of tax relief.
- Creates a tax holiday for tools and other home improvement items from September 3 through September 9, 2022, for a total of \$12.4 million of tax relief.
- Removes the sales tax on impact resistant windows, doors, and garage doors for two years, providing \$443 million of tax relief over two years.
- Creates a 7-day tax holiday for "Freedom Week," which will run from July 1 through July 7, 2022, for boating and water activity supplies and camping, fishing, outdoor and sporting equipment to help families afford a fun summer. This will save Florida families \$70.6 million.
- Removes the sales tax on Energy Star Appliances for one year, from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023, saving Floridians \$78.5 million.

[EDUCATION]

Florida continues to prove it leads the nation in empowering students and parents by providing opportunities for success beginning in early grades and continuing through higher education. Governor DeSantis has shown his ongoing support for our teachers and schools to ensure they have the tools necessary to provide high quality educational choices for all students

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

regardless of circumstance. Governor DeSantis will not stop fighting for our families and provides key investments for Floridians' education through this Budget.

Early Learning

The Freedom First Budget provides a total of more than \$453 million for Florida's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten program, a quality, free education initiative, which serves approximately 156,000 four and five-year olds. VPK prepares each child for kindergarten by building a strong foundation for school and focusing on early literacy skills.

K-12 Education

Governor DeSantis understands that education is the foundation of our future workforce. That is why the Freedom First Budget provides an historic investment in our K-12 education system. This includes the highest ever per student investment of \$8,143 in the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), which is an increase of \$385 over Fiscal Year 2021-22.

Governor DeSantis is once again acknowledging our hard-working educators by providing \$800 million, an increase of \$250 million, continuing to raise the minimum teacher salary for full-time public classroom teachers toward the goal of \$47,500 and providing raises to Florida's veteran teachers and other instructional personnel. The increase of \$250 million will be split evenly between raising minimum salaries and providing veteran instructional personnel with salary increases.

The \$24.3 billion in total funding for the FEFP includes the following increases:

- An increase of \$214.49 in the Base Student Allocation (BSA);

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

- An increase of \$20 million, for an historic total of \$140 million for the Mental Health Assistance Allocation;
- An increase of \$250 million, for a total of \$800 million to continue increasing the minimum teacher salary for full-time public classroom teachers to the goal of \$47,500 and provide salary increases to Florida's veteran teachers and other instructional personnel;
- An increase of \$40 million, for a total of \$170 million for the Reading Allocation; and
- An increase of \$30 million, for an historic total of \$210 million for safe school initiatives.

The Freedom First Budget provides \$8 million to provide the SAT or ACT to each public school student in grade 11, including the Department of Juvenile Justice's education programs.

Closing K-12 Achievement Gaps

The Freedom First Budget includes \$119 million to ensure Florida's students are meeting high achievement standards, as well as to continue the transition to progress monitoring aligned with the newly adopted B.E.S.T. Standards. Additionally, these funds will allow for the provision of consistent data reporting to help determine personalized interventions for struggling readers and focus areas for statewide professional learning for educators.

The Freedom First Budget continues to invest in school safety initiatives, continuing the Governor's commitment to ensuring Florida's students and teachers are in a safe and secure learning environment. The Budget includes the following school safety initiatives:

- \$210 million, an increase of \$30 million, for the safe schools component of the FEFP;

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

- \$140 million, an increase of \$20 million, for the Mental Health Assistance Allocation to support school mental health programs;
- \$20 million is provided for public school hardening grants;
- \$6.5 million is maintained for the Coach Aaron Feis Guardian Program that will be used to certify and train school guardians and provide a one-time stipend of \$500;
- \$6.4 million is maintained to continue providing school districts access to a mobile panic alert system that is capable of connecting multiple first responder agencies;
- \$5.5 million is maintained for the Youth Mental Health Awareness and Assistance Training;
- \$3 million is maintained to continue providing a centralized integrated data repository and data analytics resources to improve access to timely, complete and accurate information; and
- \$895,000, an increase of \$255,000, is provided for the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool.

