

FRAMEWORK FOR FREEDOM


FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024

Fiscal Year 2023-24 Framework for Freedom Budget

Statewide Overview and Taxes

The Framework for Freedom Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-24 totals \$116.5 billion and continues Governor DeSantis' commitment to Florida's K-12 students, parents and teachers, environmental resources, and law enforcement, all while maintaining healthy reserves, including \$6.8 billion in General Revenue.

Of the total \$116.5 billion, the General Revenue portion is \$46.1 billion. Florida's total reserves are \$15.3 billion, 13.2 percent of the total budget for the fiscal year, leaving ample resources for any unforeseen circumstances.

Taxpayer Savings

The Framework for Freedom Budget provides \$2.7 billion in record tax relief for Florida families, including permanent tax cuts to keep more money in the pockets of Floridians. Florida's per capita state tax collections of \$2,264 is the third lowest among all states. The Framework for Freedom Budget includes the following permanent and temporary tax cuts:

- **\$500 million in toll relief to frequent commuters which began on January 1, 2023** – This discounts tolls by 50 percent in 2023 for frequent drivers utilizing SunPass with more than 35 monthly transactions.
- **A permanent sales tax exemption for baby and toddler necessities for \$158.7 million** – This covers certain baby and toddler necessities such as clothing, shoes, and diapers for children under 5, all baby wipes and cribs and strollers.
- **A permanent sales tax exemption for diapers and incontinence products for \$27.5 million** – The budget exempts adult diapers and incontinence undergarments, pads and liners.
- **A permanent sales tax exemption for oral hygiene products for approximately \$39.8 million** – The exemption covers toothpaste, mouthwash, dental floss, electric and manual toothbrushes and dental picks and irrigators.
- **A 1-year sales tax exemption on gas stoves for \$6.9 million** – Gas stoves are free from federal overreach in Florida. The Framework for Freedom Budget exempts from sales tax the purchase of new stoves that are fueled by combustible gas such as syngas, natural gas, propane, butane, liquefied petroleum gas or other flammable gas.

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- **A 3-month Freedom Summer sales tax holiday to save Florida families more than \$229.9 million** – The holiday covers certain outdoor recreation purchases, such as sunglasses selling for \$100 or less, tents selling for \$200 or less, and kayaks or canoes selling for \$500 or less, as well as tickets for events, museums, the arts, and more. Newly added this year are children’s toys selling at \$75 or less and children’s athletic equipment selling at \$100 or less.
- **Two 14-day Disaster Preparedness sales tax holiday to save Florida families \$143.8 million** – The holiday covers items needed during disasters including generators priced at \$3,000 or less. Newly added this year are an exemption for over-the-counter pet medications selling at \$100 or less and common household consumable items selling at \$30 or less.
- **Two Back-to-School sales tax holidays, one in the fall and one in the spring as students return to school from winter break, to save Florida families over \$160.6 million** – The holidays cover clothing up to \$100, school supplies up to \$50, learning aides and jigsaw puzzles up to \$30, and personal computers and accessories up to \$1,500.
- **A 7-day Skilled Worker Tool sales tax holiday to save Florida workers \$15.4 million** – The holiday covers various hand tools and power tools and accessories used by Florida workers.
- **Extends the current tax exemption on ENERGY STAR appliances for an additional year at \$86.2 million** – The holiday covers appliances such as washing machines, clothes dryers and water heaters selling for \$1,500 or less and refrigerators or combination refrigerators/freezers selling for \$4,500 or less that meet or exceed the energy star standards.
- **A two-year extension for the exemption on natural gas fuel tax for \$1.8 million** – The budget extends the tax exemption set to expire in 2023 for an additional two years providing continued tax relief for natural gas fuel. Natural gas fuel is any liquefied petroleum gas product used in a motor vehicle.
- **A permanent sales tax exemption for firearm safety and storage devices for approximately \$4.5 million** – The exemption covers firearm safes, firearm lockboxes, firearm cases, devices to store a firearm, trigger locks and cable locks.
- **Reduction in business rent tax for approximately \$256 million** – The budget reduces the tax rate from 5.5 percent to 4.5 percent effective December 1, 2023.

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- **A permanent sales tax exemption for private investigative services for approximately \$1.6 million** – The exemption covers private investigation services sold by investigative agencies employing 3 or fewer employees.
- **A permanent sales tax exemption for machinery and equipment used for renewable natural gas for approximately \$0.9 million** – The exemption covers machinery and equipment used in the production, storage, transportation, compression, or blending of renewable natural gas.
- **A permanent sales tax exemption for agricultural fencing for approximately \$0.7 million** – The exemption covers fencing used to contain, confine, or process cattle.
- Various corporate income tax credits are also provided such as residential graywater tax credit, Strong Families tax credit, Brownfields tax credit and human breastmilk fortifier manufacturing equipment tax credit for **\$45 million**.
- Additionally, the budget includes over **\$850 million** in various ad valorem tax cuts, corporate income tax credits and sales tax exemption for building materials to increase affordable housing in the state of Florida.
- The budget makes various adjustments to ad valorem tax and provides tax relief for disabled veterans and their surviving spouses, properties used for education and religious purposes and refunds for damaged properties for **\$47 million**.
- Lastly, the budget distributes **\$55 million** over two years to promote horse racing and breeding and creates a credit against the pari-mutuel tax for federal assessments saving the industry **\$5 million** annually.

Florida Retirement System

The Framework for Freedom Budget increases the employer contribution for employee FRS Investment accounts by an additional two percent of the member's salary. When combined with the three percent increase provided in Fiscal Year 2022-23, the five percent increase provides members with more financial security upon retirement.

The budget also modifies the Deferred Retirement Optional Program (DROP) by allowing FRS members of the pension plan to enter the program at any time after having reached their normal retirement age for an eight-year maximum participation period and increasing the interest earned on pension payments accumulated during the program participation to four percent. In addition, the budget restores the pre-2011 normal retirement age and years of service for members of the special risk class.

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Pension Unfunded Liability – Based on the reduction of the investment return assumption from 6.8 percent to 6.7 percent by the FRS Actuarial Assumptions Estimating Conference on October 20, 2022, the unfunded actuarial liability (UAL) of the Florida Retirement System (FRS) Defined Benefit Program, known as the state’s pension program, amounted to \$38.3 billion on June 30, 2022. Based on an actuarial liability of \$217.4 billion and an actuarial value of assets of \$179.2 billion, the program is 82.4 percent funded as of June 30, 2022.

The Framework for Freedom Budget fully funds the required employer contributions to ensure the long-term solvency of retirement benefits our state employees, particularly our law enforcement officers and teachers, rely on.

