

## GOVERNOR RON DESANTIS SIGNS FLORIDA FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 BUDGET

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**WILDWOOD, Fla.**— Today, Governor Ron DeSantis signed the Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025–2026, totaling \$117.4 billion after \$567 million in line-item vetoes. This budget continues the Governor’s commitment to fiscal responsibility. The budget passed by the Legislature totaled \$117.9 billion, and following line-item and other vetoes, this budget is only roughly \$10 million above the Governor’s recommended budget from February. This marks the second consecutive year of a year-over-year reduction in state spending.

The budget also maintains \$15.7 billion in reserves. Under Governor DeSantis’ leadership, Florida has tripled the Budget Stabilization Fund, which will reach its maximum legal limit this year with an additional \$429 million contributed. Since Governor DeSantis took office, Florida’s ‘Rainy Day Funds’ have more than tripled, reaching a record-high \$4.9 billion.

The budget also includes \$830 million in funding for Florida’s accelerated debt repayment program. This investment will enable the state to this year pay off nearly 50 percent of Florida’s tax-supported debt accrued since statehood, totaling more than \$7.3 billion retired since 2019. To ensure this fiscal discipline continues, the budget includes a provision requiring a minimum of \$250 million in debt repayment annually in perpetuity.

Florida has achieved record economic and educational success under Governor DeSantis’ tenure—ranking first in the nation for education, entrepreneurship, and new business formations—with more than 3.7 million new businesses established since 2019. These accomplishments have been realized while reducing government spending and safeguarding taxpayer dollars.

This budget continues strong support for the governor’s key priorities, including teacher pay, law enforcement bonuses and pay raises, funding for civics in schools, a record amount of per-pupil K-12 funding, \$1.4 billion for continued Everglades restoration and water quality initiatives, and over \$15 billion to continue Florida’s decades-ahead-of-schedule transportation and infrastructure projects.

“Once again, Florida is spending less than the previous year,” **said Governor Ron DeSantis.** “Since I took office in 2019, we have also tripled Florida’s Rainy-Day Fund. With this year’s additional commitment, the fund is maxed out. Additionally, under my administration, this year we will have repaid almost 50% of Florida’s historic debt—and we’re now requiring a repayment of \$250 million in all future budgets. This year’s budget continues our commitment to repaying our debts ahead of schedule, saving money for Floridians, and delivering tax relief for Florida families.”

## **TAX RELIEF FOR FLORIDA BUSINESSES AND FAMILIES**

The FY 2025-2026 budget includes **\$2 billion** in tax relief focused on permanently repealing the business rent tax, renewing and expanding several sales tax holidays, and providing additional tax holidays to help keep more money in the pockets of Florida's families.

The budget saves Florida families more than **\$428 million** through several sales tax holidays, including:

- **A permanent Back-to-School sales tax holiday** every August, which includes clothing under \$100, school supplies under \$50, learning aids under \$30, and personal computers under \$1,500;
- **A permanent sales tax exemption on event tickets, state park admissions, life jackets, sunscreen, bike helmets, and insect repellent**, so families can enjoy all the outdoor fun Florida has to offer;
- **Permanent exemptions for disaster preparedness** items, including batteries, portable generators, tarps, gas cans, tie-down kits, smoke detectors, and carbon monoxide detectors;
- **A "Second Amendment" sales tax holiday from September 8 through December 31, 2025**, providing relief on purchases of bows, firearms, ammunition, tents, sleeping bags, camping stoves, fishing rods and reels, tackle boxes, and bait and tackle.

Also includes a data center exemption extension, modifying and extending the exemption from sales tax for purchases related to data center construction, maintenance, power, and operations.

## **EDUCATING FLORIDA'S STUDENTS**

Under the Governor's leadership, Florida has continued to prioritize students, expand opportunities, and empower educators. Whether a focus on workforce education, teacher quality, school safety, or academic progress, Florida remains steadfast in delivering a world-class education system. Over the past few years, sweeping education reform has led to Florida being a national leader in education. The result of this hard work has been demonstrated by being #1 in education freedom for the third year in a row, and #1 in higher education for nearly a decade.

The budget builds on Florida's record investments in education, providing a historic **\$15.9 billion** in funding for the K-12 public school system. This will include the highest per student investment ever, providing **\$9,130 per student**, an **increase of**

**\$143** over last year. This investment will also cover the costs of over 429,000 students who are projected to participate in Florida's school choice program—the Family Empowerment Scholarship.

