

Overview: 2026 Fiscal Year Budget for the University System of Georgia

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Introduction

Georgia's four-year public higher education system, the University System of Georgia (USG), is composed of 26 higher education institutions located across the state.¹ USG also encompasses the Georgia Public Library Service, which manages 61 libraries; and the Georgia Archives, which collects and preserves records and information about Georgia.

In Fall 2024, student enrollment grew to 364,725 in USG. This breaks USG's record for the highest enrollment, with a 5.9% increase since Fall 2023.² Enrollment increased at all 26 higher education institutions.³ The USG semester enrollment report indicated that the total number of students at USG increased by 20,333 (13,360 in-state students).⁴

Amended Fiscal Year 2025 Budget

Governor Brian Kemp's proposed AFY 2025 budget includes an \$18 million increase for the Board of Regents for a total budget of \$3.4 billion. The Board of Regents is the governing body of the University System of Georgia. Significant highlights include:

- \$18 million increase for FY 2025's cost-of-living formula correction
- \$20,000 increase for the Veterinary Medicine Experiment Station as a correction for the FY 2025 employer share of health benefits. This station conducts research at the University of Georgia on animal disease problems
- \$22,502 increase for forestry research, as a correction for the FY 2025 employer share of health benefits. Forestry research explores economically and environmentally sound forest resources management practices

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget:

Governor Brian Kemp's proposed FY 2026 budget allocates \$3.6 billion for the Board of Regents. Funding for the teaching portion of the university system's operating budget is set to increase by \$216 million.

Major highlights include:

- **USG Teaching/Student Learning:**

- \$170 million increase for enrollment and square footage growth
- \$119 million added for capital projects at various institutions
- \$11 million increase for Teachers Retirement System (TRS) to lift the employer contribution from 20.78% to 21.91%
- \$19 million increase for the employer's share of health benefits

- **USG Public Libraries:**

- \$1.8 million increase for the employer's share of health benefits
 - \$261,679 increase for Teachers Retirement System (TRS) to lift the employer contribution from 20.78% to 21.91%
- \$8.7 million one-time decrease in state matching funds for the graduate medical education program at the Medical College of Georgia (MCG 3+) at Augusta University, now totaling \$37 million. Other programs under the Board of Regents see an increase in funds in the budget proposal primarily due to the TRS employer contribution and the employer's share of health benefits. This includes the Agricultural Experiment Station (+\$459,453), Cooperative Extension Service (+\$1.1 million) and Public Service/Special Funding Initiatives (+\$2.7 million).

Endnotes

¹ *Enrollment Management & Student Affairs | USG Colleges and Universities | University System of Georgia.* (n.d.).

https://www.usg.edu/student_affairs/prospective_students/usg_colleges_and_universities

² *University System of Georgia Enrollment Hits an All-Time record | Communications | University System of Georgia.* (2024, November 12). Retrieved January 20, 2025, from https://www.usg.edu/news/release/university_system_of_georgia_enrollment_hits_an_all_time_record

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid.