



ENACTMENT SUMMARY

House Bill 96 **Biennial State Budget**

Appropriations Effective July 1, 2025

Other provisions effective September 29, 2025 unless otherwise noted

On June 30, 2025, Governor DeWine signed into law House Bill 96 (Rep. Stewart), which makes operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The budget contained a host of provisions significant to the judiciary, including the following:

- The Northwest Regional Hub of the State Public Defender was created and fully and independently funded. Some Allen County PD employees were transferred to OPD employees, and the NWRH is expected to be operational this Fall.
- The budget also removed the \$75 hourly rate cap for reimbursement on non-capital cases for appointed counsel and the \$140 hourly rate cap for reimbursement on capital cases for appointed counsel. In terms of the funds for county reimbursement, HB 96 contained \$197 million for FY26 and \$202 million for FY27.
- The Supreme Court will no longer provide Court Tech Grants; that line item was removed from the Supreme Court budget.
- The Attorney General's budget was increased to include money for grants to courts for the purpose of "facilitating the exchange of information and warehousing of data by and between courts and other justice system partners."
- A court is prohibited from using its special projects fund for training or education that takes place outside of the state. The prohibition goes into effect for county, municipal, and appellate courts upon 90 days after the governor's signature, and an additional 6 months after that for courts of common pleas.
- The clerk of a common pleas court is responsible for determining and implementing the best means and methods for storing, maintaining, and retrieving all papers delivered to the clerk, whether in writing or electronic form.
- The requirement that municipal and county courts submit quarterly requests to the Supreme Court for reimbursements of per diem compensation paid to acting judges is eliminated.
- The compensation of judges and other county elected officials is increased annually by a total of 5% beginning in 2026 and continuing through 2029.
- R.C. 2101.11 was amended to require the general docket of the probate court to be posted online no later than eighteen months after the bill's effective date.
- R.C. 2151.356 was amended to require a balancing test when sealing juvenile records after a complaint has been dismissed in response to *State ex rel. Cincinnati Enquirer v. Bloom*, 2024-Ohio-5029.

- Absence intervention requirements in R.C. 3321.61 and R.C. 3321.91 were modified and R.C. 3321.191 was enacted to require school districts to create a policy to address student absences by consulting with the juvenile court and local agencies.
- The bill provides that anyone sentenced to DRC or removed on an out-of-jurisdiction detainer must initially be conveyed by the sheriff to an appropriate facility established and maintained by DRC, or committed electronically, for reception, examination, observation, and classification. Courts of common pleas may enter into an agreement with DRC under which these individuals may be “electronically” committed to DRC. Additionally, offenders must be committed to DRC prior to the imposition of any post-release control.

The following items were included in the budget as passed by the General Assembly, but were vetoed by the governor and could thus be subject to a veto override vote by the legislature:

- A mandate that all “state agencies” require their employees to work from the agency’s work site, prohibiting work from home, with limited exceptions. The bill defined “state agency” broadly, to mean any organized body, office, or agency established by the laws of the state for the exercise of any function of state government.
- A prohibition on the use of eminent domain for recreational trails.
- The placement of juveniles in DYS instead of DRC when the youths were bound-over and convicted in criminal court.