Additional funding highlights for Florida's K-12 students include:

- **\$1.36 billion** to provide salary increases for teachers and other instructional personnel, an increase of nearly **\$101.6 million** over FY 2024-2025.
- **\$1.6 billion** for early childhood education, including **\$434.2 million** for Voluntary Prekindergarten initiatives.
- **\$290 million** for the Safe Schools Allocation.
- **\$7.4 million** to support civics engagement programs, including **\$3.5 million** for the Florida Civics Seal of Excellence Program.

The budget also maintains recurring base funding of **\$2.8 million** to continue supporting the Summer Bridge Program for VPK students who score below the tenth percentile on the second administration of the Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring (CSPM) System.

## **FLORIDA LEADS THE NATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

Florida has ranked #1 for Higher Education for nearly a decade, while also holding the line on tuition to provide a quality education at an affordable price. The Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget builds on Florida's success and ensures that Florida will continue to have the top education system in the country.

This budget fully funds the projected student enrollment for the Bright Futures Scholarship at **\$637.7 million**.

For colleges and universities, the budget recommends:

- **\$1.8 billion** for the Florida College System
- **\$3.9 billion** for the State University System
- **\$161.5 million** for Florida's four Historically Black Colleges and Universities
- **\$675 million** in performance funding for state colleges and universities to ensure they are successfully graduating and preparing our students for the outside world.

Providing a quality education that leads to quality jobs is an important part of ensuring that Florida's workforce can continue to meet the demand of the job market. When the Governor took office, he set a goal of being the best state in the nation for workforce education by the year 2030, and Florida is well on its way to meet this goal, investing more than **\$10 billion** in workforce education since 2019. The budget continues this progress by investing **\$726.9 million** for workforce education programs, ensuring that

Floridians can continue to access workforce education opportunities that lead to high-demand, high-wage jobs. This investment includes:

- **\$467.3 million** in operational funding for Florida's CTE programs.
- **\$60 million** to establish or expand CTE and apprenticeship programs.
- **\$130 million** for quality nursing education programs to continue addressing nursing vacancies through the PIPELINE and LINE programs.
- **\$10.5 million** to support training programs and certification costs for new and relocating law enforcement officers and first responders.

## **KEEPING FLORIDA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RUNNING STRONG**

Florida is the fastest growing state in the nation because Governor DeSantis has championed freedom first policies and continued investments that create opportunities for Florida families to thrive. The budget continues to make smart investments to support Florida's infrastructure, workforce and economy to ensure we meet the demand of our growing state.

To support Florida's transportation network and infrastructure, the budget invests:

- **\$15.1 billion** for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
- Of this amount, **\$13.7 billion** for the state transportation work program to construct and maintain Florida's transportation network.

To help create new jobs and support business development throughout the state, the budget invests:

- **\$50 million** for the Job Growth Grant Fund to support local infrastructure and workforce training projects.
- **\$80 million** to continue marketing efforts through VISIT FLORIDA.

Florida's rural communities are an important part of the success of our state, and the budget continues to provide our rural communities with the resources they need to thrive. This includes:

- **\$22 million** for the Rural Infrastructure Fund to support local infrastructure projects that help attract jobs.
- **\$92.2 million** for the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) to assist small county governments in repairing infrastructure.

To support workforce housing, the budget includes:

- **\$163.8 million** for the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program.

- **\$71.2 million** for the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) program.
- **\$50 million** for the fourth year of the Hometown Heroes Housing program to provide down payment and closing cost assistance for first time homebuyers while adding members of the State Guard to the list of eligible applicants.

Governor DeSantis has made it a top priority of his administration to enforce the immigration laws of our country and our state. The budget includes **\$1.9 million** for the Office of SecureFlorida in the Department of Commerce. This office works to ensure that Florida businesses are hiring only those legally allowed to work in the United States by submitting information to the federal E-Verify system and takes appropriate action should employers fail to comply.

## **SUPPORTING LAW ENFORCEMENT AND THE MILITARY**

Governor DeSantis has always recognized the invaluable contributions made to Florida by its law enforcement and military communities. They risk their lives every day to protect Floridians, and they are on the front lines of combatting illegal immigration into our state.

Florida under Governor DeSantis maintains its commitment to support the men and women of law enforcement who put their lives on the line every day by securing **\$49 million** for pay increases to over 16,200 state sworn law enforcement officers. These additional investments include:

- An increase in the minimum annual base rate of pay to \$60,000 for state law enforcement officers.
- A 10% increase in pay for entry-level sworn law enforcement.
- A 15% increase in pay for veteran sworn law enforcement officers with at least 5 years of state service.

