



MIKE DEWINE
GOVERNOR OF OHIO



Ohio's People & Workforce

OPERATING BUDGET 2026-2027

Ohio's greatest asset is its people, and Ohio's 2026-2027 operating budget focuses on the goal of Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Tressel to give all Ohioans the opportunity to live up to their God-given potential. Since taking office in 2019, the DeWine Administration has helped today's workforce adapt to Ohio's evolving technology-driven economy and has focused on ensuring that Ohio's future workforce is set up for success. This budget builds on those priorities by encouraging talented Ohioans to keep their talents in Ohio, connecting employers with skilled workers, and helping young families build a strong foundation for the future.

More of Ohio's top high school graduates will stay in Ohio to continue their education and transition into careers. The operating budget continues to fund the **Governor's Merit Scholarship**, which offers the top 5% of each high school's graduating class a \$5,000 scholarship per academic year for four years to attend an Ohio college or university.

Students with the highest levels of financial need will also benefit from funding in Ohio's operating budget, which makes **the largest investment in Ohio's history into the Ohio College Opportunity Grant**, with \$428 million over the biennium. Additionally, the **Ohio Work Ready Grant**, which supports students attending community colleges, and the **Choose Ohio First Scholarship**, which supports students pursuing STEM degrees, are being supported with a combined \$85 million total investment.

Building on Governor DeWine's goal to encourage young Ohioans to keep their talents in Ohio, the new operating budget **guarantees admission to a state college or university for each Ohio high school graduate in the top 10% of the graduate's graduating class** – and guaranteeing admission to the main campus for students in the top 5% of the graduate's graduating class – both simplifying the admissions process and ensuring Ohio's top students are prioritized for admission into Ohio's institutions.

As Ohio's economy continues to evolve, Ohio continues to help its workforce adapt. The new operating budget provides \$47.4 million over the biennium in continued support for the successful **TechCred** program, which defrays costs incurred by employers for upskilling their workforce to meet the demands of today's technology-driven economy.

To continue the state's work to fill the most in-demand jobs in Ohio, the new operating budget will continue to support the **Industry Sector Partnership Grant Program** with \$10 million over the biennium. The grant program supports collaborations between businesses, educational institutions, and training providers that work to grow the workforce in sectors such as healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, construction, and transportation.

Ohio is already a leader in funding outcomes and successes based on the number of students completing courses, certificates, and degrees, but another crucial measure of success is the number of graduates who enter the workforce. The new operating budget carries out **Governor DeWine's plan to make Ohio the first state in the nation to tie a significant portion of funding for colleges and universities to whether their graduates are getting jobs.**

Connecting Ohio's students with available and in-demand co-op and internship opportunities sets students up for success after graduation and invigorates Ohio's workforce. Ohio's operating budget creates a partnership between JobsOhio and Ohio's state colleges and universities to develop and implement **co-op, internship, and other work-based learning initiatives** that bring more opportunities for students to connect with Ohio employers, leading to better after-college job placement.

The budget creates the **Strategic Square Footage Reduction** revolving loan fund (\$82.6 million in FY 2026), an innovative program to competitively fund voluntary square footage reductions on public college and university campuses that create efficiencies, with priority given to institutions experiencing a decrease in enrollment.

The **Ohio Institute for Quantum Computing Research, Talent, and Commercialization** will be established with \$7 million in FY 2026 to be distributed to Miami University to teach computing skills and creating a link to the world-renowned Cleveland Clinic, home of the first quantum computing system in the United States.

The Ohio State University houses the only veterinary school in Ohio. This operating budget will allocate \$15 million each year to **The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine** in order to increase enrollment of Ohio students, with the goal that 70% of the students in the 2026-2027 academic year will be Ohioans. These monies will also fund large animal vets in rural areas in need.

For Ohio's workforce to thrive, its workers must be safe. Included in the **Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation** budget, a total of \$82.6 million will help employers promote a drug-free workplace, reduce workforce illness and injuries, protect first responders, and ensure the safety of school staff. Funding will also be used to support the development of new protective equipment that improves on-the-job safety.

Each year, 18,000 men and women are released from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC). The new operating budget invests \$2.2 million over the biennium to continue expanding pre-release **vocational training and education for in-demand jobs** to help prepare those leaving ODRC to reintegrate into society and join Ohio's workforce.