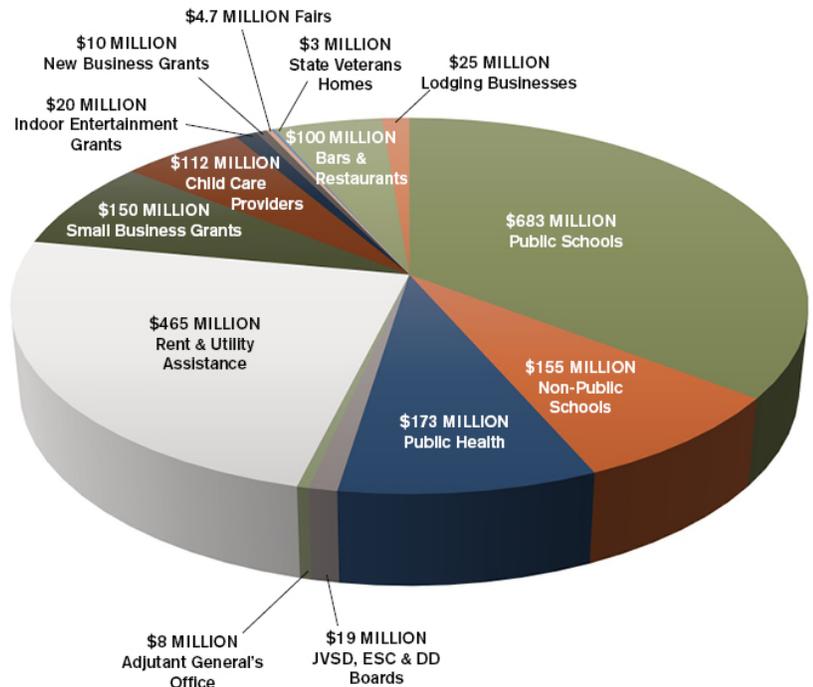


Ohio Legislature Drops Multi-Billion Dollar COVID Relief Plan

By: Katie Caprez & Sherri Warner

The Ohio Legislature dropped a multi-billion dollar COVID relief plan on Tuesday afternoon intended to improve public health and provide support to entities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. The \$2.15 billion proposal is part of the Statehouse’s response to the economic stressors of the pandemic and is funded, in part, by federal funds.

Thus far, the relief plan has been laid out in four Senate Bills organized by subject matter. The House is expected to release “companion bills” with identical content, enabling the Chambers to conduct Committee hearings on these measures simultaneously. The legislation as drafted would provide Ohio schools, businesses, public health professionals, child care providers, housing-insecure persons, and others with monetary assistance. Additional details are below.



Bars, Restaurants, and Hotels

The plan provides \$125 million in grants to bars and restaurants and to the lodging industry, with funding provided through the Development Services Agency (DSA). Bar and restaurant grants will be awarded in amounts of \$10,000, \$20,000, and \$30,000 and will be based on several factors including demonstrated lost revenue and the number of individuals they employ.

Grants for lodging facilities will also be awarded in increments of \$10,000, \$20,000, and \$30,000 with factors considered to include demonstration of lost revenue and actual occupancy rates.

Most-Affected, Small, and New Businesses

DSA will distribute \$180 million in grants targeted to indoor entertainment venues, new businesses, and small businesses.

\$20 million has been allocated for indoor entertainment venues. Like bars and restaurants and lodgings, these grants are in amounts of \$10,000, \$20,000, and \$30,000 and will be awarded based on several factors, including loss of revenue due to cancelled events.

\$10,000 grants are available to Ohio’s “new businesses,” and to any business which previously applied for, but did not receive, funding through the Small Business Administration (SBA)’s Small Business Grant Relief Program. Businesses created in Ohio after January 1, 2020 can apply for a “new business”

grant taken from the fund's \$10 million. \$150 million has been appropriated for SBA applicants whose previous attempts were unsuccessful.

Childcare Providers, Local Fairs, and Veterans Homes

The Ohio Department of Jobs & Family Services (ODJFS) will use \$112 million to reimburse child care providers for expenses related to the pandemic and to encourage retention of the child care workforce. The Department of Agriculture will provide \$4.7 million to local fair boards and the Department of Veterans Service will allocate \$3 million to Ohio's Veterans Homes.

Last month, Governor Mike DeWine announced the \$100 million Home Relief Grant program to help low-income Ohioans pay rent, mortgage, and utility bills. The new relief plan appropriates an additional \$465 million in rent and utility assistance to DSA. The funds will be distributed according to provisions specified in the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (last year's Congressional omnibus bill). We expect DSA to continue their collaboration with Ohio's Community Action Agencies to distribute these funds.

Schools, County DD Boards, and Departments of Public Health

The plan includes more than \$850 million in funding for Ohio students in K-12, appropriating \$683 million for public schools, \$155 million for non-public schools, and \$19 million total for Educational Service Centers (ESCs), Joint Vocational School Districts (JVSDs), and county developmental disabilities boards who serve "school-age students." All funds in these categories will be distributed via a mechanism to be determined by the Ohio Department of Education.

\$173 million is included in the plan to fund the "Public Health Emergency Response" for public health purposes to be specified by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the Office of Budget and Management (OMB).

Additional information about each of the relief segments will be made clear as the House and Senate host hearings to scrutinize each bill.

For more information, please contact any of the listed professionals.

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