To support Florida's law enforcement and military communities, the budget includes:

- **\$3 million** to FDLE to award grants to local jails that are under construction and have contracted with the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to support immigration enforcement efforts.
- **\$1.9 million** to enhance the Missing and Endangered Person Information Clearinghouse applications through FDLE's databases.
- **\$446,220** to assist local law enforcement with sex offender registration and compliance requirements.
- **\$20 million** for the fourth year of the Law Enforcement Recruitment Bonus Program, which provides a signing bonus of up to \$5,000 for those hired as first-time law enforcement officers in Florida.

- **\$2 million** for the Florida Defense Support Commission, which supports the Florida defense industry by awarding grants and guiding the future of military installation operations in the state.
- **\$1.5 million** for the Military Base Protection Program, which helps secure non-conservation lands to serve as a buffer protecting military installations from encroachment and supports local community efforts to engage in service partnerships with military installations, and the Defense Reinvestment Grant which provides support for community-based activities that protect military installations.
- **\$3.3 million** for the replacement of aging FHP vehicles, and **\$2 million** for the installation of dash cameras in patrol vehicles and **\$1.8 million** for bullet-proof shields to be used in FHP Trooper vehicles.

## **INVESTING IN EVERGLADES RESTORATION AND WATER QUALITY & SUPPLY**

Florida's natural resources are directly tied to the economic strength of the state and provide important defenses against natural disasters such as hurricanes. Florida has made record investments in protecting our natural resources and conserving the Florida way of life, and Governor DeSantis continues this commitment in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget.

During Governor DeSantis' first term as Governor, he signed record investments to protect Florida's Everglades and support water quality, investing a record **\$3.3 billion**. At the start of his second term, he called for a historic **\$3.5 billion** investment over the next four years. The budget includes more than **\$1.4 billion** for Everglades restoration and water quality, bringing the total investment during the Governor's second term to **\$4.6 billion**. This investment includes **\$830 million** for Everglades restoration projects:

- **\$550 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** for specific project components designed to achieve the greatest reductions in harmful discharges to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Estuaries.
- **\$81 million** for the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program.
- **\$65 million** for the C-51 Reservoir.
- **\$20 million** for Agricultural Nonpoint Source Water Restoration Projects.

In addition, **\$2 million** is included for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to remove pythons from the Everglades.

To continue protecting Florida's water quality and supply, the budget includes **\$460 million** for targeted water quality improvements to achieve significant, meaningful, and measurable nutrient reductions in key waterbodies. This includes:

- **\$382 million** for the expanded Water Quality Improvement Projects to construct, upgrade or expand wastewater facilities, including septic to sewer conversions, stormwater management projects, and agricultural nutrient reduction projects.
- **\$25 million** for the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) Protection Program for priority projects to improve water quality in the IRL, as called for in Executive Order 23-06.
- **\$25 million** to accelerate projects to meet scientific nutrient reduction goals, called Total Maximum Daily Loads.
- **\$20 million** for critical infrastructure including wastewater and stormwater projects that address water quality impairments and coral reef restoration in Biscayne Bay.
- **\$10 million** for water quality improvements in the Caloosahatchee River watershed.

Additional water quality investments include **\$50 million** to restore Florida's world-renowned springs and for land acquisition to protect spring sheds as well as **\$30 million** to improve water quality and combat the impacts of harmful algal blooms, including blue-green algae and red tide. The budget includes **\$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.

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 Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget dedicates **\$34 million** to infrastructure improvements and resource management with the goal of maintaining this high standard. Additionally, the budget includes **\$996 million** to support several conservation and acquisition programs, including Florida Forever, Rural and Family Lands, and the Wildlife Corridor.

In Fiscal Year 2021-22, Governor DeSantis championed the passage of the Resilient Florida Grant Program to enhance efforts to protect our inland waterways, coastlines, shores, and coral reefs, which serve as invaluable natural defenses against storm surge and flooding. Since its creation, the Resilient Florida Grant Program has provided more than **\$1.8 billion** in resiliency funding. The Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget invests **\$260 million** to strengthen the state's defenses against the wind and water impacts of hurricanes and severe weather. This includes **\$209 million** for Resilient Florida and **\$53 million** for beach nourishment.

