



## *House Budget and Research Office*

COVERDELL LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 412  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30334  
404-656-5050

CHRISTINE MURDOCK  
DIRECTOR

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### **FISCAL YEAR 2024 STATE BUDGET HOUSE BILL 19 – CONFERENCE COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS**

HB 19, the Fiscal Year 2024 budget, is set by a revenue estimate of \$32.4 billion dollars. This is a 7.4% increase, or \$2.2 billion, over the original FY 2023 budget. In the FY 2024 budget, 53% of funds are appropriated to education, 24% for health and human services, 7% for public safety, 7% for transportation, and 9% for economic development and general government services including debt service. Highlights of the budget include:

#### Economic Development

- The FY 2024 budget supports the Department of Agriculture by providing \$1 million for operations; \$340,000 to support the State Agricultural Response Team (SART); and \$550,000 to administer and enforce soil amendment rules.
- HB 19 provides a total of \$250,000 to the state's veterinary labs for planning for a new lab in Athens and replacing federal funds at the lab in Tifton.
- The FY 2024 budget provides \$200,000 to expand the Helping Hands Ending Hunger program to increase access to food, reduce food waste, and encourage better educational outcomes and sustainability.
- The General Assembly provides \$800,000 for the Home Access Program to increase the number of awarded grants to individuals requiring home accessibility modifications.
- HB 19 provides \$200,000 to expand 2-1-1 in rural Georgia to further connect individuals and families to local community resources and services, such as housing, food, transportation, and health care.
- The General Assembly creates a \$10.4 million special project in the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority budget for a grant program for natural gas pipeline and capacity expansion for non-Universal Service Fund (USF) eligible entities.
- The FY 2024 budget maintains \$500,000 for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change for grounds and exhibit space enhancement.
- The General Assembly supports the Georgia Forestry Commission by providing \$3 million for an additional \$4,000 pay raise on top of the \$2,000 increase provided by the governor to support recruitment and retention efforts.

## Education

- The FY 2024 budget fully funds the Quality Basic Education (QBE) program, totaling \$13.1 billion in state funds; the most state funds ever provided to K-12 education. The QBE funding formula has been fully funded the last five out of six years.
- HB 19 provides \$295 million to increase the state base salary schedule for certified teachers and employees by \$2,000, for a total adjustment to the state base salary schedule of \$7,000 since FY 2020. This adjustment can be found in the following programs with certified employees and certified staff: Agricultural Education (\$410,045), Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) (\$1.4 million), Sparsity Grants (\$359,641), Residential Treatment Facilities (\$347,648), Preschool Disabilities Services (\$1.1 million), Quality Basic Education Program (\$290 million), and Technology/Career Education (\$1.4 million).
- The budget also includes \$8.5 million for a 5.1% pay raise for school nutrition workers (\$1.6 million), bus drivers (\$4.6 million), school nurses (\$1.8 million), and Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) staff (\$482,496) and \$8.6 million to provide all school custodians with a \$1,000 salary supplement.
- HB 19 includes \$154.9 million to provide for enrollment growth and training and experience for an additional 11,804 students and 1,959 teachers. The budget also includes \$13.3 million for growth in the State Commission Charter School supplements. Charter system grants receive \$296,034 in additional funding, and local charter schools, pursuant to SB 59 (2021 Session), receive \$27,154.
- The final version of HB 19 provides \$122.2 million for Equalization grants, a grant to systems whose property tax wealth per weighted FTE falls below the statewide average. In FY 2024, Equalization grants are funded at a total of \$756 million.
- HB 19 includes additional funding for pupil transportation based on an increase in FTEs, totaling \$1.3 million; when combined with the pay raise, total pupil transportation funding is \$148.8 million.
- The school nutrition program receives an additional \$6.3 million in state funds to provide for the cost of breakfast and lunch for reduced-paying students. These funds will provide more than 17 million free meals to low-income public school children.
- In the Agricultural Education program, \$288,000 is provided for two new young farmer positions in Barrow and Hall counties and a young farmer oversight position at the Department of Education. Additionally, HB 19 provides the state share of funds for 18 new agricultural education programs across Georgia, for a total cost of \$171,000. In the Technology/Career Education program, the FY 2024 budget includes \$711,000 for construction industry certification to improve career path placements, teacher recruitment and retention, and program alignment with elementary and middle schools.
- The FY 2024 budget provides an additional \$50,000 for feminine hygiene grants due to inflation and an increase in student population. The total funding for feminine hygiene grants is \$1.5 million, which is provided to school systems with low property tax wealth and a high percentage of economically-disadvantaged students.
- The General Assembly provides \$3.5 million for dyslexia screening that is required for the 2024-2025 school year, pursuant to SB 48 (2019 Session).
- The budget includes \$1.7 million for charter facilities grants in the Charter School program, increasing the total funding to \$9.2 million. Charter schools will now receive the \$100,000 per school, pursuant to HB 430 (2017 Session).

