


Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act



Ohio Annual Report Program Year 2021

(July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022)

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Introduction

In accordance with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Sections 136 and 185, each state that receives a funding allotment under WIOA Section 127 (Youth Activities) or Section 132 (Adult and Dislocated Worker Activities) must prepare and submit an annual report of performance progress to the U.S. Secretary of Labor. This narrative provides an opportunity for Ohio to describe progress toward its strategic vision and goals for the workforce system.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services so they can succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. It also establishes the structure and relationship between national, state, and local workforce investment activities to increase occupational skill attainment, employment, retention, and earnings while improving the quality, productivity, and competitiveness of the workforce and reducing individuals' needs for public assistance.

By supporting the alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development systems, WIOA provides Ohio with the opportunity to enhance its service delivery system by coordinating activities and promoting consistency of services among the core programs. During program year (PY) 2021, Ohio continued to work toward the goal of integrating the WIOA Title I programs with the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services program and other workforce programs that our OhioMeansJobs centers deliver.

This PY 2021 WIOA Annual Report provides a summary of how Ohio has used workforce integration to support the goals of each program.

Reopening

Like every other state in the nation, Ohio had to adapt to a new way of doing business starting in March 2020, when most states had their first confirmed COVID-19 cases. To address the concerns of local workforce areas during and after the pandemic, Ohio created the Operation Restore workgroup. The workgroup met monthly and included local workforce development board directors, county association directors, and state workforce development staff. Throughout PY 2020, the group discussed, developed, and shared best practices around a variety of topics, including safety, the reopening of the OhioMeansJobs centers, virtual services, digital literacy, policy, and meeting employers' needs. The group also collaborated on the following projects:

- Statewide media campaigns to direct customers to the OhioMeansJobs centers in their time of need.
- A public-facing map that provided up-to-date operating statuses and availability of virtual services for all 88 OhioMeansJobs centers.

- The OhioMeansJobs Workforce Scheduler, which allows customers to schedule time at OhioMeansJobs center resource rooms, schedule one-on-one meetings with local workforce professionals, or register for career fairs and workshops.

The workgroup continued into PY 2021 but was decommissioned in February 2022 as COVID-19 stabilized across the state and Ohio was able to reopen all 88 OhioMeansJobs Centers.

Statewide Workforce Development Initiatives

OhioMeansJobs Centers

Eighty-eight local OhioMeansJobs centers (also known as American Job Centers), one in each county, provide services to local businesses, as well as to individuals who are employed, underemployed, and unemployed. The OhioMeansJobs centers connect workforce partners – such as the WIOA Title I program, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Literacy programs, and other programs – to deliver a variety of employment and training services to meet the needs of their communities.

Ohio's Workforce Mission

Throughout PY 2021, the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation (OWT) continued to work in collaboration with the Ohio Departments of Education, Higher Education, Job and Family Services (ODJFS), and the Department of Development to close the gap between growing workforce needs and the goals of job seekers. The mission of the OWT is to connect Ohio's business, training, and education communities to build a dynamically skilled, productive, and purposeful workforce.

Advancing the DeWine-Husted Administration's commitment to leading an aggressive, innovative path toward a better and stronger Ohio, InnovateOhio's mission is to examine every state service with an eye on the customer's experience - looking at the customer's journey through different interactions with the state – to find ways Ohio can serve its customers better and at a lower cost. The InnovateOhio Platform provides integrated and scalable capabilities that enable state agencies to become more customer-centric and data-driven, delivering on InnovateOhio's vision to better serve Ohioans.

Path of OhioMeansJobs Center Customers/ InnovateOhio

In PY 2020, InnovateOhio, the Governor's OWT and ODJFS partnered with g2o, an innovative high-tech company, to conduct a holistic review and redesign of **OhioMeansJobs.com**. Changes were made to the site's mission, focusing on tailoring the content to various audiences, delivery effectiveness, information architecture, site and content heuristics, and overall format. These changes improved the ability of job seekers to use this state resource and better supported ongoing improvements and new requirements. Additional phases are ongoing, with the final phase expected to be delivered in early 2023.

The ARIES Project

In PY 2021, the ODJFS Office of Workforce Development (OWD) continued to partner with Monster Government Solutions in the development of Ohio's new case management system: Advancement through Resources, Information and Employment Services (ARIES). This system replaced the previous 20-year-old Ohio Workforce Case Management System.

Six teams were assembled to provide a comprehensive approach to system development: A New System Team, Implementation Team, Data Analysis and Ad Hoc Reporting Team, County Finance Information System Team, Performance Team, and Project Support Team. The system went live on April 26, 2022.

In-Demand Occupations

Ohio's efforts to reform its workforce development system are driven by a commitment to meeting employers' current and projected needs. To identify those needs, the Governor's OWT developed a methodology using three key sources: state labor statistics and projections, electronic job posting trend data, and business responses to an online job forecasting tool. The following criteria were used to define an "in-demand job" in Ohio: 1) 80% of the state median wage, which is \$14.90 per hour, or more; 2) annual growth in the number of jobs higher than the statewide average of 20; or 3) annual job openings greater than the statewide average of 620.

Using the aforementioned methodology, Ohio identified 248 in-demand occupations with more than 20,000 related job titles. When job seekers take the Career Profile assessment on OhioMeansJobs.com, they are given a list of occupations they may be suitable for, with in-demand and critical occupations listed first to improve their chances of finding employment quickly.

Additionally, 48 occupations were identified as critical in Ohio, in 12 career clusters aligning with the following goals of Governor DeWine's administration:

- Children and Community Health
- Early Childhood Education
- First Responders
- Lead Abatement and Construction
- Mental and Behavioral Health
- Nurses
- Physicians
- Wellness Research and Technology

Local workforce development boards are required to spend at least 85% of their occupational skills training funds on training that leads to employment in critical and in-demand occupations. In addition, the Ohio Department of Higher Education and Ohio's two- and four-year colleges use the in-demand occupations list to analyze occupational supply and demand, plan curriculums and training programs, and determine appropriate class offerings.