Florida Reserves

- \$6.8 billion in unallocated General Revenue
- \$4.1 billion in the Budget Stabilization Fund
- \$1.7 billion in unallocated Trust Funds
- \$500 million in the Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund
- \$2.2 billion in the Reinsurance Assistance and the Florida Optional Reinsurance Assistance Programs
- **\$15.3 billion in Total Reserves**

In addition, the Framework for Freedom Budget establishes the Debt Reduction Program and pledges \$200 million, along with additional available funds, to immediately pay down state debt, resulting in approximately \$400 million in additional debt paid off prior to maturity.

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Education

Under the Governor's leadership, Florida is the #1 Education State. Florida is the #1 ranked state in education freedom and has retained the title of #1 higher education system in the nation. Governor DeSantis, through the Framework for Freedom Budget, is building upon Florida's past successes, by protecting parents' fundamental rights, providing high-quality educational choices for all students regardless of circumstance, reinvigorating higher education, supporting and elevating the teaching profession, and ensuring Florida's schools and teachers have the tools they need to prepare Florida's students for their future endeavors.

Several important investments include:

- \$1.1 billion, an increase of over \$250 million, in funding to provide salary increases for new and veteran teachers and other eligible instructional personnel.
- \$1.6 billion in funding for early child education, including more than \$427 million for Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK).
- Historic \$26.8 billion in funding, of which \$14.5 billion is record state funding for the K-12 public school system.
 - This covers the costs associated with the current projected enrollment of almost 3.1 million students, including over 46,000 new students projected to participate in the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program.
- \$1.7 billion in state operating funding for the Florida College System.
- \$3.7 billion in state operating funding for the State University System.
- \$125 million in total funding to reward quality nursing education programs to address nursing shortages.
- \$100 million for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified faculty at state universities.
- \$25 million for the restructuring of the New College of Florida.

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

The budget provides a total of more than \$427 million for Florida's VPK program, a high quality, free education initiative, which serves approximately 140,000 four- and five-year-olds. VPK prepares each child for kindergarten by building a strong foundation for school and focusing on early literacy skills.

School Readiness

The budget maintains funding provided in the current Fiscal Year that allowed additional children to be served in the School Readiness program, and rewarded School Readiness providers who participate in program assessments and implement quality improvement strategies.

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The following initiatives that support early learning are also maintained at current year funding:

- \$10 million for the T.E.A.C.H. program to provide early childhood teacher scholarships;
- \$4.5 million for the Help Me Grow program to connect children and families with information, resources and developmental services to enhance health, behavior and learning in the development of young children;
- \$3 million in teacher training for statewide professional development to improve childcare instructor quality; and
- \$3.9 million for the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) to deliver high-quality School Readiness curriculum directly to parents so they may strengthen the cognitive and early literacy skills of at-risk children.

K-12 Public Education

Under Governor DeSantis' leadership, Florida is #1 in Education Freedom and believes students should not be limited in educational options. The Framework for Freedom Budget provides an historic investment in our K-12 education system, including a historic school choice expansion. House Bill 1 expands the Family Empowerment Scholarship and Florida Tax Credit Scholarship by creating educational savings accounts for all families.

The budget includes the highest per student investment of \$8,648 in the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), which is an increase of \$405 over Fiscal Year 2022-23. Governor DeSantis is once again acknowledging Florida's hard-working educators by providing funding flexibility for school districts to provide any eligible teacher and other instructional personnel with a salary increase.

The budget appropriates \$26.8 billion in total funding for the FEFP, which includes the following increases:

- Increase of \$552 in the Base Student Allocation (BSA);
- Increase of \$20 million, for a total of \$160 million for the mental health allocation;
- Increase of over \$250 million, for a total of \$1.1 billion for salary increases. Each Florida school district will be provided the flexibility to utilize their allocation of the increase to provide salary increases to eligible teachers and instructional personnel in the manner that best fits the school district's needs;
- Increase of \$40 million, for a total of \$250 million for safe school initiatives; and
- Increase of nearly \$21 million, for a total of \$536 million for student transportation.

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School Safety

The Framework for Freedom 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:
 - \$250 million, an increase of \$40 million, for the safe schools component of the FEFP;
 - \$160 million, an increase of \$20 million, for the mental health allocation FEFP;
 - \$5.5 million is maintained for the Mental Health Awareness and Assistance Training;
 - \$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;
 - \$845,000 is maintained for the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool;
 - \$3 million is maintained to continue providing a centralized integrated data repository and data analytics resources to improve access to timely, complete and accurate information;
 - \$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;
 - \$4 million is for fiscally constrained counties to participate in the Florida Safe Schools Canine Program established in House Bill 543. Funding may be used for the purchase and training of a firearm detection canine;
 - \$15 million is appropriated in House Bill 543 for the Office of Safe Schools to implement safe school technology systems;
 - \$42 million is appropriated in House Bill 543 for public school hardening grants; and
 - \$5.8 million is appropriated in House Bill 1537 for the procurement of a statewide transparency tool to support the implementation of instructional and library materials.

Combatting Anti-Semitism

To address the rise of safety concerns for Florida's Jewish communities, the Framework for Freedom Budget includes the following:

- \$5 million in funding, an increase of \$1 million, to enhance safety measures, hire school safety officers, upgrade safety equipment, facilities and technology, and increase security services at Florida Jewish Day Schools. This funding will be available to all eligible Florida Jewish Day Schools to ensure students can learn in a safe environment;
- \$600,000 in funding is maintained for the Florida Holocaust Museum;
- \$100,000 in funding is maintained for the Florida Holocaust Task Force;

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- \$66,501 in funding is maintained for the Holocaust Memorial Miami Beach;
- \$2.1 million in funding is provided for the development and delivery of Holocaust education curriculum to students in grades 5 through 12;
- \$995,925 in funding is provided for the Hate Ends Now cattle car exhibit, which is an immersive, 360 degree exhibit within a replica WWII cattle car used to transport Jewish and other targeted groups to concentration and extermination camps;
- \$2.5 million in funding for security and educational enhancements at the Florida Holocaust Museum.
- \$1 million in funding for the Jewish Community Alliance to upgrade safety and security measures at their facility; and
- \$2.5 million in funding for the Mobile Museums of Tolerance to further combat anti-Semitism.

