

Supporting the LGBT Community

Meeting Our Greatest Challenges: The President's Fiscal Year 2017 Budget

Under the President's leadership, we have turned our economy around and created 14 million jobs. Our unemployment rate is below five percent for the first time in almost eight years. Nearly 18 million people have gained health coverage as the Affordable Care Act has taken effect. And we have dramatically cut our deficits by almost three-quarters and set our Nation on a more sustainable fiscal path.

Yet while it is important to take stock of our progress, this Budget is not about looking back at the road we have traveled. It is about looking forward and making sure our economy works for everybody, not just those at the top. It is about choosing investments that not only make us stronger today, but also reflect the kind of country we aspire to be – the kind of country we want to pass on to our children and grandchildren.

The Budget makes critical investments in our domestic and national security priorities while adhering to the bipartisan budget agreement signed into law last fall, and it lifts sequestration in future years so that we continue to invest in our economic future and our national security. It also drives down deficits and maintains our fiscal progress through smart savings from health care, immigration, and tax reforms.

The Budget shows that the President and the Administration remain focused on meeting our greatest challenges – including accelerating the pace of innovation to tackle climate change and find new treatments for devastating diseases; giving everyone a fair shot at opportunity and economic security; and advancing our national security and global leadership – not only for the year ahead, but for decades to come.

The Budget supports and expands opportunity for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community by:

Expanding Access to Health Coverage.

The Affordable Care Act ensures that Americans can access high-quality, affordable coverage, providing health insurance to millions of Americans who would otherwise be uninsured. Insurance companies are no longer able to offer plans that discriminate against consumers due to pre-existing conditions, and because of the law, insurers can no longer offer plans that turn someone away just because he or she is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. Millions of families across the country are enrolled in either private insurance through the Health Insurance Marketplace or coverage through Medicaid. Americans have the security of knowing that if they want to change jobs or start their own business, they will have access to health insurance for their family. Additionally, financial assistance is making coverage affordable.

Addressing Health Care Disparities.

The Budget supports community efforts to focus on prevention, including using evidence-based interventions to address tobacco control, obesity prevention, and better nutrition and physical activity. The Budget also invests in expanding the health care workforce, as well as investing in health centers to provide primary care services in medically underserved communities across the country. And it continues efforts to improve data collection on health disparities impacting LGBT individuals, including LGBT older adults, that will help policymakers understand and have the tools to address the health needs of this population.

Maintaining Affordable, High-Quality Primary and Preventive Care.

Across the United States, over 1,300 health centers operate over 9,000 primary care sites that serve as high-quality, dependable sources of primary care services for nearly 23 million patients. The Budget invests \$5.1 billion in the Health Centers program in 2017 and extends mandatory resources for the program through FY 2019 so that these clinics can continue to be an accessible and dependable source of primary care services in underserved communities.

Civil Rights Enforcement and Hate Crime Prevention.

The Budget supports activities at the Department of Justice to ensure the protection of civil rights. For 2017, the Civil Rights Division will enhance efforts to improve policing practices, protect the rights of service members, and enforce the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Protecting LGBT Workers from Discrimination.

As part of a commitment to expanding opportunity for all hardworking Americans, in 2014 the President signed an Executive Order prohibiting Federal contractors from discriminating against LGBT employees and prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity in Federal employment, adding to existing prohibitions on discrimination based on sexual orientation in Federal employment. The Budget provides \$114 million for the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs to ensure robust enforcement of protections against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and other protected classes.

Improving Access to Services under the Violence Against Women Act.

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), signed by President Obama in 2013, prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in VAWA-funded programs and improves access to services in the STOP grant program. The Budget includes \$489 million, of which \$326 million is made available from the Crime Victims Fund, in Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women grants and assistance to support victims of violence, including LGBT victims of domestic violence.

Supporting the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program.

