



Higgins announces approval of 2021 budget package funding important to WNY



Includes investments complimenting waterfront development & northern border enhancements

Congressman Brian Higgins, D-NY-26, outlined components of the omnibus budget package of particular interest to Western New York. The legislation, approved by the House of Representatives, directs funding for the federal government for fiscal year 2021.

Higgins said, “2020 has been a challenging year in many ways. We are looking forward to a new year that rises to meet the challenges before the nation centered on rebuilding and reuniting with a renewed focus on the issues most important to the American people. This budget begins that process.”

To compliment continued waterfront development in Western New York, the bill includes several measures investing in Western New York waterways. This includes: supporting efforts to fight harmful algal blooms, including funding U.S. Army Corps of Engineer nuisance control research at \$17 million, with a \$4 million study of harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie and other freshwater systems, and authorizing the [pilot project requested by Higgins](#); providing \$7.8 billion (\$145 million over FY20 levels) for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, including \$1.2 million for the Buffalo Harbor; and funding \$266 million for major construction projects for the U.S. Coast Guard, including resources for improvements to Sector Buffalo’s shoreside facilities along the Outer Harbor.

Higgins, who also serves as co-chair of the congressional northern border caucus, reported the package includes improvements to the U.S.-Canada border, specifically \$10 million for port of entry technology to enhance efficiencies at bridge crossings as well as \$100 million dedicated to border patrol station replacements, which includes a new border patrol station in the City of Niagara Falls.

Below are additional highlights important to the Western New York community:

•Health Care:

√ Funds the National Institutes of Health at \$42.9 billion, a \$1.25 billion increase over 2020; this includes \$3.118 billion (a \$300 million increase) for research related to Alzheimer’s disease.

√ Invests in cancer research with \$6.4 billion for the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and more than \$542 million for cancer research led by the Department of Defense



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√ Includes language that protects patients from surprise medical billing

√ \$6 billion (\$133 million increase) for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration supporting: suicide prevention, mental health resources and substance abuse treatment and prevention

√ Further helps communities and families struggling with substance abuse with: \$392 million for the Office of Drug Control Policy, \$1.5 billion for State Opioid Response Grants, and \$1.5 billion for the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant program

√ Increases funding to Community Health Centers by \$57 million, with \$1.7 billion in FY21

√ Includes bipartisan, bicameral legislation Higgins led (HR 5952) providing individuals with hemophilia improved access to critical health care services provided through skilled nursing facilities

•Jobs & Economic Opportunity

√ \$3.475 billion (\$50 million increase) for the Community Development Block Grant Program, which provides WNY municipalities with flexible resources to address community needs

√ Protects the U.S. Postal Service by preserving six-day postal delivery and preventing the closure of small post offices

√ Funds the National Park Service's Historic Preservation Fund, which administers the Historic Tax Credit program, at \$144 million (\$26 million increase over FY20 and \$104 million more than the president's request)

√ Over \$23.8 million for the Heritage Partnership Program, which supports the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

√ \$346 million (\$13 million increase over 2020) for the Economic Development Administration (EDA), which has supported WNY entrepreneurial projects including Launch NY

√ \$167.5 million each for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, rejecting the president's plan to eliminate the programs, which provide grants to support jobs and public cultural activities in the arts and humanities

√ \$150 million for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), an increase of \$4 million over FY20; WNY's Insyte Consulting has been a leading national performer helping to create and save thousands of manufacturing jobs

√ \$270 million (\$8 million increase) for the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund (CDFI), which supports economic opportunity in distressed communities

√ Allows for competitive grants, through the Department of Education in consultation with the Department of Labor, to improve integrated employment opportunities for people with disabilities

•Support for Seniors, Veterans & Families



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√ Addresses food insecurity with \$114 billion for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), \$952 million for Senior Nutrition Programs, \$25.1 billion for child nutrition programs, and \$6 billion for the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program

√ \$3.8 billion for the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), a \$10 million increase

√ \$855 million for projects that support affordable senior housing and rent assistance for seniors

√ Extends the Weatherization Assistance Program, which helps families decrease their home energy costs through improved efficiency

√ \$1.4 billion for the HOME Investment Partnership Program, providing resources to WNY nonprofit organizations supporting affordable housing

√ \$1.1 billion for the Corporation of National and Community Services, which includes Senior Corps and AmeriCorps

√ \$5.9 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant program, which helps support the cost of child care for low-income families

√ \$2.56 billion, a \$44 million increase, for taxpayer services including: Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, Tax Counseling for the Elderly, Low Income Taxpayer Clinic Grants and the National Taxpayer Advocate program

√ \$720 million for the Assistance to Firefighter Grant program

•Veterans/Military:

√ Includes \$90 billion for veteran medical services, including mental health, suicide prevention, women's health services, opioid prevention measures and Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD-VASH), helping veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless

√ \$2.6 billion to continue implementation of the VA electronic health records system allowing for interoperability of medical records between the VA, DOD and the private sector

√ Includes \$3.18 billion (\$55 million above FY20) to address the backlog of veteran disability claims

√ Provides funding to support a 3% increase in pay for the military

•Transportation & Infrastructure

√ Provides \$1 billion for the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development program – BUILD Grants (formerly TIGER Grants), which has supported projects such as the Niagara Falls Train Station and Cars Sharing Main Street in Buffalo

√ \$2 billion for the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts program, which supports light rail and could be used toward the NFTA's Amherst extension project



√ Investments in water infrastructure with: \$2.77 billion for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds and \$40 million for Combined Sewer Overflow grants

•Education:

√ \$40.6 billion for K-12 education programs, an increase of \$498 million

√ \$22.4 billion for the Pell Grant program, increasing the maximum grant a college student can receive by \$150 to \$6,495, the largest boost in a decade

√ Simplifies the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

√ \$880 million for Educational Opportunity Grants, which support low-income students

√ \$1.2 billion for the federal work-study program

√ \$97 million for YouthBuild, which provides young adults with hands-on training

•Environment:

√ Provides \$330 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), a program that has invested over \$33 million in and around the Buffalo River

√ Includes the full \$900 million for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, authorized through the Great American Outdoors Act

√ Continues cleanup of the **West Valley Demonstration Project** with \$88 million

√ \$250 million for the Formerly Utilized Site Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP), the program, which will fund cleanup of the Niagara Falls Storage Site in Lewiston

√ \$91 million for Brownfield Cleanups (\$2 million increase over FY20 \$1.21 billion for Superfund)

√ \$12.5 million for Environmental Justice activities, a \$2.3 million increase

The legislation was also approved by the Senate and signed by President Donald Trump.