Literacy Initiatives

The budget provides funding for the following Reading literacy initiatives:

- \$16 million in funding is provided for the Science of Reading Literacy and Tutoring Program;
- \$51 million is provided to implement the Early Literacy through grade 12 Micro-credential and reading endorsement incentives;
- \$5 million in funding is maintained for the Regional Literacy Teams initiative;
- \$4 million in funding is maintained for the New Worlds Reading Scholarship Program; and
- \$1 million is maintained for online literacy professional development administered through Just Read, Florida!

K-12 Civics Engagement

\$1.5 million is provided to support and continue expanding the Florida Civics and Debate Initiative, which creates and enhances existing speech and debate programs with a focus on civic education. The Florida Civics and Debate Initiative is currently active in 52 Florida school districts, with 240 participating schools.

In addition, the Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$3.5 million in funding to provide support to school districts for the improvement of civic literacy for Florida's students using regional civics literacy captains and coaches.

Promoting Computer Science

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

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Teacher Recruitment

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$10 million in funding to implement a new first come, first served recruitment bonus for retired military veterans and retired first responders who commit to joining the teaching profession. These heroes are required to teach a minimum of two years. Individuals teaching in a critical shortage area may receive an additional bonus.

The program will:

- Provide a bonus of \$4,000 for 2,000 military veterans and retired first responders.
- Provide an additional \$1,000 for 1,000 individuals teaching in critical shortage areas.
- Waive the initial certification and exam fees for first responders, which is a current benefit that military veterans and their spouses already receive.

The budget includes \$4 million to establish the Teacher Apprenticeship Program and Mentor Bonus. The program will provide individuals who have their associate degree the ability to participate in a two-year, paid and registered apprenticeship program. The program will provide bonuses for 2,000 mentor teachers to receive \$2,000 upon completion of year one and \$2,000 upon completion of year two of the program.

Higher Education

For the 7th straight year, Florida has been ranked the #1 system for higher education in the nation. U.S. News and World Report's 2022-2023 Best Colleges rankings placed the University of Florida and Florida State University among the top 20 public universities in the country. The Governor has taken action to ensure Florida continues to have a great higher education system by enacting accountability, adding transparency, aligning general education courses, and restricting DEI on our campuses.

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes state operating funding for Florida's higher education system:

- \$1.7 billion for Florida's state colleges; and
- \$3.7 billion for Florida's state universities.

The budget also provides an increase of \$3.6 million for a total of \$24.5 million for the Florida Postsecondary Academic Library Network that provides essential library services to Florida College System and State University System institutions. Of the total, \$11.1 million is provided to Florida colleges and \$13.5 million to Florida universities to provide students with e-resources, technical support, distance learning, and more.

The budget invests \$35 million in state funding to continue the Open Door Grant Program, including \$15 million for School District Workforce Education Institutions and \$20 million for Florida College System institutions. The program is designed to create a

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demand-driven supply of credentialed workers for high-demand occupations and expand the affordability of workforce training and credentialing.

The budget provides \$8.5 million for Alzheimer's and Dementia research at the state universities.

The Framework for Freedom Budget maintains \$6 million in total funding for two programs to support Law Enforcement Officers.

- \$5 million for the Law Enforcement Academy Scholarship Program to cover the cost of law enforcement academies for prospective officers.
- \$1 million for the Out-of-State Law Enforcement Equivalency Reimbursement initiative to cover the cost of the State Officer Certification Exam fee and any necessary equivalency training program for law enforcement officers who relocate to Florida.

The budget provides \$3.5 million to establish the Dual Enrollment Teacher Scholarship Program to support public school teachers in obtaining a master's degree in their area of certification to allow them to teach dual enrollment courses on their public high school campuses, and increase access to college level courses to students at these schools.

Bright Futures

The Framework for Freedom Budget fully funds the projected student enrollment for the Bright Futures Scholarship Program at \$591 million.

Holding the Line on Tuition

The Framework for Freedom Budget does not include any tuition or fee increases for Florida's colleges and universities. Our students and families should not face any additional financial burdens as they are completing their education.

Performance Funding

The Framework for Freedom Budget increases the following performance funding at career technical centers, state colleges, and state universities:

- \$8.5 million, an increase of \$2 million, for students earning industry certifications in high-skill, high-demand areas at career technical centers;
- \$20 million, an increase of \$6 million, for students earning industry certifications in high-skill, high-demand areas at Florida colleges;
- \$30 million in performance funding for state colleges through the 2+2 Student Success Incentive Fund and the Work Florida Student Success Incentive Fund;
- \$645 million in performance funding for state universities, an increase of \$85 million; and
- \$100 million for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified faculty.

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Workforce Initiatives

The Governor has championed Florida becoming the #1 state in the nation for workforce education by 2030. To make this goal a reality, the Governor has committed more than \$6 billion to workforce education since 2019, which has achieved the following:

- Postsecondary enrollment has increased with more than 380,000 students currently enrolled and a record 800,000 students enrolled in high school Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.
- Florida's education system became the #1 in the world for entrepreneurship education and training, with more than 20,000 students earning an industry certification in Entrepreneurship and Small Business (ESB), mostly since 2020.

To continue elevating Florida's workforce program, the Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$635 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 \$20 million, an increase of \$5 million, to develop the Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program 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 in Florida's nursing workforce by maintaining \$125 million to support two nursing education initiatives:

- \$100 million for the Prepping Institutions, Programs, Employers and Learners through Incentive for Nursing Education (PIPELINE) to reward excellence in nursing education programs.
- \$25 million for the Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) fund to incentivize collaboration between nursing education programs and healthcare partners.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The Framework for Freedom Budget provides approximately \$142 million for Florida's Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

- \$17 million in operating funds for Bethune-Cookman University.
- \$7.5 million in operating funds for Florida Memorial University.
- \$7.5 million in operating funds for Edward Waters College.
- \$110 million in operating funds for Florida A&M University.

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Education Infrastructure

The Framework for Freedom Budget provides \$1.2 billion in funding for the following education capital outlay initiatives:

- **School Safety Grants**
 - \$42 million is appropriated in House Bill 543 for school safety grants provided to school districts to assist with costs associated with improving the physical security of K-12 school buildings.
- **Special Facility Construction**
 - \$89 million for Special Facility Construction projects for Glades, Gadsden, and Putnam counties.
- **K-12 Construction**
 - \$34 million for public school construction needs.
- **Higher Education Construction**
 - \$218 million for Florida College System remodeling and renovation construction needs.
 - \$616 million for State University System remodeling and renovation construction needs.
 - \$15 million for vocational and technical facilities construction needs.
- **Maintenance**
 - \$213 million for public charter school maintenance;
 - \$10 million for lab school maintenance;
 - \$595,548 for Division of Blind Services maintenance; and
 - \$4.5 million for the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind maintenance.

