



# Ohio MEANS Jobs®

## Northeast Ohio (NOW) Regional Plan

*Ashtabula County, City of  
Cleveland/Cuyahoga County,  
Geauga County, Lake County, Lorain  
County, Medina County, Portage  
County, and Summit County*

## Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	2
INTRODUCTION.....	7
The NOW Plan's Guiding Principles .....	7
The NOW Regional Plan Requirements .....	8
ECONOMIC & LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS.....	9
Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor MSA.....	12
Akron MSA .....	12
The Northeast Ohio labor market continues to be challenged by the mismatch of skills that jobseekers possess to the skills that employers require. .....	15
Technology is driving changes in industry products and services and job requirements are also changing to incorporate these higher technical skills. .....	16
The NOW Region is a confluence of overlapping <i>local</i> labor markets where significant shares of residents of one county or workforce area work in another. ....	17
Declining population in northeast Ohio presents challenges to job growth. Opportunity employment represents a larger share in northeast Ohio.....	17
Growth is expected to continue for middle- and higher-skill jobs. ....	18
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES .....	21
OhioMeansJobs Centers in the NOW Region offer the following <i>Job Seeker Services</i> :.....	22
OhioMeansJobs Centers in the NOW Region offer the following <i>Employer Services</i> : .....	23
OhioMeansJobs Centers in the NOW Region offer the following <i>Training Services</i> : .....	23
Individual Training Accounts (ITA) .....	23
OJT (On-the Job Training).....	24
Customized Training .....	24
Incumbent Worker Training (IWT).....	24
OhioMeansJobs Center Services offered through Core Partner Programs .....	25
OhioMeansJobs Center Services for Youth.....	26
OhioMeansJobs Center Priority of Services .....	27
OMJ Accountability for Services Provided .....	27
OMJ Center Locations in the NOW Region: .....	28
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES .....	30
Business-led; Focused on In-Demand Jobs .....	30
In-Demand Jobs.....	31

REGIONAL PLANNING AND PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS .....	33
Assurances .....	34
Signature Pages .....	36
Area 2.....	37
Area 3.....	38
Area 4.....	39
Area 5.....	40
Area 19.....	41
Addendum Section .....	42

## **NORTHEAST OHIO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN: 2021 - 2025**

**Required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **What is the Northeast Ohio Workforce Development Region?**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (Pub. L. 113-128) is a federal law enacted in 2014 to reform and modernize the public workforce system. It replaced the Workforce Investment Act. WIOA requires Governors to designate local and regional workforce development areas and requires these areas to create local and regional workforce development plans. The Northeast Ohio Workforce (NOW) region was designated as a WIOA Region and is comprised of the eight counties of Lorain, Cuyahoga, Lake, Geauga, Ashtabula, Portage, Summit, and Medina. There are five distinct Workforce Development Areas with their Boards (WDBs) within this Region: Ohio Workforce Areas 2 (Summit/Medina), 3 (Cleveland/Cuyahoga), 4 (Lorain), 5 (Lake), and 19 (Ashtabula, Geauga, Portage).

#### **What is the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)?**

WIOA creates a public federal-state-local comprehensive workforce development system that requires a solid understanding of the region's labor market demand for workers in order to provide services and strategies to connect businesses with the skilled workforce needed; to target investments in skill training to in-demand jobs; to prioritize intensive training services to individuals who are low-income and have barriers to employment; and to create collaborations with education and support service providers across the region. The system is led at a policy level by the Chief Local Elected Officials and the Workforce Development Boards they appoint which are business-led and comprised of local leaders in business, education, economic development, organized labor and key government and community organizations. Across the Northeast Ohio region, over 60 businesses are represented across the five WDBs. Major customers of the system are businesses, jobseekers, and low-income youth and adults with barriers to employment.

As required by WIOA, each local workforce development area operates a comprehensive one-stop career center which are called Ohio Means Jobs (OMJ) centers. All WIOA-funded services as well as workforce services from the core programs mandated by WIOA are provided through the five comprehensive OMJ centers within this region.

#### **How do the Comprehensive OMJ Centers Work Across Programs & Customers?**

WIOA creates a performance-based structure for providing services and each local workforce area is required to negotiate performance levels with the state annually. All workforce areas in the region have been successful in achieving these performance goals.

Ohio requires all participants of WIOA Title I Employment and Training, WIOA Title II Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE), WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Act, WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation, Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education (Perkins) Act, and the Senior Community Service Employment Program (Title V of the Older Americans Act) to register in OhioMeansJobs.com to ensure consistency among programs, enhance job readiness and placement efforts, and support career planning. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients enrolled in the Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) and Unemployment Insurance claimants also register.

### **What is the Northeast Ohio Workforce Development Plan?**

WIOA was the first federal workforce development law to require a regional plan in addition to local workforce plans. In 2017, the first Northeast Ohio Workforce (NOW) plan was produced and approved by the state for a four-year period.

The approach to update the regional plan in 2021 consisted of a major streamlining of the document to make it more usable, an update of the data contained in the labor market analysis, and a full description of the workforce development services and strategies for the region. The document contains four substantive sections: Introduction; Economic & Labor Market Analysis, Workforce Services and Workforce Strategies. Now, it is being updated again at the midpoint of the four-year approval period; Additionally, each workforce development area updated its local plan, and these are attached and incorporated into the regional plan. Once approved, all will be in effect from July 2023 to June 2025.

### **What are the Highlights of the Labor Market Analysis for the Region?**

The three key industries which have been identified for the region are: Healthcare, Manufacturing, and Information Technology (IT). Additionally, good-paying middle-skills jobs in opportunity occupations have been identified by analysts.

Many of the labor market challenges that were documented in the 2017 Regional NOW plan still persist today and are exacerbated by the current economic challenges created by the COVID pandemic and the need for ongoing economic recovery, which present a new urgency and opportunity for the workforce development system.

- Unemployment is low. During the current pandemic state, the unemployment rate in Northeast Ohio has remained below the national average.
- There are significant pockets of high poverty in the region. Five cities in the NOW region ranked in the top 25 for Ohio cities for child poverty reported in 2021: East Cleveland (50.3%). Cleveland (45.7%), Maple Heights (39.8%), Lorain (39.4%) and Ashtabula (39.4%). High poverty rates overall and for children pose barriers to the development of the current and future workforce.
- The Northeast Ohio labor market continues to be challenged by a mismatch of skills that jobseekers possess to the skills that employers are seeking. Although there are many workers

that need jobs, the skills/qualifications possessed by jobseekers do not always match employers' stated needs.

- The region is not producing enough high-skilled workers.
  - By 2025, 65% of workers will need a 2- or 4-year degree to qualify for the available jobs. Currently, 34% of the population have a 2- or 4-year degree, and 21% have some college/training but no degree.
  - The workforce in the region does not possess the skills that employers are seeking to fill their jobs in sufficient numbers. Based on the 2022 Aligning Opportunities report published by TeamNEO, the number of unfilled entry level jobs in these key industries was: Manufacturing: 5,954; Healthcare: 4,689; and IT: 3,177. This totals over 13,000 entry-level jobs going unfilled in these three industries.
- Technology is driving changes in industry products and services and job requirements are also changing to incorporate these higher technical skills. Occupations across the spectrum are being upskilled and traditionally lower-skill jobs are now middle-skill. This means that workers need more digital awareness and skills to work in traditional jobs in manufacturing, healthcare, and other sectors.
- Declining population in northeast Ohio presents challenges to job growth. The population in northeast Ohio dropped by 155,000 to 4.278 million between 2001 – 2018, and the labor force dropped by 146,000 to 2.111 million. Industry employment projections covering 2016 – 2026 shows a decline in the number of jobs in the goods producing sector of the economy of 6.5% but shows an increase in job growth in the service providing sector of 11.4% for the Education and Health occupations, and 10% for Computer and Mathematical occupations. This produces a projected growth of almost 60,000 jobs in health/education and technology jobs.
- From right before the great recession in 2008, through 2021, the size of the workforce for the NOW region has contracted 125,000 workers from a high of just above 1.52 million workers in 2008 to just above 1.4 million workers. This represents a contraction of the workforce of approximately eight percent (8%). The primary reason for this is beginning in 2008, the very first of the "baby boomers" generation who were born in in early 1946, 9 months after the end of World War II, started turning 62 years of age. In addition, the pandemic created a secondary contraction containing additional baby boomer retirees, plus individuals who otherwise needed to be home to provide care for family members displaced from care, work, or school by the pandemic. This contraction has had a major effect on the ability of the region to produce enough workforce to support existing, expanding, and/or new employers to the region. This in turn has served as a drag on the ability of the region to meet its maximum possible potential for economic growth.
- Growth is expected to continue for middle- and higher-skill jobs. Opportunity employment represents a larger share of the jobs available in Northeast Ohio than in other areas. It is defined as: employment accessible to workers without a bachelor's degree and typically paying above

the national annual median wage (\$37,690). Additionally, baseline skills, often called 'soft' or non-technical skills, are critical for middle- and high-skilled jobs in today's workforce.

- Jobseekers may have hurdles to employment. These could include: Racial bias; Criminal offense history; Disability; Transportation; and Substance Abuse. Veterans report consistently facing a job market that has difficulty translating skills acquired in military occupations to civilian jobs.
- Individuals face other hurdles to their ability to pursue the training they need to acquire the skills to qualify for the good jobs that are in-demand that provide career pathways and good wages. Some of these barriers include: Post-secondary education is expensive and many are not aware that resources for job training are available; many individuals have literacy, numeracy and academic barriers to enter the desired course of training; too many lack quality information about good job opportunities and employers; there are challenges to achieving a High School Diploma or Equivalency; support services to help with transportation, child care, income support, food, etc. are not widely known to people interested in job training; many low-skilled workers are working and therefore cannot take time off or stop working to pursue training; and many still face a digital barrier to accessing virtual training or education (digital skills, equipment, and high-speed, low-cost internet access).

#### **What are the Workforce Development Services available in the Region?**

- Job Matching: The OMJ centers work directly with employers to find qualified job candidates. In addition, the staff work with the jobseekers to identify their skills, interests, unique employment situations, and specific barriers. The centers offer hands-on and self-directed services in the physical OMJ locations as well as a variety of online offerings. The plan articulates specific services that are available to businesses and jobseekers for job matching and also discusses the services delivered by core partner programs within the comprehensive OMJ centers.
- Job Training: Job training funding and services are available for eligible individuals (dislocated workers, low-income adults, and youth with barriers to employment) in in-demand occupations. An Individual Employment Plan is created for each person who enters training. Success is measured by completion of training and placement into employment. There are also employer-based job training programs available: On-the-Job Training; Customized Training; Incumbent Worker Training; and Transitional Jobs. There is also training available for individuals through eligible training providers using Individual Training Accounts (ITAs).

#### **What are the Workforce Development Strategies for the Region?**

The delivery of workforce development services within the region are done within the context of strategies to achieve the overall goals of the system:

1. To be business-led and to focus on in-demand occupations;
2. To prioritize those individuals who are most in need of services;

3. To operate within meaningful collaborations with core partner programs, secondary and post-secondary education providers as well as community organizations that provide complementary and support services to individual customers; and
4. To administer services in order to achieve results for businesses and jobseekers, to be in compliance with all laws and regulations, to be transparent and accountable for these public resources, and to be innovative and agile to meet the changing needs of the labor market.

Specific strategies to ensure that services are driven by the needs of business consist of: the leadership and participation of the business members on the WDBs; the numerous arrangements and programs that have been put in place with Economic Development entities; and strong support for regional sector partnerships that have been recently established for the three key industry sectors of Manufacturing, Healthcare and Information Technology. Additionally, the WDBs actively promote and provide information on "in-demand" jobs through specific activities during "In-Demand Jobs Week," partnerships with the regional public service station *Ideastream*'s "American Graduate: Getting to Work," and identifying and utilizing the labor market data that has been produced for the region regarding skills gaps.

Providing a focus on those individuals who are most in need of workforce services requires strategies to make the services easily accessible, which include: the "one-stop" availability of all WIOA services and those of the core partners in the comprehensive OhioMeansJobs centers; making available both self-service and staff-provided individualized services; providing virtual access and remote services on-line; and, collaborating with other organizations in the community to provide neighborhood-level services such as libraries. To address the barriers some may have to getting a job or entering job training, strategies for assisting with transportation are in place, and support may be provided for childcare, purchasing work equipment, or other stipends. A recent strategy of using Transitional Jobs funding for those with little or no work history has been implemented in three of the workforce areas.

Successfully operating the workforce development system in the region relies upon numerous collaborations and partnerships with and between all organizations providing services through the OMJ centers, formalized annually through Memoranda of Understanding in each local area. Additionally, strong relationships with education and training providers as well as local government and community-based organizations that can offer supplementary services are vital. These strategies are in place to enable the system to achieve results for both jobseekers and businesses.