The Budget invests \$2.3 billion in the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program to provide treatment and care completion services for people living with HIV, and includes \$900 million for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program to ensure that people living with HIV have access to life-saving antiretroviral (ARV) treatments. By helping people living with HIV remain in care and on their medications, the Ryan White program plays a critical role in preventing the spread of the HIV epidemic, as recent

research has shown that ARV treatment reduces HIV transmission by 96 percent. The Budget also includes funding for a new initiative to increase screening and expands access to Hepatitis C care and treatment among people living with HIV.

Increasing Funding for HIV/AIDS Prevention.

The Budget expands access to HIV prevention and treatment activities for millions of Americans through the continued implementation of the updated National HIV/AIDS Strategy, with a focus on key elements of the Strategy. The updated Strategy calls for providing more people with highly effective prevention services such as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to reduce new HIV infections. PrEP has been shown to reduce the risk of HIV infection by up to 92 percent in people who are at high risk. The Budget includes \$20 million for a new innovative pilot program to increase access to PrEP and allow grantees, as the payer of last resort, to use a portion of funds to purchase the medication and other related healthcare services. In addition, the Strategy calls for prioritizing HIV/AIDS resources within high-burden communities and among high-risk groups, including gay and bisexual men, transgender women, Blacks/African Americans and Latino Americans, which is reflected throughout the Budget.

Supporting Housing Assistance for People Living with HIV/AIDS.

The Budget provides \$335 million for HUD's Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program to address housing needs among people living with HIV/AIDS and their families. The program provides States and localities with the resources to create comprehensive strategies for providing housing assistance that gives patients the stability needed for effective treatment. In partnership with other Federal agencies, HUD is working to promote greater achievements in viral suppression through the coordination and alignment of housing support with medical care. The Administration is also proposing legislative reforms that would update HOPWA's grant formula to distribute funds based on recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data on persons living with HIV, rather than the cumulative number of AIDS cases.

Encouraging State Paid Leave Initiatives.

Too many American workers must make the painful choice between caring for their families and a paycheck they desperately need. While the Family and Medical Leave Act allows many workers to take job-protected unpaid time off to care for a new baby or sick child, or tend to their own health during a serious illness, millions of families cannot afford to use unpaid leave. A handful of States and localities have enacted policies to offer paid leave, and the Federal government can encourage more States to follow their lead. The Budget includes more than \$2 billion for the Paid Leave Partnership Initiative to assist up to five States that wish to launch paid leave programs, following the examples of California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island. States that participate in the Paid Leave Partnership Initiative would be eligible to receive funds for the initial set up and half of the benefit costs of the program for three years. The Budget also includes funding for grants to help States and localities conduct analyses to inform the development of paid family and medical leave programs. These investments complement the President's executive actions to expand paid leave for employees of Federal contractors.

Preventing and Treating Prescription Drug Abuse and Heroin Use.

More Americans now die every year from drug overdoses than in vehicle crashes, and the majority of these overdoses involve opioids—a class of drugs that includes prescription pain medication and heroin. Prescription opioid-related overdoses alone cost an estimated tens of billions in medical and work-related costs each year. The Administration has supported and expanded efforts to prevent drug use, pursue “smart on crime” approaches to drug enforcement, improve prescribing practices for pain medication, increase access to treatment, reduce overdose deaths, and support the millions of Americans in recovery. However, too few Americans are getting treatment, and opioid related overdose deaths reached their highest level in 2014. Individuals who want treatment but do not get it often report cost and lack of access as reasons.

The President’s FY 2017 Budget includes \$1 billion in new mandatory funding over two years to expand access to treatment for prescription drug abuse and heroin use. This funding will boost efforts to help individuals with an opioid use disorder seek treatment, successfully complete treatment, and sustain recovery. This funding includes:

- \$920 million to support cooperative agreements with States to expand access to medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorders. States will receive funds based on the severity of the epidemic and on the strength of their strategy to respond to it. States can use these funds to expand treatment capacity and make services more affordable.
- \$50 million in National Health Service Corps funding to expand access to substance use treatment providers. This funding will help support approximately 700 providers able to provide substance use disorder treatment services, including medication-assisted treatment, in areas across the country most in need of behavioral health providers.
- \$30 million to evaluate the effectiveness of treatment programs employing medication-assisted treatment under real-world conditions and help identify opportunities to improve treatment for patients with opioid use disorders.

