



House Budget and Research Office

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

CHRISTINE MURDOCK
DIRECTOR

AMENDED FISCAL YEAR 2025 STATE BUDGET HOUSE BILL 67 – HOUSE HIGHLIGHTS

House Bill 67, the Amended Fiscal Year 2025 budget, is set by a revised revenue estimate of \$40.5 billion. In addition to revenue growth, the governor's revenue estimate for the Amended FY 2025 budget includes \$2.7 billion in surplus funds for a total infusion of \$4.4 billion, or an increase of 12.2% over the original FY 2025 budget. The Amended FY 2025 budget includes significant one-time investments in the state's infrastructure as well as Hurricane Helene relief. Highlights of the budget are as follows:

Hurricane Helene Response

- The House supports the governor's recommendation for \$145 million to be added to the Governor's Emergency Fund to continue the state's emergency response efforts related to Hurricane Helene.
- The Amended FY 2025 budget holds Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) harmless for the motor fuel tax suspension after Hurricane Helene by putting the lost \$98 million into the Capital Construction program. Additionally, \$200 million is added to Routine Maintenance for incurred costs of storm response related to Hurricane Helene, Hurricane Debby, and flooding in November.
- The House version of the Amended FY 2025 budget recognizes \$100 million in funds previously authorized through the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission for relief and provides \$150 million in additional funds to provide disaster relief assistance to farmers and timber producers impacted by Hurricane Helene, for a total investment of \$250 million.
- The Amended FY 2025 budget includes \$50 million for the Department of Administrative Services' property risk pool to address, in part, damage to state property caused by Hurricane Helene.
- House Bill 67 includes \$15.7 million for firefighting helicopter and environmental cab tractors for the Georgia Forestry Commission.
- The House provides \$35.6 million in one-time grants to 45 public rural and critical access hospitals to assist in financial stabilization and Hurricane Helene recovery efforts.
- The budget includes \$1.4 million for a \$3,000 salary enhancement to federal eligibility caseworkers. Among other duties, these individuals respond when there is a natural disaster to assist individuals with access to federal benefits. Other departmental caseworkers received this adjustment in the original FY 2025 budget.
- The House version of the Amended FY 2025 budget includes \$10 million in grant funds for Hurricane Helene relief.

Economic Development

- House Bill 67 provides \$501.7 million to the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority to support the development and construction of additional surface water resources for Georgia's coastal region to meet growth in demand.
- The House supports the governor's recommendation to provide \$250 million to the Georgia Fund for low-interest loans for water and wastewater infrastructure development in local communities; \$250 million was also provided in the Amended FY 2024 budget, for a total investment of \$500 million over two years.
- The House supports the governor's recommendation to provide \$425,772 to expand the Georgia Hemp program.
- House Bill 67 includes \$28 million to provide grants and loans for rural workforce housing. The program provides funding for projects that address current workforce housing needs by the expansion or improvement of the housing stock.
- The Amended FY 2025 budget includes \$20 million for grants for rural site development. The Rural Site Development program supports local economic development and is used to help communities establish development-ready sites.
- The Amended FY 2025 budget provides \$37.4 million to the Department of Agriculture for renovations and repairs to the Atlanta Farmers Market.

Education

- House Bill 67 provides \$114.3 million to the Department of Education (DOE) for the Quality Basic Education (QBE) midterm adjustment to reflect an increase in 3,431 students (or 0.05%) over last year, also reflecting more student growth to higher cost student categories. The formula also funds \$267,110 in growth for charter system grants; \$203,344 for state completion special school grants; \$12.9 million in growth for the state charter school supplement reflecting two additional schools; and \$13.2 million in growth for the Special Needs Scholarship.
- The Amended FY 2025 budget includes \$50 million for school security grants. Grants will be provided to systems at \$21,635 per school for one-time security expenses. When combined with \$109 million in the base, systems will receive a total of \$68,759 per school in FY 2025. Additionally, \$3 million is added to the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) for start-up for funds for a school threat assessment system.
- The House version of the Amended FY 2025 budget includes \$2.2 million to reflect increased utilization of AP exams. The state funds one AP exam for each free and reduced-price lunch student and one AP STEM exam for any student. The budget also includes an additional \$249,424 for PSAT exams for all tenth-grade students.
- House Bill 67 provides \$100,000 to the Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) to offer start-up grants of \$10,000 each to Summer Food Service Program providers in unserved and underserved areas. DECAL's program, Happy Helpings, served over 100 counties last year, and utilized Amended FY 2024 funding to partner with 12 new and experienced sponsors, serve over 100,000 additional meals, and reach 14 previously unserved counties.
- The Amended FY 2025 budget includes \$7.42 million in new lottery funds for the Department of Early Care and Learning to complete the implementation of the recommendations provided by the House