Protecting Florida's Jewish Day Schools

To continue to address safety concerns for Florida's Jewish communities, Governor DeSantis maintains funding of \$4 million to hire school safety officers; enhance safety measures; upgrade safety equipment, facilities, and technology; and increase security services to ensure children at Florida's Jewish Day Schools can learn in a safe environment. This funding will be available to all eligible Jewish Day Schools in Florida.

K-12 Civics Engagement

\$1 million, an increase of \$500,000, is provided to expand the Florida Civics and Debate Initiative to all 67 counties with over 160 debate teams across the state.

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

\$1 million is provided to implement Portraits of Patriotism, which are first-person accounts of victims of other nations' governing philosophies who can compare those philosophies with those of the United States.

\$2 million is provided to implement Stories of Inspiration, a curriculum developed by the State Board of Education to inspire future generations through motivating stories of American history.

Workforce Education

The Freedom First Budget includes over \$579 million to support workforce education programs to ensure Florida students are prepared to fill high-demand, high-wage jobs, and help Florida meet its goal of becoming first in the nation for workforce education by 2030.

This includes \$15 million, an increase of \$5 million, for the Governor's Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program to establish or expand pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs for high school and college students.

The Budget continues to invest \$35 million for the Open Door Grant Program to create a demand-driven supply of credentialed workers for high-demand occupations and expand the affordability of workforce training and credentialing.

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

- \$6.5 million for students earning industry certifications in high-skill, high-demand areas at career technical centers;
- \$14 million for students earning industry certifications in high-skill, high-demand areas at Florida colleges;

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

- \$30 million, an increase of \$5 million, in performance funding for state colleges through the 2+2 Student Success Incentive and Work Florida Student Success Incentive Funds; and
- \$560 million in performance funding for state universities.

The Budget provides \$125 million for two new nursing education programs to assist with the nursing shortage:

- \$100 million for the Prepping Institutions, Programs, Employers, and Learners through Incentives for Nursing Education (PIPELINE) to reward performance and excellence of nursing education programs at Florida's career centers, state colleges, and universities.
\$25 million for the Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) Fund to incentivize collaboration between nursing education programs and healthcare partners.

Higher Education

U.S. News and World Report has ranked Florida's higher education system the best in the nation for five consecutive years. Florida boasts five of the Top 100 public universities in the country, including one in the Top 5 and another in the Top 20, all while charging the lowest tuition in the country for public four-year institutions.

The Freedom First Budget includes historic state operating funding for Florida's higher education system: \$1.5 billion for Florida's state colleges and \$3 billion for Florida's state universities.

Education Infrastructure

The Freedom First Budget provides \$1.8 billion in state funding for the following education capital outlay initiatives:

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

- School Safety Grants
 - \$20 million for school safety grants provided to school districts to assist with costs associated with improving the physical security of K-12 school buildings.
- Construction
 - \$64.4 million to cover increasing costs related to Special Facility Construction projects for Baker, Bradford, Calhoun, Jackson, Levy, and Okeechobee counties, so these important projects can be completed regardless of rising costs from inflation.
 - \$636.1 million in state funding and State Fiscal Recovery Funds for construction projects at state colleges and universities.
 - \$19.9 million in state funding and State Fiscal Recovery Funds for construction projects at school district facilities.
- Maintenance
 - \$843 million in State Fiscal Recovery Funds for deferred maintenance needs at state colleges and universities.
 - \$195.8 million for public charter school maintenance;
 - This funds the necessary infrastructure for charter schools without utilizing any of the school districts' local funds.
 - \$11.4 million for public school maintenance;
 - This funds capital outlay revenue needs in high growth districts.
 - \$8.1 million for lab school maintenance;
 - \$8.5 million for the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind maintenance; and

[LAW ENFORCEMENT]

Governor DeSantis has made public safety a top priority and has taken bold steps to protect all Floridians. Due to the hard work of Florida's law enforcement officers, our crime rate decreased last year, marking the 50th consecutive year the state has seen a drop in its crime rate. Governor DeSantis continues to make necessary investments in our public safety,

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

including funding for safer and more modern correctional facilities, information technology enhancements, workforce recruitment and retention, and statewide prosecution issues by:

