

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget

Overview, Debt Reduction, and Reserves

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25 totals **\$116.5 billion**, lower than the current year budget and continues the Governor's commitment to fiscal responsibility and responsible governance.

Of the total **\$116.5 billion**, the General Revenue portion is **\$48.6 billion**. Florida's total reserves are **\$17.0 billion**, over **14.6 percent** of the total budget for the fiscal year, leaving ample resources for any unforeseen circumstances.

Florida's continued prioritization in maintaining reserves, and prudent fiscal management, is demonstrated by the state's continued AAA credit rating from all major credit rating agencies, which now exceeds the U.S. Government's credit rating.

Debt Reduction

Since taking office, Governor DeSantis has led the nation in sound fiscal policy, including paying down **\$6.3 billion**, or 36 percent of the state's outstanding tax-supported debt. Florida's overall debt level, including tax- and self-supported debt, is at a 25-year low. The opposite is happening in Washington, where federal fiscal mismanagement has increased national debt by 58 percent since January 2019. To further Florida's efforts to pay down debt, the Focus on Florida's Future Budget pledges an additional **\$500 million** to the Debt Reduction Program established by the Governor last year.

Maintaining Strong Reserves

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget continues Florida's record of sound fiscal management, providing for both a balanced budget and **\$17.0 billion** in total reserves as follows:

- **\$7.8 billion** in unallocated General Revenue
- **\$4.4 billion** in the Budget Stabilization Fund
- **\$2.1 billion** in unallocated Trust Funds
- **\$0.5 billion** in the Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund
- **\$2.2 billion** in the Reinsurance Assistance and the Florida Optional Reinsurance Assistance Programs
- **\$17.0 billion** in Total Reserves

Tax Relief for Florida Families

The Fiscal Year 2024-25 Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides nearly **\$1.5 billion** in tax relief, including permanent tax cuts to keep more money in the pockets of Floridians.

- **\$450 million in toll relief to frequent commuters** – Discounts tolls by 50 percent for frequent drivers utilizing SunPass with 35 or more monthly transactions.
- **Suspension of Hillsborough County Local Option Surtaxes, saving families \$162 million**
- **Four Sales Tax holidays, saving Florida families \$289 million**
 - ***Back-to-School Holiday*** – A 14-day holiday from July 29 through August 11, 2024, exempting clothing, footwear, wallets, and backpacks priced at 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.
 - ***Disaster Preparedness Holidays*** – Two 14-day holidays running June 1 through June 14, 2024, and August 24 through September 6, 2024, exempting certain disaster preparedness supplies for families and their pets.
 - ***Freedom Month*** – A one-month holiday running July 1 through July 31, 2024, exempting specific recreation items and activities.
 - ***Skilled Worker Tools Holiday*** – A one-week holiday running September 1, through September 7, 2024, exempting specified tools and equipment used by skilled trade workers.
- **Prepayment of tax on motor vehicle leases, totaling \$1.3 million in savings** – allows lessees acquiring motor vehicles for use in their trade or business to submit the sales tax on the initial purchase price rather than the periodic long-term lease payments.
- **\$501.9 million in savings for Florida Homeowners** – Requires insurers to reduce insurance premiums paid by owners of residential properties for insurance tax liability remaining for the 2024 or 2025 calendar year tax return. To hold insurers harmless from this requirement, any credits unable to be taken are refundable from General Revenue.
- **\$15 million in Corporate Income Tax Savings over 3 Years**
 - Individuals with Unique Abilities Tax Credit – Provides credit for corporations that employ individuals with disabilities in Florida in the amount of \$1 per hour worked, up to \$1,000 per employee per year and subject to a \$10,000 maximum per year. Unused credits may be carried forward for up to five taxable years. The maximum credit amount that can be awarded statewide is \$5 million for each of Fiscal Years 2024-25, 2025-26, and 2026-27.

- **\$10.9 million in Documentary Stamp Tax savings**
 - Alarm Systems – provides a 3-year exemption for loans of up to \$3,500 extended by an alarm system contractor to a customer in connection with the sale of an alarm system.
 - Reverse Mortgages – Requires the documentary stamp tax to be applied to the principal limit amount rather than the maximum claim amount or the stated mortgage amount. “Principal limit” is defined to mean the gross amount of loan proceeds available to the borrower without consideration of any use restrictions.
- **\$31.7 million in Ad Valorem tax savings**
- **\$0.7 million in Fuel Tax savings** – Reduces the tax rates that will be levied on natural gas fuel beginning on January 1, 2026, by 50 percent for one year.
- **\$35 million in various tax credits**
 - Child Care Tax Credits – Provides tax credits to taxpayers who operate a child care facility or make contributions to child care facilities on behalf of employees. The aggregate amount of credit is limited to \$5 million for each of Fiscal Years 2024-25, 2025-26, and 2026-27.
 - Strong Families Tax Credits – Increases the cap for the Strong Families Tax Credit program from \$20 million to \$40 million beginning in Fiscal Year 2024-25.

Lastly, the budget makes a permanent distribution of **\$27.5 million** of sales tax proceeds to the Florida Agricultural Promotional Campaign Trust Fund to be spent on the promotion of thoroughbred breeding and racing.

Safeguarding Florida's Retirement System

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget continues Governor DeSantis' commitment to Florida's retirees by fully funding the required contributions for Florida Retirement System (FRS) employers to ensure the long-term solvency of retirement benefits for state employees, including law enforcement officers and teachers.