## INTRODUCTION

### The NOW Plan's Guiding Principles

1. The NOW Regional Plan is aligned with the Combined State Plan.
2. The five Workforce Development Boards representing the eight counties of the Northeast Ohio Workforce (NOW) region collaborated to produce this plan.
3. The NOW Directors (the five WDB Area Executive Directors/Directors) meet quarterly to continue to implement the regional plan and to identify new workforce development solutions and innovations.
4. Strategies addressed in the regional workforce plan will not be repeated in each of the five required local plans.
5. Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs) and members of the Workforce Development Boards were notified and invited to participate in this plan's development.
6. Workforce Boards will continue to work closely with those education institutions that provide adult basic education, career technical training and other post-secondary credentials that are in demand. The boards will also deliver Youth workforce programs to address the needs of youth who are disconnected from the education systems.
7. This plan is required by WIOA, provides strategies for the northeast Ohio workforce, and strategies for the Workforce Boards to align strategies to serve businesses and job seekers and achieve the goals of the plan.
8. For purposes of the regional plan, regional initiatives and strategies do not require all five workforce areas to sign-on. Instead, if two or more of the five WDBs are working together to achieve a goal, objective, or activity, it will be considered regional.
9. This plan leverages work that has been led or conducted by others in intersecting spheres of influence to be more efficient and to utilize the needed expertise from the community. For example, other organizations are addressing the transportation issue, and excellent workforce research and labor market analyses have been produced for the region. Our goal is to create a more usable, streamlined regional workforce plan that eliminates the redundancies of the current 2017 NOW plan and links to existing analyses and information instead of repeating it.
10. The plan incorporates the major priority of addressing individuals who have been impacted by the recent pandemic recession as well as those who are low-income and/or have been left behind by the higher-skills economy to provide more choices/options for employment and careers and to provide employers with a qualified workforce.

Ohio's WIOA Combined State Plan (PY 2020-PY2023) continues Ohio's commitment to build a strong economic climate in collaboration with local workforce development partners. To support its strategic workforce vision, Ohio has identified the following four goals for preparing an educated and skilled

workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment and other populations along with meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

- ✓ Goal 1: Coordinate efforts across entities (public, private, local, and State) to reduce unnecessary duplication and maximize resources.
- ✓ Goal 2: Leverage technology and data to create efficiencies and improve services and outcomes.
- ✓ Goal 3: Deploy locally driven programs that produce results.
- ✓ Goal 4: Invest in and promote education and training for jobs that 1. empower people with 21st Century skills and strengthen Ohio's strategic economic advantage, and 2. ensure that our State has a workforce to support the health and well-being of Ohioans, their families, and communities.

The NOW WIOA regional plan supports the goals of the State WIOA Combined Plan.

## The NOW Regional Plan Requirements

Section 106 (c) (1) of WIOA requires regional plans to address eight required areas:

- Establishing regional service strategies;
- Focusing on in-demand jobs and industry sectors for the region;
- Determining whether administrative cost arrangements are needed in the region;
- Supporting transportation improvements and other supportive services, as appropriate for the region;
- Coordinating services with regional economic development services and providers;
- Following state guidance on requirements to negotiate and reach agreement with the Governor on local levels of performance and
- Incorporating local plans.

Section 108 of WIOA contains 22 subsections regarding the elements that local plans must address. This regional plan incorporates all of the local planning elements except for those specific administrative processes of the local area (subsections 16 and 17). Also, any special initiatives of a workforce area are found in the local plans.

We have determined that there is no need for administrative cost pooling between the workforce areas in the region, therefore, no strategies regarding this element are included in this plan

## ECONOMIC & LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS

The creation of the Regional NOW plan in 2017 was assisted by an extensive labor market analysis conducted by a hired consultant. A 24-page description of this analysis was included in the Regional NOW plan itself and supplemental data was appended. The labor market update included in this plan relies on data and analyses produced by sources such as the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), Team NEO (the state economic development entity for northeastern Ohio), the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey and other sources. Our goal here is to provide the highlights from these data sources pertaining to the workforce challenges in northeast Ohio which drive workforce development service strategies.

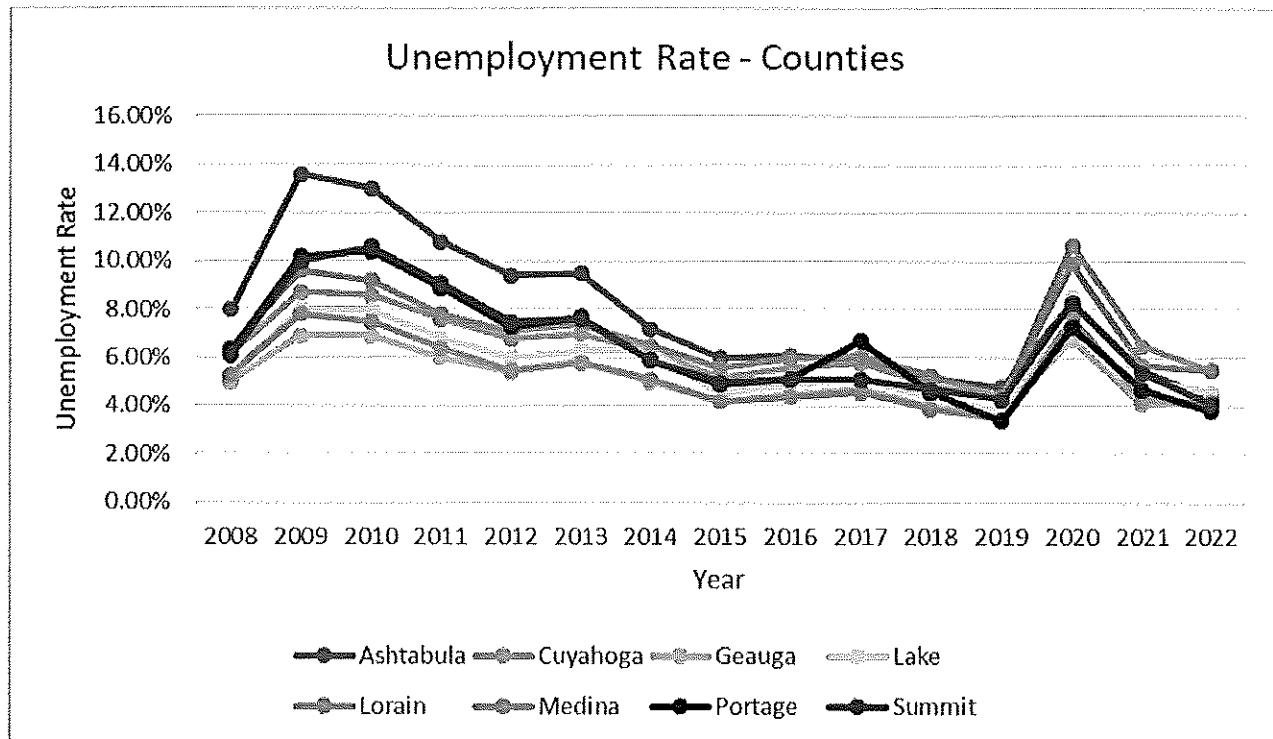
In addition to the labor market challenges that were documented in the 2017 Regional NOW plan and still persist today, the economic challenges created by the pandemic and the need for economic recovery presented a new urgency for the workforce development system. Moving out of the pandemic, the region has seen unemployment levels return close to pre-pandemic levels. According to ODJFS, the unemployment rates for the eight counties in this region in December 2022 were much lower than the previous pandemic rates – i.e.:

- Cuyahoga: 3.6%
- Lorain: 3.5%
- Ashtabula: 4.3%
- Summit: 3.9%
- Portage: 3.7%
- Medina: 3.0%
- Lake: 3.3%
- Geauga: 2.9%

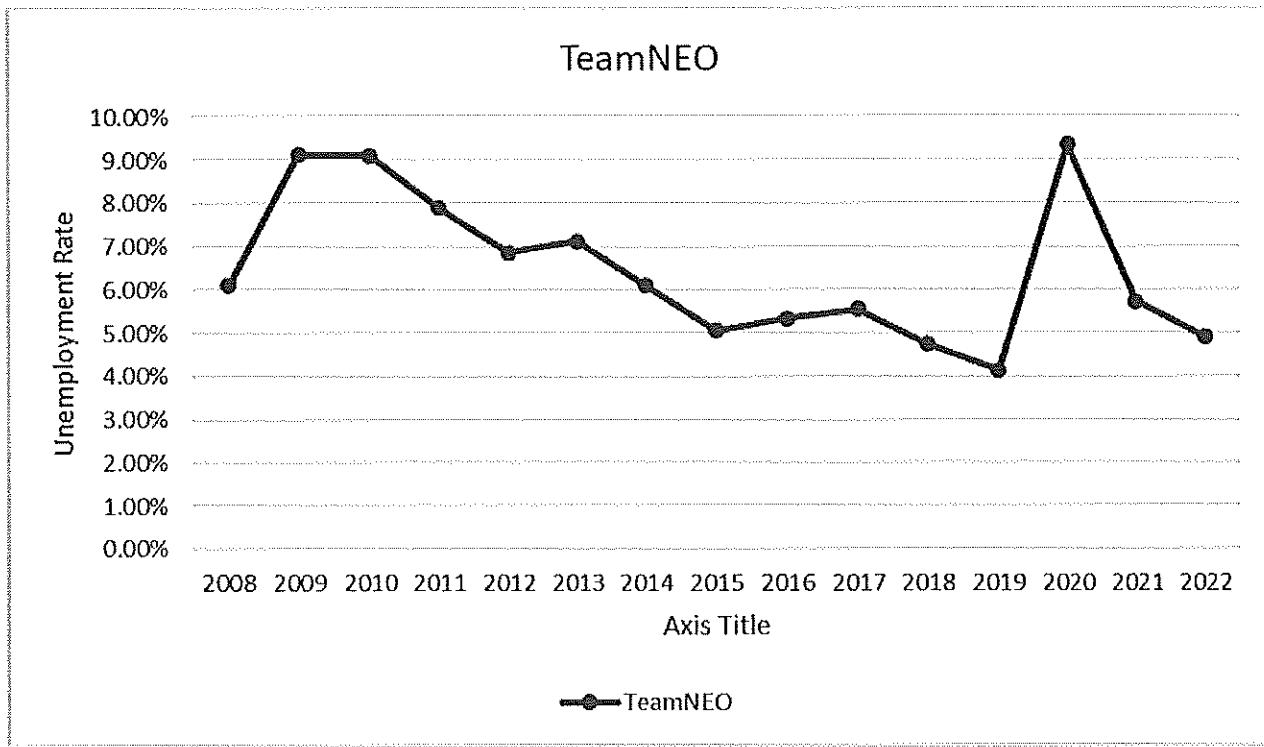
Also, for December 2022, the BLS reported the following data based on the region's two metropolitan statistical areas.

- Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor MSA:
  - Employed: 975,700
  - Unemployed: 34,500
  - Unemployment Rate: 3.4%
- Akron MSA:
  - Employed: 332,300
  - Unemployed: 13,400
  - Unemployment Rate: 3.9%

The following graph demonstrates the historic unemployment rates for each of the NOW Region's 8 counties for the time period from 2008 through 2022. This graph demonstrates that each of the eight counties are similarly situated in their unemployment patterns for that fourteen year period of time. All eight counties had a spike of unemployment in 2009 as an effect of the great recession that occurred during 2008-2009. Then, each of the eight counties saw their unemployment rates recede to lows in 2019, followed by a large one short, sharp spike in 2020 during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, the region has returned to unemployment rates between three and five percent (3%-5%).



The following graph also demonstrates the unemployment rate for the same period as the previous graph, for the fourteen year period from 2008 until 2022, but in this instance, as a collective eight county area, and not weighted by population of the respective counties. It shows the same general trends, with a spike in unemployment during the great recession for 2009 and into 2010, and a shorter spike during 2020 in the first year of COVID.



The impact of the pandemic on nearly 48,000 unemployed workers in this region was worse for low-skilled workers in jobs such as hospitality, restaurants, and tourism. Job losses for African American, Hispanic, and other minority workers is much higher than those for white workers. Additionally, the unemployment rate does not reflect those who have dropped out of the labor force altogether. It has been widely reported that the COVID pandemic has forced far more women than men out of the labor force. Analysis conducted by Cleveland State University's Levin College of Urban Affairs for the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County WDB documented that a much lower rates of labor force participation exists in poorer neighborhoods pre-pandemic. This too has declined since the COVID pandemic, as BLS reported that nationally, the Labor Force Participation rate was 95.6% in January 2022 compared to a rate of 61.4% in January 2021.

Overall, this has produced what some economists refer to as a "K – shaped" recovery where high-skilled workers continue to prosper while comparatively-lower-skilled workers, especially African Americans, Hispanics, other minorities, and those living in disadvantaged neighborhoods continue to lose ground economically. This is a critical time for the public workforce development system to focus on these populations.