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Environment

Florida natural resources are the foundation of Florida's communities, economy, and way of life, and the protection of Florida's environment remains a key focus of Governor DeSantis. With record investments over the past four years, Florida has ushered in a new area of stewardship for Florida's natural resources, including the Everglades. The Framework for Freedom Budget continues this historic momentum, with significant investments made for Fiscal Year 2023-24. As part of more than \$7.2 billion in funding to protect our environment, agriculture and natural resources, the budget includes over \$3.8 billion specifically for the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Continued Improvements for Water Quality, Quantity and Supply

In Executive Order 19-12, among other major environmental reforms, Governor DeSantis called for \$2.5 billion to be invested over four years for the protection of water resources, an increase of \$1 billion over the previous four years. The Governor surpassed that goal by securing over \$3.3 billion. Governor DeSantis builds on this historic investment with Executive Order 23-06, calling for \$3.5 billion over the next four years for Everglades restoration and protection of our water resources, including water quality and water supply. The Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget initiates this investment, by dedicating more than \$1.6 billion.

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes more than \$694 million for Everglades restoration projects, including:

- \$58 million for Restoration Strategies.
- \$356.5 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.
- \$50 million 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 August 2020.
- \$70 million for the C-51 Reservoir.
- \$96.1 million is included for the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program.

The Framework for Freedom Budget also includes more than \$796 million for targeted water quality improvements to achieve significant, meaningful and measurable nutrient reductions in key waterbodies across the state and to implement the recommendations of the Blue-Green Algae Task Force. This includes:

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- \$200 million for the expanded Water Quality Improvement Grant Program for projects to construct, upgrade or expand wastewater facilities, including septic to sewer conversions, stormwater management projects, and agricultural nutrient reduction projects.
- \$100 million for the new Indian River Lagoon (IRL) Protection Program for priority projects to improve water quality in the IRL, as called for in Executive Order 23-06.
- \$40 million to accelerate projects to meet scientific nutrient reduction goals, called Total Maximum Daily Loads, which may include green infrastructure investments or land conservation to protect our water resources.
- \$398.3 million for local water quality and supply projects.
- \$20 million for critical infrastructure including wastewater and stormwater projects that address water quality impairments and coral reef restoration in Biscayne Bay.
- \$25 million for water quality Improvements in the Caloosahatchee watershed.
- \$13 million for additional water quality improvements, including Lake Apopka, wetlands restoration and protection and areas within the Northwest and St. Johns River Water Management Districts.

On top of the investment in targeted water quality improvements, the Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$50 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 Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$85 million for the continued stabilization, water treatment, and closure of Piney Point.

The Framework for Freedom Budget invests more than \$64 million to improve water quality and combat the effects and impacts of harmful algal blooms, including blue-green algae and red tide. The Framework for Freedom Budget includes the following:

- \$12.5 million for innovative technologies and short-term solutions to aid in the prevention, cleanup and mitigation of harmful algal blooms and pharmaceuticals in wastewater.
- \$12.8 million to increase water quality monitoring, support the Blue-Green Algae Task Force, and to maintain and improve the water quality public information portal.
- \$20 million for harmful algal blooms mitigation to implement water quality treatment technologies to combat harmful algal blooms in Lake Okeechobee.
- \$10 million to assist county governments with their responses to emergency conditions associated with harmful algal blooms and red tide events that may

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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.
- \$5 million in funding through the Division of Emergency Management for Sargassum clean up grants to local governments.

\$60 million is provided 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.

Further Protection of our Valuable and Vulnerable Coastlines

In Fiscal Year 2021-22, 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 Framework for Freedom Budget invests over \$356 million for resiliency, including \$300 million for implementation of statewide resilience projects and \$56 million for resiliency planning and coral reef protection.

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 Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$50 million in beach nourishment funding to continue addressing Florida's critically eroded shorelines. In addition, \$106 million for Hurricanes Ian and Nicole beach erosion recovery projects to fully fund DEP's *Hurricanes Ian and Nicole Recovery Plan for Florida's Beach and Dune Systems*.

Florida's Coral Reef Restoration and Recovery Initiative

Included within \$21.7 million for coral reef protection is \$10.2 million to implement Florida's Coral Reef Restoration and Recovery Initiative, established in Executive Order 23-06, to restore 25 percent of Florida's Coral Reef by 2050. Through facilitating an unprecedented, evidence-based propagation and outplanting program conducted by the state and its partners, Florida's Coral Reef will be restocked with hardy populations of native corals and other keystone species to re-establish and strengthen natural reproduction, dispersal, and recruitment patterns. Florida's Coral Reef Restoration and Recovery Initiative will significantly enhance flood protection in Southeast Florida and strengthen coastal economies.

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Apalachicola Bay Oyster Restoration

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$17 million to support the ongoing oyster restoration operation in Apalachicola Bay. This investment will double the supported acreage from 1,000 to 2,000 acres of durable oyster habitat.

Investing in Clean Lands and Air

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$211 million for the cleanup of contaminated sites with a focus on promoting redevelopment of these areas once cleanup has been completed. Working with federal and local partners, cleanup and redevelopment of these sites will ensure Florida's new businesses and growing communities can safely develop and our economy can continue to grow. Specific investments include:

- \$195 million for Petroleum Tanks Cleanup;
- \$10 million for Dry Cleaning Solvent Contaminated Site Cleanup;
- \$6 million for Hazardous Waste Contaminated Site Cleanup.

A Commitment to Florida's Prized Properties and Waterways

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes more than \$1 billion to protect our prized properties and waterways in Florida. This funding will ensure all Floridians have access to enjoy our pristine natural environment, while protecting these unique natural resources and investing in the management of our state-owned lands.

As land acquisition is vital to both our economic growth and environmental protection, the Framework for Freedom Budget includes more than \$976 million for conservation and recreation land acquisition. This includes:

- \$100 million for the Florida Forever Program, the state's premier conservation and recreation land acquisition program, for the Division of State Lands to acquire land with a focus on protecting our water resources for Floridians and visitors, including lands within the Florida Wildlife Corridor.
- \$850 million for the lands within the Florida Wildlife Corridor, including the Caloosahatchee Big Cypress land acquisition project and lands within the Ocala to Osceola Wildlife Corridor.
- \$15 million for the Florida Communities Trust component of Florida Forever, which provides funding to local governments and eligible non-profit environmental organizations for the acquisition of community-based parks, open space and greenways that further outdoor recreation and natural resource protection needs.
- \$11.2 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.

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Florida's State Parks have won the National Gold Medal a record four times for having the best state park system in the nation. The Framework for Freedom Budget dedicates \$37 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.