The Governor fully funded the actuarially determined employer contribution (ADC) to the FRS during each year of his administration. Additionally, the actuarial assumptions underlying the Pensions Plan's Valuation and determining such required contributions were strengthened during the Governor's term. The investment return assumption was reduced gradually from 7.5 percent in 2018 to 6.7 percent in 2023 and the amortization period for the Unfunded Actuarial Liability (UAL) was shortened from 30 years to 20 years. While increasing the ADC, these changes ensured the contributions to be adequate to strengthen the plan's financial position and therefore to safeguard the pension of our public servants including teachers, law enforcement officers, and firefighters.

Education

Under the Governor's leadership, Florida is the national leader in education. Florida is again ranked #1 overall in education, #1 in education freedom for the second year in a row and has been ranked #1 in higher education for nearly a decade. The Fiscal Year 2024-25 Focus on Florida's Future Budget continues to propel Florida's education forward by investing in our students and families.

Several important investments include:

- **\$1.25 billion, an increase of \$201.8 million**, in funding to provide salary increases for teachers and other instructional personnel.
- **\$1.7 billion** in funding for early child education, including **\$438 million** for Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK).
- Historic **\$28.4 billion** in funding, of which **\$15.5 billion** is record state funding for the K-12 public school system.
 - This covers the costs associated with the current projected enrollment of over 3.2 million students, including over 315,000 students projected to participate in the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program.
- **\$1.7 billion** in state operating funding for the Florida College System.
- **\$4.1 billion** in state operating funding for the State University System.
- **\$130 million** in total funding to reward quality nursing education programs to address nursing vacancies.
- **\$100 million** for the State University System for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified faculty.

Combatting Antisemitism

To address the rise of antisemitic threats and safety concerns for Florida's Jewish communities, the Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes the following:

- **\$20 million** in funding is provided to enhance safety measures, hire school safety officers, upgrade safety equipment, facilities and technology, and increase security services at Florida Jewish Day Schools and Jewish preschools;
- **\$5 million** in funding for the Museum for Hope and Humanity.
- **\$3.5 million** in funding provided for the Jewish Day School-Student Transportation Safety Initiative that assists the Agudath Israel of South Florida to contract with a bus transportation service that will provide transportation to and from their three schools to help ensure the safety and security of the students and the school facilities;
- **\$1.6 million** in funding is provided for the Greater Miami Jewish Federation's Holocaust Memorial (formerly Holocaust Memorial Miami Beach) that provides Holocaust programming for students in grades 5 through 12 and in college;
- **\$1.5 million** in additional funding, for a total of **\$2.1 million**, to the Florida Holocaust Museum, for educational operations and to support the design, development, and construction of an immersive educational theatre space in

which students, teachers, scholars, and visitors can interact in real-time through holographic with Holocaust survivors, enhancing the impact these interactions have in engaging, educating, and inspiring future generations about the Holocaust and antisemitism through these irreplaceable voices of lived history.

- **\$1 million** in funding provided for the Holocaust Education Center - Jewish Federation Sarasota Manatee initiative where the tragedies and history of the Holocaust are provided in an educational environment that utilizes an interactive curriculum;
- **\$1 million** in funding for the Mobile Museums of Tolerance that is a mobile education center, utilizing innovative technology and interactive lessons to bring a message of tolerance directly to communities;
- **\$750,000** in funding is maintained for the Florida Holocaust Museum;
- **\$350,000** in funding to the Temple Beth-El St. Petersburg for security improvements at the Temple;
- **\$475,000** in funding provided for security enhancements to the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center;
- **\$350,000** in funding for the Hebrew Academy Student Wellness Center to provide students access to a whole host of services, from guidance counselors to trained learning specialists;
- **\$286,250** in funding for the Last Ones initiative to document Holocaust survivor testimonies;
- **\$165,000** in funding for the Alpert Jewish Family Service, Ruth Rales Jewish Family Service & inSIGHT Traveling Holocaust Classroom;
- **\$100,000** in funding is maintained for the Florida Holocaust Task Force; and
- **\$700,000** In funding for the pre-school program and vocational training programs at the Miami Jewish Montessori.

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

The budget provides **\$438 million** for Florida's VPK program, a high quality, free education initiative, which serves approximately **137,000** four- and five-year-olds. VPK prepares each child for kindergarten by building a strong foundation for school and focusing on early literacy skills.

The total funding for Florida's VPK program includes **\$4.1 million** for the establishment of 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.

School Readiness

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides funding so that additional children can be served in the School Readiness program, and reward School Readiness providers who participate in program assessments and implement quality improvement strategies.

The following initiatives that support early learning were increased or maintained at current year funding:

- **\$17 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; 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

Governor DeSantis continues to put Florida's families first. Under his leadership, Florida has implemented the most expansive school choice policies in the nation.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes the highest per student investment of **\$8,959** in the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), which is an increase of **\$240 per student** over Fiscal Year 2023-24. Florida's hard-working educators are prioritized with funding for school districts to provide any eligible teacher and other instructional personnel with a salary increase.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$28.4 billion** in total funding for the FEFP, which includes the following increases:

- Increase of **\$201.8 million**, for a total of **\$1.25 billion** for pay increases to teachers and other instructional personnel;
- Increase of **\$191** in the Base Student Allocation (BSA);
- Increase of **\$20 million**, for a total of **\$180 million** for the mental health allocation; and
- Increase of **\$20.8 million**, for a total of **\$556.6 million** for student transportation.

School Safety

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget continues to invest in school safety initiatives, continuing Governor DeSantis' commitment to ensuring Florida's students and teachers are in a safe and secure learning environment.