The intent of this section of the NOW Plan is to provide the WDB leadership in Northeast Ohio with data-based insights, implications, recommendations and the labor market dynamics needed to inform the regional as well as local plans for the five workforce areas (Areas 2, 3, 4, 5 and 19) that include counties from the Cleveland and Akron MSAs, plus Ashtabula County.

Other important aspects of the regional labor market were identified and documented in the NOW regional plan and remain important to workforce development strategies. The regional plan for this

eight-county area of northeast Ohio reflects the joint efforts of the five WDB Boards and OMJ Centers to agree on strategic directions to guide local goals and actions over the next four years. Understanding these issues can help WDB leadership to agree on their role in addressing them and how to develop a quality workforce system within the region, while meeting industry workforce needs, and helping all segments of the workforce achieve their full potential.

The three key industries which have been identified for the region are: Healthcare, Manufacturing, and Information Technology (IT). Additionally, good-paying middle-skills jobs in opportunity occupations have been identified by analysts.

According to the Census Bureau's 2021 American Community Survey 5-year data estimates, the following data describe pertinent economic and demographic factors for The Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor MSA and the Akron MSA.

#### Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor MSA

Population 16 & Older	1,697,380
In Labor Force	63.7%
Not in Labor Force	36.3%
Median Household Income	\$61,320
% Earning < \$50,000	41.7%
% on Cash Public Assistance	2.8%
% on SNAP	13.5%
White	71.6%
Black	19.5%
Asian	2.3%
Hispanic	6.2%

#### Akron MSA

Population 16 & Older	576,222
% in Labor Force	65.1%
% not in Labor Force	34.9%
Median Household Income	\$63,331
% Earning < \$50,000	40.1%

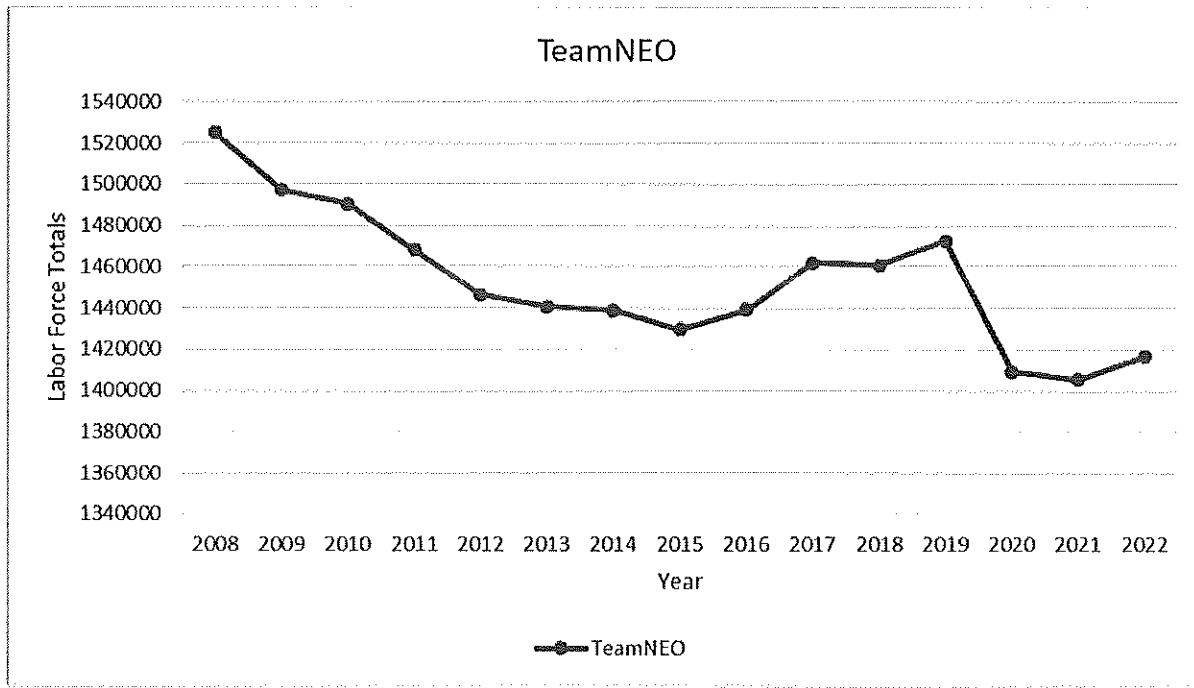
% on Cash Public Assistance	4.8%
% on SNAP	13.0%
White	79.6%
Black	12.0%
Asian	3.3%
Hispanic	2.3%

An article in [Cleveland.com](https://www.cleveland.com) on 1/3/20 by Rich Exner titled, "Every Ohio City and County Ranked for Poverty, Child Poverty: Census Estimates," was based on ACS data from 2014-2018. Living in poverty was defined as income less than or equal to \$24,465 for a family of four with two parents; or \$20,231 for a single parent with two children. Three cities in the NOW region ranked in the top 10 for Ohio cities for child poverty: East Cleveland (56.5%), Cleveland (50.9%), and Ashtabula (50.5%). High poverty rates overall and for children pose barriers to the development of the current and future workforce. Poverty rates across the eight County region are:

County	Rank	Poverty Rate	Child Poverty Rate
Ashtabula	7	20.3	30.5
Cuyahoga	18	18.1	26.7
Lorain	42	13.7	20.9
Summit	52	13.1	18.7
Portage	60	13.1	17.0
Lake	74	8.3	12.1
Medina	83	6.4	8.9
<b>Geauga</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>8.2</b>

In addition to the pockets of high poverty in this region, the region has experienced a significant contraction in the size of its total workforce for the twelve (12) year period from 2008 through 2022. In 2008, the NOW's region hit its historically largest workforce in the modern era, just shy of 1.53 million workers. Then, in mid 2008, the first group of baby boomers turned 62, and the great recession started. Those two events together combined to produce a significant sharp contraction of approximately 6.6% of the NOW region for the following seven (7) years. By 2015, the NOW region had shed approximately 100,000 employees from its peak in 2008.

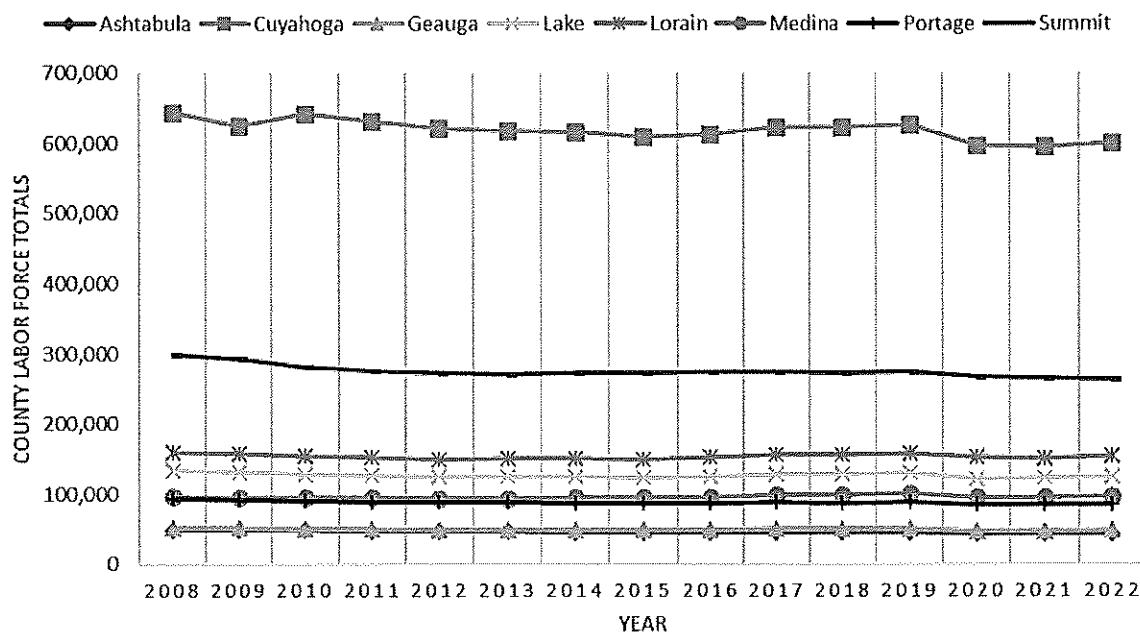
From 2015 through the end of 2019, the NOW region recovered slightly, gaining back approximately 40,000 of the 100,000 workers lost. Then the pandemic arrived in March of 2020, triggering another significant contraction of the workforce. The combination of the deaths from the pandemic, plus the need for many workers who are immune-deficient, or had to stay at home to provide care to children who were displaced from school, all contributed to this contraction of the workforce. In addition, the transition to online or remote work skills required of all workers, combined with the concern that the pandemic would cause greater health problems or even death, caused many of those baby boomers who had not retired in the previous decade to take that option in 2020 and 2021. Unlike during the great recession, during the pandemic, the stock market remained strong, and so did the value of the housing market. With retirement plans and home values strong, this, combined together with all of the other pandemic factors, produced a second wave of contraction of the workforce shown on the graph below from 2020 through 2021.



In all, from the high in 2008 to the low in 2021, the entire NOW region contracted by approximately 125,000 workers, for a total loss of approximately 8% of the workforce during that 13 year time period. While 2022 has shown some modest gains and recovery, economists project that the size of the workforce will remain at or near these contracted levels for most of the remainder of the decade while the baby boomers continue to cycle out of the workforce.

The following graph shows the contraction of the workforce, but on a county-by-county basis for the same fourteen year period, from 2008 through 2022. It should be noted that while the NOW region's overall workforce contraction was approximately 8% from 2008 through 2021, that in some of the individual counties, the contraction was much sharper and deeper.

## EACH COUNTY'S YEARLY LABOR FORCE, NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED



In addition to the issues of pockets of high poverty and contracting workforce within the region, the content of the plan below describes other challenges the region faces in developing its workforce: the mismatch of jobseeker skills with skills sought by employers; the up-skilling of jobs resulting from technology advances; local labor markets extend beyond the boundaries of local workforce boards; and opportunities for workforce development to prepare workers for careers and higher wages in middle-skill jobs and opportunity occupations.

The Northeast Ohio labor market continues to be challenged by the mismatch of skills that jobseekers possess to the skills that employers require.

The biggest issue presented by the current situation is that although there are many workers that need jobs, the skills/qualifications possessed by jobseekers do not match employers' needs for new workers. This produces a confounding result:

- Employers are frustrated that they cannot find qualified workers to fill their open jobs which impedes their ability to grow their businesses;
- Unemployed workers in need of jobs are unable to connect to open jobs because they lack the qualifications;
- This creates a drag on the economic recovery needed for the region.

The state and regional workforce development system has a keen focus on prioritizing strategies and services on “in-demand” jobs and, as described in this plan, has implemented, and will continue to implement actions to address these mismatches.

Team NEO continues to initiate a “deep dive” analysis of this issue in northeast Ohio as published in the organizations’ “Aligning Opportunities in Northeast Ohio” Report. This report provides excellent documentation regarding in-demand skills and related credentials being produced. This work focuses on the three key industries in this region. ([Job Demand & Skills Gaps in Northeast Ohio | Team NEO](#)). Some of the key findings are:

- The region is not producing enough high-skilled workers.
  - By 2025, 65% of workers will need a 2- or 4-year degree to qualify for the available jobs. Currently, 34% of the population have a 2- or 4-year degree, and 21% have some college/training but no degree.
  - The workforce in the region does not possess the skills that employers are seeking to fill their jobs in sufficient numbers. In 2021, the number of unfilled entry level jobs in these key industries was: Manufacturing: 5,954; Healthcare: 4,689; and IT: 3,177. This totals approximately 13,800 entry-level jobs going unfilled in these three industries.
  - African American, Hispanic, and other minority groups have lower levels of educational attainment, higher unemployment rates, and are more likely to work in lower wage occupations.

Technology is driving changes in industry products and services and job requirements are also changing to incorporate these higher technical skills.

As industries adopt new methods, occupational structures and jobs are being impacted. The end result is that occupations across the spectrum are being up-skilled and traditionally lower-skill jobs are now middle-skill jobs, many of which are entry-level jobs. This means that workers need more digital awareness and skills to work in traditional jobs in manufacturing, healthcare, and any other sector.

Relatively fewer jobs are available for workers with no more than a high school credential. The chances of being employed today in NEO jumps dramatically as workers complete some college, and even more so when Associate’s and Baccalaureate degrees are attained. ODJFS data for Northeast Ohio regarding online job adds between 1/1/22 and 10/1/22 shows that the majority of jobs require higher educational achievement:

- 41.4% GE/HS
- 14.8% Associate’s Degree
- 38.9% Bachelor’s Degree
- 4.8% Doctoral Degree

Not all workers have kept pace with the rate of change in skill and job requirements. Moreover, many workers face barriers that prevent them from gaining the necessary skills to benefit from the region's jobs and wage gains.

