

# FRAMEWORK FOR FREEDOM



FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024

## Fiscal Year 2023-24 Framework for Freedom Budget

### Statewide Overview and Taxes

Over the past few years, as so many states grinded their citizens down, Florida lifted its people up. Under the leadership of Governor Ron DeSantis, Florida has steadfastly worked to improve the lives of its residents including guaranteeing access to high-quality education, creating a robust economy that continues to outpace the nation, providing access to resources for those recovering from hurricanes, and investing record funding into the Everglades and Florida's water resources. Governor DeSantis has articulated a vision for a free and prosperous state, providing a Framework for Freedom for those across the country to follow.

The Framework for Freedom Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-24 totals \$114.8 billion and continues Governor DeSantis' commitment to Florida's K-12 students, parents and teachers, environmental resources, and law enforcement, all while maintaining healthy reserves, including \$6.9 billion in General Revenue.

Of the total \$114.8 billion, the General Revenue portion is \$42.4 billion. Florida's total reserves are \$15.7 billion, 13.7 percent of the total budget for the fiscal year, leaving ample resources for any unforeseen circumstances.

The Framework for Freedom Budget recommends a net decrease of 46 FTE based on a realignment of priorities across state agencies, reducing excess vacant positions to accommodate the additions of new positions for critical programs and services where they are needed.

### Taxpayer Savings

Governor DeSantis' Framework for Freedom Budget recommends record tax relief for Florida families, including permanent tax cuts to keep more money in the pockets of Floridians. Florida's per capita state tax collections of \$2,002 is the second lowest among all states. In the first year of his second term, Governor DeSantis has championed a \$2 billion tax cut plan to provide relief to Florida families. In addition to the \$500 million Toll Relief Program which began on January 1, 2023, the Framework for Freedom Budget includes an additional \$1.5 billion in tax cuts, including:

- **A permanent sales tax exemption for baby and toddler necessities for \$138.7 million** – This covers certain baby and toddler necessities such as clothing, shoes, and diapers for children under 5, and all baby wipes.
- **A permanent sales tax exemption for cribs and strollers for approximately \$3.9 million**

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- **A permanent sales tax exemption on gas stoves for \$7 million** – Gas stoves are free from federal overreach in Florida. The Framework for Freedom Budget exempts from sales tax the purchase of new stoves that are fueled by combustible gas such as syngas, natural gas, propane, butane, liquefied petroleum gas or other flammable gas.
- **A permanent sales tax exemption for over-the-counter pet medications for approximately \$33.6 million** – This covers over-the-counter pet medications such as flea and tick prevention.
- **Additionally, the Governor’s budget saves Florida Businesses \$141.4 million** – This permanently increases the amount of savings provided to businesses who e-file to the first \$60 of the sales tax return. The purpose of this allowance is to compensate the taxpayer for the cost, time, and effort expended to comply with timely filing.
- **A 1-year sales tax exemption for cosmetic and toiletries for \$72 million** – This covers cosmetic and toilet articles which may contain medicinal ingredients such as soap, toothpaste, hairspray, shaving products, mouthwash, shampoo, and deodorant.
- **A 1-year sales tax exemption for dental and oral hygiene products for \$45.3 million** – This covers all oral hygiene products and includes items used for preventative oral healthcare such as toothbrushes, dental floss, oral irrigators, and mouth wash.
- **A 1-year sales tax exemption on children’s books for \$17.3 million** – The holiday extends the 3-month sales tax holiday in the current fiscal year for one year.
- **A 1-year sales tax exemption on children’s toys for \$132.7 million** – The holiday provides for a 1-year tax exemption for children’s toys designated for children between the ages of 2 and 12 years old.
- **A 1-year sales tax exemption on children’s athletic equipment for \$42.5 million** – The holiday covers any equipment necessary for children to participate in a sports activity such as children’s bikes, children’s scooters, children’s rollerblades and skates, footballs, soccer balls, baseballs, baseball bats, and basketballs.
- **A 1-year sales tax exemption on household items under \$25 for \$138 million** – The holiday proposes a “household rescue year” to reduce the impact

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of inflation on Florida families by providing for a one-year sales tax exemption for all household consumer discretionary non-exempt products that are under \$25 in value. Everyday household items such as laundry detergent, toilet paper, paper towels, hand soap, dish soap, disinfecting wipes and spray, hand sanitizer, trash bags, facial tissue, and sponges that are under \$25 in value can be purchased tax free for one year.

- **Two Back-to-School sales tax holidays, one in the fall and one in the spring as students return to school from winter break, to save Florida families over \$210 million** – The holidays cover clothing up to \$100, school supplies up to \$50, and personal computers and related accessories priced \$1,500 or less.
- **A 14-day Disaster Preparedness sales tax holiday to save Florida families \$27.1 million** – The holiday covers items needed during disasters including generators priced at \$1,000 or less.
- **A 15-week Freedom Summer sales tax holiday to save Florida families more than \$224 million** – The holiday covers certain outdoor recreation purchases, such as the first \$100 of the sales price of sunglasses, the first \$200 of the sales price of tents, and the first \$500 of the sales price of kayaks or canoes, as well as tickets for events, museums, the arts, and more.
- **A 1-year sales tax exemption on pet foods for \$170.2 million** – The holiday covers pet food for all household pets inclusive of dogs, cats, fish, rabbits, hamsters, ferrets, guinea pigs, birds, and reptiles.
- **A 7-day Skilled Worker Tool sales tax holiday to save Florida workers \$13 million** – The holiday covers various hand tools and power tools and accessories used by Florida workers.
- **A 1-year sales tax exemption on ENERGY STAR appliances for \$82.4 million** – The holiday covers appliances such as washing machines, clothes dryers and water heaters selling for \$1,500 or less and refrigerators selling for \$3,000 or less that meet or exceed the ENERGY STAR PROGRAM.
- **A two-year extension for the exemption on natural gas fuel tax for \$1.2 million** – The proposal extends the tax exemption set to expire in 2023 for an additional two years providing continued tax relief for natural gas fuel. Natural gas fuel is any liquefied petroleum gas product used in a motor vehicle.

