

UTAH TAXPAYERS
ASSOCIATION

THE PORK BARREL 2023

*An annual analysis of the Utah State Budget to
provide transparency and accountability*



THE PORK BARREL

The Pork Barrel report, first published by the Utah Taxpayers Association in 2022, seeks to shine light on spending by the Utah state legislature. In recent years, Utah's thriving economy has generated high tax revenues, and facilitated more government spending in the form of both higher budgets for existing programs and the creation of new ones. Reduced revenue forecasts mean this level of spending cannot continue.

Taxation is a function of government spending. The only reason taxes increase is because the government wants to spend more. Similarly, the only way taxes can decrease is if the government chooses to spend less. In the Association's first newsletter, published in January 1923, we said, "to escape the blighting consequences of excessive taxation in this country we must first reduce the cost of state and local governments". This report aims to highlight budget areas where costs could be reduced.

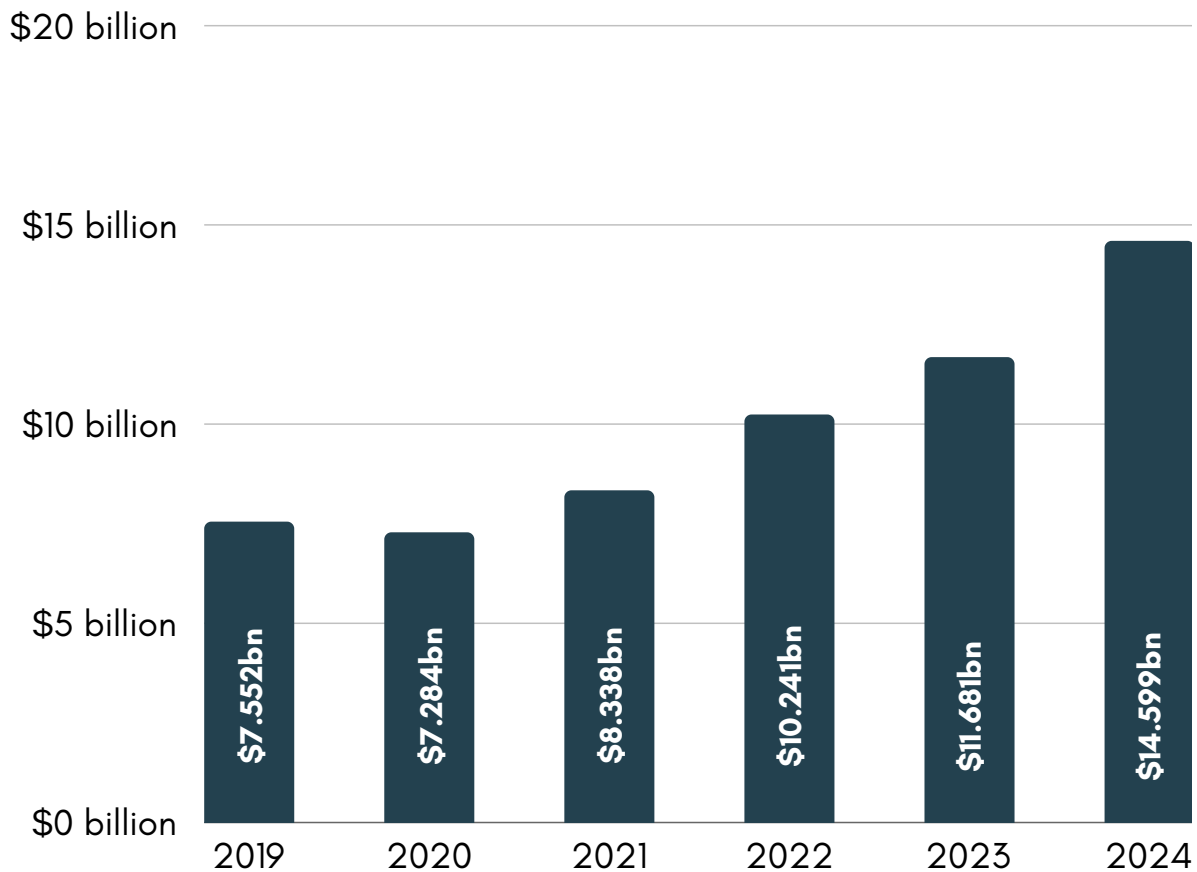
The Pork Barrel highlights various budget areas that have seen significant growth over the last six years. **Mention of a particular line item or category does not necessarily mean that the expenditure is unjustified or the program is invalid; simply that its costs have grown more quickly and dramatically than we might expect.** Different budget areas will be addressed each year. We encourage the Legislature to carefully review appropriations requests and ensure that one-time, ongoing, and increasing appropriations are justified and in the best interests of Utah as a whole.