The region's primary infrastructure for improving an existing and emergent workforce are the very entities that make up our workforce system: postsecondary education (especially colleges and universities); the public workforce system (funded by federal and state resources); economic development organizations; and other efforts to support talent development that address the region's gaps. Greater alignment and partnership among these regional workforce development partners is vital to hastening the pace that improves workforce quality for the employer. The NOW Regional Plan embraces the challenges and opportunities that are possible in a collaborative system, one in which WDB leadership and roles are articulated clearly and agreed upon.

The NOW Region is a confluence of overlapping *local* labor markets where significant shares of residents of one county or workforce area work in another.

The regional plan reflects the reality that the majority of jobs are in two counties (Cuyahoga and Summit) that are part of two different workforce areas; and that the labor market opportunities for workers and employers alike are not aligned with the political boundaries created for the five workforce areas. However, there are many ways for the five local workforce systems to work together to improve outcomes for the region as a whole. The regional and local plans identify ways to pursue regional cooperation.

Declining population in northeast Ohio presents challenges to job growth. Opportunity employment represents a larger share in northeast Ohio.

TeamNEO reported that the population in northeast Ohio dropped by 155,000 to 4.278 million between 2001 – 2018, and the labor force dropped by 146,000 to 2.111 million. Northeast Ohio industry employment projections covering 2018 – 2028 provided by ODJFS shows a decline in the number of jobs in the goods producing sector of the economy of 6.8% but shows an increase in job growth in the Personal Care & Service providing sector of 12.2%, an increase in job growth for Healthcare Support occupations of 11.3%, an increase for Computer and Mathematical occupations of 8.6% and an increase in Construction & Extraction Occupations of 7.7%. This produces a growth of almost 26,300 jobs in those occupations with expected increases and a loss of over 13,000 manufacturing jobs. However, even with the number of manufacturing jobs declining, open jobs go unfilled for that industry due to the skills gap, as discussed above.

The Federal Reserve Banks of Cleveland, Philadelphia and Atlanta have conducted research helpful to the workforce development system regarding "Opportunity Employment." Opportunity employment is defined as employment accessible to workers without a bachelor's degree and typically paying above the national annual median wage (\$37,690), adjusted for regional differences in consumer prices. It found that opportunity employment accounts for 21.6 percent of total employment in the 121 metro areas analyzed in this report.

For the Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor area, the share is 30.1% which makes it the 7<sup>th</sup> highest share among these metro areas. The top ten occupations are:

- Registered Nurses, (Note: However, most major hospitals in the region require a BSN degree for employment or at least a commitment to attain a BSN degree within a period of time.)
- Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive,
- General and Operations Managers,
- Customer Service Representatives,
- Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks,
- Maintenance and Repair Workers, General,
- Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers,
- First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers,
- First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers, and
- Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses

The Akron MSA was not one of the 121 areas reviewed in the comparison report. However, an earlier analysis of Ohio's eight large metropolitan areas, listed the top ten opportunity occupations for Akron:

- Registered Nurses,
- Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers,
- Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive,
- General and Operations Managers,
- Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks,
- First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers,
- Maintenance and Repair Workers, General,
- Medical Secretaries,
- First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers, and
- Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses.

Using this valuable information for career counseling and investments of WIOA training funds enables individuals to choose those areas of interest that are in-demand and will yield higher-paying career opportunities.

Growth is expected to continue for middle- and higher-skill jobs.

In the region, jobs in demand for skilled workers are evenly split between middle- and higher-skill jobs, based on a comparison of total job ads for middle- and higher-skill jobs for the eight-county region. Demand for lower-skill jobs is declining in in-demand industry sectors where employers are up-skilling these jobs.

The level of postsecondary education that employers typically seek serves as a proxy for differences in skill level. Middle-skill jobs typically require less than a bachelor's degree and pay better than average earnings. Thousands of these in demand jobs exist in the region and present the best employment opportunities for the two-thirds of the region's workforce who lack a four-year degree.

According to researchers at the Bureau of Labor Statistics, "A number of them (jobs) are in growing STEM fields – science, technology, engineering, and math. We've identified a number of STEM jobs that need less than a bachelor's degree to get started, and also pay close to or above the median for all occupations in May 2015: \$36,200."

Regarding digital skills, the NOW 2017 Regional Plan found that:

1. Foundational digital skills are needed throughout the economy at every level. There is a tremendous demand in Northeast Ohio for middle-skill jobs where digital skills are as important to employers as the specific technical skills needed for the positions.
2. Digital proficiencies include a multitude of office and organizational software skills that are needed to be productive on the job. These start with Excel, Office Suite, and VPN, ERPs, etc. The demand for these skills in a wide range of technician and support jobs throughout the economy are well documented in real-time online job postings and are the reason these jobs are predominately middle-skill in today's economy.

The research completed for the NOW plan showed that up to 90%+<sup>1</sup> of job postings include a digital component ranging from knowledge of different software to coding skills and beyond. Further, the research supported the notion that all employees (both current and future) need to have foundational skills in digitization, which will enhance their employment outlook in the northeast Ohio marketplace and qualify them for moving into middle- and higher-skilled positions.

3. In many technology-based industries in NEO, and not just in IT occupations, the ability of workers to *write code* is the key to meeting employer expectations for higher-skill jobs and qualifies job seekers to advance along or between career paths.
4. The impact of Disruptive Technologies, such as 3-D fabrication, advanced uses of robotics, and the digitizing of data on just about everything has led to challenges of managing Big Data and increased attention to how to analyze and use masses of data to improve success of industry and consumer experiences. These technologies are impacting Advanced Manufacturing; Healthcare and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. As evidenced in job posting data, there is a merging of engineering, IT and business intelligence and process skills, and transforming job assignments and occupational structure.

Additionally, **baseline skills**, or what are often called 'soft' or non-technical skills are critical for middle- and high-skilled jobs in today's workforce. These are not the typical 'show up on time' workplace attributes. Rather skills mentioned in job ads that are more germane to successful performance on the job. These include communication, writing, problem solving skills, etc. Baseline [soft] skills are most emphasized in roles that involve higher levels of personal interaction relative to technical activities. In Customer Support roles, over half of all requested skills are baseline skills. Clerical and Administrative, Human Resources, Hospitality, Sales, and Management are the other areas where employers place the greatest emphasis on baseline skills.

---

Burning Glass has conceptualized the broad range of soft or foundational skill sets into six clusters that are required for some occupations and industries. Those skill sets are: Customer Service; Presentation and Persuasion; Detail Oriented; Supervision; Positive Disposition; and Project Management, Research and Strategy.

This analysis makes it clear that the workforce development system must be focused on preparing and connecting workers to jobs. To do so, policies and strategies must also address barriers workers have to obtaining employment as well as hurdles faced by individuals who need to improve their skills to qualify for these good jobs.

Jobseekers often have additional barriers to employment:

- Racial bias;
- Criminal offense history;
- Disability;
- Transportation: Public means of transit in the NOW Region, outside of Metro areas, can be difficult (especially time schedules) or non-existent.
- Substance Abuse: Ability to pass a drug test is still a requirement of hire and a challenge for many job seekers.
- Employers have difficulty in translating skills acquired in military occupations to civilian jobs. (A “crosswalk” to enable this comparison is available through OhioMeansJobs.com.)

Hurdles to improving skills:

In addition to the barriers listed above, individuals face other hurdles to their ability to pursue the training they need to acquire the skills to qualify for the good jobs that provide career pathways and good wages. Some of these barriers include:

- ✓ Post-secondary education is expensive which is a deterrence to some. Many individuals are not aware that resources for job training are available through WIOA, the Perkins Act and other places, and these may go unused. The number of hours of minimum wage work needed to pay for 4 years of a public college for a millennial is 4,459 hours as compared to the cost for a boomer which was 306 hours. 56% of millennials have student loans. Paradoxically, there was \$87 million in unused federal funds in Ohio in 2019 through FAFSA which could have funded the post-secondary education of 21,600 more students.
- ✓ Literacy, numeracy, and academic skills are too low to enter the course of training they want to pursue. This typically requires remedial education to address reading, math, etc. before starting job training/skill upgrading courses, which ultimately increases the amount of time and the cost of pursuing the training
  - ✓ 58.5% of those pursuing a sub-baccalaureate credential need remedial education. Of those, 24.6% complete their remediation and courses on time.
  - ✓ 25% of those pursuing a bachelor's degree need remedial education. Of those, 38.4% complete their remediation and courses on time.

- ✓ Many lack access to basic information about what are the good jobs, career paths and how to access job training at community colleges, career technical training institutions, apprenticeship programs, etc.
- ✓ Similarly, new freshmen commence and complete post-secondary courses in fields with little labor market value or low demand for workers.
- ✓ For those who dropped out of High School, there are challenges to achieving a High School Diploma or Equivalency. In recent years, the GED has become more challenging academically, is more expensive to take, and is only accessible on the internet.
- ✓ Support services to help with transportation, child care, etc. are not widely accessible to assist people in job training.
- ✓ Many low-skilled workers are working and cannot take time off or stop working to take training. Many low-skilled jobs have irregular schedules which create obstacles to taking a course with a standing schedule. There is a strong need to increase the number of "Earn and Learn" opportunities like: apprenticeships, internships, co-ops, work experience opportunities, etc.
- ✓ Too many still face a digital barrier to accessing virtual training or education (digital skills, equipment, and high-speed, low-cost internet access).

The services and strategies available through the public workforce development system are focused on providing the assistance needed to individuals who are facing barriers and hurdles to acquiring the needed skills to obtain good jobs on a career pathway.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

WIOA creates a public federal-state-local comprehensive workforce development system that requires a solid understanding of the region's labor market demand for workers in order to provide services and strategies to connect businesses with the skilled workforce needed; to target investments in skill training to in-demand jobs; to prioritize intensive and training services to individuals most in need who have barriers to employment; and to create collaborations with education and support service providers across the region. The system is led at a policy level by the Chief Local Elected Officials and the Workforce Development Boards they appoint which are business-led and comprised of local leaders in business, education, economic development, organized labor and key government and community organizations. This section addresses the services provided by this system in the NOW region according to the major customers of the system: businesses, jobseekers, and youth and adults with barriers to employment.

As required by WIOA, each local workforce development area operates a comprehensive one-stop career center which are called Ohio Means Jobs (OMJ) centers. All WIOA-funded services as well as

workforce services from the core programs mandated by WIOA are provided through these OMJ centers and in other locations in the community. WIOA creates a performance-based structure for providing services and each local workforce area is required to negotiate performance levels with the state annually. All workforce areas in the region have been successful in achieving these performance goals.

The OMJ centers work directly with employers to find qualified job candidates. In addition, the staff work with the job seekers to identify their unique employment situations and develop strategies to overcome specific barriers. The centers offer hands-on and self-directed services in the physical OMJ locations as well as a variety of online services.

Additionally, the state operates [OhioMeansJobs.com](http://OhioMeansJobs.com) which is more than a job board and resume bank as it provides a multi-faceted online career counseling center that provides a menu of career services options for all Ohioans, especially those residing in rural areas with limited access to a physical OMJ center location. [OhioMeansJobs.com](http://OhioMeansJobs.com) also provides a front door for individuals and businesses that are interested in employment programs. Virtual online services are available for use by individuals who can access it online through [OhioMeansJobs.com](http://OhioMeansJobs.com). The state of Ohio has completed a complete overhaul and update of this tool and it was just launched in March 2021.

The site offers registered users step-by-step instructions to help register for online services including:

- ✓ A virtual “backpack” that includes a document storage element, school, scholarship, career, and employment program searches;
- ✓ Information on local career fairs and workshops; and,
- ✓ Free practice testing including ACT, SAT, GED, WorkKeys.
- ✓ Information on apprenticeship program and internships.

The following sections describe the services available at comprehensive OhioMeansJobs Centers.