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## Florida Retirement System

Governor DeSantis recommends increasing the employer contribution for employee FRS Investment accounts by an additional three percent of the member's salary. When combined with the three percent increase provided in the current year, the six percent increase will provide members with more financial security upon retirement.

Furthermore, the Governor recommends increasing the pension benefits of retired FRS members by four percent to mitigate the loss of purchasing power faced by these former employees as a result of the recent inflationary surge due to the Biden Administration's disastrous economic policies.

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

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

## Florida Reserves

- \$6.9 billion in unallocated General Revenue
- \$3.4 billion in the Budget Stabilization Fund
- \$2.4 billion in unallocated Trust Funds
- \$1.0 billion in the Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund
- \$1.0 billion in the State Investment Fund
- \$1.0 billion in the Florida Optional Reinsurance Assistance Program
- **\$15.7 billion in Total Reserves**

The Governor's Framework for Freedom Budget recommends dedicating \$1 billion of General Revenue to a new state reserve fund, named the State Investment Fund. This Fund is available to the State as a reserve of last resort accessible only after the Budget Stabilization Fund has been fully exhausted. Additionally, \$100 million will be dedicated every year moving forward to grow the Fund to further strengthen Florida's fiscal reserves.

In addition, the Governor's Framework for Freedom Budget establishes the Debt Reduction Program and pledges \$400 million to immediately pay down state debt. A portion of investment returns from the State Investment Fund serve as a funding source

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for the Debt Reduction Program, enabling the state to pay down debt prior to its maturity and generate taxpayer savings.

## **State Pay Package**

The Framework for Freedom Budget recommends \$695 million to retain staff and continue to recruit critical vacancies such as law enforcement officers, correctional officers, and child protection investigators. The pay package provides:

- An across-the-board 5 percent pay increase for all state employees;
- A historic pay increase for state law enforcement officers;
- An increase for correctional officers to \$23 per hour;
- An additional 10 percent increase over the statewide average for certain “hard-to-hire” positions of importance for state government; and
- Targeted pay adjustments for critical staff of the Department of Children and Families child protection system and Department of Business and Professional Regulation licensing professionals, to reduce the wait time for licensees.

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## Education

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

Several important investments include:

- \$1 billion, an increase of \$200 million, in funding to provide salary increases for new and veteran teachers and other eligible instructional personnel.
- \$1.6 billion in funding for early child education, including more than \$451 million for Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK).
- Historic \$26 billion in funding, of which \$14.1 billion is record state funding for the K-12 public school system.
  - The appropriated funding covers the costs associated with the current projected enrollment of over 3 million students.
- \$1.5 billion in state operating funding for the Florida College System.
- \$3.1 billion in state operating funding for the State University System.
- \$125 million in total funding to reward quality nursing education programs to address nursing shortages.
- \$5 million in funding for the Law Enforcement Academy Scholarship Program.
- \$1 million in funding for the Out-of-State Law Enforcement Equivalency Reimbursement to help cover the cost of law enforcement officers moving to Florida.
- \$100 million for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified faculty at state universities.
- \$15 million for the institutional overhaul and restructuring of the New College of Florida.

### Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

The budget provides a total of more than \$451 million for Florida's VPK program, a high quality, free education initiative, which serves approximately 155,000 four- and five-year-olds. VPK prepares each child for kindergarten by building a strong foundation for school and focusing on early literacy skills.

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## School Readiness

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

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

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

## K-12 Public Education

Governor DeSantis understands that education is the foundation of our future workforce, and that is why the Framework for Freedom Budget provides an historic investment in our K-12 education system. This includes funding to ensure Florida's students are afforded every opportunity to get an education that best fits their needs. The budget expands the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship and the Family Empowerment Scholarship, which includes the newly renamed Family Empowerment-Gardiner-McKay scholarship, by creating educational savings accounts for eligible families.

The budget includes the highest per student investment of \$8,453 in the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), which is an increase of \$205 over Fiscal Year 2022-23. Governor DeSantis is once again acknowledging Florida's hard-working educators by providing funding for school districts to provide eligible teachers and other instructional personnel with salary increases.

The budget appropriates \$26 billion in total funding for the FEFP, which includes the following increases:

- Increase of \$121 in the Base Student Allocation (BSA);
- Increase of \$20 million, for a total of \$160 million for the mental health allocation;
- Increase of \$200 million, for a total of \$1 billion for salary increases. Under the Governor's proposal, each Florida school district will be provided the flexibility to utilize their allocation of the additional \$200 million in funding to provide salary

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increases to eligible teachers and instructional personnel in the manner that best fits the school district's needs;

- Increase of \$40 million, for a total of \$250 million for safe school initiatives; and
- Increase of \$20 million, for a total of \$535 million for student transportation.

## School Safety

The Framework for Freedom Budget continues to invest in school safety initiatives, continuing the Governor's commitment to ensuring Florida's students and teachers are in a safe and secure learning environment.