In addition, under the direction of Governor DeWine and the leadership of Lt. Governor Jon Husted, Ohio extended its focus to prioritize both Ohio's economy and the health and well-being of Ohioans through Ohio's Top Jobs List. The Top Jobs List is updated biennially and

includes both in-demand and critical jobs. The Governor's OWT and InnovateOhio created a Top Jobs interactive dashboard at topjobs.ohio.gov, which was most recently updated in the fall of 2021. The list is a customizable, online tool to help guide Ohioans on promising career pathways. Top jobs can be viewed and sorted by region and/or industry, to allow job seekers, educators, businesses, and community leaders to make more informed decisions to solidify their short- and long-term success.

TechCred

Ohio's TechCred program reimburses employers up to \$2,000 for training costs incurred when one of their employees earns a short-term, industry-recognized technology credential. A collaboration between the Governor's OWT, the Ohio Department of Higher Education, and ODJFS, the program has been very successful. From the time it began in September 2019 through August 2022, a total of 1,958 employers were approved for funding for 48,632 credentials. After a successful start to the program, OWT set a new goal of funding 20,000 tech-focused credentials each year, which has already been met for the first year of the biennium.

Additionally, ODJFS and the OWT teamed up to link employers whose trainings were not eligible for TechCred with Ohio's local workforce development areas for potential WIOA-funded incumbent worker training opportunities.

Industry-Sector Partnership Grants

The Ohio Industry Sector Partnership Grants illustrate an investment by Ohio to fill in-demand jobs and to diversify and grow a high-quality, dynamic workforce. The grants support new and existing collaborations between businesses, education and training providers, and other community leaders who are invested in improving their region's workforce. These collaborations create a more skilled workforce and benefit both Ohioans and Ohio's job creators.

The first round of Industry Sector Partnership Grants, in January 2021, awarded 12 partnerships a total of \$2.5 million. Lt. Governor Husted announced a second round of funding in September 2021, with just over \$2.45 million available. Grant recipients from the second round were announced in early 2022.

Ohio to Work

[Ohio to Work](#), led by JobsOhio, launched in Cleveland in September 2020. It was designed as a pilot initiative to provide pathways to in-demand, long-term employment opportunities through personalized career coaching, accelerated training options, local employer connections, career tools, and more. The project is a partnership with the Governor's OWT, the Ohio Department of Development, ODJFS, OhioMeansJobs Cleveland-Cuyahoga County, the Urban League of Greater Cleveland, and Goodwill of Greater Cleveland and East Central Ohio. It includes three vital sets of stakeholders:

- Employers;
- Existing service providers; and
- Displaced workers.

In September 2021, the initiative was expanded into Columbus (Area 11), Toledo (Area 9), Cincinnati/Dayton (Areas 7 and 13), and the Mahoning Valley (Areas 17 and 18).

As of December 2021, career resources were provided to 20,424 Ohioans. Of those individuals, 1,683 learned skills for a new career, and 2,757 received job offers.

Individual Microcredential Assistance Program

In July 2020, the Governor's OWT, in partnership with the Ohio Department of Development, launched the Individual Microcredential Assistance Program (IMAP). This program reimburses training providers when a low-income Ohioan who is partially or totally unemployed earns a technology-focused credential.

Training providers can include universities, colleges, Ohio technical centers, and private sector training businesses. They can be reimbursed up to \$3,000 for each completed credential issued, up to \$250,000 per provider. Eligible Ohioans work directly with the awarded training provider of their choice to enroll in the most-suitable training program at no cost to them. As of December 2021, 11 training providers had received awards. They offered 54 training programs to 1,592 Ohioans.

National Dislocated Worker Grants and Other Federal Grants

Holistic Care Management SUPPORT Act Grant

Ohio received a \$5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) to serve individuals impacted by the opioid epidemic and substance use disorders in local Workforce Development Area 1 (Adams, Brown, Scioto, and Pike counties). The grant is funding career services, training, and supportive services to develop a foundation of employment skills, offer hope for recovery, and provide families with economic stability.

To build the behavioral health field in these communities, the grant is also funding training to eligible individuals seeking to transition to or obtain skills in professions that support individuals with a substance use disorder or those at risk of developing one. Eligible participants include dislocated workers, individuals with barriers to employment, new entrants to the workforce, and incumbent workers (employed or underemployed). Funding also allows training to be provided for

employers, first responders, and early childhood educators to help them better understand substance use disorders and trauma-informed care.

The grant period began on October 1, 2020 and will continue through September 30, 2024. As of June 30, 2022, a total of 201 participants had been enrolled, and 389 services had been provided.

Opioid Emergency Disaster Recovery

Ohio received an \$11 million Opioid Emergency Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant from the USDOL to serve eligible dislocated workers and long-term unemployed individuals across the state. Counties were grouped into nine “communities” with the same combination of one or more of the following four key impacts related to the opioid health emergency:

- Overdose deaths of 13 per 100,000 or higher;
- Costs per capita of opioid abuse of \$500 or more;
- Limited or no access to medication-assisted treatment; and
- 9% or more of children entering children services custody due to parental opioid use.

Ohio identified the humanitarian, health care, treatment, and training needs specific to the key impacts and implemented the following strategies: providing temporary disaster relief employment up to 4,080 hours (jobs must alleviate issues caused by opioid crisis); building the skilled workforce in professions that could impact the causes and treatment of the opioid crisis; reintegrating into employment individuals who have a history of opioid use or who have a friend or family member with a history of opioid use; and engaging employers to adopt recovery-friendly policies and practices. The types of temporary disaster relief employment include case aides with children services, peer recovery supporters at hospitals and treatment providers, employment navigators in courts and probation departments, and education aides in schools.

This grant period began on April 1, 2019, and continued through March 31, 2022, due to a one-year extension approved by the USDOL. As of March 31, 2022, Ohio had enrolled 1,027 participants and provided 2,452 services.