- Communities in Schools receives an additional \$262,000, recognizing additional county participation and a per-affiliate increase. Communities in Schools supports students academically and non-academically to improve student attendance, behavior, academic performance, retention, and graduation.
- The appropriations bill includes \$250,000 for the Georgia Council on Literacy, pursuant to SB 211 (2023 Session) and \$750,000 to support the implementation of effective literacy methods, including digital curriculum for Pre-K through 5.
- HB 19 includes \$1 million in matching funds to allow the Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) to draw additional federal Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) to provide child care assistance to low-income families and \$20.6 million in lottery funds to provide Pre-K teachers and assistant teachers with a \$2,000 salary increase.
- The FY 2024 budget includes \$14 million in lottery funds to increase Pre-K classroom operations and ensure private providers are able to fully fund Pre-K lead teacher salaries at 100%.
- The General Assembly provides \$2.8 million for a \$0.50 increase, from \$16.00 to \$16.50, to the benefit multiplier for retired members of the Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS).
- HB 19 includes \$26.75 million for a one-time benefit adjustment of \$500 for each retired state employee. This funding is now in the base and will provide an annual benefit adjustment, in addition to any cost-of-living adjustment granted by the Board of Trustees.

#### General Government

- HB 19 includes nearly \$4.6 million for the State Accounting Office, to be collected through the agency's TeamWorks billings process, for cost-of-living adjustments and expenses related to the state's financial and human capital management systems.
- The FY 2024 budget provides \$53,684 for annual expenses related to an initial investment of \$505,798 in the Amended FY 2023 budget to purchase software that will automate licensing processes for the Department of Banking and Finance.
- The FY 2024 budget provides the Department of Driver Services with over \$2.3 million to target high turnover at certain customer service centers.
- The budget includes \$403,496 for two arson investigators and one each of building inspectors, elevator inspectors, and manufactured housing inspectors for the Fire Safety program under the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance.
- Within the Secretary of State's budget, HB 19 includes \$550,000 for a data plan contract for Poll Pads and \$2 million for election equipment replacement, as well as \$513,018 to establish the State Election Board as a separate entity administratively attached to the Secretary of State's Office. To address licensure and complaint volume, the budget also includes \$129,196 for one analyst and one full-time educator for the Georgia Board of Nursing, as well as \$123,584 to provide two additional analysts to help with other licensing boards.
- HB 19 supports over \$1 million for the Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors Board, which was established as an independent licensing board pursuant to HB 476 (2022 Session). The budget funds five positions, including a director, two analysts, an investigator, and an administrative assistant, and covers operation expenses, contracts, and rent.
- As the Georgia Access to Medical Cannabis Commission adds enforcement and regulation duties to its current licensing responsibilities, the General Assembly provides the commission with \$401,793 for four positions, including a safety and compliance specialist, an investigator, an inspector, and a laboratory

specialist. Additionally, the General Assembly includes \$242,017 for seed-to-sale tracking technology, laboratory testing, and to account for an expected rise in operating expenses associated with the commission's expanding role.