Early Childhood Education Working Group. Funding will complete the recommendations to improve Pre-K lead teacher and assistant teacher pay by bringing pay parity between Pre-K assistant teachers and K-12 paraprofessionals and moving Pre-K lead teachers to the State Board of Education salary schedule.

- The Amended FY 2025 budget provides \$160,000 in one-time funding to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement to establish a Regional Crisis Recovery Network in partnership with the Southern Regional Education Board. The network will utilize and train 650 counselors across 16 participating states who can be deployed for up to 10 days at a time to offer students stabilization and psychological first aid following traumatic events like school shootings or natural disasters.

General Government

- House Bill 67 includes \$500 million for the Employees Retirement System of Georgia, to reflect the second year of a three year initiative to improve the system's overall health and funding ratio, which will provide a greater COLA benefit to retirees in future years.
- The House supports the governor's recommendation of providing the Department of Administrative Services with \$225 million to the agency's Risk Management program to address growing obligations related to liability claims and state property insurance. Of the \$225 million, \$175 million will go towards paying the over 1,600 outstanding liability claims against the state and \$50 million will help address rising property insurance expenses and projected future claims.
- In the Amended FY 2025 budget, the House recommends over \$1 million for the Department of Driver Services to improve license issuance services, including increased usage of chatbot technology to improve customer service and technology to combat address fraud.
- The House recommends providing over \$58 million in the Amended FY 2025 budget to the Georgia Technology Authority to support an IT modernization project with the Department of Human Services as well as funding for the Department of Community Health's Integrated Eligibility System.
- To keep pace with the growing interest financial institutions have shown in the state, the House supports the governor's recommendation in HB 67 to provide the Department of Banking and Finance with \$227,411 for two positions and software to address the increased workload expected from new charters.

Health

- House Bill 67 includes an additional \$795,000 for consulting and actuarial services for the Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) pursuant to HB 1078 (2024 Session).
- The House provides \$685,125 for a pilot program to utilize predictive modeling to detect potential fraud, waste, and abuse with the state's Medicaid program.
- \$500,563 is included in the Amended FY 2025 budget for the Georgia Board of Dentistry and the Georgia Board of Pharmacy to implement a new licensing software to enhance efficiency in licensure review.
- HB 67 provides \$79,402 for two child and adolescent psychiatric fellowship positions, and \$12.5 million in start-up funds for graduate medical education.
- The Amended FY 2025 budget includes a one-time \$25 million enhancement for Mercer School of Medicine to support learning opportunities to produce more physicians and prepare them to serve

the state's rural communities. Additionally, the budget includes \$25 million to Morehouse School of Medicine in a one-time enhancement for faculty recruitment and retention, medical curriculum modernization, and the expansion of the pathway and career academy program.

- HB 67 includes \$3 million in scholarships for medical students attending Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM) South Georgia who are Georgia residents.
- Within the Department of Public Health, the House includes \$500,000 for an educational and awareness campaign on the signs and symptoms of colorectal cancer and a campaign to educate Georgians on the adverse effects of vaping. An additional \$270,000 is budgeted to study the impacts of social media on the mental health of Georgia's children.
- \$437,000 is provided in the Amended FY 2025 budget in response to SB 495 (2024 Session) requiring the Georgia Department of Public Health to mail Low THC Oil Patient registry cards to the patients directly.

Higher Education

- The Amended FY 2025 budget includes \$30 million in one-time funds for the University System of Georgia (USG) for major repairs and rehabilitation at properties throughout the state.
- The Amended FY 2025 budget provides the Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC) with an additional \$21.3 million to fund the growing participation in the Dual Enrollment program. These additional funds bring the Amended FY 2025 total appropriation to \$112.6 million.
- An additional \$2 million is provided to the GSFC for the HOPE Grant program in order to fund the increased usage and expanded eligibility of those grants.
- An additional \$6 million is appropriated to fund HOPE Scholarships at public institutions. This additional funding brings the total appropriation to \$852 million, which will provide more than 300,000 awards to students across the state.
- House Bill 67 provides \$45,000 to the Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission (NPEC) to fund start-up costs associated with a transcript processing service. This service will allow NPEC to more-efficiently process transcript requests from students impacted by an institution closure.

