



AFSCME FY 2022 Appropriations Priorities

From Hawaii to Maine, Florida to Alaska, and in cities and towns across the United States, the dedicated members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) are 1.4 million front-line workers providing essential public services and addressing urgent needs. Working in hundreds of different occupations, AFSCME members care for the sick and elderly; administer COVID tests and vaccines; help unemployed workers access needed benefits and services and find new employment; ensure that students have access to nutritious meals while classes are remote; ensure that school buildings are clean and safe; provide child care so that parents can work; maintain libraries as community resources; ensure clean drinking water; protect public safety; maintain our roads; and much more.

Public service is not just a job, it's a calling. AFSCME members don't do this work to get rich. They do it because it means something to be on the front lines of making a community safer, healthier and a better place to live, even if it means they are putting their own lives at risk. Robust investments are essential to enable the public services needed to recover from the current pandemic and be better prepared for future health emergencies; address the opioid epidemic and substance abuse; educate students and train our workforce; address inequities; and build back better for everyone. Without adequate federal funding, state and local governments simply cannot provide the services our communities and our country need.

Jobs We Do

Corrections
Early Childhood Education
Emergency Services
Environmental Stewardship
Health Care
Higher Education
Home Care
Housing
K-12 Education
Law Enforcement
Library Workers
Probation and Parole
Public Administration
Public Works
Transportation
Worker and Family Support

Federal grants to state and local governments play a critical role in funding health care, public education, job training, nutrition assistance, housing assistance, transportation, community development, and other critical government functions that support strong communities. Federal funding has historically accounted for more than 30% of state budgets, and more than 20% of state and local budgets combined.¹

In recent years, federal funding for many state and local discretionary grant programs has failed to keep pace with inflation, the needs of our growing population, and to prepare adequately for emergencies. At the beginning of the pandemic, non-defense discretionary (NDD) funding had dropped to the lowest point on record as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) since it was first recorded in 1962, representing hundreds of billions in lost investment. From 2010-2021, indiscriminate budget caps cut NDD funding by \$496 billion below levels needed to keep up with inflation and by \$757 billion below levels needed to keep up with inflation and population growth. The consequences have been devastating, making us more vulnerable to a deadly

¹ https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/data-visualizations/2021/where-states-get-their-money?utm_campaign=2021-04-15+SPU&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Pew

health crisis, fueling inequity, and resulting in crumbling infrastructure. Now is the time to reinvest in American communities and workers.

President Biden's transformative budget proposal puts working families first and makes the kinds of investments in public services our communities need to recover and build back better from the brutal toll of the pandemic and a decade of austerity budgeting. Robust investments in critical public services will combat deep-seated inequalities and create opportunity for everyone, not just the wealthy and profitable corporations. **AFSCME urges Congress to follow the president's lead and pass a budget that robustly invests in the public services needed to strengthen communities and our country. The American Rescue Plan (ARP) was a needed infusion to address the immediate crisis. Annual appropriations are the path to sustain our recovery and ensure a bright future. AFSCME has identified and prioritized key areas for investment.**

Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS)

This subcommittee funds many of the programs most critical to strengthening communities. In recent years, however, its allocation has remained flat or increased by a disproportionately small amount relative to other subcommittee allocations. The consequences of this underfunding have been public health officials without the resources needed to address the pandemic; substance abuse and mental health crises; unemployed adults without access to job training programs necessary to re-enter the workforce; and parents without access to affordable, early-learning opportunities for their children. **AFSCME requests an increase in funding for LHHS appropriations that is no less than commensurate to its share of the budget.**

Health and Human Services Programs

All Americans deserve access to the services necessary to live healthy and productive lives. AFSCME members are on the front lines to protect public health, provide child care, health care, substance abuse and mental health services, and other essential social services. AFSCME priorities include:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): COVID-19 exposed the needs of understaffed and underfunded state and local public health departments and the urgency to rebuild and sustain investments in public health infrastructure. **AFSCME supports the administration's request for \$8.4 billion for the CDC and \$842 million for the CDC Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) program** to protect local communities and states from terrorist threats; infectious disease outbreaks; natural disasters; and biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological emergencies in addition to other threats. We urge that CDC annually reports the breakout of its funding from states to public health departments.
- Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG): CCDBG allows low-income parents to work while their children benefit from positive early learning experiences. COVID-19 has laid bare and deepened cracks in the patchwork of our child care "system." Since the start of the pandemic, one in six child care jobs has disappeared, women have lost a net five million jobs, and 2.3 million women have left the workforce entirely, with child care obligations likely

playing a large role. Further, investments fall short of what is needed to pay child care providers a living wage. **AFSCME requests an increase of \$6.1 billion for CCDBG for a total of \$12 billion**, to address these shortfalls.