To address the goal of engaging employers, ODJFS partnered with the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, RecoveryOhio, and Working Partners® to create three supplemental recovery-friendly training modules for employers and job seekers. The trainings focused on a science-based explanation of opioid and substance use disorders to reduce stigma and develop effective strategies for managing them in the work environment. These trainings guide employers in developing a business approach to preventing and responding to opioid and other substance misuse, including hiring and retaining employees in recovery. For employees, the trainings can help them navigate workplace policies, practices, and overall organizational culture to ensure that they have the tools necessary to maintain lifelong recovery and to retain employment. The new training modules can be found on the RecoveryOhio website, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce website, and the ODJFS [Opioid Grants webpage](#).

National Health Emergency Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant

The USDOL awarded ODJFS a two-year grant, conditionally approved for up to \$8.5 million, so local workforce development areas can continue addressing the opioid crisis and better supporting Ohio’s employers and individuals in recovery. The grant award period is from March 1,

2022, to March 31, 2024. Funds have been issued to local workforce development areas so they can continue providing training, career and supportive services, and temporary disaster relief jobs started under the Opioid Emergency Disaster Grant.

Services are tailored to local needs. Funds are being used to do the following:

- Test innovative approaches for combating the opioid problem – for example, by supporting employers to develop recovery-friendly policies, practices, and encouraging the hiring of individuals in recovery.
- Provide job training, career services, and supportive services to dislocated workers and long-term unemployed individuals, including those impacted directly or indirectly by the opioid crisis. Supportive services can include health, outpatient mental health, and addiction treatment; drug testing; help purchasing work clothes; and transportation assistance.
- Provide temporary disaster-relief employment to help alleviate issues caused by the opioid crisis in impacted entities such as hospitals, recovery homes, child protection agencies, health departments, courts, educational settings, and related agencies.
- Build the addiction and substance use disorder treatment, mental health, and pain management workforce.
- Facilitate peer learning and sharing of best practices through cross-discipline learning collaboratives across partner agencies.

Numerous state and local partnerships have allowed Ohio's public workforce system to comprehensively address the education, training, mental health, health, transportation, housing, and other diverse needs of individuals served, and these partnerships will continue. As of June 30, 2022, Ohio had enrolled 47 participants and provided 185 services.

COVID-19 Economic Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant

In June 2020, the USDOL approved Ohio's request for special grant funding of \$8.5 million from the COVID-19 Employment Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant to reduce the financial impact to our economy and assist individuals impacted by job loss. All affected industries and eligible dislocated workers may be served under this grant, as direct impact from COVID-19 is not required. In addition, the grant period has been extended through June 30, 2023.

This grant allows career services, supportive services, on-the-job training, customized and occupational skills upgrading, and retraining to be provided for those who cannot return to their former positions – for example, because their employers have permanently closed their businesses. The goal is to help dislocated workers find employment in top jobs, for their good and the good of their communities. The supportive services can include safety-related training, equipment, and accommodations to reopening businesses.

To date, more than 1,000 services have been provided to more than 600 eligible participants.

Broadband and 5G Sector Partnership

The COVID-19 health crisis revealed gaps in broadband coverage that left many Ohioans unable to participate in employment, education, and healthcare. In response, significant investments are being made to expand broadband access. This will create an estimated 32,000 network infrastructure jobs in Ohio.

The Ohio Broadband and 5G Sector Partnership was launched in September 2021 to implement a statewide strategy to address shortages in skilled workers so that the buildout of broadband and 5G infrastructure could occur quickly. This partnership, which is led by The Ohio State University and the Wireless Infrastructure Association, includes ODJFS and several other state agencies.

The primary objectives are to raise awareness about occupations and career pathways in the telecommunications industry; to identify existing or to establish new education and training programs; and to leverage state and federal funding streams that can support the implementation of broadband and 5G workforce strategies.

As the central convening entity, the partnership will reduce duplicative efforts among regions and share best practices. The ultimate goal is to make Ohio a prime destination for new, innovative technology companies to form and utilize the next generation of wired and wireless communications.

As the state workforce agency, ODJFS is supporting the partnership's success by:

- Investing federal workforce dollars in the infrastructure and supplies needed to launch new training programs;
- Adding the institutions that implement new training programs in this field to the state's eligible training provider list so they may qualify for workforce dollars to train eligible students;
- Helping sponsors create Registered Apprenticeship programs so that employers can train their workers through both classroom instruction and on-the-job training;
- Establishing pre-apprenticeship hubs to help the emerging workforce learn about telecommunication careers, begin earning credentials, and prepare for the transition into Registered Apprenticeship employment; and
- Providing technical assistance and informational resources to the local workforce boards and OhioMeansJobs centers so they can promote careers in these in-demand occupations to their job seekers, youth, and other populations they serve.

Simply stated, the development of high-speed internet boosts innovative capacity, which is good for growth and development. Employers that need a skilled workforce to build the state's broadband and 5G infrastructure will have an easier time recruiting talent and filling open positions. Students in middle school and high school will learn about the job opportunities and career pathways available in this field. Individuals seeking to enter a telecommunications career will have access to tuition dollars and other supports. Businesses across the state will gain economic advantages and increase their competitiveness in global markets, and families in rural communities will gain opportunity as the technology gap is reduced.

Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network

Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN) is a research project studying how to help workers with medical conditions that occur off-the-job remain at work and avoid disability. ODJFS joined forces with Bon Secours Mercy Health and five local workforce areas to obtain this \$18.8 million grant for the implementation of innovative stay-at-work/return-to-work services in coordination with health and employment services.

This grant serves 18- to 65-year-old workers in the regions of Youngstown (Columbiana, Mahoning, and Trumbull counties), Toledo (Lucas County) and Cincinnati (Butler, Clermont, Hamilton, and Warren counties) who are patients of Bon Secours Mercy Health and have non-occupational illnesses or injuries that impact their ability to perform their job.

Eligible patients who agree to participate are randomly assigned to either a care coordination group or comparison group. Those in the comparison group receive standard medical care. Those in care coordination are assisted by a health services coordinator who communicates with the individual's employer and health care provider to increase the participant's probability of returning to work. Examples of solutions have included transitional work assignments and physical accommodations that enable the worker to perform essential job functions. In some cases, the coordinator may refer the individual to OhioMeansJobs center partners for employment, training, or vocational rehabilitation services. In addition, a nurse hotline, access to a social worker, and supportive services are available to the participants in care coordination.