Sources used are linked throughout and listed below:

- [Budget Quick Facts 2023](https://le.utah.gov/interim/2023/pdf/00002299.pdf) - <https://le.utah.gov/interim/2023/pdf/00002299.pdf>
- [Capital Budget Summary](https://le.utah.gov/interim/2023/pdf/00000527.pdf) - <https://le.utah.gov/interim/2023/pdf/00000527.pdf>
- [Budget of the State of Utah FY23 and FY24](https://le.utah.gov/interim/2023/pdf/00002644.pdf) - <https://le.utah.gov/interim/2023/pdf/00002644.pdf>
- [FY24 DFCM 5-Year Building Program](https://dfcm.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/FINAL_FY2024-DFCM-5-Year-Building-Program-Book-1-19-2023.pdf) - https://dfcm.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/FINAL_FY2024-DFCM-5-Year-Building-Program-Book-1-19-2023.pdf
- [COBI FY23-24](https://cobi.utah.gov/) - <https://cobi.utah.gov/>

We would like to thank the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst for their resources and efforts in ensuring transparency in the budgetary process.

GENERAL & EDUCATION FUND SPENDING

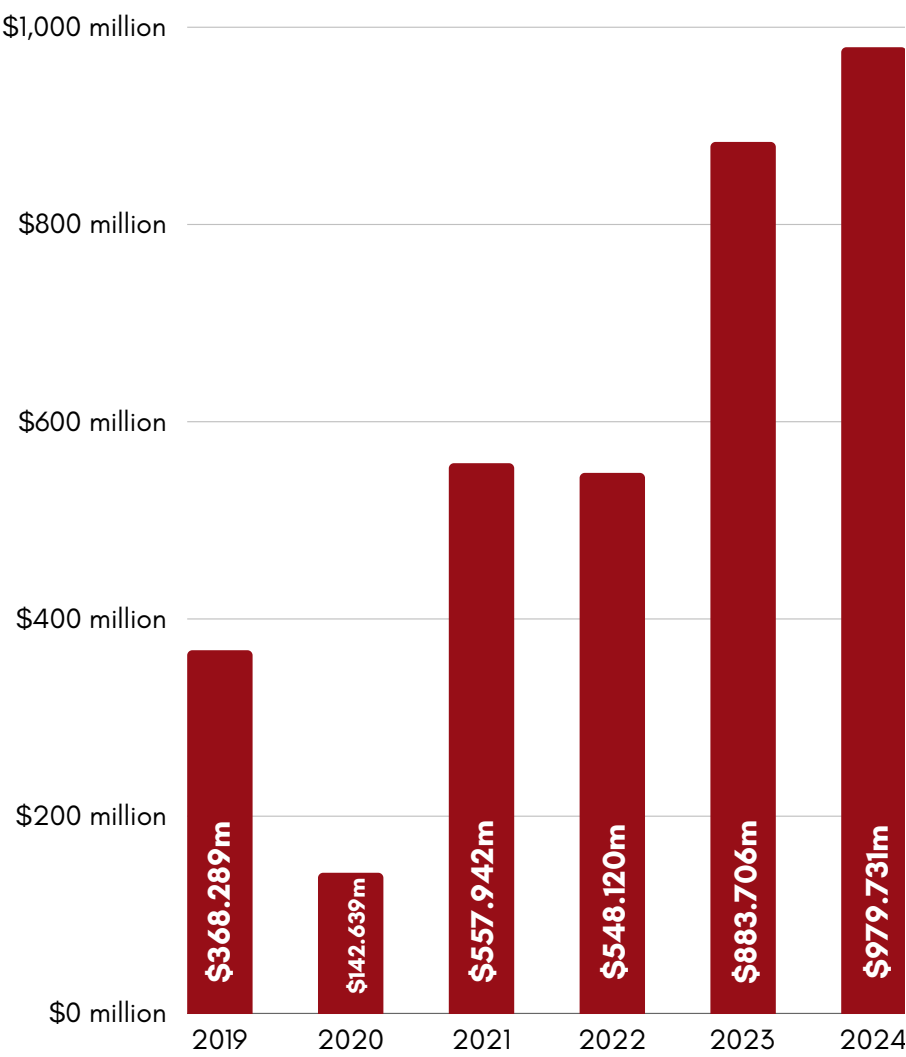


Why has the budget grown so much?