OhioMeansJobs Centers in the NOW Region offer the following *Job Seeker Services*:

- ✓ Career Counseling
- ✓ Basic Skills Assessment
- ✓ Career Advancement Education and Training Opportunities
- ✓ Job and Labor Market Information
- ✓ Informational Interviews
- ✓ Preparation of an Individual Employment Plan
- ✓ Information about Job Openings, Skills and Education Requirements, Wages and Benefits
- ✓ Resume Preparation and Job Interviewing Skills
- ✓ Job Referral and Placement
- ✓ Skill and Interest Inventories

- ✓ Job-Search Workshops and Seminars
- ✓ Links to Programs at community colleges and other job training providers
- ✓ Funding for training programs for eligible individuals
- ✓ Career Information and Guidance Assistance in Identifying Financial Resources to Support Employment, Education and Training Related Expenses
- ✓ Connections to Community Resources

OhioMeansJobs Centers in the NOW Region offer the following *Employer Services*:

- ✓ Assistance in preparing job openings
- ✓ Posting job openings
- ✓ Recruiting, screening, and referring qualified candidates for job openings
- ✓ Providing pre-employment skill testing
- ✓ Scheduling and hosting employer interviewing sessions
- ✓ Providing funding for skills training for newly hired or incumbent workers through WIOA
- ✓ Creating services for mass recruitments and customized training programs
- ✓ Participating in the state-led “rapid response” activities for businesses that are experiencing mass layoffs or shut-downs
- ✓ Providing employers with access to resources for hiring and workforce development

OhioMeansJobs Centers in the NOW Region offer the following *Training Services*:

#### Individual Training Accounts (ITA)

Individual Training Accounts can be established on behalf of an eligible individual customer to purchase training services from an eligible provider (on the State approved eligible training provider list) that he/she selects in consultation with an OMJ Center case manager. Eligible individuals include low-income adults and youth who have barriers to employment and dislocated workers who were laid-off and cannot return to their previous occupation. ITAs account for the largest amount of training investments made in the region through WIOA. As required by WIOA, the training must be targeted to “in-demand” occupations and the state requires that 85% of WIOA training funds must be used for in-demand training. OMJ staff engage in eligibility determinations, career counseling and assessments of individuals in order to create an Individual Employment Plan for each person who will enter training. The Workforce Development Boards in the region work closely with the four community colleges that serve this area as well as other training providers in coordination with those programs also funded by the Carl Perkins Act. Regionally, these investments are focused on in-demand jobs in the key industries of Manufacturing,

Healthcare, and IT. The five Workforce Boards have worked to review each policy regarding local ITAs and have acted to make these policies more complementary across the region. To do so, policy changes were made in areas such as the amount of the cap for training and the duration of training.

#### OJT (On-the Job Training)

The OJT model involves training that is provided by an employer (or in combination with a designated training entity) under a contract between the OMJ Center and the employer. As part of that contract, the paid participant (employee) is engaged in productive work in a job that provides:

- knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of the job;
- reimbursement to the employer for the extraordinary costs of providing the training and additional supervision related to the training up to a capped amount;
- limited duration training as appropriate to the occupation for which the participant is being trained, taking into account training content, the participant's prior work experience, and the participant's service strategy, as appropriate.

The five Boards also worked together to review all OJT policies in order to build on the best of each other's policies and work toward clarity for the business community.

#### Customized Training

- designed to meet the special requirements of an employer (or a group of employers);
- developed and carried out through a commitment by the employer to employ, or in the case of incumbent workers, continue to employ, an individual upon successful completion of the training; and
- employers are required to contribute a significant amount of the cost of training as determined by the local Workforce Development Boards.

#### Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)

Provides both workers and employers with the opportunity to build and maintain a quality workforce. Incumbent worker training can be used to help avert potential layoffs of employees, or to increase the skill levels of employees so they can be promoted within the company and create backfill opportunities for the employers. Under section 134(d)(4) of WIOA, local boards can use up to 20 percent of their adult and dislocated worker funds to provide for the cost of providing Incumbent Worker Training. IWT takes into account:

- The characteristics of the participants in the program;
- The relationship of the training to the competitiveness of a participant and employer; and
- Other factors the state or local boards may determine appropriate (e.g., the number of employees participating in the training, wage, and benefit levels of those employees (both pre-

and post-participation earning), and the existence of other training and advancement opportunities provided by the employer).

Employers are required to pay for a significant cost of the training for those participants in IWT; this can be done through both cash and/or in-kind payments. Wages paid to participants, while in training, may be considered as a source of matching funds. Under section 134(d)(4)(D) of WIOA, the minimum amount of employer share in the IWT depends on the size of the employer:

- At least 10 percent of the cost, for employers with 50 or fewer employees;
- At least 25 percent of the cost, for employers with 51 to 100 employees; and,
- At least 50 percent of the cost, for employers with more than 100 employees.

#### Transitional Jobs

Three WDBs in the region (areas 2, 3 & 4) have created a program to provide transitional jobs which are targeted to jobseekers who have barriers to employment, may have little or no work history, or lost their jobs in the service industry during the pandemic and have no work experience in other industries who are hiring. This program provides incentives to employers to hire these workers by reimbursing businesses up to 100% of wages for a minimum of 20 hours per week and a minimum of \$10 per hour. The duration per worker is two to 12 months. The work experience provides the worker with a work history in order to build a resume and affords him or her with the opportunity to develop new and basic skills. As with all WIOA training, individuals must be eligible and an individual plan is developed for each worker with the hiring employer regarding job, wages, duration, etc.

#### OhioMeansJobs Center Services offered through Core Partner Programs

In addition to the services available in the OMJ centers described above which are authorized and funded by Title I of WIOA, the following related services are also offered through core partner programs. Each Workforce Development Board creates a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with these programs for the provision of these services as well as their financial contributions toward the operations of the OMJ centers.

- ✓ WIOA Title II authorizes the Adult Education and Literacy programs known as Aspire in Ohio and operated by the state. Services include education and testing for individuals in need of a High School Equivalency credential and English as a Second Language courses as well as other literacy programs. These services are available in the OMJ centers as well as other locations such as libraries and community-based organizations.
- ✓ WIOA Title III amended the Wagner-Peyser Act which provides employment services to jobseekers and businesses with a focus on the re-employment of unemployed workers. This program is operated by the state and WIOA requires these staff to be located in the OMJ centers. This close relationship with the state's employment services also provides the OMJ centers with strong connections to the state-run Unemployment Insurance system. The Boards receive information regarding unemployed claimants in the region so that a quick and pro-active approach is taken to contact them, inform them of the free services available and assist them in their reemployment.

- ✓ WIOA Title IV amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and requires the state agency tasked to deliver these services for jobseekers with a disability (Ohio Office of Disabilities) to ensure they are also available in OMJ centers. Additionally, all of the OhioMeansJobs Centers comply with WIOA Section 188 and comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 in terms of physical and programmatic accessibility. The state requires a One-Stop certification process to be conducted by the Workforce Boards for the OMJ centers to ensure compliance with Section 188 and ADA.
- ✓ The federally funded, county-operated Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program provides access to its services at the OMJ centers, including cash assistance, childcare, housing assistance, food stamps (SNAP), etc.
- ✓ The federally operated Job Corps program is also authorized by WIOA Title I and is required to locate services for information, outreach, and recruitment in the OMJ centers. This program serves economically-disadvantaged individuals ages 16 – 24 who have barriers to employment. There is one Job Corps center located in the region in the city of Cleveland.

### OhioMeansJobs Center Services for Youth

WIOA services for youth are available at or through OMJ centers in the region. The priority is to serve out-of-school youth, and 75% of WIOA funds are required to be used for this cohort. Out-of-school youth are defined as 16 to 24 years of age, not attending any school, and meeting one or more of the following conditions: a school dropout; being within age of compulsory attendance but not having attended for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter; basic skills deficient; an English language learner; subject to the juvenile or adult justice system; homeless, runaway, in foster care or aged out of the foster care system; eligible for assistance under Section 477 of the Social Security Act, or in out-of-home placement; pregnant or parenting; an individual with a disability; low income person who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment. In-school youth must be aged 14-21, attending school, be low income, and meet one or more of the following conditions: Basic skills deficient; English language learner; an offender; homeless, runaway, in foster care or aged out of the foster care system; pregnant or parenting; an individual with a disability; person who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment. There is an emphasis on work-experience, with at least 20 percent of local WIOA Youth formula funds required to be used for work experiences, such as summer and year-round employment, pre-apprenticeship, on-the-job training, internships, and job shadowing.

Services for youth include career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, culminating with a good job along a career pathway or enrollment in post-secondary education.

Ohio created a new program for WIOA youth with the TANF program which became effective on July 1, 2016 called the Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP). Ohio has developed a common application, initial assessment strategy and tools, and individual opportunity plan and case management system for WIOA youth and TANF programs, through CCMEP. Ohio requires each

county Department of Job and Family Services and each workforce development area to develop a county CCMEP plan that details how the two program funding sources and entities will coordinate, align services, focus on individualized case management and employment planning, address each individual's barriers to employment, and provide supportive services. The County Executives and County Commissioners for each of the eight counties in the region were required to designate a lead agency for the operation of the CCMEP program. All counties except Lorain County have designated the county department of Job and Family Services as the lead agency. The Workforce Development Agency has been designated as the lead in Lorain County. Each of the region's Workforce Development Boards remain responsible for the oversight of the WIOA services and resources within the CCMEP program.

WIOA youth services in the region are also coordinated with special programs developed by the state of Ohio for this cohort. It developed an "OhioMeansJobs Readiness Seal" to provide a formal designation that students can earn on their High School diploma and transcript. This Seal indicates that the student has the personal strength, strong work ethic, and professional experience that businesses need. Another tool that was developed to aid in the delivery of services to youth is the "K-12 Portal" on OhioMeansJobs.com. This enables each individual student to create a virtual backpack which can be used by schools, OMJ centers and other service providers to capture data, store transcripts, individual development plans, progress toward goals, etc. for each student.

#### OhioMeansJobs Center Priority of Services

OMJ Centers provide "universal services" to anyone seeking employment and training assistance. However, funding for training services and other intensive services are finite and the following priorities are used for their investment:

- ✓ Veterans and eligible spouses receive priority of service consideration for all DOL-funded job training programs, including WIOA programs. Further, representatives funded through Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG), a required partner program under WIOA, are located in many OMJ Centers.
- ✓ Recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient also receive priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds.

#### OMJ Accountability for Services Provided

The intake and case management system for services provided through programs carried out under WIOA by the local workforce system is state-operated, enables integrated case management and is technology-enabled. Participant data is entered into the state's Ohio Workforce Case Management Systems (OWCMS) which is used for client tracking, providing data on enrolled participants in the various programs, and outcomes for the individual participants. The state creates performance reports for the workforce development areas on a quarterly and annual basis which track each area's progress toward achieving their performance goals which are established annually through negotiations with the state. The state submits detailed reports regarding participants, services, and performance to the U.S. Department of Labor annually which maintains the national WIOA data base for reports to Congress.

Ohio requires all participants of WIOA Title I employment and training, WIOA Title II Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE), WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Act, WIOA Title IV vocational rehabilitation, Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education (Perkins) Act, and the Senior Community Service Employment

Program (Title V of the Older Americans Act) to register in OhioMeansJobs.com to ensure consistency among programs, enhance job readiness and placement efforts, and support career planning. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients enrolled in the Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) and unemployment insurance claimants also register.

OMJ Center Locations in the NOW Region:

**Medina County – WDA #2**

**OhioMeansJobs | Medina County (affiliate/satellite center)**  
72 Public Square, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Medina, OH 44256  
(330) 723-9675

**Summit County – WDA #2**

**OhioMeansJobs | Summit County (comprehensive center)**  
1040 East Tallmadge Ave.  
Akron, OH 44310  
(330) 633-1050

**City of Cleveland / Cuyahoga County – WDA #3**

**OhioMeansJobs -Downtown Location (comprehensive center)**  
1910 Carnegie Ave.  
Cleveland, OH 44115  
(216) 777-8200

**Ashtabula County – WDA #19**

**OhioMeansJobs | Ashtabula County (comprehensive center)**  
2247 Lake Avenue  
Ashtabula, Ohio 44004  
(440) 994-1234

**Geauga County – WDA#19**

**OhioMeansJobs | Geauga County (affiliate/satellite center)**

12611 Ravenwood Dr.

Chardon, OH 44024

(440) 285-9141

(440) 285-1218 Fax

**Portage County – WDA#19**

**OhioMeansJobs | Portage County (affiliate/satellite center)**

253 South Chestnut St.

Ravenna, OH 44266

(330) 296-2841

(330) 296-7805 Fax

**Lake County – WDA#5**

**OhioMeansJobs | Lake County (comprehensive center)**

Lake County Employment & Training Division

177 Main Street, Painesville, OH 44077

(440) 350-4000 Main

(440) 918-4000 Lake County West

(440) 428-4838 Lake County East

**Lorain County – WDA#4**

**OhioMeansJobs | Lorain County (comprehensive center)**

Main Office

42495 North Ridge Road

Elyria, OH 44035

(440) 324-5244

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The delivery of workforce development services within the region are done within the context of strategies to achieve the overall goals of the system:

1. To be business-led and to focus on in-demand occupations;
2. To prioritize those individuals who are most in need of services who have barriers to employment;
3. To operate within meaningful collaborations with core partner programs, secondary and post-secondary education providers as well as community organizations that provide complementary and support services to individual customers; and
4. To administer the services to achieve results for businesses and jobseekers, to be in compliance with all laws and regulations, to be transparent and accountable for these public resources, and to be innovative and agile to meet the changing needs of the labor market.