Enrollment and service delivery began in January 2022. ODJFS and its partners will continue the intervention strategies for 27 months, followed by 12 months for close-out and final assessment activities.

A third-party evaluator will use rigorous methodology to identify program outcomes. In addition, throughout the project, a RETAIN Roundtable comprised of medical, industry, and government stakeholders will identify and share best practices.

The project's leadership team includes representatives from the Governor's Executive Workforce Board, Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation, Ohio Department of Health, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, Bon Secours Mercy Health, and Workforce Development Boards in Areas 9, 12, 13, 17, and 18.

Ohio Pathway Home Program

The Ohio Pathway Home program provides evidence-based employment services to justice-involved individuals before and after their reentry into the community. Using a \$4 million grant from the USDOL, ODJFS is working in partnership with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and the Jefferson County Community Action Council to employ a team of reentry navigators who provide job search assistance to individuals residing in and released from state correctional facilities. The business services teams in the participating workforce development areas also provide employer outreach, job development, and access to employer incentives to promote the hiring of justice-involved individuals.

This program will serve up to 540 adults transitioning from state correctional facilities to six of Ohio's largest urban counties: Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Montgomery, Stark, and Summit. These counties are in local workforce areas 2, 3, 6, 7, 11, and 13.

Beginning up to six months prior to each participant's scheduled release and continuing afterward at the local OhioMeansJobs center, the reentry navigator works with the

participant to assess skills and barriers, develop an individual employment plan, and enhance job readiness. Depending on their needs, participants may receive financial literacy training, workplace etiquette training, and interview coaching. Referrals also may be made to community-based organizations for such things as substance abuse treatment and assistance removing other barriers to employment. In addition, incentives may be offered to participants who achieve employment milestones.

Services to participants will be delivered from July 1, 2021, through December 31, 2023, followed by a year of follow-up activities.

Integrated Workforce Programs

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families and WIOA Youth Program

Ohio's Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) is designed to help low-income young adults ages 14 to 24 build career paths, find employment, and break the cycle of poverty. CCMEP integrates funding from both the WIOA Youth Program and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program to offer more coordinated, individualized services.

The intent of CCMEP is to deliver comprehensive, effective services in a manner that ensures the vigorous engagement of participants by establishing trust and understanding. Case managers and participants work together to develop individual service strategies (called individual opportunity plans). The goal is not only workforce preparation, but also the removal of barriers to employment to help participants achieve successful outcomes long-term.

CCMEP engages participants in meaningful employment and training activities that help build lifelong, sustainable, and in-demand careers. These services include:

- Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies.
- Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services.
- Paid and unpaid work experiences.
- Occupational skills training.
- Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.
- Leadership development.
- Supportive services.
- Adult mentoring for the period of participation.
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling.
- Mental and behavioral health-related and referrals.
- Financial literacy education.
- Entrepreneurial skills training.

- Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors.
- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.
- Follow-up services.

Trade Adjustment Act and WIOA Dislocated Worker Program

Ohio continues to improve services for workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced due to increased imports. There have been changes to the current law governing the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program. On July 1, 2022, the TAA program terminated, and a gradual phase-out has begun. The USDOL will cease investigating petitions to determine worker group eligibility, and there will be no new TAA determinations issued. Benefits and services to current TAA participants and eligible workers will continue. Congressional action is required for reauthorization of the TAA program.

The TAA regulations require that all Trade participants be co-enrolled into the WIOA Dislocated Worker program. In June 2021, a TAA-WIOA Co-Enrollment Workgroup was created with 10 local workforce areas and ODJFS. The goal of the workgroup was to establish the process to co-enroll participants, develop best practices, and create technical assistance material, in an effort to meet the federal co-enrollment requirements in Ohio.

A pilot project was developed with the 10 local workforce areas involved in the workgroup; the pilot project ended on March 31, 2022. After a kick-off meeting with the workforce development board directors and a series of trainings with state and local staff, ODJFS launched the co-enrollment protocol statewide in August 2022.

In addition to implementing the TAA and Dislocated Worker co-enrollment process, ODJFS has engaged in the following activities designed to modernize the TAA program:

- The TAA Obligation and Expenditure Tracking System was created in January 2022 to track and monitor the TAA obligations and expenditures. The TAA contracts, invoices, and related information are contained within this system.
- A Trade Mobile Application is being created to give TAA participants the option to view the Benefit Rights Information (BRI) session and links to the Trade Readjustment Allowance application. This mobile application also provides a variety of alerts and notices. It allows participants to receive notifications from the Trade Delivery Professionals, and it uploads grades, certificates and other documentation related to training.
- The BRI presentation video was upgraded to include Rapid Response information. This aligns with new law changes for Reversion 2021. The new presentation will be accessible and available to customers to view and complete online. These new videos will be ready in early PY 2022.

ApprenticeOhio and WIOA Title I Programs



ApprenticeOhio (AO), which is housed within the ODJFS Office of Workforce Development, registers and monitors apprenticeship programs that meet national criteria for quality and safety. The unit supports program sponsors, answers questions about the apprenticeship model, guides partners in developing programs, connects businesses to training providers, and assists with marketing outreach.

Registered Apprenticeship programs are industry-driven, high-quality career pathways where employers can develop their future workforce and individuals can obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, and receive a nationally recognized credential.

Ohio has impressive numbers and continues to be a national leader in Registered Apprenticeship programs:

- In fiscal year 2022, Ohio ranked third in the nation for the number of registered apprentices, with more than 19,000 apprentices enrolled.
- Currently, Ohio ranks third in the nation for the number of registered apprentices, with more than 21,000 apprentices enrolled.
- Ohio was sixth in the nation for new apprentices in fiscal year 2022, with approximately 7,000 new apprentices.
- Ohio has 609 Registered Apprenticeship sponsors that administer 319 different registered occupations.