Investments in Behavioral Health Care Services.

The psychological impacts of COVID-19 have exposed the consequences of inadequate investments in behavioral health. During the pandemic, overdose deaths increased across the country by 33 percent and overdose-related cardiac arrests climbed 42 percent in 2020. Suicides and depression in children and younger adults are on the rise. Even as the country reopens, the impacts of the death, economic loss, and isolation caused by COVID-19 will continue. AFSCME supports key provisions in the President's budget to invest in behavioral health, specifically:

- **\$3.5 billion for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Grants and \$2.25 billion for State Opioid Response Grants.**
- **\$1.6 billion for the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant (MHBG) to support new and unique community mental health programs or supplement existing programs.**

Behavioral health workers are the key to quality services and the foundation to any solution. **AFSCME supports the president's requests of \$285 million for the STAR Substance Use Disorder Treatment Workforce Loan Repayment program.** This program can help stabilize the workforce by providing loan repayment for eligible mental and behavioral health professionals working full time in high-need communities or federally designated mental health professional shortage areas.

Labor Programs

Every American deserves dignity, respect, and safety on the job, as well as the security of a financial safety net in case they lose their job. AFSCME members administer our unemployment insurance programs, ensuring that hard-working Americans who lose their jobs have the resources they need to support their families while they seek new employment. AFSCME members also run the job training and employment services programs that help Americans improve their skills and find employment. These are essential programs that enable our economy and workforce to recover from the pandemic and resulting recession. AFSCME labor program priorities include:

- Federal-State Unemployment Compensation: Unemployment compensation is an earned benefit provided to workers who are unemployed through no fault of their own. In addition to providing an essential support to unemployed workers and their families, unemployment compensation is also one of the most effective programs for improving the economy during recessions, providing countercyclical support to our economy through benefits paid directly to those who need it, and are most likely to spend it. The increase in unemployment claims due to the coronavirus and the increased processing backlog has shown that more funding is needed to hire more highly trained merit-staffed employees to process and administer unemployment insurance (UI) benefits. **AFSCME supports the president's budget request for \$2.8 billion for State UI Administration and a \$100 million investment in UI Information Technology (IT) systems.**

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA): WIOA programs provide workforce training and employment services that help Americans improve their skills and find employment. WIOA programs help economically disadvantaged adults improve their skills, workers dislocated by changes in our economy adjust, out-of-school youth to realize their potential, and those with disabilities to obtain jobs and live independently. **AFSCME supports the president's budget request of \$3.7 billion for WIOA Title I.**
- The Employment Service (ES): ES is a primary workforce development program that provides worker employment and training activities for adults, displaced workers, and youth. AFSCME members administer these services at workforce development agencies across the country. The coronavirus has exacerbated the need to increase funding for this job placement and training program. **AFSCME requests at a minimum \$1.7 billion for the Employment Service, an increase of \$1.1 billion.**
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA): OSHA is tasked with assuring the safety and health of working people in the United States by issuing safety and health standards; enforcing those standards through inspections to determine whether employers are providing a workplace free of recognized hazards; and providing compliance assistance and training to help workers and employers recognize and reduce hazards and exercise their legal rights and responsibilities. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of a strong federal OSHA to protect the health and safety of workers on the front lines. **AFSCME requests a \$158 million increase for OSHA to \$750 million, including \$150 million for state programs activity** to support grants to 26 states enforcing OSHA-approved plans to protect the occupational safety and health of state and local government workers.

Early Learning and Public Education

Every American deserves a quality education and the chance to reach their full potential. Millions of Americans entrust AFSCME early education professionals to teach and care for their children in child care and public schools, including assisting in the classroom, feeding, transporting students, and providing clerical, custodial and maintenance support. AFSCME education priorities include:

- Title I, Elementary and Secondary Education: Title I programs help low-income and disadvantaged students succeed, supporting approximately 25 million students in more than half the nation's schools. For decades, but especially over the past year of the pandemic, students in Title I schools have suffered underinvestment, institutional racism, and lack of access to the materials necessary for learning, such as broadband internet, safe buildings, and a stable workforce. **AFSCME requests \$36.5 billion for Title I, the president's request, so that these schools are better able to provide resources equitably for children in need.** This historic increase would more than double funding needed to address disparities for under-resourced schools in high-poverty areas and provide needed support for students and school staff.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): IDEA grants help provide needed services for students with disabilities so that they can succeed. Congress has failed to uphold its IDEA obligation, most recently appropriating less than 15% of the average per pupil expenditure (APPE) for each student receiving special education services, far below the 40% that was

promised. States are mandated to cover additional costs for students with disabilities, and the shortfall in federal assistance requires states to cut significantly into other budget areas. **AFSCME requests \$15.5 billion for IDEA**, a \$2.6 billion increase as proposed in the president's budget, which would be a significant first step toward fully funding IDEA.

Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS)

Library services play an essential role in our schools and in our communities. Library workers create welcoming environments that facilitate student and family learning, provide free internet, help residents to access and navigate services, and are community centers. Cultural Workers United-AFSCME represents more than 25,000 library workers across the country.

- Federal state library grants under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA): LSTA grants enable libraries to offer free internet and computer services to help individuals apply for employment, navigate e-government resources, increase literacy and pre-reading skills, and develop new work skills. **AFSCME requests \$206.4 million for the LSTA to sustain libraries.**

Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

Housing and Urban Development Programs

Every American deserves access to safe, decent, and affordable housing. AFSCME members maintain and repair public housing and work in administrative roles at Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) to ensure applicants, residents, and employees in HUD-assisted housing meet program requirements and guidelines. AFSCME HUD program priorities include:

- Public Housing Operating Fund: The operating fund covers the gap between residents' rent payments and the full costs of operating public housing and helps to improve its safety and livability. Years of severe underfunding impede the ability of public housing agencies (PHAs) to ensure safe, decent, and affordable homes for public housing's 1.8 million residents, including 850,000 children living in 960,000 housing units. Among public housing households, nearly three quarters (74%) have extremely low income, less than 30% of local area median income. **AFSCME requests an increase to fully fund the Public Housing Operating Fund at a level projected to cover 100% of public housing operating expenses. The Biden Administration projects this FY 22 level is \$4.887 billion.**
- Public Housing Capital Fund: The capital fund supports developing, financing, and modernizing public housing. Recent funding has failed to maintain ongoing capital needs and to address the aging stock's significant backlog of capital needs, such as roofs, heating and cooling systems. Much more is needed to reduce the estimated \$70 billion capital backlog of needed repairs. President Biden's recent American Jobs Plan infrastructure plan proposes \$40 billion (over 10 years) for this fund, the related Warren-Velazquez companion bills (S. 598 and H.R. 235) would fund \$70 billion, and Sen. Schumer and Rep. Velazquez recently requested \$80 billion. **AFSCME requests an increase for the Public Housing Capital Fund formula grants from**

\$2.765 billion (enacted FY 21), without set asides, to at least \$5 billion. President Biden's FY 22 budget requests \$3.2 billion.

- **Rental Assistance Demonstration Program (RAD): AFSCME opposes added funding for RAD and seeks to ensure that public housing units remain under the responsibility of local governments instead of transferring ownership or responsibilities to non-governmental entities. AFSCME urges: 1) continuing to zero out RAD funding and reducing the unit cap, and 2) enacting workplace protections, worker anti-displacement rights, right of first refusal for new employment openings, and union successor rights for PHA employees potentially displaced by RAD.**

Transportation Programs

AFSCME members work hard to keep America moving, ensuring that people and goods travel safely throughout the country, including getting students to school and workers to their jobs safely and efficiently. But our nation's infrastructure is collapsing around us with congested roads and hazardous potholes, bridges in disrepair, and transit systems that are outdated and in need of repairs. AFSCME members design, build, maintain and operate our nation's streets, highways, bridges, airports, public transportation systems, parking facilities and ports. AFSCME members also maintain our buses and rapid transit trains; plow our roads; inspect bridges, highways and tunnels; and direct traffic. AFSCME transportation program priorities include:

- **Federal Transit Administration (FTA): FTA programs provide essential resources for our overburdened and underfunded public transportation systems, including buses, subways, light and commuter rail, trolleys, ferries, and other systems. Investments in public transportation systems provide well-paying jobs and enable our communities to function properly, boosting economic growth. AFSCME requests \$18.9 billion for FTA.**
- **Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE, formerly BUILD) Grants: These grants help state and local transportation agencies finance construction, repair, and maintenance for infrastructure projects, and provide local governments a much-needed source of direct federal funding. AFSCME requests \$1 billion for RAISE Grants.**

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

Every American deserves access to safe drinking water at home, at work, and at school. AFSCME members are the operators, maintenance workers, engineers and the scientists working at public utilities to ensure that our communities have access to safe and affordable drinking water, and that wastewater and sewage is properly treated to protect our environment. Funding has fallen significantly short of basic needs to meet health and environmental standards. The American Society of Civil Engineers' latest Infrastructure Report Card gave the nation's drinking water systems a grade of C- and wastewater systems a D+. AFSCME program priorities include:

- **Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF): This fund provides financial support to help water systems improve drinking water equipment, repair distribution pipes, improve water**

supply quality, and undertake other infrastructure projects. In recent years, funding has been insufficient to modernize our aging water infrastructure, down 33%, inflation adjusted.

AFSCME requests an increase of \$1.274 billion for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, to \$2.4 billion, to ensure that water systems can address risks and ensure the safety of our drinking water supply.

- Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF): This fund provides financial support for water infrastructure projects that treat wastewater, control pollution, protect estuaries, and other means of protecting and improving water quality. In recent years, funding has been insufficient to protect public health and our environment, down 36%, inflation adjusted. **AFSCME requests an increase of \$761 million for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund to \$2.4 billion, so that state and local governments can begin to address critical water quality issues.**

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

Justice Programs

AFSCME members serve in roles that touch on every aspect of our justice system, working to protect the public and helping those who violate the law to get their lives back on track. AFSCME members are the law enforcement officers that patrol our streets; the administrative employees that keep our court system running; the youth services workers that help troubled juveniles; the corrections officers that oversee individuals in jails and prisons; the probation and parole officers that monitor and support offenders; and the social workers that help support crime victims.

AFSCME recognizes that criminal justice agencies and their unions have essential roles to play in putting an end to systemic racism, dysfunctional cultures, and abusive practices. Federal funds are essential to promote all aspects of public safety and to address these and other systemic problems. AFSCME justice program priorities include:

- State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance: These programs play a critical role in ensuring the safety and security of our communities by awarding grants to state and local governments for a broad range of crime prevention and control activities. **AFSCME requests \$513 million for Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants, an increase of \$16 million, to fully fund programs and grants that assist law enforcement and correctional officers in addressing criminal justice challenges most important to their communities.**
- Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS): COPS grants allow state and local governments to hire new officers and train them in community policing, including de-escalation techniques, crisis intervention, cultural awareness, implicit bias, and peer intervention. COPS funding also supports the implementation of new technologies and policing strategies. COPS funding has been used for security community policing personnel at schools which requires advanced training. **AFSCME requests at least \$537 million for the COPS program.**
- Officer Safety: The Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement Officers and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability ([VALOR Initiative](#)) is an effort to increase safety, wellness,

and resilience of law enforcement officers. **AFSCME requests \$12.5 million for the continued full funding of VALOR and \$30 million for the Patrick Leahy Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program.**

- Public Safety Officers' Benefit (PSOB) program provides death and education benefits to survivors of fallen police, corrections, firefighters, and other first responders, in addition to disability benefits to officers catastrophically injured in the line of duty. **AFSCME requests the Public Safety Officers' Benefit (PSOB) program continues to receive such sums as are necessary with a minimum of \$24 million for the educational assistance benefit.**
- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA): VAWA programs support victims of domestic and gender-based sexual violence and help prevent these crimes from occurring. **AFSCME requests \$1 billion for VAWA, nearly doubling the program as proposed in the president's budget, in order to prevent as many of these crimes as possible from occurring, and, to ensure that survivors receive the support and services they need.**

June 16, 2021

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AFSCME's 1.4 million members provide the vital services that make America happen. With members in communities across the nation, serving in hundreds of different occupations — from nurses to corrections officers, child care providers to sanitation workers — AFSCME advocates for fairness in the workplace, excellence in public services and freedom and opportunity for all working families.