

Transportation, Infrastructure, & Emergency Management

Florida is currently home to over **22 million people** and welcomed more than 137 million in 2022. As a high-growth state, the movement of an increasing number of people and goods from place to place quickly and efficiently depends on a continuing commitment to the development and maintenance of a world class transportation infrastructure.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$15.6 billion** for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). FDOT's total budget for the next five years surpasses **\$68 billion** in transportation investments. Every dollar invested in transportation is estimated to result in a return of up to **\$4** in economic benefits to Florida's residents and businesses.

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

Moving Florida Forward Initiative to Relieve Traffic Congestion

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides **\$630 million** for the Moving Florida Forward Initiative, championed by the Governor last year. This program is a bold initiative to address congestion on Florida's highways and roads that will support our state's historic growth.

Transportation Work Program

Within the total amount provided to the Department of Transportation, the Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides **\$14.5 billion** for the State Transportation Work Program, Florida's ongoing five-year plan for the implementation and completion of transportation infrastructure projects. These projects include construction and maintenance of Florida's roads, bridges, rails, seaports and other public transportation systems. This year's investment in the Work Program includes:

- **\$5.4 billion** for highway construction and maintenance to include 135 new lane miles.
- **\$1.9 billion** to resurface 3,115 lane miles.
- **\$109.6 million** in seaport infrastructure improvements to ensure Florida's ports continue to have capacity while the rest of the nation struggles from supply chain backups at seaports.
- **\$334.4 million** for aviation improvements.
- **\$381.7 million** in scheduled repairs for 62 bridges and replacement of 15 bridges.
- **\$997.7 million** investment in rail and transit projects.
- **\$210.1 million** for safety initiatives.

- **\$215.3 million** for community trail projects and **\$70.3 million** for the SunTrail Network.

Spurring Innovation in Florida's Supply Chain

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$75 million** to provide grant funding to enhance Florida's supply chain and innovative delivery models, including vertical takeoff and landing aircraft, vertiports, airports, inland ports, seaports, freight railroads, intermodal logistic centers, and fuel pipelines.

Prioritizing Florida's Trucking Community

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$25 million** to expand the Truck Parking Improvement Program to increase the number of parking spots available in Florida to cargo hauling large trucks.

Moving Water South along the Tamiami Trail

Upon taking office, Governor DeSantis prioritized the raising of Tamiami Trail along the Northeast Shark River Slough to restore the natural flow of the Everglades and send over 220 billion gallons of clean freshwater south to Florida Bay. The Focus on Florida's Future Budget directs FDOT to continue this work and prioritize additional projects into the western portion of the Shark River Slough to support the long-term protection of America's Everglades.

Natural Disaster Recovery & Emergency Management

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

Open Federally Declared Disasters – Funding to Communities and State Operations

- **\$1.3 billion** is provided for disaster preparation, response, recovery and mitigation, including:
 - **\$199.9 million** in state match for costs relating to disasters.

Community Development Block Grant

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

Maintaining and Improving State Critical Infrastructure

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget addresses critical building deficiencies throughout the state with the investment of **\$30 million** in improvement projects at state-owned facilities. This includes:

- **\$21 million** to provide employees and visitors at state owned office buildings a safe and efficient working environment; and
- **\$9 million** for maintenance and repair projects at the Florida State Fire College and Arson Lab.

Bolstering Florida's Record Economic Growth

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

- Florida leads the nation in the number of new business creations, with more than 2.7 million businesses created since 2019.
- In October 2023, Florida was named as the most entrepreneurial state in the nation by the *Digital Project Manager*, noting that Florida has the highest percentage of the population that has started a business with 13,238 small businesses per 100,000 residents, 3,000 more small businesses per 100,000 residents than the second-place Georgia.
- Florida's unemployment rate in October 2023 was 2.8 percent, near the historic all-time low for our state and 1.1 percent less than the national unemployment rate of 3.9 percent. Florida's statewide unemployment rate has been lower than the national rate for 36 consecutive months, and as of October 2023 was the lowest among the top 10 largest states in the nation.
- Florida's private sector job growth increased by 252,900 jobs from October 2022 to October 2023, a growth rate of 3.0 percent and higher than the national growth rate of 1.7 percent.
- As of October 2023, Florida employers have added jobs for 41 of the last 42 months, and Florida's private sector year-over-year job growth rate has exceeded the nation's for 31 consecutive months.
- Florida's labor force has outpaced the nation in labor force growth for 29 consecutive months.