Traditionally, apprenticeships have primarily been offered in skilled trades, such as boilermakers, carpenters, electricians, glaziers, etc. However, a growing number of other occupations now offer apprenticeships, such as broadband and 5G, supply chain automation, cyber security, teaching, and government occupations.

AO received a 2020 “Building State Capacity to Expand Apprenticeship through Innovation” grant in July 2020 to further to further strengthen the state’s Registered Apprenticeship system and expand the number of apprenticeship opportunities available for Ohioans. Among other things, the grant is being used to develop pre-apprenticeship programs to teach basic technical and job readiness skills and help prepare participants for apprenticeship programs. Currently, Ohio has 144 active pre-apprenticeship programs.

To assist with expansion and recruitment efforts, six workforce development boards are serving as pre-apprenticeship “hubs.” Hubs work locally with local employers and local schools to meet the needs of the local workforce. In each hub, at least one community provider delivers services and activities directly to participants. AO holds monthly technical assistance calls with the hubs to provide collaboration and support.

Additionally, ODJFS, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), and the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) are working together to develop pre-apprenticeship programs for schools and to create efficient ways to share participant data. They formed a Tiger Team to better collaborate and maintain a common vision.

To provide comprehensive guidance to local areas regarding pre-apprenticeships, ODJFS issued Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Policy Letter (WIOAPL) No. 21-03, “State-Recognized Pre-Apprenticeship Policy.”

The grant funds were also used to create a “Chat with Virtual Assistant” feature at [Apprentice.Ohio.gov](https://www.apprenticeohio.gov), to provide a quick and easy way for individuals to get answers to their questions about apprenticeships. The automated assistant, named “Antonio,” was built with artificial intelligence software. Users can simply type in their questions or – to see categories of information – click “What can Antonio help you with?” This feature is beneficial not only to Ohioans, but also to AO staff, who can now dedicate more time to providing complex technical assistance.

In addition, also as a result of the expansion grant, AO offered training and tool reimbursement grants to eligible ApprenticeOhio sponsors and employers. Through December 31, 2022, sponsors and employers can apply for grants of up to \$25,000 each to help cover apprenticeship training and tool costs incurred since July 1, 2020. Sponsors and employers can receive reimbursement of up to \$2,500 per apprentice for up to 10 apprentices. To receive funding, they must have both a state of Ohio [OHJID](https://www.ohjid.org) and a federal Registered Apprenticeship ID, and apply at [Apprentice.Ohio.gov](https://www.apprenticeohio.gov).

Finally, continued efforts are being made to modernize how apprenticeship data is captured. Registered Apprenticeship will be set up as a full program in Ohio’s new case management system, ARIES. This will allow job seekers/apprenticeship and program development participants to be case managed within a single system.

RESEA and WIOA Dislocated Worker Programs

ODJFS successfully transitioned the delivery of the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program to local workforce area staff. All 20 of Ohio’s local workforce areas now deliver the RESEA program. The transition is allowing Ohio to serve nearly three times as many claimants per year. The program is also serving as the gateway into the workforce system, as claimants also receive Wagner-Peyser employment services after they complete the RESEA program. They also are referred to WIOA Title I programs for additional individualized career services and training services.

Rapid Response and WIOA Dislocated Worker Program

Since April 2021, the number of Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notifications (WARNs) received, and workers impacted, has decreased, as Ohio’s economy has improved.

In April 2022, Ohio’s transition to a new workforce case management system temporarily impacted Rapid Response program data. At the time of this writing, WARN and non-WARN data for April 22 through June 30, 2022, were unavailable. However, work was under way to obtain it.

From July 1, 2021, through April 21, 2022, the Rapid Response team received 44 WARNs impacting 5,087 workers across the state. From April 22, 2022, through June 30, 2022, the Rapid Response team received 8 WARNs impacting 697 workers across the state.

From July 1, 2021, through April 21, 2022, the Rapid Response team received 64 non-WARNs impacting 5,454 workers across the state. From April 22, 2022, through June 30, 2022, the Rapid Response team received 17 non-WARNs impacting 591 workers across the state.

During federal fiscal year 2022, Ohio’s local workforce areas made one request totaling \$163,353 for Rapid Response Emergency Assistance and Layoff Aversion funding. The application was approved. As of August 22, 2022, incremental awards totaling \$106,274 had been allocated. The remaining \$57,079 was recommended for approval and was awaiting disbursement to the local

area.

State merit staff continued to deliver Rapid Response Reemployment Sessions virtually until May 2022, when in-person sessions resumed based on employer needs. The state Rapid Response team continues to build stronger partnerships with the local workforce areas and their business service teams.

Veterans' Employment Services

OhioMeansJobs centers offer a full range of individualized employment and training services for veterans and eligible spouses who are unable to obtain employment through basic career services. Emphasis is placed on meeting the employment needs of veterans who are economically or educationally disadvantaged, with priority service offered to disabled veterans and those with significant barriers to employment. The Veterans Program continues to build a strong social media presence with @OMVetJobs to promote OhioMeansJobs center services, including job fairs, other events, and veteran community resource information.

The program continues to conduct Transition Assistance Program briefings at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Staff members also visit large military transition bases outside Ohio and attend Ohio Inter-Service Family Assistance Committee meetings to target transitioning service, National Guard, and Reserve members. All transitioning service members receiving unemployment benefits are given priority of service in the RESEA program to help with their transition to civilian life. Wagner-Peyser also identifies veterans on registration reports, providing reemployment services and partner program referrals.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted veteran services significantly. Veterans Program staff began PY 2021 working remotely and later returned to the OhioMeansJobs centers four days a week, working remotely one day a week. The staff also adapted their case management services to the new case management system, ARIES.

The Veterans Program promoted its "Hire a Veteran Month" in November. Online trainings were shared with WIOA partners to promote consistency in the veteran intake process and to increase their awareness of community resources for veterans.