Defending Florida's Everglades from Invasive Species

Governor DeSantis has prioritized efforts to remove the invasive Burmese python from the Everglades. The Framework for Freedom Budget includes up to \$3.4 million for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to remove pythons from the Everglades.

Investing in Florida's Agriculture and Citrus Industry

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes more than \$2.8 billion for Florida's agricultural industry. In order to preserve Florida's iconic citrus industry, the budget invests \$52.4 million for citrus research and the Citrus Health Response Program. This includes \$8 million for research and additional advertising by the Department of Citrus including new varieties research and to help increase the production of trees and advance technologies that produce a resistance to citrus greening.

Combatting Wildfires

Also, recognizing the importance of effectively combatting wildfires, the budget includes \$11.5 million for wildfire suppression equipment and \$4.9 million for road and bridge maintenance to allow for better access for land management and wildfire suppression activities.

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Transportation and Economic Development

Under the leadership of Governor DeSantis, Florida has become the state where, more than anywhere else in this nation, people and businesses want to come to live their lives and enjoy unparalleled economic prosperity. Florida's position as a roaring economic engine and job creator is proven by the following facts:

- In 2022, Florida experienced the largest percentage increase in net population migration, ranking as the fastest growing state in the nation.
- Florida's unemployment rate in April 2023 was 2.6 percent, near the historic all-time low for our state and 0.8 percent less than the national unemployment rate of 3.4 percent. Florida's statewide unemployment rate has been lower than the national rate for 30 consecutive months, and as of April 2023 was the lowest among the top 10 largest states in the nation.
- Florida's private sector employment increased by 336,200 jobs from April 2022 to April 2023, a growth rate of 4.1 percent and higher than the national growth rate of 2.7 percent.
- As of April 2023, Florida employers have added jobs for 35 of the last 36 months, and Florida's private sector year-over-year job growth rate has exceeded the nation's for 25 consecutive months.
- Florida's labor force grew by 2.3 percent over the year April 2022 to April 2023, higher than the national growth rate of 1.7 percent.
- As of April 2023, there were almost half a million (464,000+) job opportunities for Floridians posted online.

Moving Florida Forward Initiative to Relieve Traffic Congestion

The Framework for Freedom Budget invests \$4 billion for a bold new initiative to address the challenge of congestion on Florida's highways and roads that is the inevitable result of our state's historic growth. The *Moving Florida Forward Initiative* will accelerate the development and completion of transportation projects to provide additional highway and road capacity to meet the needs of Florida's ever-growing economy and population.

Transportation Infrastructure and Safety

Florida is currently home to over 22 million people and welcomes millions of visitors each year. As a high-growth state, being able to move an increasing number of people and goods from place to place quickly and effectively depends on a continuing commitment to developing and maintaining a world class transportation infrastructure.

In addition to the \$4 billion *Moving Florida Forward Initiative*, the Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$14.8 billion for the Florida Department of Transportation. This investment will provide for the retention and creation of more than 254,000 jobs.

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Every dollar invested in transportation is estimated to result in a return of up to \$4 in user and economic benefits to Florida's residents and businesses.

Transportation Work Program

Within the total amount provided to the Department of Transportation, the Framework for Freedom Budget provides \$13.9 billion for the State Transportation Work Program, Florida's ongoing five-year plan for the implementation and completion of transportation infrastructure projects. These projects include construction and maintenance of Florida's roads, bridges, rails, seaports and other public transportation systems that grow the state's economy and improve the quality of life for our citizens. This year's investment in the Work Program includes:

- \$5.5 billion for highway construction to include 118 new lane miles.
- \$1.6 billion to resurface 2,632 lane miles.
- \$149.3 million in seaport infrastructure improvements to ensure Florida's ports continue to have capacity while the rest of the nation struggles from supply chain backups at seaports.
- \$404.3 million for aviation improvements.
- \$726.6 million in scheduled repairs for 65 bridges and replacement of 19 bridges.
- \$791.3 million investment in rail and transit projects.
- \$250.9 million for safety initiatives.
- \$156.3 million for community trail projects.

Keeping Florida Roads Safe

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes:

- \$6.8 million for the purchase of three Florida Highway Patrol aircraft to enhance the support of patrol and investigative operations with local and federal partners.
- \$1.3 million for additional trooper equipment including 1,982 portable, handheld ballistic shields for every sworn member of the Florida Highway Patrol, so that they are better prepared to respond to any situation.

Transport of Unauthorized Aliens

By signing into law Senate Bill 1718, Governor DeSantis secured \$12 million to continue implementation of the Governor's initiative to protect Floridians against the harm resulting from illegal immigration by facilitating the transport of unauthorized aliens.

Disaster Recovery/Emergency Management

One of the key elements underpinning Florida's economic success has been its ongoing ability to plan for, respond to, and recover from significant disasters. In 2022, Governor DeSantis, the Division of Emergency Management, other state, and local agencies and first responders, and Floridians from all walks of life rose to the significant challenges imposed by disasters occurring within our state, most notably Hurricanes Ian and

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Nicole. The Framework for Freedom Budget provides significant funding for disaster recovery, mitigation, and emergency management, including:

Open Federally Declared Disasters – Funding to Communities and State Operations

- \$2.3 billion is provided in federal and state funding is provided 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.
 - \$472.5 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.
- \$350 million for the Hurricane Recovery Grant Program which provides funding to counties impacted by Hurricanes Ian and Nicole.

Community Development Block Grant

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$362.6 million in federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds directed toward local hurricane recovery and hardening efforts throughout the state. These funds include several CDBG programs, including the CDBG Disaster Recovery Program for all named hurricanes since 2017 and the CDBG Mitigation Program.

Ensuring Housing Availability and Affordability for Florida’s Families

By signing into law Senate Bill 102, Governor DeSantis secured a record amount of \$711 million for affordable housing in Florida and the state’s Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Funds:

- \$259 million for the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) program.
- \$252 million for the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program.
- \$100 million for the second year of the Hometown Heroes Housing program, which makes homeownership affordable for more hard-working Floridians, including our eligible frontline community workers such as law enforcement officers, firefighters, educators, healthcare professionals, childcare employees, and active military or veterans.
- \$100 million to implement a competitive loan program to alleviate inflation-related cost increases for Florida Housing Finance Corporation-approved multifamily projects that have not yet commenced construction.

