



A Moral Document

How the budget can bring out the best in Ohio

Recommendations

Department of Education & Workforce

- Permanently incorporate the Fair School Funding Plan (FSFP) into the state budget; fund it directly, adequately, and equitably.
- Account for inflation when making FY2026-27 allocations for Ohio's education system and benchmark inflation adjustments to the **beginning** of the six-year phase-in process.
- Fund statewide universal pre-K and all-day Kindergarten. ([House Bill 595 is a good place to start.](#))
- Increase starting teacher salaries to \$50,000 as part of the FSFP.
- Help teachers pay off their education debt. (State representatives proposed \$25 million for such a program in FY2024, but state senators rejected it.)
- Leverage federal programs (such as the [EPA's Clean School Bus Program](#) and the [Inflation Reduction Act's clean energy tax credits](#)) by funding the purchase and operation of electric school buses.
- Provide free school meals for all children regardless of their family's income.

Department of Higher Education

- Increase the state share of instruction to at least 3%.
- Fund the Foster-to-College Scholarship Program proposed in [House Bill 164](#).
- Allocate at least \$562 million for the Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG) to encourage Ohio's students to stay in Ohio.
- Restructure OCOG to make it a "first-dollar" grant, allowing students to access the full amounts they need and should qualify for in both state **and** federal funds.
- Fund the Ohio Access Challenge and other programs that help students attending community colleges and regional campuses.
- Enact House Bill 590, the Hunger Free Campus Act, to allocate \$2.5 million over the next biennium to address student hunger across Ohio — or fund such a program directly in the FY2026-27 budget.

Department of Children and Youth

- Invest \$150-200 million in Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC) over the biennium.
- Make PFCC permanent and expand it to cover families making under 300% FPL (or \$77,460 for a family of three in 2024).
- As required by the federal Administration for Children and Families, reimburse childcare providers based on enrollment rather than attendance, and cap co-pays for PFCC families at 7% of their income.
- Reimburse childcare providers at the 75th percentile of the market rate.
- Ensure the reimbursement increase reaches childcare workers by mandating a wage of at least \$20 per hour.
- Create a new funding model based on the *actual* cost of care and informed by a broad group of stakeholders, especially providers and parents.
- Restore at least \$15 million annual funding for the Kinship Caregiver Program by restoring the Kinship Care TANF earmark in the next budget cycle, while also maintaining existing support for kinship care providers.
- Increase payments through both Ohio Works First child-only cases and the Kinship Permanency Incentive Program to account for inflation.
- Fund the planning and implementation of a kinship licensing program compliant with the new federal rule and the existing kinship provider requirements.
- Increase funding for childhood literacy programming through the Governor's Imagination Library program; expand it by earmarking funds for the development of media literacy programming.

Department of Job and Family Services

- Increase funding for all human services by at least 3% to account for inflation.
- Increase minimum SNAP benefits for eligible older adults to \$50 by including House Bill 428 in the budget.
- Allocate \$100,000–150,000 annually to restore and maintain the Civil Impacts of Criminal Convictions database.

Department of Youth Services

- Cover the costs of caring for children incarcerated by the state, such as room, board, and medical and dental care.
- Strike section 2151.36 (Support of Child) from the Revised Code and eliminate the practice of allowing judges to order families to pay for their child's incarceration.

Department of Commerce

- Increase funding for wage and hour enforcement to \$2.6 million annually.
- Incorporate HB 106, the [Pay Stub Protection Act](#), into the FY2026-27 budget.

Department of Medicaid

- Expand Medicaid eligibility for pregnant women up to 300% FPL.
- Expand continuous enrollment to eligible children up to age 6.
- Rollback the request to allow the state to impose work requirements for Medicaid.
- Increase reimbursement rates for Medicaid-eligible behavioral health services to increase salaries for behavioral health care providers.

Department of Health

- Increase departmental funding to account for inflation since the previous increase.
- Increase funding for line items that support lead abatement and lead safety programs, especially in high-risk communities with housing built before 1980.

Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

- Create a new, permanent line item in the GRF to directly fund non-police crisis response programs in municipalities and other local government entities across Ohio, or earmark funds to support this work in existing line items for Community Innovations and Community Projects.
- Continue funding Crisis Stabilization Centers at \$6 million per fiscal year.
- Allocate \$10 million annually from the GRF to strengthen the pipeline of professionals entering the behavioral health workforce by supporting [the Great Minds Fellowship program](#). Earmark funds to provide non-tuition-specific stipends for community mental health interns.

Department of Transportation

- Increase state funding for public transit to 10% of the total transportation budget.
- Leverage historic federal infrastructure spending and tax credits available for fleet electrification.
- Fund a state-wide needs assessment to understand Ohio's evolving transit needs.

State Revenue Distribution Budget

- Restore the Local Government Fund to 3.68% of total state GRF revenue.
- Maintain the current level of funding for the Public Library Fund: 1.7%