### Business-led; Focused on In-Demand Jobs

As required by WIOA, all Workforce Development Boards in the region are chaired by a business executive and over 50% of the members represent key businesses in the areas. This enables regular input and oversight of the workforce system from local business representatives. As described above, each OMJ center offers a wide range of business services that can be customized to meet the specific needs for skilled workers of businesses. Strategies also support:

- **Economic Development.** Strong collaborations have been created between the WDBs and numerous economic development entities throughout the region to coordinate OMJ centers' workforce services with economic development activities. In addition to these long-standing partnerships that are considered "best practices," there are some new initiatives to note.
  - **Amplification of OMJ Services Through "Ohio to Work" Pilot:** The State of Ohio's economic development entity is JobsOhio, and it recently launched the Ohio to Work initiative to help employers find the workers they need and to ensure workers have the skills employers desire. OMJ is an essential partner in this pilot initiative. Ohio To Work enhances existing resources, designed to connect job seekers to career coaching and training services that help individuals transition into promising, long term careers with leading local employers in Manufacturing, Information Technology and Healthcare who have immediate openings. OMJ in collaboration with other local partners provide job seekers with access to life-changing, career resources. Amplified resources provided through this collaboration include:
    - Personalized career coaching and career navigation support,

- Talent evaluation tools that help match an individual's skills to real job opportunities with local employers,
- Access to accelerated career training options,
- Virtual career fairs with employers who need help immediately.

While the Ohio to Work initiative was an original three-month pilot, this has been extended through calendar year 2022 due to the initial success. OMJ looks forward to continuing collaborating on this initiative with the goal of assisting 2,000 residents find employment and 500 residents successfully receiving in-demand career training.

- **Sector Partnerships:** Two regional economic development entities: TeamNEO which is the state of Ohio's regional entity, and the Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP) which has business members across the northeast Ohio region and describes itself as the "largest metropolitan chamber of commerce in the nation," joined an effort with the Deaconess Foundation, the Cleveland Foundation, the Fund for our Economic Future, Cuyahoga County, the City of Cleveland, and the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Board to create industry sector partnerships in Manufacturing, Healthcare and Information Technology. MAGNET (Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth Network) and GCP have developed the Manufacturing sector partnership; RITE-GCP is developing the IT sector partnership; and NewBridge, together with New Growth Group and major hospital systems, is developing the Healthcare partnership. The funds to create these were provided, in part, by WIOA funds and targeted training in these industries are available through WIOA and marketed to jobseekers.

### In-Demand Jobs

WIOA requires services to be targeted to occupations that are in-demand and the state of Ohio has established goal for all OMJ centers that 85% of training resources must be dedicated to in-demand jobs. A challenge in northeast Ohio is to get the information out to educators and individuals regarding the opportunities that are available in our area for workers that have the skills for good-paying middle-skill jobs in our major industries (see discussion in section II of this plan). New efforts within recent years to compile and broadcast this important information are:

- **In-Demand Jobs Week.** In recent years, the state announced an annual In-Demand Job week to provide a focus for events to highlight the importance and availability of these jobs. All WDBs in the northeast region plan and conduct events including job fairs, seminars, and other activities during this week to get information to jobseekers and educators/career counselors regarding these occupations.
- **Better Information on In-Demand Jobs and Skill Gaps.** As described in Section II of this plan, in recent years, new information has been developed regarding in-demand jobs in the region and the misalignment of the production of skilled workers with the jobs that are available. This information is excellent and actionable for all entities engaged in workforce development. TeamNEO published "Aligning Opportunities in Northeast Ohio, 2020 Report" with two additional publications on "Top In-Demand Careers in

Northeast Ohio" and "Misaligned Opportunities; how Racial Inequities Influence the Skill Gaps in Northeast Ohio." The Federal Reserve Banks of Cleveland, Philadelphia and Atlanta have published their research on Opportunity Occupations which contain good information for this region.

1. **Priority Services to those Most in Need.** As described in Section III, services provided under the Adult and Youth programs through WIOA are focused on those who are low-income and have barriers to employment. This ensures that OMJ centers serve those most in need of assistance to prepare for and obtain a good job on a career path. However, as discussed in Section II, those who are most in need of workforce development services may face barriers and hurdles to accessing and taking advantage of those services. WDBs in this region address these impediments through a variety of strategies.
  - o **Access to Services.** WIOA creates a "one-stop career center" in the comprehensive OMJ centers by requiring that all WIOA services and services provided by the core partner programs as described in Section III are available in one location for ease of use and navigation by individuals. Those who have difficulties in accessing these services in-person may be provided with bus tickets or other means of transportation to attend job preparation classes, etc. Also, OMJ centers offer services virtually and have increased the ability to provide them remotely during this past year. The OMJ center service delivery strategies across the region also includes taking the services directly to locations within the community, especially in poor neighborhoods, to improve access by local residents. These locations in northeast Ohio include libraries, city recreation centers, and community colleges.
  - o **Transitional Jobs.** As described in the section on training available under WIOA, several areas have adopted a strategy to provide transitional job assistance to job seekers with little or no work history and barriers to employment in order to develop skills and build a resume for permanent employment.
  - o **Transportation & Supportive Services.** The WDBs in the region have adopted policies to enable the provision of supportive services to individuals to enable them to participate in the activities created for their Individual Employment Plans by OMJ centers. These services are customized to the individual's needs and include assistance for childcare, work equipment needs, stipends to help with the costs of participating in training, and especially transportation issues. Resources are available to help workers get to the training and/or job locations in the form of bus tickets and other arrangements created for the workers and the businesses on a case-by-case basis. The WDBs have also worked with the Northeast Ohio Area Coordinating Agency (NOACA) which has produced an extensive analysis of public transportation routes.
  - o **Work with other Resource Providers in the Community.** The OMJ centers across the region also collaborate with other entities that provide services to specific populations to further assist individuals with barriers. These include programs that assist ex-

offenders, those recovering from addiction, those with disabilities, those that help individuals access technology, those in need of remedial education, etc.

2. **Meaningful Collaborations.** As described in this plan, the delivery of workforce development services by OMJ centers requires the creation, maintenance, and constant adaptation of collaborations between core partner programs, community service providers, and secondary and post-secondary education institutions. Each of the five local WDBs maintains a strong working relationship with its area's community college, and they provide much of the training through ITAs. Northeast Ohio has a strong postsecondary educational presence that includes four community colleges: Cuyahoga Community College (CCC); Lakeland Community College (LCC); Lorain County Community College (LCCC); and Stark State College (SSC). In addition, the region hosts several public universities and private colleges, including: Cleveland State University; the University of Akron; Kent State University; Case Western Reserve University; Baldwin Wallace University; Hiram College; Notre Dame College; John Carroll University; and Oberlin University.

Another critical element that the WDBs, the community colleges and the region's employers place great value on is work-based educational experiences. The value of work experience – connecting education to on-the-job experiences – cannot be overstated. At both the local and regional levels the workforce and higher education are working together with industry to expand work-based learning opportunities for students. In addition, the state is working with public and private colleges and universities, as well as employers, to embed work experiences (including co-ops and internships) for in-demand jobs into the curriculum of degree programs. Students, educators, and employers may access OhioMeansJobs.com for work experience information and opportunities.

3. **Achieving Results, Innovation & Accountability.** The workforce development services and strategies provided through the WDBs in the region are aimed at achieving tangible results for individuals and businesses. In addition to service-delivery strategies, the WDBs also have strategies to move toward continuous improvement of services, to ensure quality and accountability of operations, to shift strategies when conditions in the region require change or new action, and to work on being a high-performing Board. In addition to the performance goals negotiated with the state for workforce services that was discussed previously, other performance-driven strategies have been implemented. For example, some WDBs have implemented performance-based contracting for training providers. Performance-based contracts hold training providers accountable for job placement. The providers (excepting public institutions) are paid at three milestones: 50 percent on enrollment; 25 percent when training is completed; and 25 percent when the job seeker is placed in a job

## REGIONAL PLANNING AND PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

WIOA, passed in 2014, was the first federal workforce development law to require a regional plan in addition to local workforce plans. In 2016, after the Governor designated our eight counties as the northeast Ohio workforce region, the five Directors of the Workforce Development areas planned an extensive process to hire a contractor, conduct consultations in the region and produce the plan. The

2017 NOW plan reflects that year-long effort and is packed with information regarding workforce development services and strategies.

In our approach to update the regional plan in 2021, we determined that we needed to streamline the regional plan to make it more usable while ensuring that we refresh the data contained in the analysis of the labor market, recap the workforce development services and strategies we are pursuing and ensure compliance with the plan requirements of WIOA and the state of Ohio. Additionally, each workforce development area updated its local plan.

The five area Directors collaborated to hire a consultant to assist in development of the 2021 regional plan. The draft regional plan was circulated for review and comment to the members of the five Workforce Development Boards, the Chief Local Elected Officials, and the core partner programs.

A draft of the NOW Regional Plan, which incorporated input gathered from the internal review and comment process, and all Local Plans were made available in mid-April, 2021 for public comment by being posted on each of the WDBs' websites for 30 days. One common email address was established to collect comments at [NOWregion@gmail.com](mailto:NOWregion@gmail.com). Comments received on the plan were accepted and incorporated.

#### Assurances

The following assurances are being provided by the local WDBs as required in WIOA Policy Letter 16-03 regarding regional planning:

- The local Workforce Development Boards within the planning region assure that they will establish fiscal control and fund accounting procedures to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for all funds received through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- The local WDBs assure that they will keep records that are sufficient to permit the preparation of reports required by the Act and shall maintain such records, including standardized records for all individual participants, and submit such reports as the State may require.
- The local WDBs assure that they will collect and maintain data necessary to show compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of the Act.
- The local WDBs assure that funds will be spent in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, regulations, written Department of Labor Guidance, written Ohio Department of Job and Family Services guidance, and all other applicable Federal and State laws.
- The local WDBs assure that veterans will be afforded employment and training activities authorized in the Jobs for Veterans Act and 20 C.F.R. Part 1010.
- The local WDBs assure that they will comply with any grant procedures prescribed by the Secretary which are necessary to enter into contracts for the use of funds under WIOA, but not limited to the following:
- General Administrative Requirements – Uniform guidance at 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and 2 C.F.R. Part 2900.

- Assurances and Certifications – SF424B – Assurances for Non-Construction Programs; 29 C.F.R. Part 31,32 – Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Assurance (and Regulation); 29 C.F.R. Part 93 – Certification Regarding Lobbying (and Regulation); 29 C.F.R. Parts 94 and 95 – Drug Free Workplace and Debarment and Suspension; Certifications (and Regulations).

## Signature Pages

The signature pages for the regional plan attests that all assurances have been met and that the regional plan and accompanying local plans represent the local workforce development boards' efforts to maximize resources available under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and to coordinate these resources with other State and Local programs in the planning region.

The effective date of the regional plan and the local plans will be July 1, 2021 and remain in effect through June 30, 2025, a period of four years.

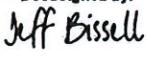
These signatures further certify that the local workforce development boards in the planning region will operate the WIOA program in accordance with the regional plan and applicable Federal and State laws, regulations, policies, and rules.

Below are the signature pages for Areas #2, #3, #4, #5, and #19 respectively. Each Area's sign-off on the NOW Plan depicts a signatory line for the local WDB Chairperson, the local workforce area's Director or Executive Director, and the Chief Local Elected Official for the workforce area, with their typed name and position on the line below the signature.

## Area 2

By signing my name below, I hereby attest each of the following for the NOW Regional Plan and the Area 2 Local Plan Addendum, effective from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

- All of the Assurances indicated on page 36 of the NOW Regional Plan and of the Area 2 Local Plan Addendum Have been met and that this plan represents the Local Area WDB's efforts to maximize resources available under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and to coordinate these resources with other state and local programs within the planning region.
- Area 2 WDB will operate the WIOA program in accordance with the regional plan and applicable federal and state laws, regulations, policies, and rules.

DocuSigned by:  
  
07880931B8144AD...

5/20/2023 | 8:35 AM PDT

Chair, Area 2 Workforce Development Board

Date

DocuSigned by:  
  
31D0A63AE9CB48C...

5/19/2023 | 10:49 AM EDT

Christine Marshall, Director, Area 2 Workforce Development Board

Date

DocuSigned by:  
  
6E20C583BED44C3...

5/21/2023 | 9:20 PM EDT

for

County Executive, County of Summit

Date

DocuSigned by:  
  
EE8A58B000A243A

5/20/2023 | 4:29 AM EDT

Medina County Commissioner

Date

Area 3

By signing my name below, I hereby attest each of the following for the NOW Regional Plan and the Area 3 Local Plan Addendum, effective from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

- All of the Assurances indicated on page 35 of the NOW Regional Plan and of the Area 3 Local Plan Addendum Have been met and that this plan represents the Local Area WDB's efforts to maximize resources available under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and to coordinate these resources with other state and local programs within the planning region.
- Area 3 WDB will operate the WIOA program in accordance with the regional plan and applicable federal and state laws, regulations, policies, and rules.