Since Fiscal Year 2019, the amount of state funds spent has grown by **\$7.1 billion**, or 93%. Between FY23 and FY24, the budget grew by 25%, outpacing the State's population growth (1.2%), GDP growth (2.8%), and public education enrollment growth (0.01%). The disconnect between the state's growth and the Legislature's spending indicates several things: first, a growing government; second, an oversized appetite for spending; and third, a lack of restraint in managing appropriations requests.

With reduced revenues on the horizon and calls for tax relief, the state government has the responsibility to curb the growth of the budget and make necessary cuts to actively reduce it.

CAPITAL BUDGET GROWTH



“The Capital Budget funds new construction, major remodeling, alterations, repairs, improvements, real estate, roofing, and paving projects.”
-Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst

Projects are funded based on recommendations by the Division of Facilities Construction and Management (DFCM), whose five-year plan ranks projects based on priority and who establish design criteria, and standards and procedures for new construction or remodeling projects.

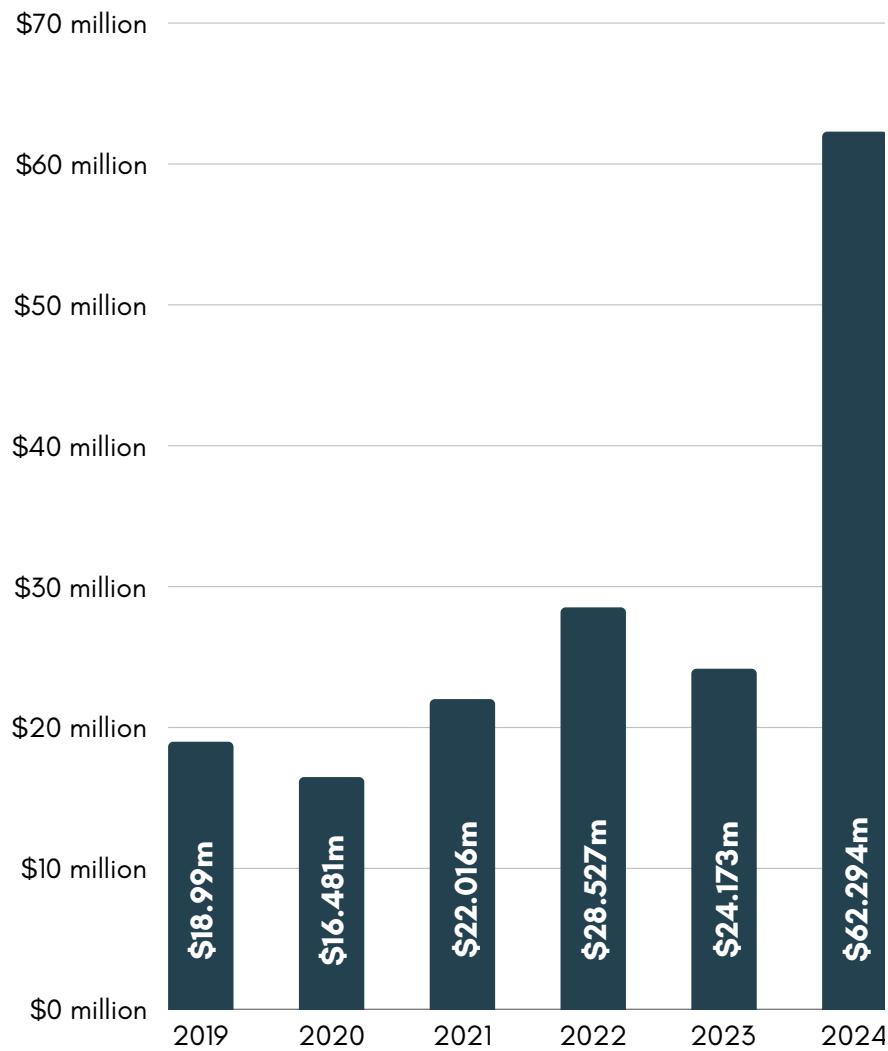
Since 2019, the state’s capital budget has grown by more than \$611 million or 166%.