- The budget includes the following school safety initiatives:
  - \$250 million, an increase of \$40 million, for the safe schools component of the FEFP;
  - \$160 million, an increase of \$20 million, for the mental health allocation FEFP;
  - \$5.5 million is maintained for the Youth Mental Health Awareness and Assistance Training;
  - \$6.5 million is maintained for the Coach Aaron Feis Guardian Program that will be used to certify and train school guardians and provide a one-time stipend of \$500;
  - \$845,000 is maintained for the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool;
  - \$3 million is maintained to continue providing a centralized integrated data repository and data analytics resources to improve access to timely, complete and accurate information;
  - \$42 million is provided for public school hardening grants;
  - \$3 million for the procurement of a statewide transparency tool to support the implementation of HB 7, HB 1467, and HB 1557;
  - \$6.4 million is maintained to continue providing school districts access to a mobile panic alert system that is capable of connecting multiple first responder agencies; and
  - \$10 million for the Office of Safe Schools to implement the following school safety initiatives:
    - Secure statewide student safety and support portal;
    - Create a web-based tool to satisfy SESIR reporting; and
    - Create a Threat Management System.

## Protecting Florida's Jewish Day Schools

To continue to address safety concerns for Florida's Jewish communities, the Framework for Freedom Budget provides a record \$5 million in funding, an increase of \$1 million, to hire school safety officers, enhance safety measures, upgrade safety equipment, facilities and technology, and increase security services to ensure children at Florida Jewish Day Schools can learn in a safe environment. This funding will be available to all eligible Florida Jewish Day Schools.

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## Promoting Computer Science

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

## K-12 Civics Engagement

\$1 million is maintained to continue expanding the Florida Civics and Debate Initiative, which creates and enhances existing speech and debate programs with a focus on civic education. The Florida Civics and Debate Initiative is currently active in 54 Florida school districts, with 243 participating schools.

In addition, the Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$3.5 million in funding to provide support to school districts for the improvement of civic literacy for Florida's students using regional civics literacy captains and coaches. Additionally, the budget includes \$3 million for civic education curriculum.

## Teacher Recruitment

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

The program will:

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

## Higher Education

For the 5th straight year, Florida has been ranked the #1 system for higher education in the nation. U.S. News and World Report's 2022-2023 Best Colleges rankings placed the University of Florida and Florida State University among the top 20 public universities in the country. The Governor has taken action to ensure Florida continues to have a great higher education system by enacting accountability for tenure, adding transparency requirements for tuition and fees, aligning general education courses, and transforming the accreditation process.

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

- \$1.5 billion for Florida's state colleges; and

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- \$3.1 billion for Florida's state universities.

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

The budget invests \$25 million in state funding to continue the Open Door Grant Program, including \$10 million for School District Workforce Education Institutions and \$15 million for Florida College System institutions. The program is designed to create a demand-driven supply of credentialed workers for high-demand occupations and expand the affordability of workforce training and credentialing.

The budget provides \$8 million for Alzheimer's and Dementia research at the state universities.

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

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

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

## **Bright Futures**

The Framework for Freedom Budget fully funds the projected student enrollment for the Bright Futures Scholarship Program at \$614.5 million.

## **Holding the Line on Tuition**

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

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## Performance Funding

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

- \$6.5 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;
- \$560 million in performance funding for state universities; and
- \$100 million for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified faculty.

## Workforce Initiatives

The Governor has championed Florida becoming the #1 state in the nation for workforce education by 2030. To make this goal a reality, the Governor has committed more than \$5 billion to workforce education since 2019, which has achieved the following:

- Postsecondary enrollment has increased by 12 percent with more than 380,000 students currently enrolled and a record 772,000 students enrolled in high school Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.
- Florida's education system became the #1 in the world for entrepreneurship education and training, with more than 20,000 students earning an industry certification in Entrepreneurship and Small Business (ESB), mostly since 2020.

To continue elevating Florida's workforce program, the Framework for Freedom Budget includes over \$624 million to support workforce education programs to ensure Florida students are prepared to fill high-demand, high-wage jobs, and help Florida meet its goal of becoming first in the nation for workforce education by 2030.

- This includes \$20 million, an increase of \$5 million, to develop the Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program for the Governor's Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program to establish or expand pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs for high school and college students.

The budget continues to invest in Florida's nursing workforce by maintaining \$125 million to support two nursing education initiatives:

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

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## Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The Framework for Freedom Budget provides approximately \$126 million for Florida's Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

- \$16.96 million in operating funds for Bethune-Cookman University.
- \$7 million in operating funds for Florida Memorial University.
- \$7.4 million in operating funds for Edward Waters College.
- \$95.3 million in operating funds for Florida A&M University.

## Education Infrastructure

The Framework for Freedom Budget provides \$830 million in funding for the following education capital outlay initiatives:

- **School Safety Grants**
  - \$42 million for school safety grants provided to school districts to assist with costs associated with improving the physical security of K-12 school buildings.
- **Special Facility Construction**
  - \$105 million contingency fund to cover increasing costs related to Special Facility Construction projects for Glades, Gadsden, and Putnam counties, so these important projects can be completed regardless of rising costs from inflation.
- **Higher Education Construction**
  - \$93.1 million for Florida College System remodeling and renovation construction needs
  - \$81.3 million for State University System remodeling and renovation construction needs
- **Maintenance**
  - \$220.9 million for public charter school maintenance;
    - This funds the necessary infrastructure for charter schools without utilizing any school districts' local funds.
  - \$136.9 million for maintenance at the state colleges;
  - \$136.9 million for maintenance at the state universities;
  - \$8.6 million for lab school maintenance;
  - \$595,549 for Division of Blind Services maintenance; and
  - \$4.5 million for the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind maintenance.