Economic Recovery and Development

As Florida’s pro-freedom policies result in economic growth, it is more important than ever to maintain our state’s economic momentum through targeted investments in programs that support the creation of good jobs for Floridians and promote key Florida

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industries like tourism. The Framework for Freedom Budget provides substantial funding for such initiatives, including:

- \$75 million for the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund, which supports additional economic growth in Florida by providing local areas with funding for proposed public infrastructure and workforce training projects.
- \$80 million to continue the vital state marketing and promotion efforts of VISIT FLORIDA, the state's official tourism marketing corporation and a source of travel planning for visitors across the globe. In 2022, Florida enjoyed record tourism by welcoming 137.6 million visitors to the state, and in the first quarter (January-March) of 2023 established a new quarterly record of 37.9 visitors.
- \$170.9 million for the second phase of the State Small Business Credit Initiative, providing Florida's small businesses with essential access to additional growth and support funding.

Rural Development

Among its many economic advantages, Florida's rural areas represent a tremendous opportunity to establish a model for growth and prosperity. One of the key elements to this approach is a focus on developing modern infrastructure in rural areas, including a strong commitment to providing the infrastructure needed to make broadband internet service widely available in Florida's rural communities. The Framework for Freedom Budget continues the state's ongoing commitment to developing economic growth opportunities in rural areas, including:

- \$25 million for the Rural Infrastructure Fund, to support local rural infrastructure projects such as roads, storm and wastewater systems, and telecommunications facilities.
- \$100 million to support broadband initiatives to expand high-speed internet deployment and access to Florida communities.
- \$13 million for the Digital Capacity Grant Program, providing resources to implement the Digital Adoption and Use Plan to achieve statewide digital literacy.

Assistance to Households

To support qualifying Floridians who face the headwinds of increasing household expenses, the Framework for Freedom Budget provides funding for the following programs:

- \$18.4 million for additional federal funding under the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). In partnership with local agencies, LIHEAP assists low-income households in meeting the costs of their home heating and cooling needs.
- \$37.5 million for additional federal funding under the Low-Income Water Assistance Program (LIWAP). Modeled after LIHEAP, LIWAP assists low-income households in meeting the costs of their home water and wastewater needs.

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- \$23.4 million for additional federal funding under the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). WAP provides resources to install energy conservation measures in the homes of low-income people, focusing on homes occupied by the elderly, persons with disabilities, and children.

Ensuring Fair, Free, and Safe Elections

Florida is known as a national leader in conducting fair and accurate elections, which was demonstrated once again in 2022. Nevertheless, continued vigilance and oversight are needed to ensure that the integrity of Florida elections is always maintained, and that those who commit election fraud or other election law violations are held accountable. The Framework for Freedom 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.

- The Framework for Freedom Budget includes a total of \$14.8 million for election oversight activities within the Department of State, with a focus on election integrity and security. This includes:
 - An additional \$1 million and one additional position for the Office of Election Crimes and Security, responsible for receiving notices and investigating instances of potential election fraud and irregularities, and where warranted referring cases to the appropriate authorities for prosecution.
 - \$962,969 for live call center services supporting the Statewide Voter Fraud and Assistance Hotline.
 - \$106,650 for cybersecurity awareness training for Supervisors of Elections.
 - \$100,000 for an Elections Signature Verification Training Program.

Supporting Florida Arts and Culture

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes funding for Florida's arts and culture communities:

- \$32.4 million for Cultural and Museum Grants to support projects that further the state's cultural objectives.
- \$525,000 to support the Florida Main Street Program. This program encourages economic development in Florida's historic commercial districts. There are currently 50 designated Main Street communities throughout the state.

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Health and Human Services

The Framework for Freedom budget illustrates Governor DeSantis' focus on providing services to meet the behavioral health needs of Floridians, improving the health and choices for families and children, and meeting the needs of the state's seniors and veterans who have faithfully served our nation. The budget includes funding to support motherhood and fatherhood initiatives, as strong parents are crucial to ensuring that our children thrive. The budget also continues to position Florida as a leader in the fight to cure cancer and respond to the opioid crisis.

Cancer Research

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes more than \$190 million in funding for cancer research and care, including \$20 million to establish the Florida Cancer Innovation Fund to support groundbreaking cancer research. Funding will provide grants to support emerging research, trends and promising practices that can be replicated and expanded upon in Florida. The budget includes \$128 million for the Casey DeSantis Cancer Research Program, an increase of \$28 million over the prior fiscal year.

Support for Women and Children

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes increased funding of \$290 million to support the care of pregnant and postpartum women and children. This funding will improve maternal health outcomes for women at high risk for maternal morbidity, expanding a pilot program for pregnant women into 20 Florida counties. Funds will improve access to behavioral health services for children, support quality improvement initiatives for children birth to 36 months who have a developmental delay and expand school health and dental services. This funding also includes \$3.8 million to support premiums for families who receive services through the Florida KidCare Program and were impacted by Hurricane Ian.

An additional \$30 million was included for Fiscal Year 2023-24 in the Heartbeat Protection Act (Chapter 2023-21, Laws of Florida), signed by Governor DeSantis on April 13, 2023, which will support life and family in the State of Florida. Additional resources available for mothers and families will include parenting support services, nonmedical materials like cribs, car seats, clothing, diapers and formula, counseling and mentoring, education materials, and classes on pregnancy, parenting, adoption, life skills and employment readiness.

Support for Care for Infants and Children

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes an additional \$76 million to increase hospital rates for hospitals that care for acutely ill newborns and pediatric patients. Increased funding of \$54 million is also included for stand-alone children's hospitals

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serving Medicaid patients as well as \$76 million to increase the rates provided to pediatric physicians.

Behavioral Health

The Framework for Freedom Budget provides more than \$625 million in funding to support a comprehensive array of behavioral health services. Funding will provide additional support for mental health treatment facilities, competency restoration services, and will enhance the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline services.

Of the total \$625 million, nearly \$78 million is included to sustain and expand the bed capacity at state-operated mental health treatment facilities. This will expand the number of patients that can be served, helping to reduce the waitlist for those that require these critical mental health care services.

The budget also provides \$31 million to support expanded access to central receiving systems that provide crisis intervention and assessment and help to connect those with behavioral health challenges to the services that they critically need.

Opioid Crisis

Florida continues to provide funding for individuals who are struggling with opioid use disorders through services including the Core Network. The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$385 million to increase access to treatment, recovery support and continues research and surveillance activities that seek to reduce overdoses, unemployment and the incidence of hospitalization and homelessness.

This funding includes more than \$187 million from the nationwide Opioid Settlement Agreement to establish the Office of Opioid Recovery to oversee these funds, establish an accredited Graduate Medical Education program to increase the number of psychiatric residents and for other initiatives that support education, treatment, and prevention for individuals with substance use disorders.