5/17/23

---

Ethan Karp, Chair, Area 3 Workforce Development Board

Date

---

Michelle Rose, Director, Area 3 Workforce Development Board

Date

---

Justin M. Bibb, Mayor, City of Cleveland

Date

---

Chris Ronayne, County Executive, Cuyahoga

Date

Area 3

By signing my name below, I hereby attest each of the following for the NOW Regional Plan and the Area 3 Local Plan Addendum, effective from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

- All of the Assurances indicated on page 35 of the NOW Regional Plan and of the Area 3 Local Plan Addendum Have been met and that this plan represents the Local Area WDB's efforts to maximize resources available under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and to coordinate these resources with other state and local programs within the planning region.
- Area 3 WDB will operate the WIOA program in accordance with the regional plan and applicable federal and state laws, regulations, policies, and rules.

---

Ethan Karp, Chair, Area 3 Workforce Development Board

Date



---

05/31/2023

Michelle Rose, Director, Area 3 Workforce Development Board

Date

---

Justin M. Bibb, Mayor, City of Cleveland

Date

---

Chris Ronayne, County Executive, Cuyahoga

Date

Area 3

By signing my name below, I hereby attest each of the following for the NOW Regional Plan and the Area 3 Local Plan Addendum, effective from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

- All of the Assurances indicated on page 35 of the NOW Regional Plan and of the Area 3 Local Plan Addendum have been met and that this plan represents the Local Area WDB's efforts to maximize resources available under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and to coordinate these resources with other state and local programs within the planning region.
- Area 3 WDB will operate the WIOA program in accordance with the regional plan and applicable federal and state laws, regulations, policies, and rules.

---

Ethan Karp, Chair, Area 3 Workforce Development Board

Date

---

Michelle Rose, Director, Area 3 Workforce Development Board

Date

  
Justin T. Bibb, Mayor, City of Cleveland

5-18-23

Date

---

Chris Ronayne, County Executive, Cuyahoga

Date

Area 3

By signing my name below, I hereby attest each of the following for the NOW Regional Plan and the Area 3 Local Plan Addendum, effective from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

- All of the Assurances indicated on page 35 of the NOW Regional Plan and of the Area 3 Local Plan Addendum Have been met and that this plan represents the Local Area WDB's efforts to maximize resources available under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and to coordinate these resources with other state and local programs within the planning region.
- Area 3 WDB will operate the WIOA program in accordance with the regional plan and applicable federal and state laws, regulations, policies, and rules.

---

Ethan Karp, Chair, Area 3 Workforce Development Board

Date

Michelle Rose, Director, Area 3 Workforce Development Board

Date

---

Justin M. Bibb, Mayor, City of Cleveland

Date

  
Chris Ronayne, County Executive, Cuyahoga

5/31/23  
Date

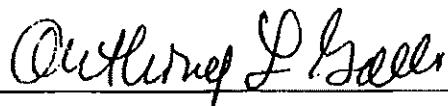
PRR EO 2023-0001

On behalf of Chris Ronayne, County Executive  
As designee pursuant to Executive Order No.  
EO2023-0001 dated February 21, 2023

Area 4

By signing my name below, I hereby attest each of the following for the NOW Regional Plan and the Area 4 Local Plan Addendum, effective from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

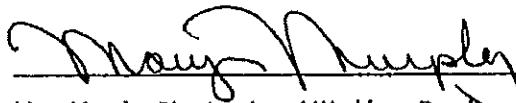
- All of the Assurances Indicated on page 36 of the NOW Regional Plan and of the Area 4 Local Plan Addendum Have been met and that this plan represents the Local Area WDB's efforts to maximize resources available under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and to coordinate these resources with other state and local programs within the planning region.
- Area 4 WDB will operate the WIOA program in accordance with the regional plan and applicable federal and state laws, regulations, policies, and rules.



6/5/2023

Anthony "Tony" Gallo, Chair, Area 4 Workforce Development Board

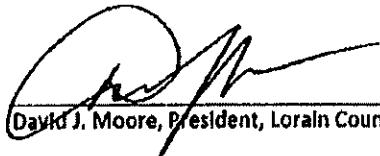
Date



6/6/2023

Mary Murphy, Director, Area 4 Workforce Development Board

Date



6-2-2023

David J. Moore, President, Lorain County Board of Commissioners

Date

**Area 5**

By signing my name below, I hereby attest each of the following for the NOW Regional Plan and the Area 5 Local Plan Addendum, effective from July 1st, 2021, through June 30th, 2025

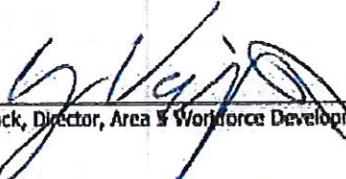
- All the Assurances indicated on page 36 of the NOW Regional Plan and of the Area 5 Local Plan Addendum have been met and that this plan represents the Local Area WDB's efforts to maximize resources available under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and to coordinate these resources with other state and local programs within the planning region.
- Area 5 WDB will operate the WIOA program in accordance with the regional plan and applicable federal and state laws, regulations, policies, and rules.



Hugh Scott Seeholm, Chair, Area 5 Workforce Development Board

5/17/23

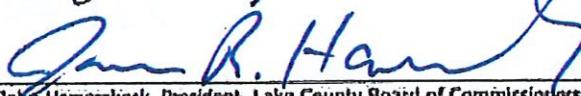
Date



Cory Vojack, Director, Area 5 Workforce Development Board

5/17/23

Date



John Hamercheck, President, Lake County Board of Commissioners

Date

Area 19

By signing my name below, I hereby attest each of the following for the NOW Regional Plan and the Area 19 Local Plan Addendum, effective from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

- All of the Assurances indicated on page 36 of the NOW Regional Plan and of the Area 19 Local Plan Addendum Have been met and that this plan represents the Local Area WDB's efforts to maximize resources available under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and to coordinate these resources with other state and local programs within the planning region.
- Area 19WDB will operate the WIOA program in accordance with the regional plan and applicable federal and state laws, regulations, policies, and rules.

Ned Sherry

05/17/23

Ned Sherry, Chairperson, Area 19 Workforce Development Board

Date

S. Sernik

5-17-2023

Craig Sernik, Executive Director, Area 19 Workforce Development Board

Date

James Dvorak

5-16-23

Commissioner James Dvorak, Chief Elected Official, Northeast Ohio Consortium  
Council of Governments

Date

**YEAR TWO REVIEW NOW PLAN ADDENDUM**

**Area 2 Special Projects Grant 2022**

In the Fall of 2021, members of the ConexusNEO board ('board') in Summit County (one of Area 2's two counties), began to explore the disconnect between employers and workers, which became evident as the world reopened post the COVID-19 pandemic. The largest question posed to various members of the board was from concerned employers who were asking the community leaders *"where are the workers?"* Using several funding channels, the board was determined to uncover answers through a research project that would interview employers and ask working age adults how they were feeling about work. The research had an initial footprint which mirrored the Greater Akron Chamber, consisting of Medina, Portage, and Summit Counties. For the purposes of the NOW Plan, Medina and Summit Counties are local workforce Area 2 and Portage County is one county in local workforce Area 19. The project commenced with a set of surveys to obtain insights from employers about their challenges in hiring talent and to determine the average working adult's commitment to work. The next phase of the project invited responses from workers. Spoiler alert: the research showed the direct impact from the COVID-19 pandemic changed everything about work as we know it. We knew it would be important to understand where employers and workers were coming from to find solutions to fill job openings, retain workers, and address the skills gap. The impact of this research extends beyond our own organizations and into the region's economic, education, and workforce development systems.

#### *Methodology*

The employer research began in the late Fall of 2021, funded by the board and TeamNEO (the northeast portion of JobsOhio with an 18-county footprint) with a distribution of surveys to employers across the three counties and follow-up focus groups for a deeper dive into the survey responses. With 254 survey responses received, TeamNEO determined it wanted to expand the research to additional northeast Ohio counties and recovered an additional 512 employer responses across an 11-county footprint. The 766 surveys revealed 80% of employers were facing a talent shortage, 65% experiencing higher turnover, 95% did not have a sufficient pool of qualified candidates, 18-30 years old were the hardest to recruit and retain, and finding workers interested in full-time positions were the hardest to locate. Finally, employers reported that raising wages and providing bonuses aren't enough of an incentive to attract or retain workers. Workers were reportedly looking for more emphasis on company culture and creation of flexible policies which include hybrid work. Bottomline is employers continue to struggle to find motivated employees.

The second portion of the research began with a survey for the working age adults made possible by U.S. Department of Labor funds through a grant to the Summit/Medina Workforce Area Council of Governments (Area 2) from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The survey's content was collected from various community partners across the three counties. The research firm, Center for Marketing and Opinion Research, LLC (CMOR) was selected to develop the final tool, transmit the surveys, collect the data, conduct focus groups, and produce reports based upon the findings. A total of 2,400 surveys (800 from each county) were collected between mid-February and the end of the first week in May of 2022. The working age adults research project was expanded by the *Fund for Our Economic Future (FFEF)* a think tank organization based in Cleveland and serving northeast Ohio communities, who also consulted with CMOR to replicate the tool to gather more information across eight additional northeast Ohio counties: Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Mahoning, Stark, Trumbull and Wayne resulting in an additional 2,587 survey responses. Four of the eight additional counties are part of the NOW Plan: Cuyahoga (Area 3), Geauga (Area 19), Lake (Area 5) and Lorain (Area 4).

### *Results*

Of those who responded as employed and/or looking for work, the findings showed:

- 98% say a wage is somewhat or very important;
- 92% say meaningful work is somewhat or very important;
- 91% say flexibility in the workplace is somewhat or very important;
- 55% are looking for part-time work; and
- 24% desire more training.

Additionally, we learned most respondents quitting their jobs did not have a new job lined up and many planned to quit in the next year. The number one reason expressed for quitting was a "toxic" work environment. 43% of the respondents' declared work is less of a priority after the pandemic. 18-30-year-olds were the number one age group involved in the "Gig" economy with 69% starting this type of work during the pandemic and 84% of respondents in that age group enjoyed the freedom of working for themselves. Both Gen Z and unemployed respondents expressed a desire for employers to provide access to mental health benefits.

Themes emerged from the working age adults' responses include:

1. Wage matters
2. "Flexibility" is desired
3. Want "meaningful work" (i.e. to feel a part of something/contributing)

4. Gig work is a large part of the current employment landscape
5. Access to mental health services as a benefit is desired
6. Half of the respondent looking for work desire part-time work
7. High interest in job related training and education
8. COVID has had a significant impact on defining what work means

The responses were analyzed during May 2022. The findings determined what topics would drive five focus groups. The data has been sliced into various demographic categories including but not limited to gender, race, age, household income, educational attainment, generation, geographic (major cities and by county), and employment status.

*Call to action*

It is our desire to share our research findings with employers and workers to foster equitable, community-based solutions to this massive shift in the way our workplaces and economy perform. The current phase of the research project has shifted to collecting and sharing solutions. We invite you to visit [www.conxusneo.jobs/watw](http://www.conxusneo.jobs/watw) for a slide presentation specific to the three-county research project. Finally, FFEF is leading our post-survey work for the region and has created a virtual tool kit for employers and an interactive website. For more information visit the FFEF website at [www.thefundneo.org/watw](http://www.thefundneo.org/watw).



## **ADDENDUM TO THE NORTHEAST OHIO REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN**

### **AREA 2 LOCAL WORKFORCE PLAN**

**Effective June 2021 – January 2025**



**Summit & Medina Counties**  
A proud partner of the  
American Job Center network



**Summit and Medina  
Workforce Area**  
Council of Governments

## Area 2 Local Workforce Plan

### Introduction

This document, Area 2 Local Plan (local plan), is presented as an addendum to the Northeast Regional Plan (regional plan) as required in Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Policy Letter 16-03. As stipulated in 16-03, this local plan will remain in effect until January 31, 2025, when a new local plan will be required.

Under WIOA, states may establish local plan contents pursuant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 and its applicable final rules. This document adheres to the local plan contents described in 16-03, Attachment D, relative to the authority established in WIOA.

The ODJFS has certified Area 2, comprised of Medina and Summit Counties, as a local workforce region eligible for WIOA funding pursuant to a sub-grant agreement.

### Part I - Local Plan Descriptions as Required by ODJFS WIOA Policy Letter 16-03, Attachment D

#### 1. Description of the Workforce Development System

##### A. Identification of the programs that are included in the system

###### *Description of Local Workforce Area*

Summit and Medina Counties are located in northeast Ohio and are included in the Northeast Region as defined by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services – Office of Workforce Development.

In 2019, the combined population for the Area was 720,759 residents. The county seats for the two counties are the City of Akron in Summit, ranked as the fifth largest city in Ohio with 198,051 residents; and the City of Medina, ranked as the 58<sup>th</sup> largest city in Ohio with 26,095 residents. The City of Cuyahoga Falls located in Summit is ranked in the top 20 cities in Ohio at number 17 with 49,192 residents. The most populous city in Medina, is Brunswick ranked as the 40<sup>th</sup> largest city in Ohio with 34,781 residents. Summit tends to be more densely populated, and Medina a more sparsely populated county. Medina is a “bedroom community” with its workforce serving both Summit and Cuyahoga Counties.