Ensuring Housing Availability and Affordability for Florida's Families

Following the signing of the Live Local Act during the 2023 Legislative Session, which provided historic funding levels for the state's affordable housing programs, Governor DeSantis again proposes nearly **\$400 million** to fully fund these programs:

- **\$89.5 million** for the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) program.
- **\$208.6 million** for the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program.
- **\$100 million** for the third year of the Hometown Heroes Housing program, which makes homeownership affordable for hard-working Floridian heroes, including law enforcement officers, firefighters, educators, healthcare professionals, childcare employees, and active military or veterans.

Economic Recovery and Development

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

- **\$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.
- **\$105 million** to continue the vital state marketing and promotion efforts of VISIT FLORIDA, the state's official tourism marketing corporation and a source of travel planning for visitors across the globe.
- **\$175.2 million** for the third phase of the State Small Business Credit Initiative, providing Florida's small businesses with essential access to additional growth and support funding.

Economic Support for Law Enforcement and the Military

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

- **\$20 million** for the third year of the Law Enforcement Recruitment Bonus Program, which provides a signing bonus of up to \$5,000 for those hired as first-time law enforcement officers in Florida.
- **\$7 million** for the Defense Infrastructure Grant Program, which provides funding for infrastructure projects that make a positive impact on the military value of installations within the state.
- **\$5 million**, an increase of **\$3 million**, for the Florida Defense Support Task Force, which supports the Florida defense industry by awarding grants and guiding the future of military installation operations in the state.
- **\$3 million**, an increase of **\$2.2 million**, for the Military Base Protection Program, which helps secure non-conservation lands to serve as a buffer protecting military installations from encroachment.

Rural Development

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

- **\$25 million** for the Rural Infrastructure Fund, to support local rural infrastructure projects such as roads, storm and wastewater systems, and telecommunications facilities.
- **\$100 million** for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (B.E.A.D.) Program, to support broadband initiatives to expand high-speed internet deployment and access to Florida communities.

- **\$88.1 million** for the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) to assist small county governments in repairing or rehabilitating county bridges, paving unpaved roads, addressing road-related drainage improvements, resurfacing or reconstructing county roads, or constructing capacity or safety improvements to county roads.
- **\$26.5 million** for the Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP) to assist small county governments in resurfacing or reconstructing county roads.
- **\$66.7 million** for the County Incentive Grant Program (CIGP) to provide grants to counties to improve transportation facilities located on the State Highway System or to relieve traffic congestion on the State Highway System.

Investing in Florida's Property Insurance Market

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget invests over **\$109 million** to support residential home mitigation programs and additional oversight of the property insurance market, including:

- **\$107 million** in recurring funding to make the My Safe Florida Home Grant Program permanent and continue assisting Florida homeowners through home inspections and cost sharing for approved home hardening and wind mitigation programs that make properties less vulnerable to hurricane damage and reduces insurance premiums.
- **\$1.1 million** to bolster the Florida Office of Insurance Regulation's (OIR) ability to curate data related to Florida's property insurance market.
- **\$675,000** to contract for independent reinsurance and mitigation research experts to bolster OIR's ability to review filings and recommend new tools to mitigate properties from hurricanes.

Assistance to Households

To support qualifying Floridians who face the headwinds of increasing household expenses, the Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides **\$100 million** for additional funding under the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). In partnership with local agencies, LIHEAP assists low-income households in meeting the costs of their home heating and cooling needs.

Ensuring Fair, Free, and Safe Elections

Florida is known as a national leader in conducting fair and accurate elections. Nevertheless, continued vigilance and oversight is needed to ensure that the integrity of Florida elections is always maintained, and that those who commit election fraud or other election law violations are held accountable. The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides **\$21.6 million** for resources needed to ensure our future elections are conducted with the utmost integrity and are safe from cyber threats, fraud, and any other election irregularities, including:

- **\$2.5 million** for Florida Voter Registration System Modernization; and
- **\$1 million** for enhanced election security.