



Investing in Our People and Workforce

Families

As part of Governor DeWine's budget, Ohio families will save over \$130 million a year from a new income tax exemption. Taxpayers with dependent children will receive a **\$2,500 income tax exemption per child**. This is in addition to existing exemptions for filers and their dependents, so families with four children, will receive a \$10,000 tax exemption for household income.

The budget prioritizes the use of one-time federal funding to counties to foster **improved quality of life for seniors** so they can remain in their homes and connected to their communities. A \$40 million pilot program grant will allow seniors to delay entry into Medicaid, preserve their personal assets, and promote a healthy, independent, active lifestyle.

Mental Health

Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Husted are focused on ensuring that each Ohioan has access to mental health services and supports. This budget provides \$46.5 million to fund 988, the new three-digit number that connects callers to the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, where compassionate, accessible care and support is available to anyone experiencing mental health-related distress or for those with concerns for a loved one who may need crisis support.

Ohioans with serious mental health issues often interact with multiple support systems, including health care, behavioral health, human services, homeless services, and criminal justice services. This budget provides significant investments over the biennium to continue **critical mental health initiatives** to ensure that Ohioans are healthy and productive members of our workforce, including increased investment in multisystem adult collaboration to connect our citizens to needed care, recovery supports, stable housing, and positive community participation.

With \$110 million from the budget, a new State of Ohio Action for Resiliency Network or SOAR Network, will solidify Ohio as a national leader in **mental health research and innovation**. The center will strategically research complex and diverse factors related to the prevention and treatment of, and recovery from, mental illness and substance use disorders; reveal innovative strategies that result in improved recovery, health, and wellness for Ohioans; and deploy those strategies in practice, programs, and policy. The SOAR Network will guide mental health best practices to grow and strengthen this important workforce in Ohio.

The executive budget will increase the capacity for Ohioans to receive care in their own communities by expanding access to **wellness and recovery services** across systems through \$20.5 million funding over the biennium to improve **coordinated community treatment, provide meaningful employment supports, and recovery services**, and as a result, reduce inpatient admissions and jail stays.



To provide for the **mental health of our college and university students**, the budget focuses \$20 million over the biennium for the Mental Health Support Program in higher education. This program allows for the expansion of telehealth options, increased awareness of phone and text care line services, expansion of certified peer educator programs, and direct aid to higher education students who cannot afford care.

Ohioans involved in the criminal justice system will also receive help with \$72.6 million over the biennium **to enhance forensic center capacity for court-ordered evaluations**. This investment continues supports for Ohio's specialty courts and improves the ability of jails to offer addiction services, psychotropic medications, and re-entry programs. This funding also expands access to treatment within Ohio's correctional facilities for counseling, peer support, technology, and medication. These services provided during incarceration significantly increase the likelihood that individuals become productive members of society upon release.

This budget provides \$40 million over the biennium will help grow Ohio's local **crisis services and infrastructure** through locally identified needs and gaps in communities across the state. This funding is distributed through local alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health boards to support and grow mobile crisis response services, behavioral health urgent cares, and crisis centers, providing Ohioans in a behavioral health crisis with an appropriate response and safe place to have their needs met, while also alleviating burdens on local emergency departments and jails.

Ohio is providing \$62 million to support **quality housing options for Ohioans living with and recovering from mental health and substance use disorders**, including increasing the Residential State Supplement and providing grants for enhancing residential quality.

K-12 Education

The Governor's budget includes \$20.3 billion over the biennium to support students, schools, and districts with **increased funding in the K-12 school funding formula and school choice programs**. This record investment continues the six-year phase-in of the school funding formula implemented in 2022, funding students where they are educated and **increasing investment in economically disadvantaged students and student transportation programs**.

Ohio has a strong tradition of supporting family choice about where their children are educated. This budget builds on that commitment to school choice programs by expanding eligibility for the EdChoice Expansion Scholarship to 400% of the federal poverty level (\$120,000 per year for a family of four).

School choice also includes community schools, and this budget continues to support a strong community school sector in the state by doubling the per-pupil facilities funding in this budget — from \$500 to \$1,000, (\$87.1 million in fiscal year 2024 and \$88.6 million in fiscal year 2025) — for brick-and-mortar community schools through the Community School Facilities Program. In addition, this budget signals our commitment to **Quality Community School Support** with \$125 million per year for quality community schools. Each school qualifying for this funding will receive an additional \$3,000 for each economically disadvantaged student and \$2,250 each for all other students. These funds will help successful charter schools build the capacity to serve more Ohio students.

This budget also encourages student participation in interscholastic athletics and extracurricular programs by providing \$15 million per fiscal year to reduce pay-to-play fees.



Continuing the commitment to **mental and physical health supports for K-12 students**, Governor DeWine's budget requires schools and districts to use at least 50% of Student Wellness and Success Funds for mental health and physical health care services. The budget aligns the allowable uses of Student Wellness and Success Funds with the allowable uses of Disadvantaged Pupil Impact Aid, ensuring schools continue to support the whole child.

School-Based Health Centers in high-need counties will receive \$7.5 million per year to continue effectively improving student access to health care and decrease the gap in critical services disproportionately experienced by economically disadvantaged students. Delivering essential preventive and primary care services in the school setting eliminates many barriers to obtaining care such as transportation, missed time at work, lack of provider, and time out of the classroom.

To support safety and crime prevention in schools, the budget provides \$194.1 million per year to support a **School Resource Officer** in each of the 4,300 school buildings across the state.