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## Environment

Florida natural resources are the foundation of Florida's communities, economy, and way of life, and the protection of Florida's environment remains a key focus of Governor DeSantis. With record investments over the past four years, Florida has ushered in a new area of stewardship for Florida's natural resources, including the Everglades. The Framework for Freedom Budget continues this historic momentum, with significant investments made for Fiscal Year 2023-24. As part of more than \$6.8 billion in funding to protect our environment, agriculture and natural resources, the budget includes over \$3.5 billion specifically for the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

### Continued Improvements for Water Quality, Quantity and Supply

In Executive Order 19-12, among other major environmental reforms, Governor DeSantis called for \$2.5 billion to be invested over four years for the protection of water resources, an increase of \$1 billion over the previous four years. The Governor surpassed that goal by securing over \$3.3 billion. Governor DeSantis builds on this historic investment with Executive Order 23-06, calling for \$3.5 billion over the next four years for Everglades restoration and protection of our water resources, including water quality and water supply. The Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget initiates this investment, by dedicating more than \$1.1 billion.

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes more than \$614 million for Everglades restoration projects, including:

- \$58 million for Restoration Strategies.
- \$182.2 million for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP).
- \$86.3 million for the C-43 West Basin Reservoir Storage Project.
- \$152 million for the EAA Reservoir to continue the momentum of this critical project to reduce harmful discharges and help send more clean water south of the Everglades.
- \$50 million is included for specific project components designed to achieve the greatest reductions in harmful discharges to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Estuaries as identified in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project Draft Integrated Project Implementation Report and Environmental Impact Statement dated August 2020.
- \$86.1 million is included for the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program.

The Framework for Freedom Budget also includes \$370 million for targeted water quality improvements to achieve significant, meaningful and measurable nutrient reductions in key waterbodies across the state and to implement the recommendations of the Blue-Green Algae Task Force. This includes:

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- \$200 million for the wastewater grant program for projects to construct, upgrade or expand wastewater facilities, to provide advanced wastewater treatment and to convert from septic to sewer.
- \$100 million for the new Indian River Lagoon (IRL) Protection Program for priority projects to improve water quality in the IRL.
- \$50 million to accelerate projects to meet scientific nutrient reduction goals, called Total Maximum Daily Loads, which may include green infrastructure investments or land conservation to protect our water resources.
- \$20 million for critical infrastructure including wastewater and stormwater projects that address water quality impairments and coral reef restoration in Biscayne Bay.

On top of the investment in targeted water quality improvements, the Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$50 million to restore Florida's world-renowned springs. This funding may also be used for land acquisition to protect springsheds and is crucial to supporting homeowners and local communities as they work with the state to achieve septic and nutrient reduction requirements.

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$85 million for the continued stabilization, water treatment, and closure of Piney Point.

The Framework for Freedom Budget invests \$65 million to improve water quality and combat the effects and impacts of harmful algal blooms, including blue-green algae and red tide. The Framework for Freedom Budget includes the following:

- \$10 million for innovative technologies and short-term solutions 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 to maintain and improve the water quality public information portal.
- \$30 million for harmful algal blooms mitigation to implement water quality treatment technologies to combat harmful algal blooms in Lake Okeechobee.
- \$10 million to assist county governments with their responses to emergency conditions associated with harmful algal blooms and red tide events that may impact public health, Florida's environment and fragile ecosystems, including beaches and wildlife.
- \$4.2 million in funding for continued support of research activities conducted by the Center for Red Tide Research.

\$50 million is provided for the Alternative Water Supply Grant Program to help communities plan for and implement vital conservation, reuse and other alternative water supply projects. DEP will continue to engage local governments, industry, universities and water management districts to identify and research all viable

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alternative water supply sources and is working to provide an assessment of funding needs critical to supporting Florida's growing economy.

## **Further Protection of our Valuable and Vulnerable Coastlines**

In Fiscal Year 2021-22, Governor DeSantis championed the passage of the Resilient Florida Grant Program which enhances our efforts to protect our inland waterways, coastlines, shores and coral reefs, which serve as invaluable natural defenses against sea level rise.

The Framework for Freedom Budget invests over \$406 million for resiliency, including \$350 million for implementation of statewide resilience projects and \$56 million for resiliency planning and coral reef protection.

Protecting Florida's 1,300 miles of coastline is critical to our growing economy and quality of life, as millions travel from around the world to visit our world-renowned beaches. The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$50 million in beach nourishment funding to continue addressing Florida's critically eroded shorelines. In addition, Governor DeSantis recommends \$106 million for Hurricanes Ian and Nicole beach erosion recovery projects to fully fund DEP's *Hurricanes Ian and Nicole Recovery Plan for Florida's Beach and Dune Systems*.

## **Florida's Coral Reef Restoration and Recovery Initiative**

Included within \$21.2 million for coral reef protection is \$10.2 million to implement Florida's Coral Reef Restoration and Recovery Initiative to restore 25 percent of Florida's Coral Reef by 2050. Through facilitating an unprecedented, evidence-based propagation and outplanting program conducted by the state and its partners, Florida's Coral Reef will be restocked with hardy populations of native corals and other keystone species to re-establish and strengthen natural reproduction, dispersal, and recruitment patterns. Florida's Coral Reef Restoration and Recovery Initiative will significantly enhance flood protection in Southeast Florida and strengthen coastal economies.

## **Apalachicola Bay Oyster Restoration**

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$15 million to support the ongoing oyster restoration operation in Apalachicola Bay. This investment will double the supported acreage from 1,000 to 2,000 acres of durable oyster habitat.

## **Investing in Clean Lands and Air**

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes more than \$194 million for the cleanup of contaminated sites with a focus on promoting redevelopment of these areas once cleanup has been completed. Working with federal and local partners, cleanup and redevelopment of these sites will ensure Florida's new businesses and growing

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communities can safely develop and our economy can continue to grow. Specific investments include:

- \$180 million for Petroleum Tanks Cleanup;
- \$9 million for Dry Cleaning Solvent Contaminated Site Cleanup;
- \$5.5 million for Hazardous Waste Contaminated Site Cleanup.

