

# **Greenbook**

## **LBO Analysis of Enacted Budget**

### **Ohio Expositions Commission**

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# LBO Greenbook

## Ohio Expositions Commission

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### Quick look...

- The Ohio Expositions Commission (EXP) produces the annual Ohio State Fair and operates the Ohio Expo Center, a year-round multipurpose convention and meeting facility.
- The Commission is governed by a 14-member board, consisting of nine gubernatorial appointees; the directors of the Department of Development, Agriculture, and Natural Resources; and the chairs of the House and Senate standing committees that deal with agricultural issues.
- As of July 2025, the Commission employs 54 full-time permanent staff, and, heading into the busy State Fair season, several hundred temporary employees.
- H.B. 96 provides funding of approximately \$21.0 million in each fiscal year of the FY 2026-FY 2027 biennium.

Fund Group	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
General Revenue	\$368,960	\$379,544	\$380,000	\$380,000
Dedicated Purpose	\$50,766,830	\$131,093,473	\$20,650,000	\$20,650,000
Total	\$51,135,790	\$131,473,017	\$21,030,000	\$21,030,000
% change	--	157.1%	-84.0%	0.0%
GRF % change	--	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%

### Agency overview

The Ohio Expositions Commission (EXP) is responsible for maintaining the buildings and grounds on an approximately 360-acre site in Columbus that is used as a year-round venue for large events and exhibitions. Overall, there are over 1 million square feet of event space in the 14 buildings that are part of the Ohio Expo Center. The Commission is governed by a 14-member board. As of July 2025, the EXP staff roster included 54 full-time employees and several hundred seasonal workers. In addition to hosting the annual Ohio State Fair, the Expo Center brings in approximately 150 events and exhibitions each year.

Receipts from events held at the fairgrounds typically make up the bulk of operating revenue under EXP's budget. However, during the FY 2024-FY 2025, EXP received a cash transfer of FY 2023 GRF surplus to undertake projects detailed in the Expo 2050 master plan framework established by the Ohio Expo 2050 Task Force. In total, \$21.3 million in FY 2024 and \$69.9 million in FY 2025 was used for these purposes. EXP also expended just under \$50.0 million in remaining federal Coronavirus assistance over the biennium to cover Ohio Expo 2050 Master Plan expenses and bring staffing up to pre-pandemic levels.

## Analysis of FY 2026-FY 2027 budget

Overall, the enacted budget for EXP is approximately \$21.0 million in FY 2026 and \$21.0 million in FY 2027. Almost all the funding is supported by fees related to the annual Ohio State Fair and other events held on the grounds. A very small part of the budget, a subsidy related to the Junior State Fair, is from the GRF.

### Operating Expenses (ALI 723601)

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
<b>Fund 5060 ALI 723601, Operating Expenses</b>					
\$7,109,403	\$15,763,954	\$19,440,881	\$20,137,337	\$20,000,000	\$20,000,000
% change	121.7%	23.3%	3.6%	-0.7%	0.0%

This ALI is used to pay all expenses related to operations at the Expo Center. Also, any additional expenses for the Junior Fair portion of the Ohio State Fair that exceed the GRF subsidy for that purpose is absorbed by funding provided in this ALI. The Ohio Expositions Fund (Fund 5060) is comprised of fees charged during the annual State Fair and nonfair events. Income is derived from space rentals, exhibit entries, admissions, parking, and other such sources. Nonfair revenues consist of charges for building rentals, parking, and concession income from the 150 or so events held at the Expo Center throughout the year.

### Grounds Maintenance and Repairs (ALI 723604)

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
<b>Fund 5060 ALI 723604, Grounds Maintenance and Repairs</b>					
\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$290,432	\$300,000	\$300,000
% change	0.0%	0.0%	-3.2%	0.0%	0.0%

This ALI provides supplementary support for maintenance and repairs on the grounds of the Expo Center. It is also funded by receipts from the State Fair and other events that are deposited into Fund 5060. Upgrades to the fairgrounds are designed to make the property more attractive to potential customers and to increase the number of non-fair events held at the fairgrounds.

In addition to this funding, EXP receives capital funding for building and grounds renovations, upgrades, and new construction. H.B. 2, the capital budget for the FY 2025-FY 2026 capital biennium, provided \$205.9 million for projects at the fairgrounds, almost all of which was to support the first phase of the Expo 2050 Master Plan.

## Junior Fair Subsidy (ALI 723403)

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
<b>GRF ALI 723403, Junior Fair Subsidy</b>					
\$350,643	\$362,650	\$368,960	\$379,544	\$380,000	\$380,000
% change	3.4%	1.7%	2.9%	0.1%	0.0%

This ALI is used to support the Junior Fair portion of the Ohio State Fair, which includes (1) premium payments to participants, (2) payments for judges, meals, and lodging for the All-Ohio State Fair Band and Choir, and (3) other related costs.

## Ohio State Fair Harness Racing (ALI 723602)

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
<b>Fund 4N20 ALI 723602, Ohio State Fair Harness Racing</b>					
\$287,405	\$316,766	\$297,195	\$285,475	\$350,000	\$350,000
% change	10.2%	-6.2%	-3.9%	22.6%	0.0%

This ALI is used to pay cash awards for harness races held in conjunction with the State Fair. The Ohio State Fair Harness Racing Fund (Fund 4N20) is a pass-through account which holds entry fee receipts for the harness races collected by the Commission. These amounts are then disbursed to Scioto Downs, where these races are held.