- The budget includes the following school safety initiatives:
 - **\$290 million**, an increase of **\$40 million**, for the safe schools component of the FEFP;
 - **\$5.5 million** for the Mental Health Awareness and Assistance Training;
 - **\$6.5 million** for the Guardian Program to certify and train school guardians and provide a one-time stipend of \$500;
 - **\$1.2 million** for the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool;

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- **\$3 million** to continue providing a centralized integrated data repository and data analytics resources to improve access to timely, complete and accurate information;
- **\$6.4 million** to continue providing school districts access to a mobile panic alert system that is capable of connecting multiple first responder agencies;
- **\$42 million** for public school hardening grants;
- **\$6.5 million** to continue implementation of safe school technology systems; and
- **\$5 million** for District Threat Management Coordinators.

K-12 Civics Engagement

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides funding for the following civic initiatives:

- **\$1.5 million** to support and continue expanding the Florida Civics and Debate Initiative, which creates new and enhances existing speech and debate programs with a focus on civic education. The Florida Civics and Debate Initiative has programs in 405 schools, serving almost 4,300 students, in all 67 Florida school districts.
- **\$3.5 million** to provide support to school districts for the improvement of civic literacy for Florida's students using regional civics literacy captains and coaches.
- **\$2.8 million** for the Civics Professional Development Initiative to support professional development focused on the new civics and government standards.
- **\$10 million** for the Florida Civics Seal of Excellence Program that will allow over 3,000 educators to receive a \$3,000 stipend for completing the Florida Seal of Excellence endorsement coursework.

Promoting Computer Science

The Focus on Florida's Future 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.

Higher Education

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget continues to provide key investments in our #1 higher education system and continues the path towards #1 in workforce education by 2030.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes state operating funding for Florida's higher education system:

- **\$1.7 billion** for Florida's state colleges; and
- **\$4.1 billion** for Florida's state universities.

The Focus on Florida's Future 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 demand-driven supply of credentialed workers for high-demand occupations.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides **\$10 million** for Alzheimer's and Dementia research at state universities.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget maintains **\$11 million** in total funding for two programs to support First Responders.

- **\$10 million** for the expanded First Responder Scholarship Program, formerly the Law Enforcement Scholarship Program, to cover the cost of academies for first responders including Emergency Medical Technicians, Paramedics, Firefighters and Law Enforcement.
- **\$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 for law enforcement officers who relocate to Florida.

Bright Futures

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget fully funds the projected student enrollment for the Bright Futures Scholarship Program at **\$617 million**.

Holding the Line on Tuition

Governor DeSantis has not included any tuition increases during his six years in office, as he believes Florida students and families should not face any additional financial burdens as they are completing their education.

Performance Funding

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget increases the following performance funding at career technical centers, state colleges, and state universities:

- **\$8.5 million**, for students earning industry certifications in high-skill, high-demand areas at career technical centers;
- **\$20 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; and
- **\$100 million** for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified faculty at our state universities.

Workforce Initiatives

To meet the goal of becoming #1 in workforce education by 2030, Governor DeSantis has committed more than **\$8.5 billion** to workforce education programs spanning secondary to postsecondary since 2019, which has achieved the following:

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- 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 since 2019.
- Florida's education system became the #1 in the nation for entrepreneurship education and training, with more than 20,000 students earning an industry certification in Entrepreneurship and Small Business (ESB).

To continue elevating Florida's workforce program, the Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes an historic **\$765 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.

Highlights include:

- **\$451 million** in operational funding for Florida's CTE programs;
- **\$20 million** for the Governor's Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program to establish or expand pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs for high school and college students. Within the \$20 million, **\$5 million** is dedicated to the Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program; and
- **\$100 million** in the Workforce Development Capitalization Incentive Grant Program for the creation or expansion of CTE programs.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget continues to invest in Florida's nursing workforce by maintaining **\$130 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.
- **\$30 million** for the Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) fund to incentivize collaboration between nursing education programs and healthcare partners.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides **\$80 million** to the Florida Semiconductor Institute at the University of Florida to support workforce development for semiconductor manufacturing alongside research and development focused on advanced packaging, artificial intelligence, and assurance.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget invests an additional **\$25 million**, for a total of **\$35.5 million**, in the Florida Center for Cybersecurity at the University of South Florida to strengthen the state's cybersecurity industry by enhancing education, research, and workforce development.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides **\$173.5 million** for Florida's Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

- **\$17 million** in operating funds for Bethune-Cookman University.

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- **\$7 million** in operating funds for Florida Memorial University.
- **\$7.5 million** in operating funds for Edward Waters University.
- **\$122 million** in operating funds for Florida A&M University.
- **\$20 million** for HBCU facility hardening.

Education Infrastructure

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides **\$1.2 billion** in funding for education capital outlay initiatives, including:

- **Special Facility Construction**
 - **\$193 million** for Special Facility Construction projects for Gadsden, Gilchrist, Glades, Hendry, Putnam, and Wakulla counties.
 - **\$42 million** for inflationary cost increases for Calhoun, Jackson, and Okeechobee counties.
- **Higher Education Construction**
 - **\$100 million** for Florida College System construction needs.
 - **\$573 million** for State University System construction needs.
- **Maintenance**
 - **\$231 million** for public charter school maintenance;
 - **\$9 million** for lab school maintenance;
 - **\$14 million** for the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind maintenance;
 - **\$6 million** for Public Broadcasting projects;
 - **\$15 million** for Public School projects; and
 - **\$7 million** for Vocational Technical facilities.

Conserving Florida's Natural Resources

Conserving Florida's natural resources, restoring the Florida Everglades, and prioritizing water quality improvements have remained key focuses since Governor DeSantis took office. The Focus on Florida's Future Budget continues Florida's record support of investing in Everglades restoration projects, restores our waterways, and funds infrastructure projects to improve quality and supply of water resources, and invests in mitigation projects to fortify Florida's beaches and coastlines.

Prioritizing Florida's Everglades and Water Quality

During his first term in Office, Governor DeSantis called for **\$2.5 billion** to be invested over four years for the protection of water resources. The Governor surpassed that goal by securing over **\$3.3 billion** during his first term.

Last year, Governor DeSantis reinforced his commitment to prioritizing Florida's waterways in his second term by calling for an historic **\$3.5 billion** investment for Everglades restoration and protection of our water resources. The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes more than **\$1.5 billion** for this initiative, bringing the total investment during the Governor's first two years of his second term to **\$3.2 billion**, well on track to meet the **\$3.5 billion** goal.

Investing in Florida's Everglades

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes more than **\$850 million** for Everglades restoration projects, including:

- **\$550 million** for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP).
- **\$64 million** for the EAA Reservoir to continue 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 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.
- **\$100 million** for phase 2 of the C-51 Reservoir.
- **\$86.7 million** for the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program.

Defending Florida's Everglades from Invasive Species

Governor DeSantis has prioritized efforts to remove the invasive Burmese python from the Everglades. The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes more than **\$3 million** to remove pythons from the Everglades.

Protecting Florida's Water Quality, Quantity and Supply

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget also includes **\$535 million** for targeted water quality improvements to achieve significant, meaningful and measurable nutrient

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reductions in key waterbodies across the state and to implement the recommendations of the Blue-Green Algae Task Force. This includes:

- **\$110 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. Senate Bill 1638 provides an additional **\$79 million** for projects in the expanded Water Quality Improvement Grant Program.
- **\$100 million** for the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) Protection Program for priority water quality projects, as called for in Executive Order 23-06.
- **\$25 million** to accelerate projects to meet nutrient reduction goals, called Total Maximum Daily Loads.
- **\$20 million** for critical infrastructure including wastewater and stormwater projects to address water quality and coral reef restoration in Biscayne Bay.
- **\$25 million** for water quality improvements in the Caloosahatchee River watershed.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$55 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 Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$40 million** to improve water quality and combat the impacts of harmful algal blooms, including blue-green algae and red tide, including:

- **\$10 million** for innovative technologies to aid in the prevention, cleanup and mitigation of harmful algal blooms.
- **\$10.8 million** to increase water quality monitoring, support the Blue-Green Algae Task Force, and maintain the water quality public information portal.
- **\$10 million** for harmful algal blooms mitigation to implement water quality treatment technologies in Lake Okeechobee.
- **\$5 million** to assist county governments with their responses to emergency conditions associated with harmful algal blooms and red tide events.
- **\$4.2 million** in funding for continued support of research activities conducted by the Center for Red Tide Research.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$55 million** for the Alternative Water Supply Grant Program to help communities plan for and implement vital conservation, reuse and other alternative water supply projects. DEP will continue to engage local governments, industry, universities and water management districts to identify and research all viable alternative water supply sources and is working to provide an assessment of funding needs critical to supporting Florida's growing economy.

Prioritizing Florida's State Parks

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 Focus on Florida's Future Budget dedicates **\$15 million** to infrastructure improvements and resource management with the goal of maintaining this high standard. Senate Bill 1638 also provides **\$32 million** for land management activities within the state park system and **\$4 million** for implementing the Local Trail Management Grant Program.

Protecting Florida's Conservation Lands and Waterways

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **more than \$129 million** to protect Florida's conservation lands and waterways to ensure Florida's prized properties are accessible for future generations of Florida families. Project highlights include:

- **\$100 million** for the Florida Forever Program, the state's blueprint for conserving Florida's natural and recreation lands, including those located within the Florida Wildlife Corridor.
- **\$15 million** for the Florida Communities Trust, to acquire community-based parks, open space and greenways that further outdoor recreation and natural resource protection needs.
- **\$14.3 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.

In addition, Senate Bill 1638 provides **\$100 million** for the acquisition of lands or conservation easements within the Florida wildlife corridor.

Protecting Florida's Domestic Food Security & Family Farms

In addition to funding Florida Forever, the Focus on Florida's Future Budget makes funding for Florida's working agricultural lands and family farms permanent by providing an annual appropriation of **\$100 million** to the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program.

Fortifying Florida's Coastlines and Beaches

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 storm surge and flooding. Since its creation, the Resilient Florida Grant Program has provided more than \$1.6 billion in resiliency funding.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget continues Florida's record investment in projects to strengthen and fortify our beaches and coastal community infrastructure. This includes over \$171 million for the resilience Florida Grant Program and \$11 million to restore Florida's Coral Reefs.

To continue to fortify our beaches, the Focus on Florida's Future budget invests \$50 million to support beach nourishment projects, bringing the cumulative investment since 2019 to more than \$600 million. Florida's coastlines are its first defense against a storm and ensuring that the state's beaches are strong is important to protect our coastal infrastructure.

Florida's Coral Reef Restoration and Recovery Initiative

Included within **\$22.4 million** for coral reef protection and restoration is **\$10.9 million** to continue 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. 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.