Human Resources

- The House version of the Amended FY 2025 budget provides the Department of Human Services with \$22.2 million to address the growth in foster care and increased costs of care.
- The Amended FY 2025 budget also includes \$1.7 million for a special victims unit in the Department of Human Services which is tasked with rescuing foster youth who are being sexually exploited.
- The House supports the governor's recommendation to restore \$1.7 million for the Court Appointed Special Advocates program.
- The House provides \$1 million to the Department of Veterans Services to open the sub-acute unit which will serve veterans with severe mental illness and brain injuries. The department also receives \$1.5 million to address the increased cost of healthcare at veterans nursing homes.

Judicial

- The Amended FY 2025 budget appropriates \$106,854 to the Judicial Council for three new information technology positions, one of which will be focused on the implementation of the Juvenile Court Activity Tracking System (JCATS).
- The House version of the Amended FY 2025 budget includes funding for four assistant district attorney positions in the Coweta Judicial Circuit that were transferred to the West Georgia Judicial Circuit after its creation by SB 424 in the 2024 Legislative Session.

Public Safety

- The House version of HB 67 provides a total infusion of \$333.6 million for the Department of Corrections (GDC) including \$214 million in new funding for the department to make needed safety, security, and technology upgrades to its infrastructure. This appropriation provides necessary technology and security enhancements to keep both inmates and correctional staff safe. Upgrades include \$35 million for security technology to detect and prevent the introduction of contraband.
- House Bill 67 also provides \$50.6 million to the department for physical, mental, dental, and pharmaceutical services to continue to provide these necessary services to inmates. Another \$15 million is allocated for the creation of a state-owned electronic healthcare records system.
- The House version of the Amended FY 2025 budget appropriates \$16.3 million for new correctional officer positions created by increased retention as a result salary increases from \$27,936 in Fiscal Year 2021 to \$44,044 in Fiscal Year 2025, provided by the governor and General Assembly.
- The Amended FY 2025 budget provides \$10.5 million to GDC for new body cameras and tasers, improving the safety of both officers and offenders. These safety tools link to an Over Watch Logistics Unit (OWL) so when either is turned on, surveillance officers can immediately zero in on disturbances and send additional correctional officers if necessary. The OWL unit is funded at \$7.2 million to outfit a space, purchase start-up equipment and technology, and continuously surveil all security cameras across the state.
- The House provides \$4.2 million to GDC for the purchase and replacement of farm equipment and renovations at the dairy farm. The cost to feed prisoners has increased 40.37% over the last 5 years; adding needed equipment to the farm will help stabilize the cost of food grown and produced within our prison system.
- The Amended 2025 budget provides \$2.3 million to the Department of Community Supervision for personal services. This program is experiencing a deficit due to record retention rates within its agency, boasting a 4% turnover rate in Fiscal Year 2025 for community supervision officers. The General Assembly and Governor have invested in our community supervision officers, bringing the starting salary from \$35,315 in Fiscal Year 2021 to \$55,083 in Fiscal Year 2025.
- The Department of Public Safety's budget includes \$1.6 million for the purchase of 1,000 new ballistic helmets, so all sworn staff have upgraded safety equipment.

Transportation

- The Amended FY 2025 budget includes \$530 million for the Freight Infrastructure Program for the widening of Interstate 16; widening of Interstate 95; and the widening of SR 96 from Interstate 75 to Interstate 16.
- In addition to the mid-year true-up of the Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG), HB 67 includes an infusion of \$250 million in the Local Roads Administration program which does not require a local match.
- Capital Maintenance receives an increase of \$100 million for resurfacing needs.
- The Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank (GTIB) receives a one-time infusion of \$37.5 million to continue aiding local governments with transportation projects. The House directs that \$7.5 million be utilized for airport projects that are not eligible for federal funds.
- GDOT's intermodal programs, Airport Aid and Rail both received additional funds. HB 67 includes \$7.5 million to Airport Aid and \$5 million to Rail.