

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine rolls out his final state budget plan: Here's what's in it

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COLUMBUS, Ohio— Gov. Mike DeWine's newly unveiled state budget plan would drastically raise taxes on sports gambling that could help fund a new Cleveland Browns stadium, pump more money into K-12 schools and offer more state help to parents with children, among a slew of other proposed changes.

The two-year, \$218 billion budget plan will now undergo months of negotiations and revisions by state lawmakers. Ohio law requires the new budget be approved by July 1, the start of the next state fiscal year.

The budget -- [expected to be tighter this year](#) compared to the last couple state budgets, which were swollen with federal COVID relief money -- reflects several of DeWine's priorities as he enters the home stretch of a decades-long political career. But DeWine said his budget plan wasn't meant to be about his legacy.

"I worry more about my kids and my grandkids, my great grandkids. And so, it's a budget for, you know, our kids," he said. "I just see struggling families all over the state of Ohio, and, you know, they just need some help, and this is a little help that we can give them."

On Monday, he highlighted plans to offer more help for families, from funding previously launched scholarships for child care to introducing a new a state child tax credit.

DeWine's proposal would also raise taxes on marijuana and nicotine products, tie a portion of higher education funding to graduates' ability to find jobs, and return driver's education programs to high schools.

But the governor also is seeking to raise some of Ohio's use taxes.

Under DeWine's proposed budget, Ohio's 20% sports gaming tax would be doubled to 40%, which the governor said would raise an estimated \$130 million to \$180 million more per year.

A newly created commission would be put in charge of awarding that money to pay for the cost of major and minor league sports stadium projects, as well as to youth sports programs, he said.

The Cleveland Browns [have been seeking \\$600 million in state assistance](#) to help pay for a proposed \$2.4 billion new, domed stadium in suburban Brook Park, near Cleveland Hopkins International Airport.

The Browns also have said they're seeking \$600 million from local governments. The team would cover the other half of the cost, under the Browns plan.

The governor's budget plan would allow teams to apply for up to 40% of a stadium project's cost – which, in the Browns' case, would be \$960 million.

The Browns have been seeking the money not through direct state subsidies – an idea that [state lawmakers have spoken out against](#) – but rather by using tax revenue generated from the new stadium and the [proposed \\$1 billion mixed-use development](#) surrounding it.

"We appreciate Governor DeWine's commitment to looking at creative ways to solve sports facilities development while positively impacting youth sports throughout Ohio," Dave Jenkins, Haslam Sports Group chief operations officer, said in a prepared statement. "We look forward to learning more about the options this legislation may provide. At the same time, we continue to work with the appropriate stakeholders and other experienced experts to develop alternative funding mechanisms for an enclosed Huntington Bank Field in Brook Park, knowing the importance of not tapping into existing taxpayer funds that go to other pressing community needs."

Other parts of DeWine's proposed budget would raise Ohio's tax rate on recreational marijuana from 10% to 20%, with the proceeds going to county jails, police training, and mental-health initiatives, among other things, said state budget director Kim Murnieks.

Ohio's cigarette tax would jump from \$1.60 per pack now to \$3.10 per pack under DeWine's proposed budget; the state's tax on vaping products would also rise from 17% now to 42%.

The budget plan would also raise [state K-12 education funding, implementing the final leg of the bipartisan school funding plan](#). However, the governor's proposal

would also reduce the state's funding "guarantees," money given to school districts that see a sudden drop in state revenue.

DeWine said his budget plan would make Ohio the first state to tie a "significant portion" of state funding for colleges and universities to how many of their graduates are employed. "We think this frankly matches what families want, what parents want, what students want," the governor said.

The governor led off his budget rollout to reporters by highlighting his budget's proposals to help children and families, which includes a proposed \$1,000-per-year child tax credit. DeWine [sought a \\$2,500-per-year child tax credit](#) in his last budget plan, but state lawmakers shot down that proposal.

The budget proposal would maintain or raise state funding for child care, including expanding the governor's child-care voucher program to include thousands of additional families.

Every two years, Ohio's governor and state lawmakers pass four budgets. The plan DeWine laid out Monday was the state's main operating budget, which appropriates billions to run state government.

The other three budgets include the state's transportation budget (most of which goes to highway construction and maintenance projects), the budget for the Bureau of Workers Compensation (a state-run insurance system for sick and injured workers, mostly paid for by employers) and the budget for the Ohio Industrial Commission (which hears disputes over workers' compensation claims).