



Excerpts from Governor Rick Scott's 2016-2017 Florida First Budget Overview

Governor Rick Scott's Florida First Budget for 2016-2017 was released on November 23, 2015. The budget for 2016-2017 includes proposed increases for Florida's children and families in the following areas:

Alzheimer's Disease Initiative & CCE - The Florida First budget includes \$1.7 million in new funding to enroll 150 additional individuals in the Alzheimer's Disease Initiative Program, and another \$2 million to enroll 330 additional individuals in the Community Care for the Elderly (CCE) program at the Department of Elder Affairs.

Affordable Housing - The Florida First budget recommends \$131.4 million for affordable housing, \$97.4 million for the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) program and \$34 million for the State Housing Initiative (SHIP) program.

Adults with Disabilities Program - The Florida First budget invests \$10 million to reinstate funding for the Adults with Disabilities Program to serve 12,000 Floridians annually. During the 2015-2016 Legislative Session, funding was eliminated for the program.

Developmental Disabilities Waiver Program - For the first time in Florida's history, the Florida First budget invests a total of \$1 billion to enroll all individuals with critical needs from the waiting list in the Developmental Disabilities Waiver Program at the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. Approximately 700 additional Floridians will be placed into the waiver program with this investment.

Early Steps - The Florida First budget continues the \$13 million increase to the Early Steps program appropriated by the 2015 Legislature.

Mental Illness and Substance Abuse - The Florida First budget invests over \$19 million in additional funding to better coordinate and enhance mental health and substance abuse services.

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) - Florida is first among large states in access to VPK. The Florida First budget provides a \$50 increase per student for the school year and a \$43 increase per student for the summer program over Fiscal Year 2015-2016. This equates to per student funding of \$2,487 per student and \$2,123 per student, respectively. VPK prepares approximately 170,000 four-year olds for kindergarten and builds a strong foundation for school by focusing on early literacy skills.

School Readiness - The Florida First budget invests \$20.3 million to move more than 3,500 children from the School Readiness Wait List into childcare programs. This funding will help low income families by providing children with quality afterschool programs while parents are at work.

School Readiness Performance Funding - \$5 million increase, for a total of \$15.5 million, to award child care providers and instructors for improving School Readiness program outcomes.



Legislative Link

A legislative update provided by the United Way of Florida

School Readiness Quality - \$10 million for a new statewide initiative to enhance the quality of services for children in the School Readiness program.

Help Me Grow - The Florida First budget includes an additional \$2 million in state funding, for a total of \$3.9 million, for the Parent Skill Building Initiative. This initiative will connect children and families with information, resources, and developmental services to enhance health, behavior, and learning in the development of young children.

Teacher Education and Compensation Helps Program (T.E.A.C.H.) - \$5.5 million increase, for a total of \$10 million, for early childhood teacher scholarships.

Supporting and Protecting Children - Over the last two years, the Governor has made critical investments to keep kids safe, including \$16 million in core services funding for Community-Based Care agencies in 2015, and funding for an additional 270 child protective investigators in 2014. The budget continues the Governor's commitment to protect and support children across the state by investing an additional \$22.9 million to hire 272 additional case managers to increase the availability of safety services for at-risk children. This will also increase availability of safety services for families whose children are at-risk of being removed from their home.

Healthy Families - \$28.4 million is included in the Florida First budget to expand Healthy Families Florida statewide, an increase of \$1.9 million over last year's funding. This evidence-based, nationally accredited program provides in-home visits to further protect Florida's most vulnerable children.

Guardian Ad Litem - The Florida First budget provides over \$1 million to ensure that 100 percent of dependent children in out-of-home care are represented by a guardian ad litem. This funding will be used to hire 19 additional full-time staff that will serve approximately 2,000 youth in need.

At-Risk Youth Programs and Prevention Services - The Florida First budget continues efforts to reduce juvenile crime through effective investments in preventative programs, intervention, and treatment care for children at risk of criminal behavior. Over the past four years, the decreases in costly juvenile detention and residential commitment programs have saved the state more than \$87 million, while helping at-risk Florida youth to lead successful and productive lives through programs including:

- **PACE Center for Girls** - \$1.3 million to expand the PACE Center for Girls by 75 openings statewide.
- **About Face Program** - \$1.25 million to provide summer and afterschool life preparation programs.
- **Boys and Girls Clubs** - \$1 million to expand Boys and Girls Clubs programs statewide.

For additional information, please contact
the United Way of Florida at: (850) 488-8276.

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