Notable Line Items in the 2024 Budget

- Capital Improvements
- University of Utah Computing and Engineering Building
- Mountainland Technical College Wasatch Campus Building
- Loa Fish Hatchery
- Convergence Hall
- DFCM and DPS - Block 407
- Land Purchase for WSU Farmington Station

- \$210.2 million ongoing
- \$108.3 million one-time
- \$65.7 million one-time
- \$56.8 million one-time
- \$50.0 million one-time
- \$30.0 million one-time
- \$5.7 million one-time

AGRICULTURE BUDGET GROWTH



"The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food's (UDAF) mission is to "promote the healthy growth of Utah agriculture, conserve our natural resources and protect our food supply."

Projects are funded based on recommendations by UDAF and requests made to the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environmental Quality Appropriations Subcommittee.

Since 2019, the state's agriculture budget has grown by more than \$43 million or 228%.

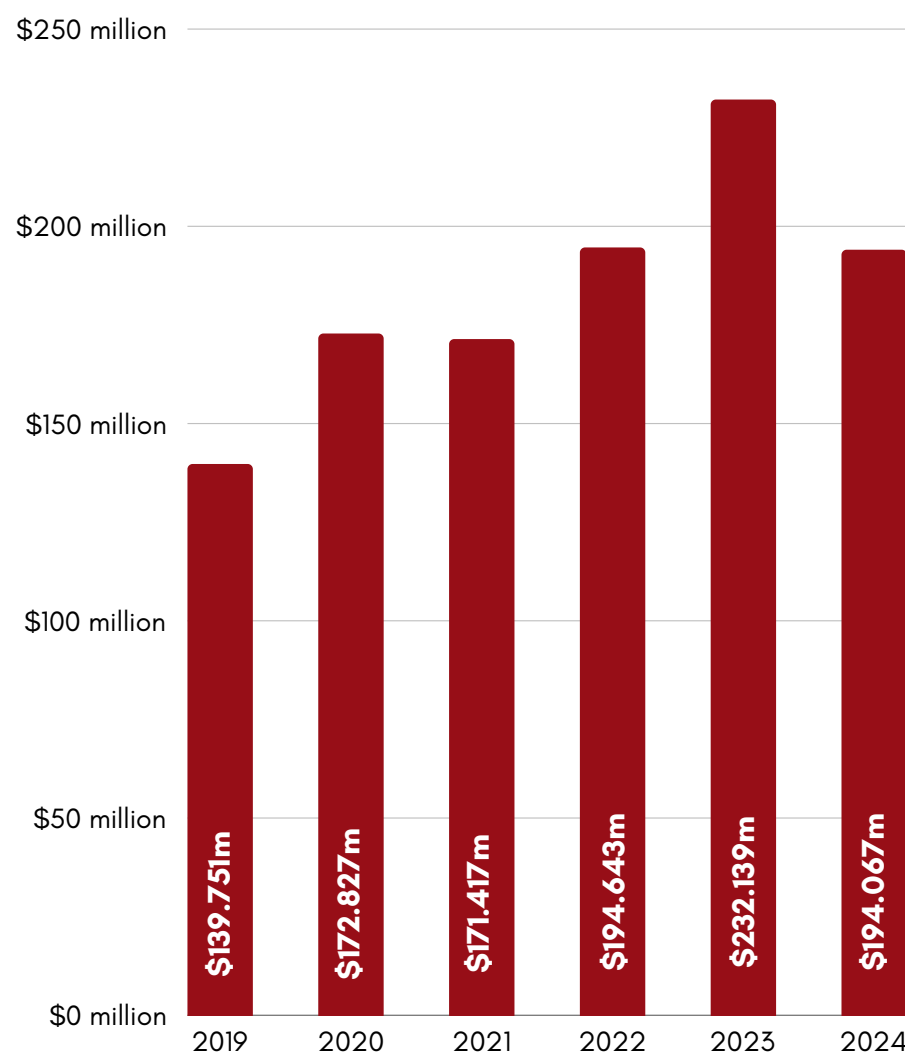
Notable Line Items in the 2024 Budget

Agricultural Water Optimization Program*	\$170 million one-time
Agriculture Resource Development Fund**	\$25 million one-time
LeRay McAllister Critical Lands Conservation Fund	\$3 million one-time
Veterinarian Education Loan Repayment Program	\$2.5 million one-time
Soil Health	\$1 million one-time
Grazing Improvement Program	\$3 million one-time and \$1 million ongoing

*The Agricultural Water Optimization Program was included in the Natural Resources budget, but warrants mention here.

*The Agriculture Resource Development Fund is comprised of \$20 million for one-time loans and \$5 million in compensation for individuals whose water was interrupted in a water shortage emergency.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET GROWTH



“The primary budget for the State Board of Education is contained in three line items, namely, State Board and Administrative Operations; Policy, Communication, and Oversight; and System Standards and Accountability.”
-Utah State Budget FY23-24

Funding for the USBE comes primarily from the Income Tax Fund, MSP and Local Levy.

Since 2019, the State Board of Education budget has grown by more than \$54 million or 38%.

Notable Line Items in the 2024 Budget

Utah Fits All Scholarship Program	\$42.1 million ongoing and \$1 million one-time
Early Intervention (All-day Kindergarten)	\$12.2 million ongoing
School Turnaround and Leadership Development Act	\$7.1 million ongoing
Informal Science Education Enhancement	\$6.04 million ongoing
Beverly Taylor Sorenson Arts Learning Program	\$2.4 million ongoing and \$2.5 million one-time