The executive budget prioritizes literacy and places a renewed focus on ensuring that all children have the resources they need to learn to read. There is clear evidence about the science of how reading is learned, and this budget takes a bold step by providing \$64 million in funding to help schools and districts purchase **curricula aligned with the science of reading**. This budget also invests in schools and teachers with \$55 million per year for professional development and to send 100 literacy coaches out to districts with the lowest proficiency rates to support literacy instruction. The budget also provides \$15 million to support math and literacy tutoring through partnerships with colleges, universities, and educational service centers.

The executive budget includes \$3.2 million per year to launch **Ohio Military Veteran Educators program**, which will provide more opportunities and incentives for veterans to enter the teaching profession and to work in Ohio schools. The program includes grants for eligible veterans to enroll in educator preparation programs, incentives for schools to hire veterans, bonuses for eligible military veterans to work in schools and establishes the Governor's Military Veteran Educator Fellowship.

Workforce readiness for K-12 students continues to be a priority in this budget with an investment of \$26 million per year. Continued funding encourages students to earn **industry-recognized credentials** and supports the Innovative Workforce Incentive Program, which provides bonus payments to schools for students earning in-demand credentials. The budget will provide new funding of \$1,000 per student involved in at least 250 hours of work-based learning.

Access to **College Credit Plus** is also supported in this budget with a \$7.5 million per year investment for high school teachers to earn credentials to teach College Credit Plus courses in high schools. Since its inception, the College Credit Plus Program has saved students in grades 7-12 and their families more than \$1 billion on the cost of college tuition.



Ohioans with Disabilities

With \$12 million, this budget ensures that technology is included as part of all service support plans for people with developmental disabilities. Making **technology-based supports** available will help provide opportunities for Ohioans with developmental disabilities to experience life more fully integrated into their communities.

Programs for youth with complex behavioral health needs are supported through expanded grant opportunities. More than \$14 million will support initiatives such as Keeping Families Together, which provides support to families through a multidisciplinary team of experts in disability and trauma to provide recommendations and resources for families, in-home resource support, and respite services.

Governor DeWine's budget infuses state dollars to maximize all available federal match to provide **vocational rehabilitation services** to more than 8,000 additional people with disabilities. This funding will ensure that traditionally underserved groups, such as high school and college students, people with mental illness, and people with developmental disabilities receive the services they need to be productive in Ohio's workforce.

This budget also includes a first-of-its-kind initiative in Accessible Ohio – a coordinated effort to help make Ohio's cities, counties, attractions, and venues to be accessible and inclusive. Accessible Ohio will make Ohio a global leader in public accessibility, encouraging businesses to locate in Ohio and visitors to prioritize travel to our state.

College Affordability and Access

In this budget, more students applying to Ohio universities will receive **need-based financial assistance** through the expansion of the Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG), increasing funding by more than \$230 million over the biennium. OCOG currently provides financial assistance only to Ohio residents who demonstrate the highest levels of financial need, but expansion will phase in increases for award amounts to \$6,000 per student and expand eligibility to students with an estimated family contribution of \$10,000 (or a family income of about \$87,000 or less). This historic investment will allow significantly more working families to access state need-based aid and increase the number of students eligible for OCOG by nearly 15,000 (28%) in the first year.

The budget will implement need-based financial aid to **support students attending community colleges and university regional campuses. This funding will support** students with family incomes less than \$87,000 per year who have historically not been eligible for need-based financial aid by providing \$1,000 grants to assist with the cost of tuition, fees, and textbooks. Nearly 33,000 Ohio students will be eligible for grants once the program is fully implemented in fall 2024.

Ohio's **Access Challenge** invests \$40 million per fiscal year to support advising, counseling and wraparound student supports and services at Ohio's colleges and universities. This investment, and the \$10 million per fiscal year for **Mental Health Supports**, ensures that we are providing for the needs of college students as they work toward certificates, credentials, and degrees.

The budget also increases the **State Share of Instruction institutional** subsidy by \$126.4 million over the biennium to maintain quality and provide support services to Ohioans attending our state institutions of higher education.



The new Governor's Merit Scholarship will help encourage Ohio's best and brightest to stay in the state, providing **\$5,000 scholarships to every student in the top 5% of their high school graduating class who choose to attend an Ohio college or university**. This critical investment in Ohio's future encourages high-achieving high school graduates to remain in Ohio to pursue their post-secondary studies and contribute to Ohio's expanding economic opportunities. It is expected that the Governor's Merit Scholarship will reduce the number of college students attending out-of-state schools by 10% to 15%.

The Mentoring Scholarship Program in this budget provides \$13.5 million over the biennium to provide support services, counseling, and mentoring for eligible students beginning as early as 6th grade. This program provides annual **\$2,500 college scholarships to help students succeed**, up to a maximum of \$10,000 in student aid over four years. When fully implemented, an estimated 12,000 at-risk students will benefit from a mentoring relationship, and 4,000 students will qualify for a renewable \$2,500 Mentorship Scholarship.

Through this budget, the Teacher Apprenticeship Program will be launched with \$3.8 million to identify and support high-quality educator candidates by providing more efficient, collaborative, and cost-effective pathways to the teaching profession. This program will support **apprenticeships and scholarships** to encourage more students to become teachers.

Veteran Care

Furthering Ohio's commitment to our veterans, the executive budget devotes a one-time \$65 million allocation to match federal funding to **modernize Ohio's veteran nursing homes to** support veterans living at Ohio's Veteran's Homes in Sandusky and Georgetown. Improvements will include the conversion to single-occupancy rooms, upgraded roofing, lighting, plumbing, heating, ventilation, air conditioning systems, and infrastructure improvements.

This summary was compiled by the Ohio Office of Budget and Management. More information is available at obm.ohio.gov.