- Creating a Law Enforcement Recruitment Bonus Payment Program to issue signing bonuses of up to \$5,000 for new recruits and out-of-state officers who join our police departments, sheriffs' departments, and state law enforcement agencies, at a total cost of \$20 million (HB 3).
- Supporting first responders through \$1,000 bonus payments for a total of \$125 million.
- Providing \$5 million toward scholarships to help students complete the required training to become a law enforcement officer.
- Providing \$1 million to assist out-of-state officers with up to \$1,000 towards the recertification process when relocating to the most law enforcement-friendly state in the nation.
- Creating access to adoption benefits for law enforcement officers who adopt a child from within the child welfare system. The adoption benefits include \$10,000 for adopting a child and \$25,000 for adopting a child who has special needs.

Salary Increases for Correctional and Law Enforcement Positions

The Freedom First Budget includes substantial pay raises for Florida law enforcement officers, who put their lives on the line every day.

In addition to the 5.38 percent pay raise for all state employees, state sworn law enforcement officers are receiving an increase of 5 percent or an increase to \$50,000, whichever is greater.

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

- This is a 15 percent average increase in pay for our state sworn law enforcement officers, including the 5.38 percent increase.

The Budget increases the minimum base pay for Correctional and Probation Officers at the Florida Department of Corrections to \$20 an hour, and provides \$15.9 million to provide pay increase for certain positions at the Florida Department of Corrections based on years of service.

The Freedom First Budget also includes \$19.9 million to increase pay for Correctional Officers in privately operated correctional facilities.

The Budget increases the minimum base pay to \$19 an hour and \$20 an hour for Juvenile Detention Officers and Juvenile Probation Officers, respectively, at the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice.

The Freedom First Budget also increases compensation for sheriffs' deputies and county correctional officers in the 29 fiscally constrained rural counties, for a total of over \$15 million.

Information Technology Infrastructure and Security

The Freedom First Budget provides \$10.1 million to the Florida Department of Corrections for year one of a five-year plan to modernize FDC's 40-year-old mainframe system, the Offender Based Information System (OBIS).

The Budget also invests \$2.2 million for FirstNet to improve the connectivity, interoperability, and functionality of officer radios on the Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System.

Correctional Operations

The Freedom First Budget enhances the security of our institutions by providing \$1.1 million to the Florida Department of Corrections to add a correctional officer sergeant to collect security threat group (i.e., gang) intelligence at each main facility and annex.

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

Florida's Crime Databases

The Freedom First Budget invests more than \$7.6 million to maintain a variety of databases that law enforcement use daily to investigate crimes and apprehend criminals. These investments include:

- \$3.5 million to begin the modernization of the Biometric Identification Solution (BIS) database;
- Over \$860,000 for the second year of the Statewide Sexual Assault Tracking System;
- \$2.4 million to complete the transition to the Florida Incident-Based Reporting System (FIBRS); and
- Nearly \$900,000 to complete the Uniform Arrest Affidavit (UAA) project.

Statewide Behavioral Threat Assessment Strategy

The Freedom First Budget provides \$1.3 million and three FTE to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) for year two of the implementation of the Statewide Behavioral Threat Assessment Management (BTAM) strategy in order to better enable law enforcement to identify individuals on a pathway to violence and prevent such individuals from committing targeted acts of violence.

Statewide Prosecution Needs

The Budget includes over \$900,000 and six FTE for additional Assistant Statewide Prosecutor positions in the Office of Statewide Prosecution (OSP) within the Department of Legal Affairs who will work to protect Floridians and address prosecutorial needs relating to organized retail theft and cases stemming from the newly established Gaming Control Commission.

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

Legal Representation of Children

The Freedom First Budget provides over \$4 million and 67.5 FTE to increase Guardian ad Litem (GAL) staff throughout the state. The additional funds will allow the GAL Program to provide representation to all eligible children.

At-Risk Youth Programs and Prevention Services

The Budget includes \$5.8 million for the Youth Challenge Program, a residential program at Camp Blanding that provides 16- to 18-year-olds who withdraw or are removed from school with educational opportunities including high school credit and career and technical education.