Investing in Florida's Citrus Industry

In order to preserve Florida's iconic citrus industry, the Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes more than **\$31 million** for citrus research and the Citrus Health Response Program. This includes **\$6 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

In addition to providing **\$4 million** to support the replanting of trees and timber impacted by hurricanes and natural disasters, the Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes over **\$20 million** to effectively combatting wildfires:

- **\$12.4 million** for wildfire suppression equipment;
- **\$5 million** for road and bridge maintenance to allow for better access for land management and wildfire suppression activities; and
- **\$3.1 million** to replace or relocate forestry stations for improved infrastructure and safety standards.

Mitigating and Restoring Contaminated Sites

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$234 million** for the cleanup of contaminated sites with a focus on promoting redevelopment of these areas once cleanup has been completed. Cleanup and redevelopment of these sites will ensure Florida's new businesses and growing communities can continue to grow. Specific investments include:

- **\$220 million** for Petroleum Tanks Cleanup;
- **\$10 million** for Dry Cleaning Solvent Contaminated Site Cleanup; and
- **\$4 million** for Hazardous Waste Contaminated Site Cleanup.

Transportation, Infrastructure, & Emergency Management

Florida is currently home to over **22 million people** and welcomed more than 140 million as visitors in 2023. As a high-growth state, the movement of an increasing number of people and goods from place to place quickly and efficiently depends on a continuing commitment to the development and maintenance of a world class transportation infrastructure.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$15.5 billion** for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). FDOT's total budget for the next five years surpasses **\$66 billion** in transportation investments. Every dollar invested in transportation is estimated to result in a return of up to \$4 in economic benefits to Florida's residents and businesses.

Many states rely heavily on the federal government to fund their transportation infrastructure needs. However, in Florida, federal funding accounts for just 25 percent of the state's record transportation budget. Rather than support the continued politicization of transportation funding being pushed by the Biden Administration, the Focus on Florida's Future Budget focuses on prioritizing road projects that reduce congestion and expedite the movement of goods through the state's supply chain.

Moving Florida Forward Initiative to Relieve Traffic Congestion

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides all remaining funding authority to implement the Moving Florida Forward Initiative, championed by the Governor last year. This program is a bold initiative to address congestion on Florida's highways and roads that will support our state's historic growth.

Transportation Work Program

Within the total amount provided to the Department of Transportation, the Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides **\$14.5 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. This year's investment in the Work Program includes:

- **\$5.2 billion** for highway construction and maintenance to include 140 new lane miles.
- **\$1.8 billion** to resurface 3,128 lane miles.
- **\$109.6 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.
- **\$334.2 million** for aviation improvements.

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- **\$382.5 million** in scheduled repairs for 72 bridges and replacement of 15 bridges.
- **\$960.6 million** investment in rail and transit projects.
- **\$210.1 million** for safety initiatives.
- **\$215.3 million** for community trail projects, including **\$50 million** for the SunTrail Network.

Natural Disaster Recovery & Emergency Management

Over the past year, under the leadership of Governor DeSantis, the State rose to the significant challenges imposed by disasters, most notably Hurricanes Ian, Nicole, and Idalia, response to illegal immigration surges across the Florida Straits and along the Southwest Border of the United States, historic flooding in Broward County, and most recently, the historic evacuation and relief missions for Israel and Haiti. The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides significant funding for disaster recovery, mitigation, and emergency management, including:

Open Federally Declared Disasters – Funding to Communities and State Operations

\$1.2 billion is provided for disaster preparation, response, recovery and mitigation for declared disasters, including Hurricanes Ian and Nicole. This funding allows the Division of Emergency Management to effectively continue the Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs statewide.

Community Development Block Grant

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$396 million** in additional federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for local hurricane recovery and hardening efforts throughout the state, including the CDBG Disaster Recovery Program for all named hurricanes since 2017 and the CDBG Mitigation Program.

Maintaining and Improving State Critical Infrastructure

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget addresses critical building deficiencies throughout the state with the investment of **\$98 million** in improvement projects at state-owned facilities. This includes:

- **\$90 million** to provide employees and visitors at state owned office buildings a safe and efficient working environment; and
- **\$8 million** for maintenance and repair projects at the Florida State Fire College and Arson Lab.

Bolstering Florida's Record Economic Growth

Under the leadership of Governor DeSantis, Florida has become the national leader for economic prosperity. Florida's position as a roaring economic engine and job creator is proven by the following facts:

- Florida leads the nation in the number of new business creations, with more than 2.7 million businesses created since 2019.
- In October 2023, Florida was named as the most entrepreneurial state in the nation by the *Digital Project Manager*, noting that Florida has the highest percentage of the population that has started a business with 13,238 small businesses per 100,000 residents, 3,000 more small businesses per 100,000 residents than the second-place Georgia.
- Florida's unemployment rate in April 2024 was 3.3 percent, less than the national unemployment rate of 3.9 percent. Florida's statewide unemployment rate has been lower than the national rate for 42 consecutive months.
- Florida's private sector job growth increased by 210,900 jobs from April 2023, a growth rate of 2.5 percent and higher than the national growth rate of 1.6 percent.

Ensuring Housing Availability and Affordability for Florida's Families

Following the signing of the Live Local Act during the 2023 Legislative Session, which provided historic funding levels for the state's affordable housing programs, the Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides nearly **\$508 million** to fully fund these programs:

- **\$234 million** for the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) program.
- **\$174 million** for the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program.
- **\$100 million** for the third year of the Hometown Heroes Housing program, which makes homeownership affordable for hard-working Floridian heroes, including law enforcement officers, firefighters, educators, healthcare professionals, childcare employees, and active military or veterans.

Economic Recovery and Development

Florida's pro-freedom policies result in economic growth, and 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 industries. The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides substantial funding for economic development 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.

