

Greenbook

LBO Analysis of Enacted Budget

Ohio Expositions Commission

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Ohio Expositions Commission

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; directors of the Department of Development, Agriculture, and Natural Resources; and chairs of the House and Senate standing committees that deal with agricultural issues.
- The Commission employs around 50 full-time permanent staff, about 600 seasonal workers for the State Fair, and about 90 seasonal workers for nonfair events.
- The budget appropriates \$225.2 million in funding over the biennium. Overall, \$190.0 million (84.4%) is budgeted for projects outlined in the Expo 2050 master plan. The funding is supported by a cash transfer from the FY 2023 GRF surplus.

Fund Group	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Appropriation	FY 2025 Appropriation
General Revenue	\$350,643	\$362,650	\$380,000	\$380,000
Dedicated Purpose	\$10,338,093	\$18,739,436	\$112,165,000	\$112,276,000
Total	\$10,688,736	\$19,102,086	\$112,545,000	\$112,656,000
% change	--	78.7%	489.2%	0.1%
<i>GRF % change</i>	--	3.4%	4.8%	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 one million square feet of event space in the 14 buildings that are part of the Ohio Expo Center. In addition to hosting the annual Ohio State Fair, the Expo Center brings in approximately 150 events and exhibitions. Typically, receipts from these sources make up the bulk of operating revenue under EXP’s budget. However, for the FY 2024-FY 2025 biennium, 84.4% of EXP’s budget is supported by a cash transfer from the FY 2023 GRF surplus revenue. This funding will support projects detailed in the Ohio Expo 2050 master plan for the Expo Center and State Fair. Beyond what is appropriated for operating expenses in the main operating budget, EXP receives funding under the capital budget to modernize the buildings and grounds in order to keep the Expo Center competitive among other venues in bidding for shows and exhibitions.

The Commission is governed by a 14-member board. The EXP staff roster includes (1) 50 full-time employees, (2) 600 seasonal workers in order to plan for and produce the State Fair, and (3) about 90 seasonal workers for the other year-round events held at the Expo Center.

EXP staffing has rebounded since the COVID-19 pandemic, during which staffing was reduced to six full-time staff members.

Analysis of FY 2024-FY 2025 budget

Overall, the budget appropriates approximately \$112.5 million in FY 2024 and \$112.7 million in FY 2025 for the Ohio Expositions Commission's (EXP) operations. Broken down by source, 84.4% of EXP's funding comes from a cash transfer of up to \$190.0 million of FY 2023 GRF surplus revenue. This will be used to support the Ohio Expo 2050 master plan. Receipts collected from the State Fair and other events held at the state fairgrounds make up approximately 15.3% of all EXP's funding. The remaining 0.3% of funding comes from the GRF and is used to cover part of the cost of holding the Junior Fair which is held alongside the annual State Fair.

Junior Fair Subsidy (ALI 723403)

FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Appropriation	FY 2025 Appropriation
GRF ALI 723403, Junior Fair Subsidy					
\$325,097	\$194,039	\$350,643	\$362,650	\$380,000	\$380,000
% change	-40.3%	80.7%	3.4%	4.8%	0.0%

This ALI is used to support the Junior Fair portion of the Ohio State Fair, which includes premium payments to participants; payments for judges, meals, and lodging for the All Ohio State Fair Band and Choir; and other related costs. The Junior Fair portion of the 2022 Ohio State Fair cost approximately \$750,000 to host. Based on the cost of the Junior Fair programming in CY 2022, this GRF subsidy would cover a little under 50.6% of this total cost in FY 2024 and FY 2025. Any costs that exceed this amount are paid from the Ohio Expositions Fund (Fund 5060).

Ohio State Fair Harness Racing (ALI 723602)

FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Appropriation	FY 2025 Appropriation
Fund 4N20 ALI 723602, Ohio State Fair Harness Racing					
\$323,648	\$315,819	\$287,405	\$316,766	\$350,000	\$350,000
% change	-2.4%	-9.0%	10.2%	10.5%	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. The budget provides \$350,000 in each fiscal year of the biennium for cash awards. Overall, Fund 4N20 collected over \$297,000 in FY 2023.