The Freedom First Budget also includes \$7.4 million for the Department of Education to contract with Big Brothers Big Sisters and the Florida Alliance of Boys and Girls Club mentoring programs throughout the state.

[STATE EMPLOYEES PAY INCREASE]

The Freedom First Budget provides over \$467 million to increase the pay of state employees:

- \$395 million to provide all state employees a 5.38 percent salary increase.
- \$72.6 million to increase all state employees to \$15 per hour.

[ENVIRONMENT]

Upon taking office, Governor DeSantis called for \$2.5 billion to be invested over four years for the protection of water resources, an increase of \$1 billion over the previous four years. The Freedom First Budget will bring the

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

four-year total to more than \$3 billion, doubling the investment of the previous four years. This includes more than \$1 billion in Fiscal Year 2022-23 for Everglades restoration and the protection of water resources.

Specifically, this includes more than \$500 million for Everglades restoration projects, including:

- \$86.5 million for Restoration Strategies.
- \$202.1 million for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP).
- \$64 million for the EAA Reservoir to continue the momentum of this critical project to reduce harmful discharges and help send more clean water south of the Everglades.
- \$83.3 million is included for the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program.
- \$65 million for phase II of the C-51 Reservoir.
- In addition, \$100 million from the State Fiscal Recovery Fund is included for specific project components designed to achieve the greatest reductions in harmful discharges to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Estuaries as identified in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project Draft Integrated Project Implementation Report and Environmental Impact Statement dated July 2018.

Over \$558 million for targeted water quality improvements to help achieve significant, meaningful, and measurable nutrient reductions in key waterbodies across the state and to continue implementation of the initial recommendations of the Blue-Green Algae Task Force. This includes:

- \$125 million for the wastewater grant program for projects to construct, upgrade, or expand wastewater facilities; to provide advanced wastewater treatment; and to convert from septic to sewer.
- \$50 million to accelerate projects to meet scientific nutrient reduction goals, called Total Maximum Daily Loads, which may include green

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

infrastructure investments or land conservation to protect our water resources.

- \$286 million for targeted local water projects.
- \$68 million for wastewater and stormwater projects in specific areas including: Indian River Lagoon, Springs Coast Watershed, and the Caloosahatchee and Peace River Basins.
- \$20 million for critical infrastructure including wastewater and stormwater projects that address water quality impairments and coral reef restoration in Biscayne Bay.
- \$10 million to continue the Septic Incentive Program, which incentivizes homeowners in Priority Focus Areas to upgrade their septic system to include nitrogen reducing enhancements.

\$75 million to restore Florida's world-renowned springs. This funding may also be used for land acquisition to protect springsheds and is crucial to supporting homeowners and local communities as they work with the state to achieve septic and nutrient reduction requirements.

The Budget supports a \$35 million investment to improve water quality and combat the effects and impacts of harmful algal blooms, including blue-green algae and red tide. The Budget includes the following:

- \$15 million for innovative technologies and short-term solutions to aid in the prevention, cleanup, and mitigation of harmful algal blooms, which is a \$5 million increase over the current year.
- \$10.8 million to increase water quality monitoring, support the Blue-Green Algae Task Force, and maintain and improve the water quality public information portal.
- \$5 million in new funding to assist county governments with their responses to emergency biological debris conditions associated with red tide events that may impact public health, Florida's environment, and fragile ecosystems, including beaches and wildlife.
- \$4.2 million in funding for continued support of research activities conducted by the Center for Red Tide Research and long-term

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

collaborative partnerships among FWC, the University of South Florida College of Marine Science, and Mote Marine Laboratory.

\$50 million for the alternative water supply grant program to help communities plan for and implement vital conservation, reuse, and other alternative water supply projects. DEP will continue to engage local governments, industry, universities, and water management districts to identify and research all viable alternative water supply sources and is working to provide an assessment of funding needs critical to supporting Florida's growing economy.

