



## *House Budget and Research Office*

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### **AMENDED FISCAL YEAR 2024 STATE BUDGET HOUSE BILL 915 – HOUSE HIGHLIGHTS**

House Bill 915, the Amended Fiscal Year 2024 budget, is set by a revenue estimate of \$37.5 billion. In addition to revenue growth, the governor's revenue estimate for the Amended FY 2024 budget includes \$2 billion in surplus funds for a total infusion of \$5 billion, or an increase of 15.6% over the original estimate. The Amended FY 2024 budget includes an unprecedented investment in the state's infrastructure including one-time needed technology and capital projects; safety and security projects; economic development projects; as well as human capital investment. Highlights of the budget are as follows:

#### Economic Development

- House Bill 915 provides the Department of Agriculture with \$500,000 in planning money and \$35 million for renovations and improvements to the Atlanta Farmers Market.
- The Amended FY 2024 budget provides \$2 million to implement the Georgia Farmland Conservation Fund. The fund will award matching grants to support farmland conservation, food and farming production, or the purchase of agricultural conservation easement.
- The House agrees with the governor to provide \$23.9 million to continue the Rural Workforce Housing program. The program provides funding for projects that address current workforce housing needs by the expansion or improvement of the housing stock.
- The House supports the governor's recommendation to provide \$29.2 million to the Georgia World Congress Center Authority for public safety, security, and infrastructure costs related to hosting the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2025 College Playoff National Championship. These events are expected to bring massive tourism to Georgia.
- 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.
- The House agrees with the governor to provide \$100 million to the Regional Economic Business Assistance program for economic development projects and \$100 million to the OneGeorgia Authority for rural economic and site development. These programs help to make Georgia more attractive to businesses seeking to expand or relocate.
- The House adds \$250,000 for the Public Service Commission to upgrade the pipeline safety database to ensure compliance with federal audit requirements and \$250,000 for the upgrade of the consumer response database for utilities to provide efficiencies and enhance the consumer experience.

## Education

- House Bill 915 provides \$102.5 million to the Department of Education (DOE) for the Quality Basic Education (QBE) midterm adjustment to reflect an increase in 825 students (or 0.05%) over last year, also reflecting more student growth in higher cost student categories. The formula also funds \$277,905 in growth for charter system grants; \$6.3 million for state completion special schools; \$27.7 million in growth for the state charter school supplement reflecting eight additional schools; and \$8.9 million in growth for the Special Needs Scholarship.
- The Amended FY 2024 budget also includes \$1.57 million for Communities in Schools (CIS) to leverage a 3-year grant to expand the program to 10 additional school districts. By the 2025-2026 school year, CIS will serve 46 districts, 240 schools, and 140,000 students. Communities in Schools supports students to improve attendance, behavior, academic performance, retention, and graduation.
- The House version of the Amended FY 2024 budget includes \$980,924 to reflect increased utilization of AP STEM exams due to the rollout of a new AP Precalculus course.
- House Bill 915 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 100 counties last year, and when combined with DOE's summer nutrition programs, 158 out of 159 counties were served.
- The House version of the budget includes \$8.9 million in lottery funds to allow DECAL to continue the Summer Transition Program at its current level of service. The Summer Transition Program provides rising Pre-K students and rising Kindergarten students with extra support in language, literacy and math to close the achievement gap. The program was expanded with federal funds following COVID, these additional dollars—provided by the House—would allow the program to continue providing these needed services to 396 classrooms and over 4,600 students.
- The Amended 2024 budget provides \$65,000 to the Governor's Honors Program, through the Governor's Office of Student Achievement, to fund needed technology updates and to further efforts toward increasing rural participation in the program.

## General Government

- House Bill 915 includes \$250 million in the Department of Administrative Services to address workers' compensation settlements, growing liability expenses, and increases to property insurance costs.
- The Amended FY 2024 budget provides \$158.5 million to Technology Empowerment Fund at the Georgia Technology Authority for new and ongoing projects including the NextGen project, which will replace the state's aging time management and human resources system. Funds are also provided for the Department of Labor to migrate Unemployment Insurance (UI) applications to a cloud-based system and to replace the antiquated UI software. The software currently used for the UI program was created in 1982. The Board of Regents also receives one-time funding to replace its 20-year old financial, human resources, and student information systems.
- House Bill 915 provides approximately \$65,000 to the Department of Banking and Finance for database upgrades to allow the agency to process applications and payments from, among other institutions, foreign banks. The agency expects an increase in the number of foreign banks operating in the state due to new and growing foreign industries moving into Georgia.