This investment, combined with other efforts underway to reduce barriers to treatment for substance use disorders, will help ensure that every American who wants treatment can access it and get the help they need.

The President’s Budget also includes an increase of more than \$90 million to continue and build on current efforts across the Departments of Justice (DOJ) and Health and Human Services (HHS) to expand state-level prescription drug overdose prevention strategies, increase the availability of medication-assisted treatment programs, improve access to the overdose-reversal drug naloxone, and support targeted enforcement activities. A portion of this funding includes support for rural areas, where rates of overdose and opioid use are particularly high. To help further expand access to treatment, the Budget includes an HHS pilot project for nurse practitioners and physician assistants to prescribe buprenorphine for opioid use disorder treatment, where allowed by state law.

Making a High-Quality College Education More Affordable.

Higher education is one of the clearest pathways into the middle class, and decades of research have shown large returns to higher education in terms of labor market earnings, health, and well-being. In fact, research shows that the typical college graduate earns twice as much over their lifetime as the typical high school graduate. Over the next decade, jobs requiring education beyond high school will grow more rapidly than jobs that do not. From the start of the Administration, the President has

focused on making college more accessible and affordable for all Americans, with the goal of making the United States the leader once again in college completion, as it was a generation ago. The Administration ended the inefficient guaranteed student loan program and reinvested the savings into making college more affordable, including strengthening and expanding the Pell Grant program, the cornerstone of opportunity for low- and moderate-income students. The Budget builds on these accomplishments to make college accessible and affordable while focusing new attention on ensuring that students not only attend college, but that they complete their degrees. Too many students start but do not finish a degree, often leaving them with significant debt and without the skills and credentials they need for success.

Promoting Affordability and Completion

In order to provide new resources that will make college more affordable and will promote college completion, the Budget:

- Provides \$60.8 billion in mandatory funding over the next decade for America's College Promise (ACP), which would create a new partnership with States to make two years of community college free for responsible students, letting students earn the first half of a bachelor's degree or an associate degree and acquire skills needed in the workforce at no cost. ACP would also provide grants to four-year Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), to provide new low-income students, including community college transfers, with up to two years of college at zero or significantly reduced tuition.
- Supports community and technical colleges' development, operation, and expansion of innovative, evidence-based, tuition-free job training programs in high-demand fields such as healthcare, manufacturing, and IT through \$75 million for the American Technical Training Fund. This initiative will be jointly administered by ED and the Department of Labor (DOL).
- Supports and encourages on-time and accelerated completion through year-round Pell availability to low-income students who have exhausted their award and completed a full-time course load of 24 credits.
- Promotes acceleration towards on-time completion by increasing the Pell Grant by an additional \$300 for students taking at least 15 credit hours per semester in an academic year, the number of credits typically required for on-time completion.
- Funds the full Pell Grant maximum award – estimated to be \$5,935 in award year 2017/18 (\$6,235 for students taking at least 15 credits) and continues to index Pell to inflation indefinitely beyond the 2017 award year to protect and sustain its value for future generation.
- Expands postsecondary education to incarcerated individuals eligible for release through the Second Chance Pell proposal with the goals of helping them get jobs, support their families, and strengthen their communities.
- Rewards colleges that successfully enroll and graduate a significant number of low-income students on time and encourages all institutions to improve their performance through the new College Opportunity and Graduation Bonus program.
- Reforms campus-based student aid programs to ensure that the funds are allocated to high-value schools that provide a quality education at a reasonable price to their students, particularly low-income students.
- Simplifies the FAFSA by eliminating burdensome and unnecessarily complex questions to make it easier for students and families to access federal student aid and afford a postsecondary education.