Protection of our Valuable and Vulnerable Coastlines

Last year, Governor DeSantis championed the passage of the Resilient Florida Grant Program which enhances our efforts to protect our inland waterways, coastlines, shores, and coral reefs, which serve as invaluable natural defenses against sea level rise.

The Fiscal Year 2022-23 Budget invests over \$500 million for resiliency, specifically \$51 million for resiliency planning and coral reef protection and \$450 million (including \$180 million from State Fiscal Recovery Funds) for implementation of statewide resilience projects, including fully funding Florida's first ever 3-year Statewide Flooding Resilience Plan.

Protecting Florida's 1,300 miles of coastline is critical to our growing economy and quality of life, as millions travel from around the world to visit our world-renowned beaches. The Budget includes \$50 million in funding for beach nourishment and inlet management to continue addressing Florida's critically eroded shorelines. In addition, the Freedom First Budget provides \$30 million specifically for state park beach nourishment.

Florida's Prized Properties and Waters

The Fiscal Year 2022-23 Budget includes \$733.3 million to protect our prized properties and waters in Florida. This funding will ensure all

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

Floridians have access to enjoy our pristine natural environment, while protecting these unique natural resources and investing in the management of our state-owned lands.

As land acquisition is vital to both our economic growth and environmental protection, the Freedom First Budget includes over \$468 million for the Florida Forever Program, the state's premier conservation and recreation land acquisition program. This includes:

- \$100 million for the Division of State Lands to acquire land with a focus on protecting our water resources for Floridians and visitors.
- \$300 million from State Fiscal Recovery Funds for the acquisition of lands in fee simple or conservation easements to protect natural and working landscapes.
- \$58 million from State Fiscal Recovery Funds for the Green Heart of the Everglades Land Acquisition and the acquisition of Rattlesnake Key Recreational Park.
- \$10.7 million for the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP), which provides competitive recreational grants to local governments for the acquisition and/or development of land for public outdoor recreation.

Florida's State Parks have won the National Gold Medal a record four times for being the best state park system in the nation. The Budget dedicates a record \$265 million to infrastructure improvements and resource management with the goal of maintaining this high standard, and ensuring all visitors and residents alike have access to these prized properties for generations to come. This includes:

- \$130.5 million to address state park repair and renovation projects;
- \$86.1 million for new development projects at existing state parks to enhance the visitors' experience;
- \$30 million for state park beach projects to address eroded shorelines;

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

- \$11.3 million for resource management within State Parks to remove invasive plants, for prescribed burning, and to restore hydrologic flow of natural resources;
- \$6.7 million specifically for facility repairs and ADA enhancement structures at the Billy Joe Rish Recreation Area.

Protecting Florida's Manatee Population

The Budget includes a record \$30 million for the care and management of manatees. Specific investments include:

- \$20 million to enhance and expand the network of manatee acute care facilities, restore access to springs, provide habitat restoration in manatee concentrated areas, expand manatee rescue and recovery efforts, and implement pilot projects like the supplemental feeding trials that took place this past winter.
- \$5.3 million to expand Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) manatee mortality and response efforts, including 12 new positions.
- \$160,000 for Manatee Management including aerial surveys to study and document aquatic systems where manatee presence is either not well understood or there is a need for documented expansion of their range.
- \$4.7 million to support manatee acute care facilities and research, rescue, and conservation activities.

Defending Florida's Everglades from Invasive Species

Governor DeSantis has prioritized efforts to remove Burmese pythons from the Everglades. Pythons are an invasive species that disrupt the natural food chain balance and have no natural predators, causing them to multiply without impediment and further threaten endangered species. The Fiscal Year 2022-23 Budget includes up to \$3 million for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to remove pythons from the Everglades, an increase of \$2 million over current year.

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

[HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES]

The Freedom First Budget provides support to those who find themselves facing some of life's greatest challenges. The Freedom First Budget provides assistance to individuals who are combating the opioid epidemic and to those utilizing services within the child welfare system. Additionally, Governor DeSantis continues his unwavering commitment to putting Seniors First by including additional community-based services to ensure more Floridians can age in place in their homes. The Freedom First Budget also recognizes the importance of supporting our healthcare workforce, Floridians with disabilities, and Florida's veterans who have faithfully served our nation to ensure they receive the care they deserve.