## Health

- The General Assembly supports Medicaid providers in the FY 2024 budget with \$42.2 million in reimbursement rate increases, including \$18.7 million for primary care and OB/GYN providers; \$8 million for speech-language pathology, audiology, physical therapy, and occupational therapy providers; \$10.5 million for home and community-based service providers; \$854,167 for Georgia Pediatric Program (GAPP) providers; \$1.3 million for occupational and physical therapy assistants in the Children's Intervention Services (CIS) program; \$1.1 million for emergency medical services (EMS); and \$621,296 for low-volume pharmacies.
- Providers are further supported in HB 19 with a total of \$3.1 million for loan repayment programs for providers practicing in rural areas and educating future providers, including \$850,000 for a new mental health professionals program, \$1.56 million to increase the amount awarded to rural physicians; \$440,000 for additional repayments for physician assistants and advanced practice registered nurses; and \$250,000 for a new nursing faculty program.
- HB 19 increases access to oral health care by including \$2.8 million to provide dental coverage for adult members of Georgia Medicaid. Current adult dental coverage is only for emergency services, and this increases coverage to 105 procedure codes currently covered under the children's dental program.
- The FY 2024 budget promotes additional access to health care by providing \$500,000 for two new federally qualified health center start-up grants; \$950,000 for Mercy Care Atlanta to address the large patient volume after the Atlanta Medical Center closure; and \$500,000 for charity clinics statewide.
- HB 19 provides a total of \$3.9 million for new graduate and undergraduate medical education, including \$2 million for 116 new residency slots in primary care medicine; \$582,338 for child and adolescent psychiatry and maternal fetal medicine fellowships at the Medical College of Georgia; and \$240,000 for the start-up of a new rural OB/GYN training program as well as \$1 million to increase the medical school class size at the Morehouse School of Medicine.
- Hospitals starting graduate medical education (GME) residency programs are supported with \$4 million in the FY 2024 budget for one-time grants of up to \$1 million for hospitals with GME programs to fund medical education training equipment and infrastructure needs to support new and expanding residency programs, with priority given to new and rural sites and including Colquitt Regional Medical Center and Archbold Medical Center. Additionally, \$225,000 is provided for three feasibility grants to assist hospitals in establishing or expanding GME programs.
- HB 19 provides \$663,114 for the fourth year of the seven-year plan to support the Mercer School of Medicine's medical school campus in Columbus, bringing the total annual amount to \$7.9 million.
- In the Department of Public Health, the General Assembly provides \$1.7 million for a pilot to provide home visiting in at-risk and underserved rural communities during pregnancy and early childhood to improve birth outcomes, reduce preterm deliveries, and decrease infant and maternal mortality.
- The FY 2024 budget includes \$463,675 to support the Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia for additional staffing support as well as \$50,000 for the Georgia Council of Lupus Education and Awareness to support research, data collection, awareness, and education.

- The General Assembly agrees with the governor to fund \$931,111 for a total of \$1.1 million for the continued expansion of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) services in Georgia.
- HB 19 provides \$150,000 for feminine hygiene products for low-income clients at community organizations.
- In the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) budget, the General Assembly agrees with the governor to increase the employer contribution per-member, per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees to \$1,580, effective January 1, 2023, and \$846.4 million is funded in the Department of Education and \$8.2 million in the Department of Early Care and Learning to fund this rate increase. Additionally, the FY 2024 budget reflects a \$500 increase in employer contribution PMPM for non-certified school employees phased in over two years, effective January 1, 2024, and reflects a minimum employer contribution of \$1,580 PMPM, effective January 1, 2026, in order to maintain the fiscal soundness of SHBP.

### Higher Education

- The FY 2024 budget includes \$9.9 million for the University System of Georgia (USG), reflecting a 2.3% decrease in credit hour growth and a 0.6% increase in square footage. The formula also includes \$82.7 million for a \$2,000 cost-of-living adjustment for all full-time benefit eligible employees, effective July 1, 2023.
- HB 19 provides \$520,000 for positions at the demonstration farm in Perry. Additionally, \$584,987 is provided to support two faculty positions that serve the peach and citrus industries and \$245,000 is provided for three research technicians to support the Peanut Breeding and Extension Team.
- In the Cooperative Extension Service budget, \$258,750 is provided for three shared 4-H county extension agents. The budget also includes \$415,013 for two faculty positions to serve the blueberry and citrus industries.
- The Public Service/Special Funding Initiatives program includes \$500,000 for a next generation battery lab and \$1.4 million for a computer science pilot program, both at the Georgia Institute of Technology. The budget also includes \$1.2 million for Middle Georgia State University to continue the aviation career path program. The University of Georgia receives \$487,637 for the Center for International Trade and Security, \$310,000 to expand the Archway Partnership into two additional communities, and \$2.6 million (total funding of \$5.2 million) for music industry archiving. The Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College receives \$1.5 million in additional dollars to support operations and address a backlog of projects. Lastly, \$90,000 in additional funds is provided to the Georgia Youth Science and Technology Center for the STEM Teacher Academy.
- The FY 2024 budget provides the Georgia Public Library Service with \$1.1 million in additional funds to increase the materials grant for public libraries from \$.60 to \$.70 per capita. This is in addition to \$59,625 in enhanced funding due to an increase in population.
- The Georgia Commission on the Holocaust receives \$264,500 for operations of the Anne Frank Holocaust Education Center.
- HB 19 includes a total of \$12 million in lottery funds for the College Completion Grant program to reflect expanded eligibility and an increased maximum award amount of \$3,500, based on changes made in HB 249 (2023 Session). The College Completion Grant program provides needs-based financial aid to eligible students who reach established completion benchmarks.
- The FY 2024 budget provides an additional \$50.2 million in lottery funds to bring the HOPE factor rate for HOPE Scholarships at public schools and HOPE grants up to 100% of the previous year's tuition. With this

change, all institutions will see an increase in the factor rate, thereby providing financial relief to every student that currently receives HOPE scholarships.