- Improves and streamlines PAYE and other income-driven repayment plans and creates a single, simple, and better targeted plan for borrowers that will help them manage their debt, as well as simplifying and strengthening teacher loan forgiveness programs. This builds on the Administration's efforts to increase enrollment in these plans, which has thus far helped more than 4 million borrowers manage their student loan debt.
- Simplifies and expands education tax benefits for all students and families. The tax bill enacted in December made the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC) – first enacted in the Recovery Act – permanent. The AOTC provides a maximum credit of up to \$2,500 per year for the first four years and is refundable up to \$1,000. The Budget would streamline and further expand education tax benefits by (1) consolidating the Lifetime Learning Credit into an expanded AOTC, which would be available for five years and refundable up to \$1,500 for students enrolled half-time or more; (2) exempting Pell Grants from taxation and the AOTC calculation; and (3) eliminating tax on student loan debt forgiveness, while repealing the complicated student loan interest deduction for new borrowers.

Ensuring that Students are Well-Served in School and by the Student Aid System

For students to succeed, institutions of higher education must deliver the high-quality education that students deserve and when students have completed their degrees, the student aid system needs to provide high-quality loan servicing to ensure that students are enrolled in manageable repayment plans and are able to get the help they need to meet their loan obligations. To meet these goals, the Budget:

- Protects students and taxpayers by lowering the share of federal revenues that for-profit colleges and universities are allowed to derive from federal financial student aid, from 90 to 85 percent, and ensuring that all sources of government support – including benefits provided to current and former members of the military and their families – are included in this calculation. The intent of this requirement is simple: quality for-profit programs should be able to secure funding that is not solely from the Federal Government and thus, show that they are able to bring in students willing to spend their own funds
- Provides \$1.6 billion for the Office of Federal Student Aid, which is responsible for administering the more than \$140 billion in new financial aid made available each year to students at over 6,000 colleges and universities. This funding will be used to implement the Administration's ongoing efforts to ensure that student loan contractors provide high-quality loan servicing to students. These funds will also allow the Department to provide enhanced oversight and strengthen enforcement activities such as pursuing schools that engage in deceptive or misleading practices toward students, including veterans. Funds will also be used to provide students and families with clear information about how students who attend different colleges fare.

Innovation in Higher Education

To support performance and innovation in higher education, with the goal of improving student success in these and other important outcomes, the Budget:

- Expands the First in the World fund to \$100 million, to identify and expand promising and evidenced-based innovations and practices at colleges and universities across the country to improve graduation rates and other educational outcomes for all students and make college more affordable.

- Provides new College Opportunity and Graduation Bonuses to reward colleges that ensure that a large share of students receiving Pell Grants finish their degrees and to schools that improve their performance on this important metric of success.
- Proposes a new \$75 million American Technical Training Fund, which would provide competitive grants to support the development, operation and expansion of innovative, evidence-based, tuition-free job training programs in high-demand fields.

Expanding Access and Opportunity at America's Minority Serving Institutions

MSIs, including HBCUs, Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPIs), and others, open the door to college for a large number of minority college students. To support student success in these important institutions, the Budget:

- Provides as part of America's College Promise (ACP) (described above) grants to four-year HBCUs and MSIs to provide first-time low-income students, including community college transfers, with up to two years of college at zero or significantly reduced tuition.
- Fosters innovative and evidence-based, student-centered strategies and interventions to increase the number of low-income students completing degree programs through a new \$30 million HBCU & MSI Innovation for Completion Fund competitive grant program.
- Sustains funding for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) and TRIO, which help disadvantaged students prepare for, enroll, and complete postsecondary education.
- Provides that up to \$20 million of the TRIO funding would support a TRIO Demonstration Initiative to test new approaches to foster college success.
- Creates a 30 percent set-aside for HBCUs & MSIs in the \$100 million First in the World competition to drive innovations in higher education that increase college completion, value, and affordability.