Child Welfare

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes more than \$100 million to support those served by the child welfare system. Funding will support foster parents and caregivers, community-based services, local prevention grants, and additional family navigators to connect high risk families and children to resources and supports through collaboration with front line child protective investigators. Additionally, funding is provided to continue the modernization of the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) system. The budget also provides funding and positions to transition child protective investigations currently conducted by certain sheriff's offices to the Department of Children and Families.

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The Framework for Freedom Budget also includes \$15 million for adoption subsidies to provide continued support to those who adopt children from the child welfare system.

Homelessness

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$22 million to support individuals who are in need of housing assistance and are at risk of becoming homeless. Funding will support emergency shelter, rental assistance, and housing relocation and stabilization services in addition to case management services.

Human Trafficking

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes an additional \$1.5 million to provide services for victims of human trafficking. Services include individualized clinical treatment and behavioral supports such as cognitive behavioral treatment.

Putting Seniors First

The Framework for Freedom Budget invests an additional \$9 million to expand services provided by the 17 Memory Disorder Clinics and the Brain Bus to enhance diagnosis and prevention strategies for those impacted by Alzheimer's disease and other related dementia. An increase of \$4 million is provided to serve additional seniors as part of the Alzheimer's Disease Initiative.

Additionally, \$5 million is provided to increase services through the Community Care for the Elderly Program and the Home Care for the Elderly Program. Funding will allow more seniors to receive services such as case management, home delivered meals, caregiver support, and home modifications allowing them to continue to live in their homes.

The Framework for Freedom Budget invests more than \$1 million in funding for the Florida Alzheimer's Center of Excellence (FACE). The FACE program supports caregivers and individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias in the community using evidence-based practices and a no wrong door approach. The FACE initiative focuses on equipping communities and the medical system in providing early diagnoses and treatment in addition to quality care management that supports linkage to community services and access to programs for support.

The Framework for Freedom Budget invests more than \$400,000 in funding for Hope Navigators to connect seniors and caregivers to services and resources to ensure an enhanced quality of life. These Navigators will assist seniors to overcome barriers to living independently and promote quality care while aging in their home or place of their choosing.

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Persons with Disabilities

The Framework for Freedom Budget provides more than \$79.6 million in funding to allow additional individuals with disabilities to be provided necessary services through the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. The budget also provides nearly \$3.4 million to support individuals who have both a development disability and mental health diagnosis receive evaluation and treatment in the most appropriate setting.

Veterans

The Framework for Freedom Budget invests an additional \$6 million to medical and non-medical equipment upgrades, capital improvements, and increased staffing for the State Veterans' Nursing Homes. The budget also includes funds to begin planning for the construction of the ninth State Veterans' Nursing Home in Collier County.

The budget also continues a \$2 million investment to assist veterans in securing meaningful skills-based employment, provide employers a skilled talent pipeline, and to assist veterans in creating and operating a small business.

An increase of nearly \$500,000 is included to implement Patriot Navigators to help meet the unique needs of veterans and their families through mentoring, referrals to available resources, and by eliminating barriers to achieve success and self-sufficiency.

Finally, nearly \$9 million is included in the Framework for Freedom Budget to support the mental health needs of Florida's veterans. These funds will support behavioral health services for veterans and their families suffering from post-traumatic stress, depression and other invisible wounds suffered by our nation's heroes. These efforts will help to reduce veterans' suicide and ease the transition to civilian life.

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Public Safety

Public safety has been a leading priority for Governor DeSantis. Due to the continued diligence of Florida law enforcement officers, Floridians are enjoying a 50-year record low crime rate, and year-over-year crime in Florida is down nearly ten percent. The Framework for Freedom Budget continues to make necessary investments in our public safety, including salary increases for correctional officers, enhancing officer safety, and combatting the flow of fentanyl into Florida from the southern border.

Combatting Fentanyl

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$20.7 million to support law enforcement efforts to combat the opioid epidemic affecting Florida's communities:

- \$20 million for the creation of the State Assistance for Fentanyl Eradication (S.A.F.E.) in Florida Program. These funds will assist local law enforcement in combatting the illicit trafficking and sale of fentanyl within Florida. Funds will be provided to FDLE to be distributed to local agencies; and
- \$749,146 for FDLE to expand the mission and capabilities of the Anti-Heroin Task Force statewide.

Law Enforcement Recruitment and Retention

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$20 million for a second round of recruitment bonus payments for law enforcement officers who are new to the profession in the state, including those relocating from other states. This initiative will provide bonus payments of \$5,000 to new eligible law enforcement officers.

First Responder Recognition Payments Program

The Framework for Freedom Budget provides \$110 million from reallocated unobligated federal State Fiscal Recovery Funds to provide one-time recognition payments to each eligible essential local first responder.

Enhancing Correctional Officer Staffing

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$38 million to improve staffing levels at Targeted High Vacancy FDC Facilities.

Salary Increases for Correctional and Probation Officers

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$60.5 million to increase the Department of Corrections' (FDC) base rate of pay to \$22 per hour for specified Correctional Officer and Correctional Probation Officer positions.

Safer Correctional Operations

The Framework for Freedom Budget also includes \$21.3 million for FDC to make Florida's correctional facilities safer. This includes:

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- \$10 million for security equipment, such as drone detection equipment, thermal fence cameras, drone support for K-9 operations, and license plate readers;
- \$2.3 million to modernize and enhance training provided at the Florida Corrections Academy; and
- \$9 million to improve infrastructure including environmental systems, regional evidence facilities, maintenance, repairs, and renovations.

Improving Inmate Health and Well-Being

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$37.7 million for FDC to improve inmate health and well-being. This funding includes:

- \$33.3 million to expand educational, career, and technical programs to increase employability and reduce recidivism.
- \$3 million to allow FDC to expand substance abuse treatment; and
- \$1.4 million to allow FDC to repurpose existing FTEs to create two additional Behavioral Risk Management Teams to provide specialized on-site monitoring of high-risk facilities to ensure inmates with mental health needs have access to appropriate services.

Enhancing Florida's Crime Databases

FDLE maintains a variety of databases used daily by law enforcement to investigate crimes and apprehend criminals. Many of these resources are publicly accessible to help keep Floridians safe. The Framework for Freedom Budget invests more than \$18.3 million to expand and enhance these databases, including:

- \$8.16 million for the second phase of the modernization of the Biometric Identification Solution (BIS) database;
- \$3.58 million for the technology enhancement of breath test instrumentation and associated software within the Alcohol Testing Program;
- \$3 million to increase the Criminal Justice Network bandwidth;
- \$1.96 million to enhance the Missing and Endangered Person Information Clearinghouse applications;
- \$1.1 million to purchase enhanced booking and arrest equipment; and
- \$500,000 for the final year of implementing the Statewide Sexual Assault Tracking System.

