



A budget for everyone

Pooling our resources to build a better Ohio

Ohio does best when we all come together to do our part. We have paid our taxes, and our collective public resources have built world-class colleges and universities, a top-notch state park system and some of the nation's best libraries. These institutions, and many others, have made Ohio a better place to live.

As we remain mired in a pandemic and recession, the coming year is shaping up to be a hard one. Lawmakers working on the state budget for 2022-23 will fund public services during a difficult time. Throughout the winter and spring, state lawmakers will decide how to use our public resources in the next biennial state budget, which covers fiscal years (FY) 2022 and 2023, running from July 1 of this year through June 30, 2023. For years, tax cuts and special interest tax breaks have benefitted corporations and the very wealthy, while draining Ohio communities of resources. Ohio's already insufficient tax system will bring in even less money than past years because of the recession.

We make recommendations in six main areas for how lawmakers can use Ohio's 2022-23 budget to address immediate needs while laying the groundwork for long-term change.

Get through the crisis

The first order of business for the 2022-23 budget is helping Ohioans through the deepest crisis of a hundred years: the pandemic recession. At least 799,639 Ohioans have contracted the coronavirus and at least 9,881 have died. Over 2 million Ohioans have filed for unemployment since the pandemic emerged in March, more than the last four years combined. Others are front line, “essential” workers who make low wages and struggle to afford child care. Illness and loss of income have disproportionately harmed Ohioans of color. In this section, we highlight investments needed to control the pandemic and limit suffering in the 2022-23 budget period.

- Build healthier communities by providing the \$93 million local public health agencies need to build core capacity in this year of crisis, and for the future.
- Ensure everyone gets enough to eat during the pandemic recession with an additional \$45 million for food banks.
- Prevent homelessness by allocating \$25 million from federal “Temporary Assistance for Needy Families” (TANF) funds; support existing youth homeless program in the Department of Health.
- Support Ohioans through the pandemic and recession by allocating \$50 million in one-time emergency assistance from TANF funds.
- Protect health of all communities through vaccination education and outreach and additional vaccine distribution and COVID testing sites to serve low-income and rural communities.

Expand health care and restore Ohio’s public health system

Many Ohioans don’t have the care they need to keep them healthy and treat them if they get sick, especially today. Many have been laid off and lost health insurance coverage. Medicaid has never been more important. In this year of pandemic, with rising illness, suffering and death from COVID, lawmakers must protect Medicaid and related health services.

- Expand health care for Ohioans by protecting Medicaid expansion.
- Control Ohio’s rising addiction epidemic by fully restoring state funding for community mental health and addiction services.
- Build a health care workforce the community will trust through loan forgiveness programs targeted to Black and brown students in health care.
- Expand health programs in Ohio’s Black, brown and Indigenous communities by directing \$7.8 million to create a state “Points of Access” grant program.
- Ensure all babies survive and thrive by funding the Ohio Commission on Minority Health’s “Infant Mortality Health Grants” at \$6 million a year; also restore cuts made to Help Me Grow and Early Intervention.

Protect working people

In Ohio's small towns, rural areas, and city centers, we need policies that work for all of us, and a government that represents everyone, no matter what we look like. From nurses in Ashtabula, to tool and die makers in Toledo, to firefighters in Middletown, we need a voice at work and a way to support our families.

- Safeguard paychecks by boosting funding and staff in the Wage and Hour division.
- Help people who are laid off make ends meet by fixing the administration of unemployment compensation so people receive timely support.
- Support more working Ohio families by increasing funding for public child care by \$138 million.

Strengthen Ohio's communities

State lawmakers prioritized tax cuts and tax breaks and allowed inflation to erode many public services for the past 15 years. Starting with this budget, Ohio lawmakers can lay the groundwork to phase-in restoration of underfunded, foundational services listed here.

- Ensure an excellent school in every zip code by leveraging \$1.9 billion in public resources to fund K-12 education equitably and sufficiently.
- Give more 3 and 4 year-olds from families with low incomes a good start with an additional \$130.7 million for early education.
- Help more Ohioans get a degree by increasing funding for higher education by at least \$415 million.
- Help local governments provide key services by restoring state revenue sharing to previous level of 3.68% of state general revenue.
- Make all homes lead safe by increasing funding for lead-free initiatives, including through the State Children's Health Initiative Program (SCHIP) and the Ohio Department of Health.
- Connect all Ohioans with broadband by increasing state funding to connect Ohioans to high speed internet and to help low-income families with the cost of connecting.
- Increase mobility and expand opportunity with \$150 million in total for public transit and transportation alternatives.
- Give people who are underpaid an income boost by directing \$207 million to rebalance Ohio's unfair tax structure with an improved EITC.

Expand opportunity and ensure Ohioans meet their basic needs

Some of our most important social services are funded primarily with local dollars, with very little state assistance. In the 2022-23 budget, Ohio lawmakers can increase funding for compassionate social services to make sure Ohioans have refuge, protection and safety.

- Increase safe, affordable housing options with more support for Ohio Housing Trust Fund.
- Help victims of domestic violence with \$7.7 million additional dollars to make up for diminished federal funds.
- Support families who step up to care for kids by adhering to Glisson Case ruling and provide kinship care gives the same support as foster parents.
- Keep seniors safe in their homes with \$22 million annually for adult protective services.
- Improve quality of life for seniors by funding Senior Community Services at \$10 million a year.
- Stabilize families experiencing deep poverty by increasing the basic cash assistance grant of the by \$100 a month per recipient to an average of \$311 a month.
- Help Ohioans find support with \$540,000 in state funding for local 211 services.

Make government more accountable and transparent

Most Ohioans believe that our elected leaders should reflect our values and govern for all of us, no exceptions. But when data is not collected, laws are not scrutinized and facts are not reported and debated, it's difficult for us to hold our elected leaders accountable. Ohio lawmakers can use the 2022-23 budget bill to support independent journalism and to establish dedicated processes and offices that will assemble, tabulate and report out on areas of critical civic interest.

- Prioritize the health of Black, brown and Indigenous Ohioans by funding an office of Minority Health Strike Force Accountability, supported with \$5 million in 2022 for start-up costs and \$3 million a year thereafter.
- Investigate injustice in the judicial system with \$1 million a year for sentencing data collection.
- Hold the powerful accountable through local journalism by boosting support for public broadcasting by \$5 million a year.
- Ensure new laws put public health first by requiring legislation that may affect the health of Ohioans undergo a health impact analysis.
- Fund staff to scrutinize Ohio's \$10 billion in annual tax breaks so the legislative "Tax Expenditure Review Committee" can decide what works for the Ohio economy — and what doesn't.