## **A Commitment to Florida's Prized Properties and Waterways**

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$145 million to protect our prized properties and waterways in Florida. This funding will ensure all Floridians have access to enjoy our pristine natural environment, while protecting these unique natural resources and investing in the management of our state-owned lands.

As land acquisition is vital to both our economic growth and environmental protection, the Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$100 million for the Florida Forever Program, the state's premier conservation and recreation land acquisition program. This includes:

- \$75 million for the Division of State Lands to acquire land with a focus on protecting our water resources for Floridians and visitors, including lands within the Florida Wildlife Corridor.
- \$15 million for the Florida Communities Trust component of Florida Forever, which provides funding to local governments and eligible non-profit environmental organizations for the acquisition of community-based parks, open space and greenways that further outdoor recreation and natural resource protection needs.
- \$10 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.

Florida's State Parks have won the National Gold Medal a record four times for having the best state park system in the nation. The Framework for Freedom Budget dedicates \$45 million to infrastructure improvements and resource management with the goal of maintaining this high standard and ensuring all visitors and residents alike have access to these prized properties for generations to come.

## **Defending Florida's Everglades from Invasive Species**

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

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## **Investing in Florida's Agriculture and Citrus Industry**

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes more than \$2.7 billion for Florida's agricultural industry. In order to preserve Florida's iconic citrus industry, the budget invests \$29.4 million for citrus research and the Citrus Health Response Program. This includes \$15 million for the Department of Citrus for the expansion of the eCommerce and digital marketing program, which is focused on driving sales of Florida Citrus products through eCommerce partnerships with retail grocers and online shopping platforms.

## **Combatting Wildfires**

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

# FRAMEWORK FOR FREEDOM



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## Transportation and Economic Development

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

- In 2022, Florida experienced the largest percentage increase in net population migration, ranking as the fastest growing state in the nation.
- Florida's unemployment rate in December 2022 was 2.5 percent, near the historic all-time low for our state and a full percentage point less than the national unemployment rate of 3.5 percent. Florida's statewide unemployment rate has been lower than the national rate for 25 consecutive months.
- Florida's private sector employment increased by 425,800 jobs from December 2021 to December 2022, a growth rate 5.3 percent and a full two percentage points higher than the national growth rate of 3.3 percent.
- As of December 2022, Florida employers have added jobs for 32 consecutive months, and Florida's private sector year-over-year job growth rate has exceeded the nation's for 21 consecutive months.
- Florida's labor force grew by 3.5 percent over the year December 2021 to December 2022, more than double the national growth rate of 1.6 percent.
- As of December 2022, there were almost half a million (442,000+) job opportunities for Floridians posted online.

### Moving Florida Forward Initiative to Relieve Traffic Congestion

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes the resources and financing required for a bold new initiative to address the challenge of congestion on Florida's highways and roads that is the inevitable result of our state's historic growth. The *Moving Florida Forward Initiative* will accelerate the development and completion of 20 priority transportation projects over the next four years that will provide additional highway and road capacity to meet the needs of Florida's ever-growing economy and population. This initiative invests \$4 billion of general revenue, which will be leveraged for a total of \$7 billion.

### Transportation Infrastructure and Safety

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

In addition to the \$7 billion *Moving Florida Forward Initiative*, the Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$14.7 billion for the Florida Department of Transportation. This investment will provide for the retention and creation of more than 244,000 jobs.

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

## Transportation Work Program

Within the total amount provided to the Department of Transportation, the Framework for Freedom Budget provides \$13.4 billion for the State Transportation Work Program, which is an ongoing five-year plan for the implementation and completion of transportation infrastructure projects. These projects include construction and maintenance of Florida's roads, bridges, rails, seaports and other public transportation systems that grow the state's economy and improve the quality of life for our citizens.

Within the budget the Work Program includes:

- \$5.4 billion for highway construction to include 119 new lane miles.
- \$1.6 billion to resurface 2,657 lane miles.
- \$150.5 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.
- \$405.8 million for aviation improvements.
- \$553.2 million in scheduled repairs for 64 bridges and replacement of 19 bridges.
- \$807.4 million investment in rail and transit projects.
- \$236.5 million for safety initiatives.
- \$167.3 million for community trail projects.

## Keeping Florida Roads Safe

- The Framework for Freedom Budget provides \$2.6 million and 20 positions to conduct additional motor carrier and commercial motor vehicle inspections throughout the state, prioritizing human trafficking and human smuggling interdictions.
- The Framework for Freedom Budget provides \$1.5 million and 8 positions to establish Florida Highway Patrol presence on the Central Florida Expressway to enhance motorist and road safety.

## Transport of Unauthorized Aliens

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$12 million to continue implementation of the Governor's initiative to protect Floridians against the harms resulting from illegal immigration by facilitating the transport of unauthorized aliens.

## Disaster Recovery/Emergency Management

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

# FRAMEWORK FOR FREEDOM



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

## **Open Federally Declared Disasters – Funding to Communities and State Operations**

- \$2.1 billion is provided in federal and state funding is provided so that communities and the state can respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies as well as mitigate against future disasters or emergencies.
  - \$224.2 million in state match is provided for the state cost share associated with authorized federal funding to eligible local and state recipients for reimbursement of the response and recovery cost, as well as state management costs relating to federally declared disasters.
- \$117 million to construct three new warehouses and implement a state of the art warehouse management system to better inventory needed supplies for disasters, reduce waste, and ensure the state is fully stocked and prepared for any future emergency needs.
- \$10 million to support Florida’s eight Urban Search and Rescue Teams.
- \$15.6 million for community disaster mitigation and risk reduction initiatives.
- \$6.4 million for a new State Flood Mitigation Grant Program.