Enhancing Law Enforcement Safety

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$2 million for FDLE to provide body armor to local law enforcement agencies to better improve the safety afforded to our state's brave men and women in law enforcement.

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Supporting State Courts

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$21.8 million for the State Court System, in addition to the five percent pay increase provided to all state employees, to provide salary increases for due process staff, including court reporters, court interpreters, case managers, trial court staff attorneys, and court program specialists.

Florida Scholars Academy

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$12 million for the Department of Juvenile Justice to create a unified juvenile justice education system. The Florida Scholars Academy provides various educational opportunities, and trade skills in high-demand occupations.

Enhancing Emergency 911 Call Services

Safeguarding our first responders and residents and visitors of Florida remains a priority through the continued investment in our state's emergency 911 (E911) call services.

The Budget includes an additional \$52 million for the following E911 enhancements:

- \$25 million for distributions and grant awards to local governments for E911 system maintenance, integration with the Next Generation (NG) 911 system and implementation of text-to-911.
- \$12 million to implement three additional regions of the NG 911 call routing and mapping solutions, which are imperative to improving communications for telecommunicators and first responders.
- \$5.8 million to continue supporting and improving the Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS).
- \$350,000 for no cost training for local government public safety telecommunicators, to include managing work-related stress, cybersecurity threats, and how to use GIS within NG 911.
- \$800,000 for modernization of the Department of Management Services' operations of the E911 program to increase the efficiency of distributions to local governments and the continued implementation of NG 911.
- \$6 million in state grant funds to assist local governments in the upgrade of SLERS radios to ensure interoperability and improve public safety.
- \$2.2 million to provide FirstNet to SLERS users which allows for connectivity to mobile networks to ensure continuous coverage for first responders throughout Florida.

Local Firefighter Support

The Budget invests more than \$72 million in dedicated grant funding to support local government fire services through the hardening of critical infrastructure and modernization of life-saving equipment to ensure our firefighters, visitors, and residents are protected. These funds will not only serve the individual communities,

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but also improve the state's overall medical, police, and fire response capabilities during natural disasters and other state emergencies.

Military Support

Continued Expansion of the Florida State Guard

Florida continues to set the example in response to not only natural disasters but also in protecting its people and borders from illegal aliens and civil unrest. It is now more important than ever to further strengthen Florida's response capabilities by augmenting our Florida National Guard with the support of the Florida State Guard. The Budget provides \$108 million to grow the Florida State Guard, a civilian volunteer force, to aid during emergencies.

- Funding supports the investment in response equipment, including critical maritime and aviation resources necessary for rapid search and recovery efforts both during and post disasters.
- Funding also supports training and equipment needs for up to 1,500 members to support units related to search and recovery, medical, logistics, communications, and other support functions that are needed during responses to hurricanes, natural disasters, and other state emergencies.

Supporting Florida National Guardsmen and their Families

Florida National Guard recruitment and retention programs remain a priority for the Governor to ensure a diverse force of soldiers that prosper not only in their National Guard duties but also in their careers. The Budget includes \$8.2 million for the following initiatives:

- \$5.2 million to fully support Florida National guardsmen seeking higher education degrees.
- \$3 million to give \$1,000 bonuses to current and former guardsmen who recruit new members into the Florida National Guard.

Strengthening the National Guard's Camp Blanding

The Budget includes record funding of \$102.5 million to launch a multi-year initiative at Camp Blanding for the construction of multiple state-of-the-art training facilities for the Florida National Guard. This major investment in live-fire ranges, infantry battle courses and barracks to support simultaneous training of 5,000 guardsmen, will elevate Florida's force readiness and reduce our dependence on federal and other state's resources.

Renovating National Guard Readiness Centers Statewide

The Budget includes nearly \$12.2 million to make critical repairs and renovations to 63 outdated readiness centers across Florida. This includes:

- \$7 million to begin year one of the Revitalization and Modernization Program (REVAMP), a multi-year plan to renovate all readiness centers to meet safety standards and building code compliance.

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- \$2.6 million for general maintenance at existing readiness centers.
- \$2.6 million for an access road at the new Panama City Readiness Center, which was destroyed during Hurricane Michael.

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Government Operations

The Governor remains committed to ensuring Florida's regulatory framework and government support functions are leading the way through the continued investment in legal business best practices, safeguarding taxpayer's sensitive information, protecting residents and visitors against financial crimes, and maintaining state owned infrastructure for years to come.

Recruitment and Retention of Critical State Employees

The Framework for Freedom Budget invests \$619.2 million to retain staff and continue to recruit critical vacancies. The pay package provides:

- An across-the-board 5 percent pay increase for all state employees;
- An increase for correctional officers to \$22 per hour; and
- Additional funding to provide special pay adjustments to address recruitment and retention issues at State Agencies.

My Safe Florida Home

The Budget invests an additional \$100 million in the My Safe Florida Home Grant Program which provides Florida homeowners free home inspections and financial assistance to retrofit their properties to be less vulnerable to hurricane damage.

Safeguarding Florida against Cybersecurity Threats

The Budget further builds on its commitment to harden Florida's cybersecurity framework through the funding of nearly \$60 million in various state agencies for security intelligence, modernization, training, and resiliency. As cybersecurity threats continue to become more sophisticated, it is vital that both state and local governments have the tools necessary to protect critical public resources and sensitive information.

The Budget also continues to support Florida's local governments through the investment of \$40 million in the Local Government Cybersecurity Grant Program administered by the Florida Digital Service. These grants will provide needed financial assistance to local governments in the development and enhancement of cybersecurity risk management programs.

Maintaining and Improving State Critical Infrastructure

The Budget addresses critical land and building deficiencies throughout the state with the investment of \$92 million in improvement projects and new facility design and acquisition. This includes:

- \$78.2 million to provide employees and visitors at state owned infrastructure a safe and efficient working environment.
- \$14 million to design and acquire new state-owned office buildings to reduce the state's dependence on costly private leased space.

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Protecting Florida against Fraudulent Activity

The Budget invests \$2.8 million in new anti-fraud initiatives at regulatory agencies to thwart bad actors defrauding taxpayer dollars and threatening the livelihood of our most vulnerable populations. \$3.5 million is also provided for identity verification software to protect consumers against business and professional license fraud, ensuring those doing business in Florida are both legal and skilled to do the job.