To preserve Florida's citrus industry, the budget invests more than **\$127 million** for citrus research and operations to support the Florida Citrus Industry.

The budget includes restoring and protecting Apalachicola Bay, including **\$5 million** for water resource protection projects and **\$12.5 million** to restore Florida's Oyster's reefs in Apalachicola Bay.

To further protect Florida's rural areas and communities surrounded by Florida's beautiful forests, the budget provides **\$4 million** to support the replanting of trees and timber impacted by hurricanes and natural disasters, in addition to investing over **\$33 million** in Florida's efforts to effectively combat wildfires including equipment, and wildfire suppression activities, such as prescribed burning.

The budget also includes **\$221 million** for the cleanup of contaminated sites with a focus on promoting redevelopment of these areas once cleanup has been completed.

### **SUPPORTING DISASTER RESPONSE, RECOVERY AND MITIGATION**

In 2024, Governor DeSantis, the Division of Emergency Management, state agencies and local partners rose to the significant challenges imposed by disasters including hurricanes Debby, Helene, and Milton. Under the leadership of Governor DeSantis, Florida's blueprint for disaster response and recovery is a model for the nation.

This includes **\$203.8 million** in state match 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.

Additionally, the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget includes **\$150 million** in additional federal Community Development Block Grant funds for local hurricane recovery and hardening efforts throughout the state, including the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program and the Community Development Block Grant Mitigation Program.

### **INVESTING IN A HEALTHIER FLORIDA**

Governor DeSantis has been steadfast in his commitment to supporting the healthy lives of Floridians. This includes providing support for those struggling with mental health and substance abuse and victims of human trafficking in addition to supporting Florida's seniors, Floridians with unique abilities, veterans, and Florida's mothers and children. The Governor has also prioritized critical cancer research and innovative treatments.

To support mental health resiliency and those suffering from substance abuse, the budget includes:



- More than **\$123.9 million** for behavioral health services, including support for forensic bed capacity and operations of the state mental health treatment facilities.
- More than **\$194.8 million** from the nationwide Opioid Settlement Agreement to continue support for the Office of Opioid Recovery, an accredited Graduate Medical Education program to increase the number of residents in areas such as addiction medicine, addiction psychiatry, and pain medicine, and for other initiatives that support prevention and treatment for individuals with substance abuse issues.
- **\$31.8 million** to continue the expansion of the Coordinated Opioid Recovery (CORE) Network across the state, which has already served thousands of Floridians.

To support important cancer research, the budget includes:

- Historic funding for cancer, with more than **\$265.4 million** in funding for cancer research, including **\$30 million** in new funding to support the Cancer Connect Collaborative Incubator, which will have an initial focus on pediatric cancer research.
- **\$127.5 million** for the Casey DeSantis Cancer Research Program to fund competitive grants and **\$60 million** for the Florida Cancer Innovation Fund to further bolster cancer research and care.

To support Florida's mothers, their children, and the children in the child welfare system, the budget invests:

- More than **\$78.7 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 support through collaboration with front line child protective investigators.
- More than **\$23.8 million** to support the care of pregnant women and children. This funding helps improve access to obstetric care for pregnant women and supports care for children and babies, including public school health services. Funds are provided to improve access and coordination for behavioral health services for children and to support quality improvement initiatives for children ages birth to 36 months who have a developmental delay.
- Continued funding of **\$29.5 million** to provide pregnancy support for mothers and families.

To put Florida senior first, the budget includes:

- An increase of **\$3 million**, for a total of **\$73.8 million**, to serve seniors as part of the Alzheimer's Disease Initiative (ADI). This further strengthens Florida's position as a national leader in the provision of care for those with the disease and their families. ADI provides support for caregivers and individuals diagnosed

or suspected of having Alzheimer's disease or other related memory disorders that interfere with daily living activities.

- An increase of **\$10.5 million** is provided, for a total of **\$126.5 million**, to serve additional seniors through the Community Care for the Elderly Program and the Home Care for the Elderly Program. Funding will provide support for seniors at risk for out-of-home placement. These services and support include adult day care, respite for caregivers, home delivered meals, and minor home modifications allowing them to continue to live in their homes.

To ensure the continued support of Florida's veteran community, the budget invests:

- An additional **\$20.8 million** to support capital improvements for the State Veterans' Nursing Homes.
- A continued funding of **\$1 million** to provide for a Veteran's Dental Care Grant Program to enable deserving qualified Florida Veterans to receive no-cost dental care to improve their general health.
- A continued **\$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.