## **Community Development Block Grant**

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

## **Ensuring Housing Availability and Affordability for Florida’s Families**

Governor DeSantis has always recognized the importance of recommending significant resources in the state budget for affordable homes and apartments, providing Floridians with options for safe and decent housing. The Framework for Freedom Budget provides \$402.7 million to fully fund the Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Funds:

- \$121.7 million for the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) Program.
- \$281 million for the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP).

The Framework for Freedom Budget also provides \$100 million for the second year of the Hometown Heroes Housing Program. This program makes homeownership affordable for eligible frontline community workers such as law enforcement officers, firefighters, educators, healthcare professionals, childcare employees, and active military or veterans.

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This program provides down payment and closing cost assistance to first-time, income-qualified homebuyers so they can purchase a primary residence in the community in which they work and serve.

## **Economic Recovery and Development**

As Florida's pro-freedom policies result in economic growth, it is more important than ever to maintain our state's economic momentum through targeted investments in programs that support the creation of good jobs for Floridians and promote key Florida industries like tourism. The Framework for Freedom Budget provides substantial funding for such initiatives, including:

- \$100 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.
- \$100 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.
- \$170.9 million for the second phase of the State Small Business Credit Initiative, providing Florida's small businesses with essential access to additional growth and support funding.
- \$2.1 million to grow the Export Promotion and Assistance Program within Enterprise Florida Inc. (EFI).

## **Rural Development**

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

- \$30 million for the Rural Infrastructure Fund, to support local rural infrastructure projects such as roads, storm and wastewater systems, and telecommunications facilities.
- \$100 million to support broadband initiatives to expand high-speed internet deployment and access to Florida communities.
- \$13 million for the Digital Capacity Grant Program, providing resources to implement the Digital Adoption and Use Plan to achieve statewide digital literacy.

## **Assistance to Households**

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

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- \$18.4 million for additional federal funding under the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). In partnership with local agencies, LIHEAP assists low-income households in meeting the costs of their home heating and cooling needs.
- \$37.5 million for additional federal funding under the Low-Income Water Assistance Program (LIWAP). Modeled after LIHEAP, LIWAP assists low-income households in meeting the costs of their home water and wastewater needs.
- \$21.9 million for additional federal funding under the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). WAP provides resources to install energy conservation measures in the homes of low-income persons, focusing on homes occupied by the elderly, persons with disabilities, and children.

## Ensuring Fair, Free, and Safe Elections

Florida is known as a national leader in conducting fair and accurate elections, which was demonstrated once again in 2022. Nevertheless, continued vigilance and oversight 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 Framework for Freedom Budget provides resources needed to ensure our future elections are conducted with the utmost integrity and are safe from cyber threats, fraud, and any other election irregularities.

- The Framework for Freedom Budget includes a total of \$22.5 million for election oversight activities within the Department of State, with a focus on election integrity and security. This includes:
  - An additional \$3.1 million and 27 positions to fully staff the Office of Election Crimes and Security, responsible for receiving notices and investigating instances of potential election fraud and irregularities, and where warranted referring cases to the appropriate authorities for prosecution.
  - \$3 million for Florida Voter Registration System modernization.
  - \$811,750 for Election Websites modernization.
  - \$1.3 million for Campaign Finance System modernization.
  - \$962,969 for live call center services supporting the Statewide Voter Fraud and Assistance Hotline.
  - \$106,650 for cybersecurity awareness training for Supervisors of Elections.
  - \$100,000 for an Elections Signature Verification Training Program.

## Supporting Florida Arts and Culture

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

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- \$5 million for Cultural and Museum Grants to support projects that further the state's cultural objectives.
- \$525,000 to support the Florida Main Street Program. This program encourages economic development in Florida's historic commercial districts. There are currently 50 designated Main Street communities throughout the state.

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## Health and Human Services

Under the leadership of Governor DeSantis, Florida continues to prioritize services for *Seniors First* and to support our most vulnerable. The Framework for Freedom budget includes initiatives that allow Floridians to age in place and continue to reside in their homes. Funding to support individuals and their caregivers who are battling Alzheimer's or other related dementia emphasizes the Governor's commitment to finding a cure. The budget also includes additional support for those struggling with mental health challenges or substance use disorder. Further, the Governor continues to prioritize children and families by providing additional resources for those who receive service through the child welfare system. Finally, the Framework for Freedom Budget includes funding to support Florida's veterans who have faithfully served our nation.

### **Cancer Research and Care - Innovative Cancer Research**

Governor DeSantis and First Lady Casey DeSantis has prioritized funding to support cancer research to enhance Florida's competitiveness at national and international levels and ensure that all Floridians have access to the highest quality of care. The Framework for Freedom Budget invests more than \$166 million in cancer research funding, with \$20 million in funding to establish the Florida Cancer Innovation Fund to support groundbreaking cancer research. Funding will provide grants to support emerging research, trends and promising practices that can be replicated and expanded upon in Florida.

### **Support for Women and Children**

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes nearly \$143 million to enhance services for pregnant and postpartum women and children. This funding will improve maternal health outcomes for women at high risk for maternal morbidity. Additionally, this funding will improve access to necessary care and behavioral health services for infants and children, support quality improvement initiatives for children birth to 36 months who have a developmental disability and expand school health and dental services.

This funding also includes \$3.8 million to support premiums for families who receive services through the Florida Healthy Kids program and were impacted by Hurricane Ian.

### **Support for Hospitals Caring for Infants and Children**

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes an additional \$76 million for increased hospital rates for Florida hospitals that provide in-patient services for acutely ill newborns and pediatric patients. This is in addition to other programs, such as the Low Income Pool (LIP) that support Florida's Safety Net Hospitals.