- **\$175.2 million** for the third phase of the State Small Business Credit Initiative, providing Florida's small businesses with essential access to additional growth and support funding.

Economic Support for Law Enforcement and the Military

Governor DeSantis has always recognized the invaluable contributions made to Florida by its law enforcement and military communities. The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes:

- **\$17 million** for the third 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.
- **\$7 million** for the Defense Infrastructure Grant Program, which provides funding for infrastructure projects that make a positive impact on the military value of installations within the state.
- **\$3 million**, an increase of **\$2.2 million**, for the Military Base Protection Program, which helps secure non-conservation lands to serve as a buffer protecting military installations from encroachment.

Rural Development

Florida's rural areas represent a tremendous opportunity for growth and prosperity. One of the key elements to this rural economic development is a focus on developing modern infrastructure, including broadband internet service. The Focus on Florida's Future Budget demonstrates the Governor's ongoing commitment to economic growth in rural areas by including:

- **\$20 million** for the Rural Infrastructure Fund, to support local rural infrastructure projects such as roads, storm and wastewater systems, and telecommunications facilities.
- **\$100 million** for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (B.E.A.D.) Program, to support broadband initiatives to expand high-speed internet deployment and access to Florida communities.
- **\$88.6 million** for the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) to assist small county governments in repairing or rehabilitating county bridges, paving unpaved roads, addressing road-related drainage improvements, resurfacing or reconstructing county roads, or constructing capacity or safety improvements to county roads.
- **\$26.5 million** for the Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP) to assist small county governments in resurfacing or reconstructing county roads.
- **\$67.1 million** for the County Incentive Grant Program (CIGP) to provide grants to counties to improve transportation facilities located on the State Highway System or to relieve traffic congestion on the State Highway System.

Investing in Florida's Property Insurance Market

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The Focus on Florida's Future Budget invests over **\$237 million** to support residential home mitigation programs and additional oversight of the property insurance market, including:

- **\$200 million** for the My Safe Florida Home Grant Program to continue assisting Florida homeowners through home inspections and cost sharing for approved home hardening and wind mitigation programs that make properties less vulnerable to hurricane damage and reduces insurance premiums.
- **\$30 million** for a new My Safe Florida Condominium Pilot Program to expand the already successful My Safe Florida Home program to provide financial assistance to condominium associations to increase hurricane resistance and reduce insurance premiums for even more Floridians.
- **\$6 million** increase for the Florida International University to upgrade and enhance the capabilities of the Florida Public Hurricane Loss Model to improve the geographic assessments and to include perils not currently contemplated in the model.
- **\$1.1 million** to bolster the Florida Office of Insurance Regulation's (OIR) ability to curate data related to Florida's property insurance market.
- **\$675,000** to contract for independent reinsurance and mitigation research experts to bolster OIR's ability to review filings and recommend new tools to mitigate properties from hurricanes.

Assistance to Households

To support qualifying Floridians who face the headwinds of increasing household expenses, the Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides **\$100 million** for additional 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.

Ensuring Fair, Free, and Safe Elections

Florida is known as a national leader in conducting fair and accurate elections. Nevertheless, continued vigilance and oversight is needed to ensure that the integrity of Florida elections is always maintained, and that those who commit election fraud or other election law violations are held accountable. The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides **\$17.5 million** for 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.

Health and Human Services

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget, supplemented with the funding included in the Live Healthy legislation signed into law by Governor DeSantis on March 21, 2024, further strengthens Governor DeSantis' commitment to providing support to Floridians struggling with behavioral health and substance use issues, seniors and their caregivers, those with unique abilities and survivors of human trafficking. The budget also increases support for foster and adoptive families with the goal of supporting new families and providing the assistance that adoptive children need to transition into adulthood and reach their goals.

Bolstering Cancer Research

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides more than **\$232 million** in funding for cancer research, including **\$60 million**, a 200 percent increase of **\$40 million**, for the Florida Cancer Innovation Fund that supports groundbreaking cancer research stemming from emerging ideas, trends, and promising practices that can serve as a catalyst for further exploration. The budget also continues **\$127.5 million** for the Casey DeSantis Cancer Research Program.

Supporting the Health of Women and Children

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget, and funding provided in the Live Healthy legislation, includes an additional **\$456.5 million** to support the health and development of pregnant women and children. This funding includes support for the Florida KidCare Program, helps improve access to obstetric care for pregnant women, and supports quality improvement initiatives for children birth to 36 months who have a developmental delay.

Behavioral Health

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget, and funding provided in the Live Healthy legislation, provides more than **\$442 million** in funding to support behavioral health services. These resources will improve access to mobile response services, increase rates for providers, provide direct services, help to expand the behavioral health workforce, as well as support collaboration between primary care and behavioral health providers.

Battling the Opioid Crisis

Florida continues to support care and recovery for individuals who are struggling with opioid use disorders through the provision of services and supports. This includes more than **\$179.4 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 psychiatric residents and for other initiatives that

support education, treatment, and prevention for individuals with substance use disorders.

In addition, **\$31.8 million** from the Opioid Settlement Agreement proceeds will be used to continue and expand the Coordinated Opioid Recovery (CORE) Network, which provides rescue response to support immediate treatment, stabilization, and assessment of the patient to determine the best course of treatment, and to provide long-term treatment and wrap around support.

