



The Patriot-News

SPOTLIGHT PA

Shapiro's budget pitch likely to tackle housing, energy costs



Lawmakers listen as Gov. Josh Shapiro delivers his budget proposal last year. His address today before a joint session of the General Assembly kicks off talks on how to fund state government ahead of the June 30 budget deadline. Shapiro's first three budget deals all missed that deadline. Photos by Dan Gleiter, PennLive, 2025

In this election year — in which both parties will be trying to flip a legislative chamber — lawmakers could face pressure to reach a deal earlier than in the past.

Kate Huangpu and Stephen Caruso
Spotlight PA

As he faces reelection, Gov. Josh Shapiro is expected to address rising housing costs, increased energy demand and unfinished business from prior years when he unveils his budget pitch to state lawmakers today. A number of challenges loom for the Democrat: a divided state legislature that has passed relatively few laws, a looming structural deficit and pressure to address a range of issues — from education and transportation funding to recreational cannabis legalization to regulating slot-like skill games.

While increased revenue is critical, the governor is not expected to propose any increases for broad-based taxes, such as sales and income levies.

His address before a joint session of the General Assembly kicks off talks on how to



In 2024, Gov. Josh Shapiro announced he was developing a housing action plan. A spokesperson said he will reveal the results today to address housing affordability after months of canvassing advocates, developers and local officials.

approach those issues ahead of the June 30 budget deadline. Shapiro's first three budget deals all missed that deadline — the recent impasse lasted more than four months, with both sides boasting of wins in the end.

The speech also gives the governor a chance to highlight issues and themes beyond the state's bottom line, similar to the president's annual State of the Union address.

In this election year — in which both parties will be trying to flip a legislative chamber — lawmakers could face pressure to finish a deal earlier than in the past. Here's what to watch for.

FINANCIAL PRESSURES

Pennsylvania faces several expensive propositions in this year's budget that, combined, put incredible pressure on the state's already strained finances.

Public transit agencies say they are in crisis. Poor public schools won a court case that found they were constitutionally underfunded. Counties say they need a boost to deliver long-neglected mental health services. And President Donald Trump's cuts to federal health care and food aid mean the state must either pay more or risk low-income families losing access to both in coming years.

Additionally, the state's aging population is driving up the human services budget, according to the Independent Fiscal Office.

Last fiscal year, Pennsylvania brought in \$46.4 billion in revenue from sales, personal and corporate income taxes, as well as other levies. Lawmakers approved a \$50.1 billion budget to fund education, health care, and public safety programs, among others.

The difference between revenue and spending was covered by the state's cash

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