- The Amended FY 2024 budget includes over \$10 million to the Department of Driver Services to begin the process of selecting a new card production system and to move card production services to a cloud-based system. Additionally, the agency receives \$341,057 to address rising postage rates.
- The House version of the Amended FY 2024 budget approves the transfer of excess revenue in the Insurance Regulation Division of the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance to the Fire Safety Program for nine inspectors, 14 vehicles, and related expenses. The inspectors will work on inspection backlogs related to construction, manufactured housing, and elevators.
- The Amended FY 2024 budget provides an additional \$134 million to the Reinsurance program, managed by the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance, to address projected claim reimbursements. An additional \$16 million is included for the state-based exchange for healthcare insurance, Georgia Access.
- House Bill 915 provides the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) with \$517,385 for vehicles and equipment for six game wardens in the Law Enforcement Division, as well as \$114,500 to raise pay for part-time staff in the Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Division. DNR also receives over \$1 million for flood and fire mitigation efforts on Sapelo Island and environmental clean-up on Ossabaw Island.
- The Department of Revenue receives nearly \$2.4 million in the Amended FY 2024 budget to renew a contract with the Georgia Correctional Industries for vehicle tag production. The budget also includes \$108,525 for three replacement vehicles and \$300,000 to migrate data to a cloud-based service, which will save taxpayer dollars in future budgets by reducing rent used to house physical servers.
- The House version of the Amended FY 2024 budget includes \$5 million for third-party ballot-text auditing technology to allow the Secretary of State's Office to audit and verify the validity of any election in the state without the use of QR codes. The agency receives \$1.7 million to account for increased postage expenses when mailing new precinct cards and \$110,000 to improve election security by adding watermarks to all ballot paper. HB 915 also includes \$6 million for the Secretary of State's Office to replace Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS) for 16,000 voting machines statewide.
- The Amended FY 2024 budget also includes \$145,600 for the Professional Licensing Division within the Secretary of State's Office to hire temporary employees to address the program's backlog related to licensure applications.
- House Bill 915 includes \$500 million for the Employees Retirement System of Georgia, to improve the system's overall health and funding ratio, which will provide a greater COLA benefit to retirees in future years.
- In another investment in human capital, the Governor's budget includes and the House supports more than \$300 million to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$1,000 for state employees and teachers.

## Health

- House Bill 915 includes an additional \$38,550 for the Georgia Board of Dentistry to purchase two replacement vehicles and \$81,221 for investigative software to allow for more accurate investigation tracking.
- \$66,732 is included in the Amended FY 2024 budget for the Georgia State Board of Pharmacy for an electronic documentation storage system.
- The Amended FY 2024 budget includes \$148,250 to support new and existing housing for medical students with the Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) and \$50,000 to further support Lupus research, data collection, awareness, and education.

- \$250,000 for the Family Health Centers of Georgia is included in House Bill 915 to increase healthcare access to patients in south Cobb County.
- As Georgia is redetermining its Medicaid population due to federal instructions, the Amended FY 2024 budget recognizes a savings of \$181 million due to a decline in enrollment. Additionally, House Bill 915 provides \$120 million for increased utilization among the remaining population. House Bill 915 also provides \$93 million for skilled nursing centers to reflect 2021 cost reports.
- The House added an additional \$200,000 to the Amended FY 2024 budget for statewide healthcare specialty assessments to evaluate gaps in the specialties of neurology, psychiatry, rheumatology, and endocrinology.
- Within the Department of Public Health, House Bill 915 includes \$323,768 to restore funding for the Clayton County district health director. The Amended FY 2024 budget also includes \$215,892 for an information technology enhancement to the Georgia Vital Events Registration System to improve accessibility and useability.

#### Higher Education

- To meet the growing healthcare needs of Georgians, the Amended FY 2024 budget includes \$178 million to design, construct, and equip a new dental school at Georgia Southern University in Savannah, and \$50 million for the design and construction of the Medical School at the University of Georgia.
- HB 915 includes \$81.2 million for major renovation, repairs, and demolitions at University System of Georgia institutions statewide and \$15.8 million for B-unit projects.
- House Bill 915 includes \$9.25 million for six new eminent scholars and six distinguished investigators at the Georgia Institute of Technology and Augusta University, to study electrification associated with artificial intelligence and “inflammaging” and brain aging, respectively.
- The Amended FY 2024 budget includes \$66 million in the Teaching program to restore original FY 2024 formula earnings. The reduction disproportionately impacted smaller, access institution in the state.
- House Bill 915 provides the Georgia Student Finance Commission with an additional \$12.3 million to fund the growing participation in the Dual Enrollment program. These additional funds bring the Amended FY 2024 total appropriation to \$88.5 million.
- The Amended 2024 budget provides the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) with \$10.25 million to complete the Rivian training center in Newton County.
- House Bill 915 provides \$4.75 million to fund operations within the Quick Start program. These additional funds will allow Quick Start to have the staff and facilities needed to meet training obligations throughout the state.
- The Amended FY 2024 budget includes \$19.5 million for the Technical Education program within TCSG to fund renovation and start-up costs for three Workforce Accelerator site locations to support the electric vehicle industry in the state.
- The House version of the budget provides \$657,910 to TCSG for start-up and equipment costs for 22 additional campus police officers throughout the system’s 20 police departments.
- House Bill 915 includes \$2 million for the construction of the Anne Frank Education Center, realizing \$4 million in private donations have already been raised.

- The Amended FY 2024 budget includes \$300,000 for Georgia Public Telecommunications Commission to develop an update to Georgia Stories, a video series that supports teachers in providing the required eighth-grade course on Georgia geography, history, and economics.

### Human Resources

- House Bill 915 repurposes \$10.4 million in unutilized funds to provide for the construction of a child and adolescent crisis stabilization unit in Savannah.
- The Amended FY 2024 budget includes \$664,462 for a new 30-bed jail-based program that would provide services to restore inmates to competency and address the forensic services backlog.
- House Bill 915 provides \$2 million to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) for a pilot to implement transportation alternatives for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.
- In the Amended FY 2024 budget, DBHDD receives \$475,625 to provide funding for 246 housing slots and \$500,000 to expand mental health services in Warner Robins to serve additional patients in need of housing and wraparound services.
- HB 915 appropriates \$60 million to DBHDD to address capital needs across the state's five psychiatric hospitals.
- The Office of the Child Advocate is appropriated \$99,780 to improve legal representation that foster children and their families receive.
- HB 915 provides \$3.2 million to the Department of Human Services to improve the SHINES child welfare case management system and \$1.7 million for the Georgia Gateway benefits eligibility system.
- The Georgia Department of Veterans Services is appropriated \$1 million for the Veterans Mental Health Services Program pursuant to HB 414 (2023 Session).

### Public Safety and the Courts

- The House version of HB 915 includes \$10.6 million in new funding for the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) 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 in existing facilities. Upgrades include \$9.8 million for security technology to detect and prevent the introduction of contraband. The budget also includes \$135.3 million for facility maintenance and repairs statewide.
- The Amended FY 2024 budget includes \$450.8 million to complete construction of a state new prison facility in Washington County. Designed with both correctional officer and inmate safety in mind, the new facility features a separate staff mezzanine for access and observation, precast cells, and rear pipe chases to prevent the introduction of contraband and weapons.
- House Bill 915 also provides \$65.2 million to GDC for physical and pharmaceutical services to continue to provide these necessary services to inmates.
- The Amended FY 2024 budget appropriates \$4.6 million to GDC to bring 400 transitional center beds online at the Metro Re-entry Center. These transitional center beds will give inmates returning to the metro area after release access to numerous resources and programming including employment assistance, social services connections, housing assistance, and family reunification programming.

- House Bill 915 provides \$887,773 to fund a \$2 per diem increase for county correctional institutions beginning April 1, 2024. County correctional institutions are a vital part of Georgia's correctional framework. There are 21 county correctional institutions across Georgia housing an average of 4,526 inmates in FY 2023.
- The House provides \$315,725 to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for a dedicated sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) coordinator in all state-funded sexual assault centers in Georgia without a full time SANE beginning April 1, 2024. This funding will ensure the integrity of critical forensic medical examinations needed for the prosecution of sexual assault. SANE coordinators are trained in trauma response to handle victims with care and integrity while gathering evidence.
- The Amended FY 2024 budget provides \$1.5 million to the Department of Juvenile Justice for new body cameras for the safety of both officers and youth. This vital technology will both support security efforts and provide leadership the ability to ensure standards of care and conduct are maintained during interactions with confined youth.

#### Transportation

- House Bill 915 reflects \$3.9 billion in funding for Georgia's transportation infrastructure. The Georgia Department of Transportation was kept whole following a three-month suspension of the motor fuel tax and receives a \$1.5 billion infusion for the department's Capital Construction project pipeline, local projects, and the state's freight infrastructure.
- The Amended FY 2024 budget adopted by the House includes an additional \$27 million in airport aid. The Capital Maintenance Program receives an infusion of \$100 million to aid the department in continuing the state's capital maintenance needs through the end of the current fiscal year.
- House Bill 915 includes funding of \$509 million in the new Freight Infrastructure Projects program to enhance the state's rapidly growing and thriving freight network.
- \$200 million is added to the Local Road Assistance Administration Program as a one-time infusion to support local transportation infrastructure projects across the state.
- The House version of the budget adds \$4.25 million to continue the long-standing commitment to upgrading the state-owned shortlines to Class II (286,000 pounds/25 miles per hour) standards.