Child Welfare

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$93.2 million** in additional funds to support those served or in danger of entering the child welfare system. This funding supports foster parents and caregivers and expands access to post-adoption supports for young adults adopted from the dependency system.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$9.4 million** to expand adoption incentives to groups that currently include state employees, law enforcement officers and school district personnel. Additional funds will provide adoption incentives to health care practitioners and employees of local tax collectors to help more children in foster care find their forever home. The one-time incentive amounts will be increased from **\$5,000 to \$10,000 and \$10,000 to \$25,000.**

Human Trafficking

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes an increase of **\$7.2 million**, for a total of **\$12.5 million**, to support prevention efforts and to provide additional services to victims of human trafficking. The funds will provide housing for survivors to support their recovery and increased staffing to enhance prevention services.

Putting Seniors First

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes an increase of **\$6 million**, for a recurring total of **\$69.1 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.

The budget provides more than **\$2 million** in additional funding for the Florida Alzheimer's Center of Excellence (FACE). This initiative supports a person-centered, holistic care model focused on community support and equips the medical system to provide early diagnoses, quality care management, and linkages to community services for persons living with dementia and their primary caregiver.

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Additionally, an increase of **\$11 million** is provided, for a total of **\$115 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 supports include adult day care, respite for caregivers, home delivered meals, and minor home modifications allowing them to continue to live in their homes.

Floridians with Unique Abilities

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget, and funding included in the Live Healthy legislation, provides more than **\$377.5 million** in new funding to allow additional individuals with unique abilities to be provided necessary services. Included in this amount is **\$38.4 million** to support the enrollment of eligible individuals into a new voluntary pilot program that provides for the comprehensive coverage of services to individuals with disabilities via a managed care service delivery model. This also includes **\$55.7 million** to enroll individuals currently in a pre-enrollment category and **\$64.8 million** to enroll those in crisis. In total, more than **\$2.2 billion** is appropriated to support iBudget waiver services, which is the highest level ever appropriated.

Veterans

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget invests an additional **\$4.9 million** to support equipment and capital improvements for the State Veterans' Nursing Homes. The budget also includes **\$10 million** to assist with the construction of the ninth State Veterans' Nursing Home in Collier County upon federal grant approval. Once this new nursing home is complete, Florida will have the most state-funded veterans' nursing homes in the nation.

The Focus on Florida's Future 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.

Maintaining Law & Order

Public safety continues to be a top priority for Governor DeSantis, with Florida currently experiencing a 50-year low in crime. The Focus on Florida's Future Budget makes necessary investments in our public safety, including enhancing correctional officer safety, and combatting the flow of fentanyl and other drugs into Florida from the Southern Border.

Keeping Floridians Safe from Terror

Governor DeSantis has led the way for Florida's support of the State of Israel in its battle against Hamas terrorists, and he was the only Governor to send planes to Israel to bring Americans in harm's way home. The Governor has also been front and center in fighting the scourge of antisemitism in our state. The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides **\$10 million** to continue the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, providing nonprofit organizations such as houses of worship, schools, museums, and community centers at risk for violent attacks with resources to increase security and safety.

Combatting Fentanyl & Illegal Drugs

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$9.3 million** to support law enforcement efforts to combat the opioid epidemic affecting Florida's communities:

- **\$8.5 million** to expand the State Assistance for Fentanyl Eradication (S.A.F.E.) in Florida Program for the second year. The funds have and will continue to assist local law enforcement in combatting the illicit trafficking and sale of fentanyl within Florida. Funds will be provided to the Department of Law Enforcement to be distributed to local agencies.
- More than **\$765,000** and an additional 5 laboratory analysts to improve fentanyl identification and trend monitoring and implement a more comprehensive seized drug testing analysis plan.

Enhancing Law Enforcement Officer Safety

- The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$2 million** for the Department of Law Enforcement to provide body armor to our state's brave men and women in law enforcement and **\$1.5 million** for a 5 percent pay increase for Special Agents.

Keeping Florida Roads Safe

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes:

- **\$3.3 million** for the replacement of aging Florida Highway Patrol vehicles.
- **\$1.3 million** for additional trooper equipment.

Agricultural Law Enforcement

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes:

- **\$9 million** to provide an additional 25 officers, and additional equipment and law enforcement vehicles.
- **\$1.9 million** to create a dedicated K9 Unit, including 8 additional officers, within the FDACS Division of Agricultural Law Enforcement to safeguard Florida's agricultural commodities from drug trafficking.

Improving Infrastructure at Florida Correctional Facilities

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes more than **\$102 million** for the Florida Department of Corrections to improve correctional infrastructure, including:

- **\$42.3 million** for general maintenance and repair at facilities across the state;
- **\$3 million** to address environmental needs, such as improvements to wastewater treatment systems;
- **\$56.4 million** for building new and secure open bay dorms within the Florida Department of Corrections; and
- **\$750,000** for repairs related to ADA compliance.

Technology Improvement

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$26.2 million** for the Florida Department of Corrections Technology projects, including:

- **\$9.2 million** to invest in a Technology Restoration Plan to expand and enhance network infrastructure; and
- **\$17 million** for the Offender Based Information System (OBIS) modernization project.

Investing in Florida's Juvenile Justice System

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides **\$38.7 million** for the Department of Juvenile Justice, including:

- **\$5.2 million** to increase residential commitment bed capacity, in order to reduce time spent in Secure Detention;
- **\$27.2 million** for the construction of a new Regional Juvenile Detention Center in Hillsborough County; and
- **\$6.3 million** for the reinvestment in children and families who need intervention services to help improve the overall family situation and environment.

Florida Scholars Academy

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes an additional **\$12.8 million** for the continued implementation of the Department of Juvenile Justice's (DJJ) Florida Scholars Academy (FSA). The FSA, which is operated by the Florida Virtual School, provides various educational opportunities and trade skills in high-demand occupations

in DJJ's residential commitment programs. The total investment of **\$24.8 million** will fully finance the operational and programmatic needs of the FSA.