# FRAMEWORK FOR FREEDOM



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## **Behavioral Health**

The Framework for Freedom Budget provides more than \$531 million in funding to support a comprehensive array of behavioral health services. Funding will provide additional support for mental health treatment facilities, competency restoration services, and will enhance the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline services.

Of the total \$531 million, \$78.9 million of General Revenue and federal State Fiscal Recovery Funds is recommended to sustain and expand the bed capacity at state-operated mental health treatment facilities. This will expand the number of patients that can be served, helping to reduce the waitlist for those that require these critical mental health care services.

In addition, the budget provides \$5.4 million in enhanced funding to support pediatric behavioral health services.

## **Opioid Crisis**

Florida continues to provide funding for individuals who are struggling with opioid use disorders through services including the Core Network. The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$334 million to increase access to treatment such as prevention services, medication assisted treatment, recovery support and continues research and surveillance activities that seek to reduce overdoses, unemployment and the incidence of hospitalization and homelessness.

This funding also includes \$147.4 million from the Opioid Settlement Agreement to establish the Office of Opioid Recovery to oversee these funds, an accredited Graduate Medical Education program to increase the number of psychiatric residents and other initiatives that support education, treatment, and prevention for individuals with substance use disorders.

## **Child Welfare**

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes more than \$96 million to support those served by the child welfare system. Funding will support foster parents and caregivers, community-based services, local prevention grants, and additional family navigators to connect high risk families and children to resources and supports through collaboration with front line child protective investigators. Additionally, funding is provided to continue the modernization of the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) system.

The Framework for Freedom Budget also includes \$15.1 million for maintenance adoption subsidies to support individuals who adopt children from the child welfare system.

# FRAMEWORK FOR FREEDOM



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## **Homelessness**

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$19 million to support individuals who are in need of housing assistance and are at risk of becoming homeless. Funding will support emergency shelter, rental assistance, and housing relocation and stabilization services in addition to case management services.

## **Human Trafficking**

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

## **Putting Seniors First**

The Framework for Freedom Budget invests an additional \$9 million to expand services provided by the 17 Memory Disorder Clinics and the Brain Bus to enhance diagnosis and prevention strategies for those impacted by Alzheimer's disease and other related dementia.

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

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

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

## **Persons with Disabilities**

The Framework for Freedom Budget provides more than \$79.6 million in funding to allow an additional 1,200 individuals in crisis to be served through the Agency for Persons with Disabilities waiver program. The budget also provides nearly \$3.4 million to support individuals who have both a development disability and mental health diagnosis receive evaluation and treatment in the most appropriate setting.

# FRAMEWORK FOR FREEDOM



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## **Veterans**

The Framework for Freedom Budget invests \$14.7 million to support nursing home residents, medical and non-medical equipment upgrades, capital improvements, and the remainder of the staff needed for the Ardie R. Copas and Alwyn Cashe State Veterans' Nursing Homes. The budget also continues a more than \$2 million investment to assist veterans in training, networking and mentoring throughout the state.

# FRAMEWORK FOR FREEDOM



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## Public Safety

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

### Salary Increases for Correctional and Law Enforcement Positions

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$124.3 million to provide salary increases across various public safety agencies, on top of the 5 percent statewide pay increase.

These salary increases include:

- \$107.2 million to increase the Department of Corrections' (FDC) base rate of pay to \$23 per hour for specified Correctional Officer, Correctional Probation Officer, and Inspector positions;
- \$1.8 million to provide a four percent increase to Special Agents and Law Enforcement positions within the Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE);
- \$6.8 million for special pay adjustments based on salary ranges for all sworn law enforcement officers within FDLE, Department of Legal Affairs (DLA), State Attorneys, and State Courts (SCS); and
- \$8.5 million for an increase for years of service for sworn law enforcement officers within FDLE, DLA, State Attorneys, and SCS.

### Combatting Fentanyl

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

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

### Law Enforcement Recruitment

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$30 million for a second round of recruitment bonus payments for law enforcement officers who are new to the profession in the state, including those relocating from other states. This initiative will provide bonus payments of \$5,000 to new eligible law enforcement officers.

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## **First Responder Recognition Payments Program**

The Framework for Freedom Budget recommends \$220 million from reallocated unobligated federal State Fiscal Recovery Funds to provide one-time recognition payments to each essential state and local first responder.

## **Enhancing Correctional Officer Staffing**

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$4.4 million to improve staffing levels at FDC. This funding includes:

- In addition to the five percent pay increase provided to all state employees, \$3.4 million to provide a targeted retention pay plan for the Correctional Officers series, the Correctional Probation Officers series, and the Inspector series that aims to address high turnover rates by providing a \$1,000 pay increase at two years of service, a \$500 pay increase at five years of service, and a \$1,000 pay increase at eight years of service; and
- \$1 million to repurpose existing FTEs for additional statewide recruitment staff to support FDC's recruitment efforts.

## **Safer Correctional Operations**

The Framework for Freedom Budget also includes \$47.2 million for FDC to make Florida's correctional facilities safer. This includes:

- \$10 million for security equipment, such as drone detection equipment, thermal fence cameras, drone support for K-9 operations, and license plate readers;
- \$1.3 million to allow FDC to repurpose existing FTEs for additional professional development, training, and support staff to continuously provide quality instructional products and training to ensure staff are both initially trained and that they maintain requisite certifications over time;
- \$2.3 million to modernize and enhance training provided at the Florida Corrections Academy; and
- \$33.6 million to improve infrastructure including environmental systems, regional evidence facilities, maintenance, repairs, and renovations.