Through the efforts of Ohio's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program specialists, the Jobs for Veterans State Grants program served 997 veterans in PY 2021. More than 64% (64.6%) of participants were employed in the second quarter after they left the program; more than 61% (61.8%) were employed during the fourth quarter after they left the program. Furthermore, the median earnings of these participants in the second quarter after their program exit was \$9,278. All performance measures exceeded standards negotiated with the USDOL.

Labor Market Information

During PY 2021, Ohio made a concerted effort to integrate labor market information into local workforce development decisions and the statewide Economic Data Workgroup. The Economic Data Workgroup includes staff from the ODJFS Bureau of Labor Market Information and eight other state agencies. The Economic Data Workgroup is an effort to collaborate across multiple state agencies to monitor and report on the state of the economy using real-time economic indicators. The group identified and integrated a set of economic indicators tracked by various member agencies. They also developed an interactive dashboard to display high-frequency data and prepared regular reports delivered to key decision makers. The group continues to meet monthly to discuss the

future of the economy in Ohio. The Bureau of Labor Market Information also presented information to local workforce development board directors, explaining labor market information, how to locate needed data, and how the data can be used.

The Bureau of Labor Market Information also conducted the following activities to present information in a user-friendly manner:

- Continuously provided information for the Monthly Statewide Employment News Situation release.
- Provided data and maps for the 2021 Latino Community Report.
- Updated Employment Projections data, including information on projected new jobs by industry and occupation, as well as annual openings in the occupational data.
- Published the Exposure to Automation in Ohio report, which compares the Ohio and U.S. shares of exposure to automation based on employment, provides Ohio's exposure occupations, and includes projected employment growth and annual job openings by exposure level.
- Published the Pre-Post Pandemic Reemployment Analysis report examining reemployment among those in the accommodation and food services industries and certain health care and social services industries who filed for unemployment benefits during March, April, and May of 2020. The analysis provides an indication of claimants who returned to work, as well as those who returned to work with the same employer.
- Updated the annual County Economic Profiles and the Ohio County Occupational Estimates reports.

Reemployment Services

Reemployment continues to be a priority in Ohio. The state remains committed to developing strong connections between the unemployment insurance programs and the OhioMeansJobs centers while strengthening partnerships with other state agencies. During PY 2021, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services staff prioritized meeting customers where they are and providing services in a manner in which they are most comfortable. Although in-person services are still available, the state's OhioMeansJobs centers now also hold virtual job fairs, workshops, and appointments. Wagner-Peyser staff also prioritized the following initiatives:

Targeted Outreach

An extensive outreach effort was undertaken to help Ohio's veterans and military spouses obtain employment. Wagner-Peyser staff contacted over 45,000 current or former military members living in Ohio asking them to take a brief survey indicating whether they or their spouses would like free job search assistance. The survey also asked questions to identify veterans with significant barriers to employment. Those who expressed interest in one-on-one services were scheduled for a virtual or in-person appointment. Veterans who indicated they had a significant barrier to employment were referred to the Jobs for Veterans State Grants program for specialized assistance. Over the next several months, outreach efforts will target an additional 80,000 veterans. Ohio also is considering outreach to other populations who in the past have been difficult to reach.

Helping Ohioans Pursue Employment (HOPE) Program

In PY 2021, the Office of Transformation commissioned McKinsey & Company to survey Ohioans who had recently either applied for unemployment benefits or registered on [OhioMeansJobs.com](https://ohio-means-jobs.com). The survey found that the overwhelming majority wished they had been made aware of reemployment services sooner. As a result, Wagner-Peyser staff developed the Helping Ohioans Pursue Employment (HOPE) initiative. The department now emails unemployment applicants extensive information about the free in-person employment services available at the state's 88 OhioMeansJobs centers, in addition to the self-service features available at [OhioMeansJobs.com](https://ohio-means-jobs.com). Future phases of the project will utilize enhanced technology, provide information via additional means, and offer the opportunity for one-on-one services at the state's OhioMeansJobs centers.

Business Services

Ohio's Wagner-Peyser Business Services team is committed to identifying new and innovative ways to connect employers and job seekers. In June 2022, ODJFS hosted its first statewide virtual career fair. More than 80 employers and 380 job seekers signed up to participate in the Statewide Virtual Skilled Trades Job Fair, which was held on the virtual event platform Brazen. The Business Service team will be conducting additional career fairs throughout program year 2022, including one geared toward National Guard units across Ohio. Going forward, the Business Service team is exploring additional ways to use technology to help meet employers' workforce needs.

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers

Agriculture continues to be Ohio's leading industry. Ohio farmers grow more than 30 commercial crops and rely on migrant labor to plant, cultivate, harvest, process, and package the produce. Migrant and seasonal farm workers are the main source of labor to conduct these activities. Because they travel from other states and live on job sites, since the onset of the pandemic many had concerns and questions about COVID-19 restrictions.

ODJFS added four new Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker offices in Henry, Erie, Stark, and Lake counties, bringing the total to 10. In addition, the program gained one new full-time and two new intermittent outreach staff. Outreach staff resumed normal services for H2A employers. Additionally, all staff received refresher training in outreach activities, employer services, the complaint process, and weekly logs.

To provide further direction and resources regarding housing, Ohio, through a partnership between ODJFS and the Ohio Department of Health, has established and implemented an Agricultural Recruitment System workflow process to ensure compliance with *20 CFR 653.501*. This process ensures that job orders are properly received by the employer and posted into Ohio's job placement system at [OhioMeansJobs.com](https://ohio-means-jobs.com). In addition, updates will be made to [OhioMeansJobs.com](https://ohio-means-jobs.com) to track Agricultural Recruitment System job postings and referrals.

Waiver Usage

Ohio requested and received approval in June 2020 for three USDOL waivers to support workforce development activities and provide flexibility for individuals using WIOA programs. Two of these waivers were approved through PY 2021. In PY 2021, Ohio requested and received approval of an additional waiver to increase the allowable threshold available for incumbent worker training from 20 to 35% through June 30, 2022. These waivers were consistent with key guiding principles that outcomes are improved through cross-program alignment, increased streamlined services, increased accountability and accessibility, state and local flexibility, and fewer administrative burdens.