Operating Expenses (ALI 723601)

FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Appropriation	FY 2025 Appropriation
Fund 5060 ALI 723601, Operating Expenses					
\$16,359,250	\$3,979,497	\$7,109,403	\$15,763,954	\$16,515,000	\$16,626,000
% change	-75.7%	78.7%	121.7%	4.8%	0.7%

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 in excess of 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.

Ongoing uncodified law included in the budget allows the EXP General Manager, in consultation with the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) Director, to submit a request to the Controlling Board to use available amounts in the State Fair Reserve Fund (Fund 6400) to supplement funding if revenues from the 2023 or 2024 Ohio State Fair are unexpectedly low. Due to the cancellation of the 2020 Ohio State Fair, the Commission exercised this authority in July 2020, and the Controlling Board authorized the transfer of \$1.0 million cash from Fund 6400 to Fund 5060. Consequently, there is currently no cash in Fund 6400. Conversely, the OBM Director, in consultation with the EXP General Manager, may determine that Fund 5060 has a cash balance in excess of EXP's anticipated operating costs of the Exposition Commission for the fiscal year, in which case that excess cash may be transferred to Fund 6400.

Grounds Maintenance and Repairs (ALI 723604)

FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Appropriation	FY 2025 Appropriation
Fund 5060 ALI 723604, Grounds Maintenance and Repairs					
\$299,997	\$299,702	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000
% change	-0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	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 undertaken with the goal of making the property more attractive to potential customers and increasing the number of nonfair events held at the fairgrounds. Any such costs that exceed the amount recommended would be paid from appropriation item 723601, Operating Expenses.

In addition to this funding, EXP typically receives capital funding for building and grounds renovations, upgrades, and new construction. H.B. 687, the capital budget act for the FY 2023-FY 2024 capital biennium, provides the Commission with \$20.0 million to support the

recommendations of the Ohio Expo 2050 Task Force master plan described in more detail below. A further \$1.5 million was provided for emergency repairs and major equipment purchases.

EXPO 2050 (ALI 723605)

FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Appropriation	FY 2025 Appropriation
Fund 5ZNO ALI 723605, EXPO 2050					
\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$95,000,000	\$95,000,000
% change	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	N/A	0.0%

This ALI will support the Ohio Expo 2050 master plan for the Expo Center and State Fair established by the Ohio Expo 2050 Task Force. The task force was created in CY 2019 and revealed the master plan in December 2022. The master plan includes a new overall organization of the Expo Center property, including the renovation, modernization, or demolition of several buildings; the addition of new exhibition facilities, parking garages, and other areas to enhance guest experience; and improved access between the Expo Center and the nearby Ohio History Connection. Funding for this ALI is supported by a cash transfer of up to \$190.0 million in FY 2023 GRF surplus revenue and deposited into the EXPO 2050 Fund (Fund 5ZNO).

Other funding support for Ohio Expo 2050 master plan

In addition to the above ALI, the 134th General Assembly appropriated money to support the initial stage of the Ohio Expo 2050 master plan development under the following: (1) H.B. 687 of the 134th General Assembly appropriated \$20.0 million in the FY 2023-FY 2024 capital biennium, and (2) H.B. 45 of the 134th General Assembly appropriated \$50.0 million under State Fiscal Recovery Fund (Fund 5CV3) ALI 723411, Expositions Commission – ARPA Recovery in FY 2023. On January 23, 2023, the Controlling Board approved the first contract to start the design phase of the master plan. The approved contract supports the designing of underground utilities and infrastructure needed for the construction of new buildings on the Expo Center grounds. Since then, the Controlling Board has approved two other contracts in FY 2023 to support Phase 1 of the master plan. These approved requests were supported by capital funding in H.B. 687.