Enhancing Florida's Crime Databases

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement 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 Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides more than **\$17 million** to expand and enhance these databases, including:

- **\$11.8 million** for the third and final phase of the modernization of the Biometric Identification Solution (BIS) database;
- **\$3 million** for the technology enhancement of breath test instrumentation and associated software within the Alcohol Testing Program;
- **\$1.9 million** to enhance the Missing and Endangered Person Information Clearinghouse applications; and
- **\$600,000** for implementing the Statewide Sexual Assault Tracking System.

Supporting State Courts

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$741.3 million** and **100 FTE** for the State Court System to provide workload support and additional due process resources by providing:

- **\$2.6 million** and **10 FTE** to assist with the growing need for due process services in the trial courts;
- **\$4.1 million** and **30 FTE** to address increased court reporting costs and for additional court reporters and stenographers needed in trial court operations;
- **\$1.9 million** and **20 FTE** to hire additional case managers in each judicial circuit to efficiently move cases through the judicial process;
- **\$3.7 million** and **20 FTE** to provide support for additional circuit court and county court judgeships throughout the state;
- **\$2 million** to address critical cybersecurity needs throughout the Judicial Branch;
- **\$1.8 million** and **20 FTE** to address an increased workload associated with child support enforcement hearings; and
- **\$1.8 million** to make necessary repairs to the Fifth District Court of Appeal's courthouse parking garage and replacement of the courthouse chiller.

Representation for Children

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes more than **\$950,000** and **11 FTE** to assist the Florida Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Office in representing the legal interests of Florida's most vulnerable children by providing:

- More than **\$800,000** and **9 FTE** to address the decline in victim advocate positions funded by grants that were established by the Victims of Crime Act in the Guardian Ad Litem Office; and

- More than **\$125,000** and **2 FTE** to coordinate and manage data related to the new mentoring expansion as part of the Hope Florida – A Pathway to Promise initiative.

Enhancing Emergency 911 Call Services

Ensuring our first responders have the technology and resources necessary to provide lifesaving aid quickly and effectively to our residents and visitors of Florida remains a priority through the continued investment in our state's emergency 911 (E911) call services. The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes an additional **\$40 million** for the following E911 enhancements:

- **\$13 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** for distributions to local governments to begin upgrading all 911 public safety answering points within the state to allow the transfer of calls from one local, multi-jurisdictional, or regional E911 system to another.
- **\$15 million** to continue supporting and improving the Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS).

Local Firefighter Support

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget invests nearly **\$50 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, but also improve the state's overall medical, police, and fire response capabilities during natural disasters and other state emergencies.

Schools and Libraries E-Rate Match Program

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget aims to make telecommunication and information services more affordable for schools and libraries through the investment of **\$3 million** in grant funds for the design, engineering, project management and construction related costs to build or upgrade telecommunication and internet access, such as broadband infrastructure.

Safeguarding Florida against Cybersecurity Threats

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget continues the commitment to harden Florida's cybersecurity framework through the funding of over **\$80 million** in various state agencies for security intelligence, modernization, training, and resiliency. While Florida has improved its cybersecurity posture in recent years, it is vital to continue to invest in modern cybersecurity initiatives to maintain pace with the ever-evolving technology landscape to ensure Floridians' sensitive information and critical infrastructure are protected.

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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.

Investing in Florida's Military

Continued Support of the Florida State Guard

Florida's response capabilities continue to strengthen through the re-establishment of the Florida State Guard to aid and respond during emergencies. In 2023, the Florida State Guard was activated for the first time in 75 years during Hurricane Idalia, augmenting manpower and providing important resources to impacted Floridians. Since then, the Florida State Guard was activated in response to Winter Storm Finn and continues to respond to Operation Lone Star and Operation Vigilant Sentry to monitor and combat illegal migration at Texas' southern border and Florida's shorelines. The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides nearly **\$20 million** to restore and build upon the current successes of the Florida State Guard by furthering capabilities to recruit, train and equip the Soldiers to enable rapid response efforts before, during and after disasters.

Supporting Florida National Guard

Florida National Guard recruitment and retention programs help provide a well-rounded force of soldiers that are supported not only in their National Guard duties but also in their careers. The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$6.7 million** for the following initiatives:

- **\$5.2 million** to fully support Florida National guardsmen seeking higher education degrees; and
- **\$1.5 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 Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$40.5 million** for year two of the multi-year initiative to construct multiple state-of-the-art training facilities for the Florida National Guard at Camp Blanding. This initiative will provide training facilities and barracks to support simultaneous training of 5,000 guardsmen.

Renovating National Guard Readiness Centers Statewide

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes over **\$14 million** to make repairs and renovations to outdated readiness centers across Florida. This includes:

- **\$5 million** for year two of the Revitalization and Modernization Program (REVAMP), a multi-year plan to renovate all readiness centers to meet safety standards and building code compliance.
- **\$8 million** for general maintenance at existing readiness centers.
- **\$1.5 million** for site surveying, demolition, and land clearing of the 70-acre Homestead Air Reserve Base which will be used in the future for a new readiness center.

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State Pay Package

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget invests **\$272 million** to retain staff and continue to recruit critical vacancies. The pay package provides:

- An across-the-board 3 percent pay increase for all state employees;
- Plus, an increase of 5 percent for special agents; and
- Additional funding to provide special pay adjustments to address recruitment and retention issues at state agencies.