



# Arkansas House Newsletter

**January 21, 2022**

## **Budget Hearings Summary**



Members continued to review agency budget proposals in preparation for the 2022 Fiscal Session. This week, the hearings focused on requests for public safety and for the Department of Human Services.

The Governor is requesting a \$7.4 million increase in the budget for Arkansas State Police.

If approved, this money would be used to help raise the starting salary of state troopers to an amount between \$52,000 and \$55,000 a year. Currently, the starting salary is \$42,357.

Arkansas State Police Director Bill Bryant testified this week that out of 525 trooper positions, 61 are currently vacant. Director Bryant told members an increase in starting salary would make the agency more competitive when it comes to new recruits.

This week, members also reviewed requests from the Department of Human Services (DHS).

The Governor has proposed an \$11 million increase for the Division of Children and Family Services, the division of DHS responsible for child abuse prevention, protection, foster care, and adoption programs.

The requests for DHS also include \$37.6 million to provide services for Arkansans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Currently, more than 3,000 Arkansans are on a waitlist for services. Those services could include medical and hospital, mental health services, early intervention day treatment, adult day treatment, personal care, and occupation, physical, and speech therapy.

The latest general revenue report shows net available revenue at 6.1% above this time last year.

Members of the Joint Budget Committee review agency requests and current revenue reports before filing appropriation bills.

The 2022 Fiscal Session begins at noon on February 14. You can watch all House sessions and committee meetings at [www.arkansashouse.org](http://www.arkansashouse.org).