- The General Assembly appropriates \$16.8 million in lottery funds to increase the Zell Miller Scholarship for private schools for a full-time student taking 12 hours of courses from \$2,977 to \$3,100 and to bring the HOPE Scholarship for private schools to 100% of the Zell award, increasing that amount from \$2,282 to \$3,100.
- HB 19 provides \$955,830 to establish Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) grants, pursuant to HB 185 (2023 Session). The IPSE grant program provides financial aid to students with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are currently enrolled in the program at postsecondary institutions across the state.
- The FY 2024 budget reflects \$10 million provided to the Georgia Student Finance Commission in the Amended FY 2022 budget to establish a service cancelable loan program for Georgians enrolled in eligible degree programs in qualified behavioral health professions, as established in HB 1013 (2022 Session).
- HB 19 provides funds to establish a medical examiner loan repayment program for eligible medical examiners employed by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. The program provides up to \$120,000 in loan repayment over a period of five years.
- The budget includes \$3.2 million to establish a law enforcement officer loan repayment program for new and existing eligible law enforcement officers. The program provides up to \$20,000 in loan repayment over a period of five years.
- The FY 2024 budget directs the Georgia Student Finance Commission to utilize reserve funds to increase the Tuition Equalization Grant annual award amount from \$900 to \$1,000. Tuition Equalization grants are provided to eligible students attending private institutions throughout the state and were awarded to over 24,000 students in 2022.
- HB 19 provides \$8.2 million to the Technical College System of Georgia to provide for the first year of a three-year phase-in for increased credit hour earnings for the Aviation, Commercial Driver's License, and Nursing programs to reflect the high-cost nature of providing these programs.
- The budget includes \$1.1 million for the Tools for Success matching grant program, which provides up to \$50,000 to each technical college to assist graduates in going to work.
- The FY 2024 budget includes \$325,000 for a Quick Start-Special Project program to identify and address healthcare shortages throughout the state.

#### Human Resources

- HB 19 appropriates \$2.4 million for substance abuse recovery programs, including addiction recovery support center expansion, peer workforce training, and the Certified Addiction Recovery Empowerment Specialists (CARES) warm line.
- The General Assembly adds 500 slots to the New Options Waiver (NOW) and Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) for individuals with intellectual and developmental with an appropriation of \$9.4 million.
- HB 19 includes \$1.5 million for pay raises to forensic peer evaluators and forensic peer mentors to support hiring and retention efforts.
- The FY 2024 budget provides \$24.5 million to support the establishment of three behavioral health crisis centers in Augusta, Dublin, and Fulton County.

- An additional 250 slots are added to the Georgia Housing Voucher program in the FY 2024 budget to help those experiencing mental illness obtain permanent housing.
- The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) receives \$10.1 million to increase the salaries of state psychiatric hospital employees. Additionally, \$650,000 is appropriated for department administrative personnel.
- HB 19 includes \$1.6 million to support the behavioral health needs of children and adolescents across the state; \$200,000 for the Georgia Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) program to expand services; and \$578,150 to support those living with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families with other services, including advocacy and referral linkage.
- The court appointed special advocates (CASA) program receives \$750,000 in the budget for enhanced statewide capacity.
- The Department of Human Services is appropriated \$7.1 million for services for older Georgians, including enhanced capacity for the Long-term Care Ombudsman program, respite care programs, and over 2,500 slots for non-Medicaid home and community-based services.
- The FY 2024 budget includes \$11.1 million for staffing needed for the upcoming Medicaid redetermination due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency ending.
- The General Assembly provides \$5 million to provide alternative housing options for youth with complex needs in the care of the Division of Family and Children Services. Additionally, \$15.2 million is appropriated for Child Caring Institutions to cover the loss of federal Foster Care Title IV-E funds.
- The Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Fund Commission receives an additional \$3.4 million to assist in the rehabilitation of victims of sexual trafficking.
- The Georgia Department of Veterans Service receives \$250,000 to support the staffing at the Georgia War Veterans Home in Milledgeville.

#### Public Safety and the Courts

- The FY 2024 budget provides \$23.5 million for a total compensation increase of \$4,000 for more than 3,900 law enforcement officers across 12 state agencies, with an additional \$2,000 salary adjustment for identified front-line officers in certain departments. All state law enforcement officers will receive this raise in the Department of Community Supervision, Department of Corrections, Georgia Drug and Narcotics Agency, Office of the Commissioner of Insurance, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Public Safety, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, State Board of Pardons and Parole, Department of Revenue, and Secretary of State.
- The Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) receives \$4.9 million in the FY 2024 budget to maintain operations of the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC) and to offset a reduction in user fee collections. GBI's crime lab will receive \$1.5 million for 14 scientists, two crime lab assistant managers, two crime lab technicians, two evidence receiving technicians, and one IT business analyst to address the crime lab backlog of more than 40,000 pieces of evidence to process. These positions and their related operating expenses will specifically target the three disciplines with the highest backlog: chemistry, firearms, and toxicology.
- The FY 2024 budget provides \$5.4 million to GBI for the creation of a cold case specialty unit. The unit will consist of one special agent in charge, two assistant special agents in charge, 10 special agents, two criminal intelligence analysts, two digital forensic investigators, two administrative assistants, and operating expenses related to the unit. There are over 600 unsolved cold cases under the GBI's purview,

and dedicated staff coupled with today's technology has the potential to bring decades-old cases to a resolution for many Georgia families. Local law enforcement agencies are also encouraged to ask the GBI for assistance on all local cases, including the new cold case unit.

- The General Assembly provides \$25.6 million in new funding for the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) to open McRae State Prison. McRae will replace the Lee Arrendale State Prison for female offenders, now the oldest prison in the state after the recent closure of Georgia State Prison last year. McRae will have the capacity to house 1,600 inmates when fully operational.
- HB 19 provides \$25.1 million to GDC for physical and pharmaceutical services to continue to provide these necessary services to inmates. County Correctional Institutions are provided \$3.5 million for a \$2 per inmate per diem increase to raise the daily rate from \$22 to \$24 per day.
- The FY 2024 budget includes \$1.1 million to fund three new judgeships created in the Atlantic, Coweta, and Dougherty judicial circuits, and \$1 million to annualize the new judgeships in the Blue Ridge, Mountain, and South Georgia judicial circuits created in the FY 2023 budget.
- The General Assembly provides \$1.1 million to fully fund a salary increase for circuit public defenders in accordance with HB 1391 (2022 Session). Additionally, HB 19 includes \$3.4 million for the recruitment and retention of assistant district attorneys and assistant public defenders.
- The FY 2024 budget provides \$4.5 million in new state funds to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) for the Georgia Crime Victims Emergency Fund to fund personal services and operation expenses for the fund, which is used to provide up to \$25,000 in compensation for expenses, loss of income, or support to victims of violent crime.
- The General Assembly provides \$1.2 million for a dedicated sexual assault nurse examiner coordinator in 14 state-funded sexual assault centers in Georgia to ensure the integrity of those critical forensic medical examinations needed for the prosecution of sexual assault.
- The Department of Public Safety is provided \$1.25 million in the FY 2024 budget to establish and operate a satellite post in the Buckhead-area of the city of Atlanta to allow for quicker responses to incidents inside and along the northern Atlanta perimeter. This satellite post will afford an additional base of operation for the Nighthawks DUI Task Force and motor unit.

### Transportation

- The FY 2024 budget includes an increase of \$72.7 million in motor fuel funds, which are used to increase Capital Construction, Capital Maintenance, Local Maintenance and Improvement Grants (LMIG), and to support a \$2,000 pay-raise.
- The Department of Transportation is directed to evaluate the feasibility of a five-year plan to increase local maintenance and improvement grants (LMIG) to 15% of projected motor fuel revenues over a five-year period beginning in FY 2025, and report to the Office of Planning and Budget, the House Budget and Research Office, and the Senate Budget and Evaluation Office by September 1, 2023.
- HB 19 includes newly established diesel for locomotive fuel tax revenue of \$7.1 million to allow the state to partner on projects with rail lines throughout the state.
- The Transit Trust Funds total \$23 million in the FY 2024 budget and the General Assembly recognizes \$11 million in trust funds to be utilized for statewide projects outside of the Atlanta region.