Cancer

Florida is fortunate to have top quality medical facilities. The Freedom First Budget includes \$100 million in funding to support Florida's National Cancer Institute Program, which is an increase of more than \$37 million over current year funding. This additional funding will continue to enhance Florida's competitiveness in cancer research and care at national and international levels and lead to future advancements that will allow more of those diagnosed with cancer to achieve positive outcomes and live cancer free lives.

Foster Care and Adoption

The Freedom First Budget includes nearly \$361 million to provide services to those served by the child welfare system. This funding will provide operational support, community-based services, foster parent support, and modernization of the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) system. Nearly \$70 million is included to provide mentorship programs and support to encourage responsible and involved fatherhood in Florida.

The Freedom First Budget includes \$24.8 million for an increase of \$200 per month to assist foster parents and relative and nonrelative caregivers

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

with covering the cost of child care. The Budget includes an increase of more than \$15 million for adoption subsidies and adoption benefits for state employees to support adoptions of children from foster care. The Governor recognizes the important role of foster parents and the impact they have on the life of a child in need.

Florida is the only state in the nation with an Early Childhood Court program and the Freedom First Budget includes \$2.1 million in new funding for the Department of Children and Families to support this program. The Early Childhood Court program allows courts to take what is currently known about the appropriate services and best practices for early brain development and make them available to the most vulnerable children.

Opioids

By working with local partners and families, the Freedom First Budget continues to make strides in ensuring that individuals who are affected by the opioid crisis receive necessary services. The Budget includes more than \$95 million to provide evidence based prevention services and support medication assisted treatment and recovery services for individuals who abuse opioids. Additionally, the funding supports drug overdose surveillance and prevention strategies to reduce overdoses.

Behavioral Health

The need for behavioral health services is increasing across the state. The Freedom First Budget provides nearly \$294 million in funding for community based behavioral health services, forensic bed capacity, and operations of the state mental health treatment facilities. Additionally, this funding will provide a comprehensive array of behavioral health treatment services that seek to reduce overdoses, suicides, and unemployment and help break the cycle of hospitalization and homelessness.

Putting Seniors First

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

The Freedom First Budget includes an additional \$21 million in funding to support medical assistance, caregiver support, and assistance with activities of daily living for seniors through the Alzheimer's Disease Initiative and the Community Care for Elderly Program. Funding provided through these programs will allow more than 2,000 seniors to receive services to allow them to continue to reside in their homes.

The Freedom First Budget also provides additional resources for the Office of Public and Professional Guardians to ensure the protection of vulnerable seniors. This funding will provide for more effective monitoring to ensure the compliance of public and professional guardians.

Veterans

The Freedom First Budget invests more than \$55 million to support equipment updates, capital improvements, and medical costs for the State Veterans' Nursing Homes to ensure the provision of quality services for our veterans. The Budget also includes more than \$2 million to assist veterans who transition to civilian life through the provision of training, networking, and mentoring throughout the state.

Persons with Disabilities

The Freedom First Budget includes \$59.6 million in new funding to allow more than 1,000 individuals to be served through the Agency for Persons with Disabilities' waiver program. The Freedom First Budget also provides \$1 million for supported employment to assist approximately 650 people with intellectual disabilities achieve employment or internships.

Healthcare Workforce

As Florida continues to lead, it is vital that we ensure that we are able to recruit and retain our healthcare workforce who care for some of our most vulnerable citizens. The Freedom First Budget includes more than \$1 billion for providers who serve individuals in institutional and community-based

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

settings. Increases are provided to those who serve our elderly population, individuals with disabilities, high risk pregnant women and children, and those providers who perform organ transplants. These providers have continued to answer the call and provide services to some of our most vulnerable residents.

Transparency

The Freedom First Budget includes \$3.9 million in funding to expand the scope of prescription drug information that is available to consumers and provide information on additional prescription drugs not currently available. This funding will also increase public awareness and utilization of Florida's online health care data and price transparency tools.

[TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT]

Florida's economic growth relies on infrastructure and it is abundantly clear that under the leadership of Governor DeSantis, Florida's prudent "open for business" approach has paid huge dividends. Unlike many other states which curtailed commerce and personal freedoms through draconian measures like lockdowns, mask requirements, and vaccine mandates, Florida followed the science and kept its economy open and poised for continued growth.

The wisdom of this approach continues to be seen in Florida's steady decrease in unemployment and the creation of jobs, both of which are enhanced by the ongoing development of world class infrastructure.

Florida employers have added jobs for 24 consecutive months and the state unemployment rate has remained below the national rate for 17 consecutive months. Furthermore, Florida is breaking tourism records with 36 million visitors between January and March of this year, a 14 percent increase over the fourth quarter of 2021 and the third consecutive quarter that Florida has surpassed pre-pandemic levels.

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

Transportation

To continue to build upon Florida's success through investment in infrastructure, the Freedom First Budget provides more than \$11.7 billion for the State Transportation Work Program, including:

- \$4.4 billion for highway construction to include 180 new lane miles;
- \$1.2 billion in resurfacing to include 2,690 lane miles;
- \$135.9 million in seaport infrastructure enhancement;
- \$314.5 million for aviation improvements;
- \$236.6 million for scheduled repairs of 64 bridges and replacement of 16 bridges;
- \$867 million for rail/transit program advancements; and
- \$160.1 million for safety initiatives.

The Freedom First Budget provides funding to assist small county governments by providing:

- \$30 million for the Small County Outreach Program to assist small county governments in repairing or rehabilitating county bridges, paving unpaved roads, addressing road-related drainage improvements, resurfacing or reconstructing county roads, or constructing capacity or safety improvements to county roads.
- \$20 million for the Small County Road Assistance Program to assist small county governments in resurfacing and reconstructing county roads.

Economic Development

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

The Freedom First Budget continues the Governor's goal to enhance Florida's job creation efforts, strengthen community infrastructure, and improve access to workforce training for Floridians. The budget:

- Supports economic development by investing \$50 million in the Job Growth Grant Fund.
- Encourages economic growth in rural communities through a \$30 million investment in the Rural Infrastructure Fund, an increase of \$25 million.
- Invests \$400 million to expand Floridians' access to high speed broadband internet with a focus on rural communities.
- Supports Workforce Housing through a \$363 million investment in affordable housing initiatives, including \$100 million for the Hometown Heroes Program which provides down payment assistance for law enforcement officers, firefighters, educators, EMTs, and other public servants.
- Provides \$150 million for the Consumer-First Workforce Information System project which creates a workforce opportunity portal that integrates with an existing case management system to ensure a seamless point of entry for Floridians looking to improve their employment or education opportunities.

The Governor continues to make hurricane recovery a top priority of his administration. Florida communities continue to recover from the impacts of hurricanes in recent years. The Freedom First Budget:

- Includes \$1.6 billion in emergency response and recovery funding so that communities and the state can respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies, as well as mitigate against future disasters or emergencies.

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

- \$113 million in state match is provided for the state cost share associated with authorized federal funding to eligible local and state recipients for reimbursement of the response and recovery cost, as well as state management costs relating to federally declared disasters.
- \$22 million to continue Florida's response efforts related to coronavirus.
- Provides significant funding for disaster recovery, mitigation, and emergency management, including \$10 million to support Florida's eight Urban Search and Rescue Teams.
- Remembers those impacted by the Surfside Building Collapse through \$1 million for a Champlain Towers South Memorial.

Election Integrity

Florida is known as a national leader in conducting fair and accurate elections. Nevertheless, continued vigilance and oversight is needed to ensure that the integrity of Florida's elections is always maintained and that those who commit election fraud or other election law violations are found and punished. The Freedom First Budget provides resources needed to ensure our future elections are conducted with the utmost integrity and are safe from cyber threats, fraud, and any other election irregularities.

- Provides \$8 million for the Supervisors of Elections to continue cybersecurity initiatives and improvements to their systems.
- Includes \$2 million for security improvements and enhancements to election technology, such as the Florida Voter Registration System, the Online Voter Registration System, and the Campaign Finance System.