## **Improving Inmate Health and Well-Being**

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$28.9 million for FDC to improve inmate health and well-being. This funding includes:

- \$1.4 million to allow FDC to repurpose existing FTEs to create two additional Behavioral Risk Management Teams to provide specialized on-site monitoring of high-risk facilities to ensure inmates with mental health needs have access to appropriate services;
- \$20 million for FDC to improve inmate health and well-being, decrease inmate idleness and violence, address aging infrastructure, and reduce recidivism; and
- \$7.5 million to renovate inmate wellness and program space statewide by increasing and improving program spaces and renovating recreation yards.

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## Enhancing Florida's Crime Databases

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

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

## Enhancing Law Enforcement Safety

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$2 million for FDLE to provide body armor to local law enforcement agencies, with a focus on agencies within fiscally constrained counties.

## Supporting State Attorneys

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$18 million, in addition to the five percent pay increase provided to all state employees, to provide salary increases to State Attorneys and Assistant State Attorneys.

## Supporting State Courts

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$15.7 million for the State Court System, in addition to the five percent pay increase provided to all state employees, to provide salary increases for due process staff, including court reporters, court interpreters, case managers, trial court staff attorneys, and court program specialists.

## Florida Scholars Academy

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

## Enhancing Emergency 911 Call Services

Ensuring that local law enforcement agencies have the tools necessary to effectively and efficiently manage emergency 911 (E911) call services is critical to safeguarding

# FRAMEWORK FOR FREEDOM



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our first responders and the residents and visitors of Florida. The Framework for Freedom Budget includes an additional \$44 million for the following E911 initiatives:

- \$25 million for distributions and grant awards to local governments for E911 system maintenance, integration with the Next Generation (NG) 911 system and implementation of text-to-911.
- \$12 million to implement three additional regions of the NG 911 call routing and mapping solutions, which are imperative to improving communications for telecommunicators and first responders.
- \$5.8 million to continue supporting and improving the Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS).
- \$350,000 for no cost training for local government public safety telecommunicators, to include managing work-related stress, cybersecurity threats, and how to use GIS within NG 911.
- \$800,000 for modernization of the Department of Management Services' operations of the E911 program to increase the efficiency of distributions to local governments and the continued implementation of NG 911.

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## Military Support

### Continued Expansion of the Florida State Guard

To ensure Florida remains fully fortified to respond to not only natural disasters but also to protect its people and borders from illegal aliens and civil unrest, it is now more important than ever to augment our Florida National Guard with the support of the Florida State Guard. The Framework for Freedom Budget provides \$98 million to grow the Florida State Guard, a civilian volunteer force, to aid during emergencies.

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

### Supporting Florida National Guardsmen and their Families

The Governor continues to support Florida National Guard recruitment, retention, and reward programs to develop and sustain a diverse force of soldiers that prosper not only in their National Guard duties but also in their careers and families. The Framework for Freedom Budget includes \$9.2 million for the following initiatives:

- \$6.2 million to fully support Florida National guardsmen seeking higher education degrees and to expand the program to allow a guardsman to transfer their unused education benefit to a spouse or child.
- \$2 million to give a one-time \$1,000 bonus to guardsmen who renew their contract.
- \$1 million to give \$1,000 bonuses to guardsmen who recruit new members into the Florida National Guard.

### Strengthening the National Guard's Camp Blanding

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes an initial funding of \$178 million to launch a multi-year initiative at Camp Blanding for the construction of multiple state-of-the-art training facilities for the Florida National Guard. This major investment in live-fire ranges, infantry battle courses and barracks to support simultaneous training of 5,000 guardsmen, will elevate Florida's force readiness and reduce our dependence on federal and other state's resources.

### Renovating National Guard Readiness Centers Statewide

The Framework for Freedom Budget includes nearly \$16 million to make needed repairs and renovations to 63 outdated readiness centers across Florida. This includes:

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- \$7 million to begin year one of the Revitalization and Modernization Program (REVAMP), a multi-year plan to renovate all readiness centers to meet safety standards and building code compliance.
- \$6 million for general maintenance at existing readiness centers.
- \$3 million for an access road at the new Panama City Readiness Center, which was destroyed during Hurricane Michael.

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## Government Operations

The Framework for Freedom Budget exemplifies the continued investment in Florida's regulatory and government support functions by ensuring legal business practices, safeguarding taxpayer's personal data, protecting residents and visitors against financial crimes, and maintaining state owned infrastructure for years to come.

### **Safeguarding Florida against Cybersecurity Threats**

The Framework for Freedom Budget continues to build on its investment to harden Florida's cybersecurity framework through the commitment of \$149 million in various state agencies for security intelligence, modernization, training, and resiliency. As cybersecurity threats continue to become more sophisticated, it is vital that both state and local governments have the tools necessary to protect critical public resources and sensitive information.

### **Maintaining and Improving State Facilities**

The Framework for Freedom Budget addresses needed land and building updates throughout the state with the investment of \$32 million in improvement projects and \$22 million in new facility design and acquisition. This includes:

- \$23 million to provide employees and visitors at state owned office buildings a safe and efficient working environment.
- \$22 million to design and acquire new state-owned office buildings to reduce the state's dependence on costly private leased space.
- \$9 million to expand visitor and training capabilities at the Florida State Fire College, including the revitalization of the Fallen Firefighters Memorial grounds, the expansion of dormitories, and the replacement of outdated equipment.

### **Protecting Florida against Fraudulent Activity**

The Framework for Freedom Budget invests \$2.1 million in new anti-fraud initiatives at regulatory agencies to thwart bad actors defrauding taxpayer dollars and threatening the livelihood of our most vulnerable populations. \$3.5 million is also provided for identity verification software to protect consumers against business and professional license fraud, ensuring those doing business in Florida are both legal and skilled to do the job.