ONGOING FUNDING

The following line items, funded in FY24 as ongoing appropriations, are potential areas for review when reducing the state budget. Between FY23 and FY24, ongoing appropriations increased by 19.1% or \$1.783 billion. There is no default expiration on ongoing appropriations; they only end if and when deliberate action is taken. The progress and success of these programs can be reviewed using the Follow-Up Tool developed by LFA.

Line Item	Ongoing Appropriation	Explanation and Comments
Targeted Workforce Development - Healthcare	\$4,500,000	Creating and expanding healthcare certificates and degrees aligned to regional demand
Targeted Workforce Development - Computer Science Program Expansions	\$4,000,000	Expanding high-demand computer science micro-credentials, certificates, and degrees
Student Credential Account (SCA) Statewide Usage	\$3,500,000	The SCA links student learning, aptitudes, and skills certifications to academic and career pathways
Behavioral Health Crisis Response Commission Amendments	\$3,200,000	New receiving center in Cache County and 2 MCOT
Utah Water Ways	\$1,000,000	Non-profit to advocate for optimal water use. Could be privately funded
Home Visitation Services for More Families	\$988,000	Home visiting services to more Utah families living in poverty
University of Utah High School-Based Clinic	\$750,000	Implement a high school-based clinic at West High School
Utah Victim Services Commission	\$551,000	New Utah Victim Services Commission - coordinates victim services provided by various agencies (this is separate to the actual funding of the services, which received its own appropriation)
Native American Excellence Opportunity at Utah Valley University	\$503,500	Various facilities and programs to aid Native American students through their college experience
Utah Women & Leadership Project Support	\$500,000	Support the Utah Women & Leadership Project mission and special initiatives
Pretrial Services & County Supervision Management	\$450,000	Development of supervised probation programs for non-felony offenses
Innovation Lab at Utah Tech University	\$400,000	Assist state departments in finding innovative processes and products to increase productivity
Utah State Fairpark and Days of '47	\$325,000	Days of '47 Rodeo to use the fairground and services free of charge
Enhancements to Performance Data Collection and Reporting	\$260,000	Collaborative performance measurement and efficiency improvement in state agencies
Support for Medical and Community Service Interpretation	\$200,000	Medical interpretation certification training in rural Utah