Ohio tracks waiver usage for reporting and evaluation purposes. Listed below are the approved waivers with supporting documentation collected from the state's database and fiscal reports.

Waiver: Allow Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to count toward the 75% expenditure requirement for out-of-school youth and allow the expenditure requirement to be calculated on a statewide basis.

This waiver supports the implementation of Ohio's expanded youth program, CCMEP, by using both WIOA and TANF funding sources to support the unique needs of the same customer while easing administrative burdens associated with managing two federal funding streams. The large infusion of TANF dollars allows WIOA Youth dollars to have a greater impact, and it also allows more disconnected youth to be served. Additionally, by allowing the expenditure rate to be calculated statewide, the waiver gives local workforce development areas more flexibility to address the unique needs of participants in their communities.

To recognize the TANF dollars invested in WIOA out-of-school youth under CCMEP, ODJFS includes the amount of TANF dollars spent on co-enrolled WIOA out-of-school youth during a program year in both the numerator and denominator of the out-of-school youth rate calculation.

Using this waiver, the out-of-school youth expenditure statewide rate for the PY 2020 funds was 79.3% and for the PY 2021 funds was 81.5%. The number of WIOA participants co-funded with TANF dollars was 4,721, which was a decrease from the previous program year (5,312 participants). Also, the overall percentage of co-funded participants decreased from 28% to 24.9% in PY 2021. A review of the demographics of PY 2021 WIOA youth participants identified the following: 85% were low-income individuals; 63% were English language learners with basic skills deficiency, low literacy, and cultural barriers; and 20% were single parents (including single pregnant women). The percentage of WIOA youth who obtained employment or enrolled in training and were able to maintain employment or training was 72.0%, which was a decrease from PY 2020 (72.7%).

Waiver: Allow the use of individual training accounts for in-school youth.

The intent of individual training accounts for the WIOA out-of-school youth program is to expand training options, increase program flexibility, enhance customer choice, and reduce paperwork. Ohio desired the same benefits for the in-school youth program. This waiver encourages in-school youth to explore in-demand occupations and career pathways and to take responsibility for planning their futures.

Ohio is working to achieve the following goals and programmatic outcomes:

- Improve the ability of local workforce development boards, youth program providers, and CCMEP lead agencies to respond quickly to the needs of in-school youth.
- Increase the quality of learning opportunities.

- Increase employment and training opportunities.
- Improve coordination by reducing fragmentation of service delivery.
- Improve customer choice and empower youth to make responsible career choices.
- Reduce unnecessary paperwork.
- Develop an emerging workforce of prepared candidates ready for work.
- Increase accountability.

During PY 2020, individual training accounts were provided to 553 in-school youth. That was an increase from PY 2019, when 491 individual training accounts were provided. In PY 2021, Ohio served 588 in-school youth with individual training accounts (participant counts based on quarters 1-3). ODJFS anticipates serving 615 in-school youth by the end of PY23.

Waiver: Allow local areas to reserve more than 20% of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds for incumbent worker training to address the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although incumbent worker training activity increased across the state in PY 2021, none of the local workforce areas utilized this waiver to increase the allowable threshold of 20% to 35%. Multiple training and technical assistance sessions were provided in PY 2021 to encourage local areas to take advantage of this waiver.

Effectiveness in Serving Employers

In accordance with WIOA sec. 116(b)(2)(A)(i) (VI), the USDOL and the U.S. Department of Education are required to establish a primary indicator of performance for effectiveness in serving employers. The departments have determined that this indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers.

All “effectiveness in serving employers” performance measures were in pilot in PY 2021. As described in the Joint WIOA Final Rule and the Joint WIOA Performance ICR (OMB Control No. 1205-0526), the departments have developed three approaches for measuring effectiveness in serving employers, although only two approaches are required. Ohio has chosen the following two measures – Retention (retention with the same employer) and Repeat Business Customers (percentage of repeat employers using services within the previous three years) – but is awaiting further guidance from the USDOL.

Statistical Adjustment Model

WIOA section 116, Performance Accountability System, requires the use of a statistical adjustment model when establishing negotiated levels of performance. WIOA requires that performance levels be negotiated for each of the primary statewide performance indicators. State-level performance outcomes are a function of the following:

- a. The characteristics of the participants being served.
- b. The labor market conditions in which those participants are being served.

WIOA specifically requires that both factors be accounted for, and the use of a statistical model when negotiating performance levels is intended to account for these variations.

A properly specified statistical model appropriately adjusts performance goals for states serving harder-to-serve populations and/or in economies facing more difficult labor market conditions. The statistical model objectively quantifies how, and to what extent, each of these factors affects performance levels – in other words, actual outcomes. The goal of the statistical approach is to account for these factors and separate them from factors that program administrators can control.

Using similar methodology, the state of Ohio adjusts the performance standards for each WIOA local workforce area after the close of the program year, following guidance set forth in Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 11-19. The final evaluation is made against these adjusted standards to determine if each area performed successfully. Failure of any WIOA performance measure by a local workforce area will result in technical assistance and a program improvement plan, and failure of the same performance measure two years in a row may impact a subsequent local workforce area designation.

The ODJFS Office of Workforce Development finalized and published the adjusted WIOA performance report for PY 2020 using the adjustment factors specified by the state's statistical model. Originally, guidance from TEGL 11-19 suggested the Median Earnings, Employment 2nd Quarter after Exit/Employment, Education, or Training 2nd Quarter after Exit, and Measurable Skill Gains measures would be evaluated for PY 2020. However, release of Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 14-21 postponed the Measurable Skill Gains evaluation to PY 2022, due to insufficient WIOA data to inform the statistical adjustment model for this measure. Following this guidance, only two WIOA performance measures were adjusted and evaluated for PY 2020: Employment 2nd Quarter after Exit (Employment, Education, or Training 2nd Quarter after Exit for Youth) and Median Earnings. The remaining performance measures (Employment 4th Quarter after Exit/Employment, Education, or Training 4th Quarter after Exit, Credential Attainment, and Measurable Skill Gains) will be adjusted and evaluated beginning in PY 2022.

