

INVESTING in Ohio's FUTURE

BUDGET OF THE STATE OF OHIO | FISCAL YEARS 2022-2023

Investing in Ohio's Future: Renewed Communities

Investing in our communities will strengthen them for future growth and improve the quality of life for all Ohioans.

As Ohioans, we know that our communities are the best places to live, work, play, and raise a family. Our cities, counties, small towns, townships, and villages have been challenged by the pandemic but have demonstrated tremendous resiliency. This Operating Budget will build on the robust economic recovery and focus on the unique needs of our communities.

Local Government Fund and the Public Library Fund

Ensuring stability for local governments and public libraries is critical to sustained communities. The Operating Budget renews Governor DeWine's commitment to Ohio's local governments and public libraries by continuing funding for the Local Government Fund at its statutory level. Based on current revenue estimates, the Local Government Fund will provide **\$437 million** in Fiscal Year 2022 and **\$452 million** in Fiscal Year 2023 in shared revenue to these critical local partners.

Law Enforcement Investments

Safe and secure communities are thriving communities. This budget seeks to increase police transparency by expanding body camera availability, helping to reduce violent crimes and decrease substance abuse, assist local agencies in the recruitment and hiring of new peace officers, and create safer schools. The Operating Budget will:

- **Fund \$10 million** in grants to local law enforcement agencies across the state to implement or enhance body-worn camera programs. This includes the body cameras themselves and other expenses associated with running the program.
- **Provide \$8 million** to help reduce violent crimes through state and local law enforcement agencies. This new program is designed to provide flexible grant funding that can meet individual communities' needs with promising or proven crime reduction strategies.
- **Invest \$1 million** to support state and local law enforcement agencies in recruiting and hiring new peace officers.
- **Invest \$6.5 million** to expand the Ohio Narcotics Intelligence Center (ONIC) to further support local law enforcement and their partners.

The ONIC assists Ohio narcotics task forces and law enforcement agencies through investigative, analytical, and digital forensic support. Launched in December of 2019, it has assisted with more than 100 criminal investigations, analyzed more than 220 cellphones, and conducted more than 840 forensic examinations. The ONIC also supported 70 agencies across federal, state, local, and county task forces, as well as within sectors including criminal justice, homeland security, and public health.

- **Provide \$5.4 million** for the Ohio School Safety Center (OSSC) to support operations and ongoing initiatives. The OSSC assists local schools and first responders with preventing, preparing for, and responding to threats and acts of violence, including self-harm, through a holistic, solutions-based approach to school safety. This funding also includes the continuation of funding for maintaining and promoting the Safer Ohio Schools Tip Line. In April 2020, the OSSC implemented a social media scanning program, resulting in 1,145 alerts. The OSSC maintains the state's Safer Ohio School Tip Line offering suicide intervention and counseling services for individuals. Furthermore, OSSC has reviewed 2,797 school emergency management plans and helped schools create and implement pandemic response procedures.

Indigent Defense

The right to legal representation is part of the fabric of our justice system. This right can be accessed through public defenders and other indigent defense services for those unable to pay for a lawyer. This budget includes **\$268 million** in funding over the biennium to fully reimburse indigent defense costs in each of Ohio's 88 counties.

H2Ohio

Water quality, preservation, and accessibility are crucial to healthy people and our communities' economic strength. We must continue the work started with the H2Ohio initiative in Fiscal Year 2020 and 2021 implemented by the Ohio Departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, and the Lake Erie Commission. H2Ohio addresses critical water quality needs and innovative solutions for some of the state's most pressing water challenges. Ohio's Operating Budget will:

- **Invest \$100 million** for the Department of Agriculture to continue to enroll and engage more than 1,800 agriculture producers in nutrient management, water management, and erosion management. Farmers rely on nutrients to ensure the maximum crop yields, and this program helps farmers with implementing proven practices that minimize nutrient runoff. To date, more than 1.1 million acres across 14 counties, 36 percent of the representative cropland, are part of this program to implement best practices for nutrient management.
- **Provide \$50 million** for the continuation of wetland creation and restoration through the Department of Natural Resources, supporting additional strategically placed wetland projects in the Lake Erie and Ohio River basins, and continued engagement in monitoring to assess the impact of wetland restoration projects. To date, this initiative

has 57 wetland projects underway, engaged with 20 nonprofit conservation partners to support 90,000 acres of watershed filtered by wetland projects, increasing recreational opportunities, and identified 90 species threatened or endangered that will benefit from this additional habitat.

- **Allocate \$20 million** for the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency to continue the protection of public health by improving water and wastewater infrastructure, reducing lead exposure by replacing additional lead service lines and failed home sewage treatment systems across seven counties. To date, H2Ohio has replaced 185 lead service lines, repaired, or replaced 180 failed home sewage treatment systems, improved the quality of drinking water for 4,000 people, and served 670 people with three new wastewater projects.

Farmland Preservation

Agriculture is an integral part of the Ohio economy, and through this budget, Ohio will work to stabilize and expand this sector of our marketplace. The Farmland Preservation Program's goal is to permanently preserve farmland through the purchase of agricultural easements from landowners. Similar to an economic development program, the proceeds are used to expand farming operations, reduce debt, and install conservation practices. To aid farmers and landowners to move forward quickly and preserve at least 1,000 additional acres, this Budget adds **\$1.5 million** in addition to the recent capital appropriations.

Broadband

A lack of access to high-speed internet and digital resources is a significant barrier for Ohio citizens and communities to connect with one another, with educational opportunities, and to job openings. A critical component of the DeWine-Husted agenda is to increase access to these important resources throughout the state. This Budget will invest **\$250 million** to expand access to broadband for Ohio households that lack the basic connectivity necessary to be part of the modern economy, education system, and healthcare system.

This investment provides direct grants to internet service providers to expand their network and to build conduits along limited-access interstate rights-of-way that can then be leased out to companies for long-haul and middle-mile infrastructure. This investment also helps companies provide low-cost internet by paying infrastructure costs, leveraging state assets, and matching funds in order to draw down federal dollars to make broadband more affordable in both urban and rural areas.

Ohio Governor's Imagination Library

Encouraging imagination through books is essential to cultivating inquisitive learners and building sustaining relationships between the reader and the child. This Operating Budget

provides **\$16 million** to continue the Ohio Governor's Imagination Library, providing Ohio children with a monthly book for the first five years of their lives. This program will help ensure that children receive help to spur their development and kindergarten readiness.

Children's Services Transformation

Creating safe, healthy, and stable environments for all Ohio children is central to thriving, renewed communities. This budget seeks to reinforce existing programs and invest in evidence-based strategies to promote independent families, build resilient children, and bring greater transparency to the children services system. The Operating Budget will:

- **Invest \$240 million** for State Child Protection Allocation to Ohio's 88 county public children's services agencies, preventing custody relinquishment of multisystem youth, expand foster care recruitment, and best practices to support Ohio's nearly 16,000 youth in and out-of-home care and more than 10,000 kinship and foster caregivers who care for them.
- **Provide \$60 million** in financial assistance to kinship caregivers while they work toward foster care licensure.
- **Allocate \$10 million** to provide financial support to caregivers in cases where children cannot return to their homes.
- **Invest \$1 million** to engage college students in the protective services program with meaningful experiences that build commitment to the children services system and quality practice.
- **Fund \$20 million** for evidence-based prevention services to prevent children from entering the children services system and, if children must enter foster care, to ensure appropriate settings are used.
- **Support \$1 million** to establish a state-level ombudsman to independently investigate and resolve complaints made by or on behalf of children and families involved with children services.
- **Devote \$24 million** to help find permanent homes for children in foster care through Wendy's Wonderful Kids, a child-focused recruitment model.
- **Provide \$2 million** to help counties efficiently inspect and approve placements for foster and adoptive children.
- **Fund \$1 million** to establish the Adoption Assessor Registry to evaluate the current home assessor workforce, develop home study completion measures, and adjust requirements for assessors.

Foodbanks and Other Nutrition Programs

Local food banks have experienced a sustained increase in demand for their services as families struggled to put food on the table during the pandemic. The Operating Budget will help foodbanks purchase food for distribution and expand aid for the supply chain areas of transportation and storage capacity.

- **Provide \$49 million** to support the Ohio Association of Foodbanks in purchasing and distributing food products.
- **Fund \$12 million** in Fiscal Year 2022 to expand the storage capacity and meet the transportation needs of foodbanks during this crucial time.

Older Ohioans

Governor DeWine's Operating Budget expands aid to Senior Community Services to help meet older Ohioans needs best. The Budget will:

- **Provide \$19.5 million** to support the implementation of health, nutrition, long-term care, and safety programs under the Older Americans Act and Medicaid through the state's Area Agencies on Aging.