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

- \$575,000 is provided for the Department of State to continue the contract with the Electronic Information Center (ERIC) to improve the accuracy of voter registration rolls and increase access to voter registration for all eligible citizens.

Also, Governor DeSantis has further strengthened Florida's election system by signing into law Senate Bill 524 passed during the 2022 legislative session. The legislation:

- Increases the penalty for ballot harvesting from a first-degree misdemeanor to a third-degree felony.
- Requires supervisors of elections to check the voter rolls every year for potentially ineligible voters.
- Requires the Department of State to recommend a plan on how to strengthen ID requirements for voting by mail-in ballot.
- Creates an Office of Election Crimes and Security to investigate allegations of voter fraud, which will have 15 employees at the Department of State, 6 employees within the Department of Legal Affairs, an additional 10 employees at FDLE, and a total budget of \$3.5 million.

Immigration

Florida stands against illegal human trafficking whether it is being carried out by common criminals or by the federal government by prohibiting contracts and cooperation.

The Fiscal Year 2022-23 Budget creates a \$12 million program within the Florida Department of Transportation to facilitate the transport of unauthorized aliens out of Florida.

Military Support

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

Florida is committed to remaining the most military friendly state in the nation through the continued investment in programs and resources for military members and their families.

The Budget provides \$17.1 million for Florida's military presence and families, which funds the State's support of military research and development. This includes:

- \$2 million for the Florida Defense Support Task Force;
- \$1.6 million for the Defense Infrastructure Program; and
- \$13.5 million to support scholarships for children and spouses of deceased or disabled veterans.

The Budget includes \$7.9 million to support our National Guard and emergency response capabilities. This includes:

- \$590,000 for renovations at Camp Blanding Readiness Center;
- \$2.2 million for a new headquarters building for the National Guard Counter Drug Program; and
- \$5.1 million to fully support Florida National Guardsmen seeking higher education degrees.

Florida State Guard

The federal government has not increased the size of Florida's National Guard commiserate with its population growth, leaving Florida with one of the lowest proportions of guardsmen to civilians in the nation.

To ensure Florida has the resources available to respond during times of need, the Freedom First Budget reestablishes the Florida State Guard, a civilian volunteer force, and provides \$10 million for its first year of operation to support 400 recruits who will aid in Florida's emergency preparedness for hurricanes and other disasters.

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

Historical Grants

- \$13.8 million to design and construct an artifact curation facility.
- Secures \$46 million for Cultural and Museum Grants to support projects that further the state's cultural objectives.
- \$30.4 million for African-American Cultural and Historical Grants to support facilities in Florida that highlight the contributions, culture, or history of African-Americans.
- \$13.5 million for Fiscal Year 2022-23 Cultural Facilities Grants which includes 28 projects.

[GENERAL GOVERNMENT]

Governor DeSantis continues to support investments in safeguards to protect Floridians and their taxpayer dollars against harmful cybersecurity threats and fraudulent financial schemes. The commitment to improving the State's critical assets and resources are evident through the continued investment in these key initiatives statewide.

Safeguarding Florida against Cybersecurity Threats

The Budget takes unprecedented action towards safeguarding Florida against harmful cybersecurity attacks through the investment of more than \$334 million in various state agencies and partners statewide for security intelligence, modernization, and resiliency. This includes training for state and local employees, a local cybersecurity grant program, security and risk assessments, and migration of aging systems to secure cloud environments.

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Freedom First Budget Highlights

Protecting Floridians and Taxpayer Funds against Fraudulent Activities

The Budget includes more than \$3.7 million and dedicated workforce teams for anti-fraud analytics, investigations, and outreach education to help protect Floridians and the State against harmful financial fraud schemes, such as health insurance, personal injury protection, and mortgage fraud.

Maintaining and Improving the Florida Facilities Pool

The Budget invests more than \$175 million in the Florida Facilities Pool to ensure safe and efficient working environments for employees and visitors at state owned buildings. The continued investment will address needed building updates throughout the state.