Data Validation

Data validation is essential for an accurate reflection of state and grantees' experiences. As a result, for PY 2021, the ODJFS Office of Fiscal and Monitoring Services' Bureau of Monitoring and Consulting Services will undertake a collaborative validation process.

The WIOA sample will include 1,200 PY 2021 participants from all 20 local areas. It also will include a sample of counties within those areas. Participants will be randomly selected from a list of closed participant cases located in the ARIES system.

The TEGL 23-19 was released June 18, 2020. Elements targeted for validation will consist of those noted in TEGL 23-19 and will be reported through a Programmatic Data Validation Summary Report issued by BMCS. Areas of significant concern will require the local areas to respond with plans for improvement.

Additionally, the Bureau of Monitoring and Consulting Services will make available training for state, local area, and lead agency staff and will include training resources on the methodology and process for monitoring and completion of data validation reviews. Training venues will include discussions and presentations via videoconferences and in-person meetings whenever possible.

The monitoring tools utilized by the Bureau of Monitoring and Consulting Services will be made available to local areas and may be referenced or adopted for use in their own data validation reviews. The ODJFS Office of Workforce Development will be responsible for resolving any issues identified within the reports issued by the Bureau of Monitoring and Consulting Services. They will also provide any training and/or technical assistance deemed appropriate.

Evaluative Studies

Department of Labor Behavioral Insights Pilot

The USDOL Behavioral Insights team, which includes researchers from the American Institutes for Research, is working with approximately 10 Ohio counties to design, implement, and assess a texting behavioral intervention to encourage CCMEP participants to maintain engagement in the program and benefit fully from available program services. Selected CCMEP participants are randomly placed in either one of two groups: intervention (treatment) or no intervention (control). Participants in the treatment group will receive encouraging text messages once per week over 12 weeks to foster engagement and prompt continuation with the CCMEP program. Outcome measures, including services received and completed, will be compared for the two groups to understand the effectiveness of utilizing an external prompt (the text messages) on CCMEP participants' engagement and success.

RESEA Program

Abt Associates, the Urban Institute, Capital Research Corporation, and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies contracted with the USDOL to conduct a study to provide Congress and USDOL with an in-depth assessment of the RESEA state programs.

An important goal of this USDOL-funded study was to assess the current RESEA program operations and how states plan to meet the requirements of the Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA) of 2018 (Public Law 115-123). Work began in October 2018 and was scheduled to be completed in 2021. The Abt team conducted site visits to 10 states and visited two local workforce areas in each of those states, to better understand the program components and plans for modification and development.

In Ohio, in-person and virtual interviews were conducted with the RESEA program administrator, direct delivery staff, and supervisors, as well as staff from the ODJFS Office of Unemployment Insurance Operations, Bureau of Labor Market Information, and workforce development board directors. The Abt team held interviews privately to ensure participants spoke candidly. Ohio is awaiting the publication of study results.

Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Workforce

Despite businesses re-opening, restrictions loosening, and unemployment rates dropping, the labor market is not seeing the influx of returning workers that was initially expected. Ohio, like the rest of the nation, is asking why. Using WIOA statewide funds, Ohio conducted two research projects aimed at understanding the influences, perceptions, barriers, and shifts in behavior of both current workers and would-be workers who have not returned to Ohio's labor force.

The Ohio Labor Force: An Analysis of Participation in Ohio's Labor Force 2020-2021

The Greater Ohio Workforce Board (Area 7), through a contract with a research company, conducted a study that examined social media analytics, survey responses, and focus group feedback. The following findings were identified:

- Among prime-age workers, one of the most common obstacles cited was the lack of opportunities that match their qualifications.
- Self-employment has provided many working-age people a sense of stability.

- For those who decided to retire during the pandemic, health concerns or the desire for a better work-life balance were among the major decision factors for leaving their jobs.
- Both those surveyed and those who participated in the focus group had positive outlooks.

Working Age Adult Survey of Summit, Medina, and Portage Counties

The Summit Medina Workforce Development Board (Area 2) contracted with a research company to survey Northeast Ohioans and conduct focus groups to understand individuals' perceptions and values regarding work. The following findings were identified:

- The inclusion of salary information in job postings was very important to respondents.
- The majority of respondents said they had done freelance or contract work in the past 12 months to earn money.
- COVID-19 has had a significant impact on experiences and views on employment.
- Most respondents said they were somewhat or very likely to seek additional education or job training in the next three years.

Customer Service Satisfaction

Customer awareness and satisfaction for both employers and job seekers remain vital pillars in the strategies deployed to effectively serve the workforce needs of Ohioans. In PY 2021, the ODJFS Office of Transformation gathered feedback from businesses, job seekers, and ODJFS Office of Workforce Development employees. Opportunities were identified to redesign services to improve the experiences of both Ohioans using workforce services and state employees working to provide those services. The insights gained have guided improvements to many workforce programs and processes, pushing the customer's experiences to the forefront of decision-making.

Through a customer survey, ODJFS learned that 59% of respondents did not know they could receive funding from an OhioMeansJobs center for a credential or degree training program. Only 19% of respondents were aware that one-on-one career coaching was offered at their local OhioMeansJobs center. With this knowledge, Office of Workforce Development leaders are already seeing meaningful changes being made to RESEA and Wagner-Peyser service delivery. Customer feedback will continue to drive meaningful improvements in our services for Ohioans.

OhioMeansJobs Certification

Local workforce development boards are responsible for certifying the OhioMeansJobs centers in their local workforce areas and ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of their local workforce systems. The boards must evaluate the centers to ensure that they are quality-focused, employer-driven, customer-centered, and tailored to meet their areas' economic needs. WIOA requires the boards to certify OhioMeansJobs centers every three years. Ohio completed the ongoing continuous improvement phase of certification in June 2022. Progress made in obtaining quality assurance and continuous improvement was reviewed with the same benchmarks established in earlier phases.

For the next phase of OhioMeansJobs certification, Ohio is planning to update the certification materials and simplify the certification process. The next certification will be due by 2025.