

Press Release

For Immediate Release

Friday, April 28, 2023

Gov. Holcomb commends the Indiana General Assembly for approving the governor's historic and transformational 2023 Next Level Agenda

INDIANAPOLIS – Governor Eric J. Holcomb today lauded the conclusion of the legislative session that enacted his 2023 Next Level Agenda providing transformational changes to the way public health is delivered to Hoosiers, historic investments in K-12 education and workforce, pivotal contribution towards the economic development toolkit and another \$500 million dedicated to the successful READI program to enhance the quality of life of Hoosiers in every corner of Indiana.

“First and foremost, we balanced our 10th straight budget which enables us to strategically prioritize key areas in health, education and workforce that will elevate Indiana to the Next Level,” Gov. Holcomb said. “I’m proud of what was accomplished this legislative session and through collaboration and hard work we will be able to make transformational investments that will better the lives of Hoosiers and build a better today and stronger tomorrow.”

The Indiana General Assembly approved key components of Gov. Holcomb’s 2023 Next Level Agenda.

Public Health

Dedicating \$263 million over the biennium to fulfill the recommendations of the Governor’s Public Health Commission to improve the health outcomes of Hoosiers by providing the necessary resources and delivery of services.

Of the total, \$225 million will directly go toward local public health departments that opt-in to the local/state partnership. The remaining \$38 million will be used for state resources to assist local health officials improve health outcomes. This includes integrating public health data and analytics, improving emergency preparedness through EMS training and readiness programs, increasing the state’s strategic stockpile of supplies and promoting childhood and adolescent screenings.

New legislation will provide \$100 million for mental health services and resources to more Hoosiers by expanding mobile crisis teams and crisis stabilization units and continuing to offer the 988 Crisis and Suicide Lifeline services.

The state will implement the Governor’s Challenge to Prevent Suicide among veterans and service members to partner with communities, state agencies and veterans to come up with strategies and a prevention plan.

The state also will strategically invest the more than \$500 million the state will receive in the coming years from the national opioid settlement to create more community substance use programs to help those suffering from addiction.

Education and Workforce

K-12

The state will continue to make historic investments in K-12 education with an additional \$1.47 billion in tuition support over the next two years. The increase will empower local public schools to reach the goal of achieving a statewide average teacher salary of \$60,000.

With the General Assembly's support, the state will remove a hidden tax on Hoosier parents by eliminating textbook and curriculum fees for more than 1 million students in traditional public and charter schools.

The state will also launch Dolly Parton's Imagination Library statewide by investing \$6 million over the next two years to provide every child high-quality books from birth to age five. State funding will be put toward literacy initiatives to achieve the state's goal of 95% of third-grade students indicate reading proficiency skills by 2027.

Higher Education

Through legislation, the Commission for Higher Education will implement the governor's goal of auto-enrolling eligible students in the 21st Century Scholarship Program.

The budget also delivered on the governor's promise to support first-generation and low-income minority students by dedicating \$10 million to Martin University and several other programs with similar initiatives.

Early Learning

Eligibility for On My Way Pre-K will be expanded by raising the income eligibility limits for the programs from 127% to 150% of the federal poverty limit. The governor will simultaneously expand eligibility for Child Care and Development Fund vouchers to provide program access to about 5,000 more lower income working families.

Workforce

The budget delivers on Governor Holcomb's sustained commitment to provide Hoosiers with more opportunities to obtain the skills they need for the jobs of tomorrow by investing \$58 million over the biennium in Next Level Jobs Grant programs to benefit employers and employees.

Aligned with the governor's proposals, the enacted budget provides increases across the state's adult education ecosystem to offer Hoosiers more opportunities to obtain skills to enter the workforce, including \$12 million to reduce waiting lists and expand capacity for adult education training programs as well as \$16.3 million to expand adult charter high schools, including the Excel Center.

Economic Development

Thanks to the agreed upon budgets, Indiana will continue its global reach to bring growth to our state by:

- Formalizing a deal closing fund totaling \$500 million over the biennium and an additional \$250 million-per-year tax credit cap
- Establishing an ongoing revolving fund of \$150 million for site acquisition efforts
- Doubling resources for the Manufacturing Readiness Grant Program
- Appropriating dollars to complete four capital projects: the new Westville Correctional Facility, new state archives building, co-location of the state's blind and deaf schools and a new state park inn at Potato Creek State Park
- Investing in Indiana tourism by increasing the Indiana Destination Development Corporation's funding

Community Development

The legislature passed the governor's proposal of an additional \$500 million for the second round of the Regional Economic Acceleration & Development Initiative (READI). READI has become a nationally recognized innovative program that connects communities to build sustainable partnerships for growth.

The Indiana General Assembly further showed its support of community development by:

- Funding Next Level Trails to expand the state's trails system and move even closer to the governor's goal of becoming the most trail friendly state in the country
- Allocating dollars for land conservation efforts
- Providing the funds to pursue more direct flights options from Indianapolis International Airport
- Appropriating dollars to provide upgrades to regional airports throughout the state
- Partnering with the state's Food bank network by doubling funding to \$2 million a year

Good Government

The governor's budget supported salary increases for the Indiana State Police and other agency law enforcement officials by raising the starting salary of state police troopers from \$53,690 to \$70,000 a year.

With the support of lawmakers, the state will invest more than \$7 million in a regional firefighter training infrastructure to provide a standardized training model across the state. With the help of the Department of Homeland Security, the existing training locations will be enhanced, and new sites will be created to help cover gaps that exist in area of Indiana.

The state will dedicate \$10 million to purchase necessary equipment for volunteer firefighting organizations.

To bolster school safety, the state will increase the Secured School Safety Grant Fund to \$25 million per year and expand how schools can utilize the grant dollars. The state will invest in more free trainings for school safety specialists.

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