The Area's postsecondary educational resources include: The University of Akron located in Summit County with a branch campus in Medina; Summit has branch campuses of both Kent State University and Stark State College. Cuyahoga Community College has a branch in Medina County. Both counties have career centers: Portage Lakes Career Center in Summit and the Medina County Career Center. Also available is the Four Cities Compact including Barberton, Norton, Wadsworth, and Copley.



### ***Area 2 Workforce Development Board***

The local area is served by a Council of Governments (COG), a political subdivision recognized under Chapter 167 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC). The COG was officially approved by the State of Ohio in November 2016 and is established under the name *The Summit and Medina Workforce Area Council of Governments*. The member representatives of the COG consist of one commissioner, appointed by his or her peers, from Medina County and the Summit County Executive. Please find attached to this plan an exhibit containing a table of organization to better illustrate Area 2's organizational structure.

In compliance with WIOA, the COG members as the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEO) appoints the Workforce Development Board (WDB) members to assume and execute the roles and responsibilities enumerated in WIOA and its final rules and other binding regulations. The COG members retain the responsibilities assigned to Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs) under WIOA. The day-to day WDB responsibilities, per WIOA, are assigned to the board's Executive Director and staff. For responsibilities not specifically assigned by WIOA or its final rules, the Executive Director assumes responsibility as directed by WDB and COG bylaws. The Area 2 WDB maintains a membership of 19 of which at least 51% are from the business community.

The WDB for Area 2 is responsible for the oversight of the following services, but not limited to:

- The location and operation of a federally mandated one-stop employment center in Ohio known as OhioMeansJobs (OMJ) centers in each county;
- The negotiation of the MOU and budget with the OMJ center partner organizations;
- WIOA Youth services, in conjunction with Ohio's Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) model;
- Business Services to employers in Area 2 or employers hiring residents in Area 2;
- Career Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers; and
- Training Services for Area 2 residents.

#### **B. Location of OMJ Centers in the local workforce development area**

Area 2 operates one OMJ center in each county. At the time of this writing, the following OMJ centers are operational in Area 2:

OhioMeansJobs | Summit County  
1040 East Tallmadge Avenue  
Akron, OH 44310  
330-633-1050

OhioMeansJobs | Medina County  
72 Public Square, First Floor  
Medina, OH 44256  
330-723-9675



## 2. The OhioMeansJobs delivery system within Area 2

### A. How will the local board ensure continuous improvement of service providers utilized by the Area and also ensure such providers meet the needs of local businesses and job seekers?

The board and/or its designated representatives will ensure quality services through a combination of the following:

- Monitoring of provider performance measures against established performance standards as negotiated between the Board, CLEOs and ODJFS;
- Monitoring of provider performance against additional performance metrics included in the provider contract or contract amendments; and
- Requiring the one-stop operators to meet established standards to obtain and retain certification.

### B. How will the local board facilitate access to services provided through the OhioMeansJobs.com service delivery system through the use of technology or other means?

Area 2 OMJ centers are mandated, per WIOA Policy Letter 17-01, to register job seekers and businesses on the OhioMeansJobs.com website to facilitate their activities. The activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Job seekers visiting the centers for onsite services, or accessing virtual services, create and post their resume on OhioMeansJobs.com as standard procedure;
- Adult and youth job seekers are taught how to use the OhioMeansJobs.com system to find a job, prepare for a career, and develop skills; and
- Business Services staff post all incoming job order requests on OhioMeansJobs.com as standard procedure.

### C. How will OMJ Centers in the Area comply with Section 188 of WIOA, if applicable, and applicable sections of the ADA regarding the programmatic and physical accessibility of facilities and programs?

Area 2 centers are dedicated to providing access, as directed by WIOA and the ADA, to all members of the public seeking service. As such, our centers provide access via:

- Computer devices for those with visual impairments;
- Handicap accessible doors, including powered doors;
- Sorenson Video Relay Service (VRS) for hearing impaired customers;
- Handicapped-designated parking spaces with ADAAG compliant signage;
- All offices on accessible 1<sup>st</sup> floor;
- Signs posted to identify areas of available services/goods with raised letters, Grade II Braille; and
- Doors adjusted to 5 lbs. or less to comply with ADAAG.



Summit & Medina Counties  
A proud partner of the  
American Job Center network



**Summit and Medina  
Workforce Area**  
Council of Governments

Area 2 received written approval from ODJFS, Bureau of Civil Rights, dated July 11, 2016 for Phase 1 of the One-Stop Certification process. The Area 2 WDB accepted and ratified this on July 13, 2016. Therefore, the Area 2 Comprehensive Center located in Summit County is compliant with ADA requirements.

**D. How will the local board coordinate with the respective JobsOhio entity, Team NEO?**

The Board values its relationship with Team NEO and local economic development organizations.

Previously, Area 2 has partnered with Team NEO on presentations to relocation prospects about business services provided by OMJ Centers. Further, the local area has worked with Team NEO partners, such as local chambers, on presentations to member businesses, as grant seeking collaborators, and data gathering and dissemination.

These activities are welcome and reinforce the value of workforce system partnerships with economic development entities.

**E. Describe the roles and resource contributions of the OMJ Center partners.**

The roles and resource contribution of OMJ center partners in the two centers are informed by:

- The negotiated terms of the MOU governing partnerships in each center;
- The unique set of services that each partner organization provides;
- The integration of services including partner staff rotation in the resource room, presenting workshops, and making referrals;
- Cost sharing throughout the system including facility, management, resource room, equipment and supplies and outreach; and
- Other legal and regulatory factors governing required center partners, including WIOA statute and regulations, and ODJFS guidance in the form of the Ohio Combined Plan and policy letters.

The board's staff will determine if partner entities are meeting statutory and contractual obligations as outlined in the above guiding documents through the contracts with the One-Stop Operators. Where corrective action is determined necessary, the staff shall request the entity responsible to take appropriate corrective action. Preference is given to mutual resolution through dispute mechanisms detailed in the MOU.

Having a partner structure, the OMJ centers benefit from a shared service model. Each partner brings a unique set of services which enhances the resources available to job seekers and employers. All partners contribute to the day-to-day operations of the One-Stop.

**3. Description and assessment of Adult and Dislocated Work services in the Area.**

**A. Career Services**

Area 2 procures Adult and Dislocated Worker Services through a competitive bidding or award process. The outline of routine services located below describes current services. Services will include:



**Summit & Medina Counties**  
A proud partner of the  
American Job Center network



**Summit and Medina  
Workforce Area  
Council of Governments**

- Orientation processes that provide job seekers with information about services within the public workforce system;
- Determination of WIOA eligibility for Adult or Dislocated Worker services;
- Comprehensive or specialized skills assessments, including WorkKeys, and in-depth interviewing to determine employment barriers and strategies for overcoming those barriers;
- Job search and placement assistance;
- Local labor market information, including in-demand industry sectors and occupations, and related information including expected job openings and typical wages;
- Program cost and success measurements, if available, for eligible training providers;
- Supportive services based on a job seeker's individual needs;
- Group workshops for job searching, resume writing, interviewing, and other career-related topics. Available workshops are reviewed quarterly;
- Individual Employment Plans (IEP) to coordinate and delineate multiple services, including training, for a single individual;
- Referrals to individual or group counseling;
- Workforce preparation activities including career planning and internships or work experiences that are linked to in-demand occupations; and
- Workplace success training including development of learning skills; communication skills; and professional conduct.

#### **B. Training Services**

Area 2 training services are provided under the guidance of State and local policies. Training will be utilized for job seekers who are unable to otherwise attain or maintain consistent and self-sustaining employment. Training may take one or more of the following forms:

- Occupational skills training, in the form of an Individual Training Account, which may include upskilling or retraining;
- On-the-Job training, which may include classroom training;
- Transitional Jobs to establish work history for job seekers with specific barriers;
- Incumbent working training, which may include classroom training;
- Adult basic and literacy education (ABLE); and/or
- Customized training in consultation with an area employer.

#### **4. Comprehensive Case Management & Employment Program (CCMEP)**

Medina and Summit Counties have each submitted and received approval from ODJFS for a CCMEP plan as directed by Ohio Administrative Code 5101:14-1-03. Currently, each county's Department of Job and Family Services are the lead agencies for the implementation of the CCMEP. The board has the oversight responsibility to ensure the WIOA negotiated youth performance is monitored within the confines of each of the local CCMEP plans.



**Summit & Medina Counties**  
A proud partner of the  
American Job Center network



## **5. Local board and OMJ center operator coordination to improve service delivery**

The Area 2 WDB will seek to avoid service duplication, maximize service coordination, and provide superior overall service delivery with its partners through the following means:

- Issuing RFPs for center operations for each of the two local centers;
- Execution of a Memorandum of Understanding that addresses service delivery expectations, minimizes duplicative services, and identifies avenues for coordination;
- Engaging in continuous operational improvements in accordance with local policies and OMJ certification, and;
- Oversight by the One-Stop Operations Committee of the WDB.

## **6. Describe the executed cooperative agreements defining service provider requirements**

The Area 2 WDB is a party to the following agreements that determine the conditions requiring service integration and access to the suite of services available at each county's OMJ center and provider sites, if applicable:

- Career services;
- Services determining WIOA adult and dislocated worker eligibility and the provision of case management services for eligible individuals; and
- Services determining WIOA youth eligibility and the provision of case management services for eligible individuals.

## **7. Identification of the Area's Fiscal Agent**

The WDB has identified the Area's COG members as its subrecipient for WIOA funding. The County of Summit's Office of Finance and Budget, under the direction of the County Executive, provide fiscal services for the COG. The Summit County Department of Job and Family Services is delegated as a sub-fiscal agent for the County of Summit.

## **8. Describe the competitive process procuring services provisioned by WIOA Title I**

The Area WDB staff design procurement solicitations adhering to all applicable WIOA and federal regulations, as set forth within the Area's procurement policy established in 2018. The procurement process will include the following:

- Dissemination of an RFP or other document detailing items a bidder must address in order to be considered for selection. This document will also detail the WDB's criteria for selecting a service provider;
- A review process that considers all bids received in a timely manner that minimally address the qualifications stipulated in the RFP or related document and which scores each proposal based upon a set of consistent and fair evaluation criteria;
- The review committee may consist of individuals from the following:
  - WDB members;



**Summit & Medina Counties**  
A proud partner of the  
American Job Center network



- WDB staff;
- Fiscal agent or designated staff;
- CCMEP staff; and
- Invitees of allied organizations as nominated by WDB or COG board members.
- Timely notification of selections to bidders; and
- Negotiation of a service contract.

#### **9. Board actions taken to become or remain a high performing board**

Area 2 used the passage of WIOA to focus on becoming and remaining a high functioning board. The resulting actions included:

- The creation of a COG serving the area as one unit rather than two counties;
- Adoption of bylaws governing COG activities;
- A defined permanent committee structure;
- Identification of the Area Fiscal Agent;
- Hiring board staff that falls directly under the supervision of board leadership and who oversees service delivery in both counties;
- Refocusing board membership upon required members, business leaders, nonprofit leaders, and economic development representatives who represent in-demand industries, provide business knowledge, and display aptitude toward excellent and sustained board service; and
- Adoption of WDB bylaws and Area policy letters.

The Board will review their activities, policies, and other governing activities on an ongoing basis to ensure excellent performance and address deficiencies.

#### **10. OMJ center commitment to technology-enhanced systems under WIOA**

During the effective period of this local plan, the OMJ centers located within Area 2 will continue to use the intake, case management, and financial tracking systems provided by ODJFS. These systems include the Ohio Workforce Case Management System (OWCMS) and the County Financial Information System (CFIS). Area 2's newly updated in 2021, local OMJ websites are user-friendly and utilize a Virtual Assistant feature for individuals, enhancing the user experience through technology.



**Summit and Medina  
Workforce Area**  
Council of Governments

## Part II - Assurances

Area 2, through its Officers and designated Agents, makes the following assurances:

1. The Area has established and will continue to employ fiscal control and fund accounting procedures to ensure proper disbursement of and accounting for all funds received under WIOA.
2. The Area shall keep records sufficient to prepare reports required by the Act and shall maintain all records, including standard records for all individual participants, and submit such reports as the State may require.
3. The will collect and maintain data necessary to show compliance with the nondiscriminatory provisions of the Act.
4. The Area will expend funds in accordance with WIOA, regulations, Department of Labor guidance, written Ohio Department of Job and Family Services guidance, and all other applicable Federal and State laws.
5. The Area will assure veterans will be afforded employment and training activities authorized by the Jobs for Veterans Act and 20 CFR Part 1010.
6. The Area assures it will comply with any grant procedures for the use of WIOA funds, but not limited to the following:
7. General Administrative Requirements – Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 2900.
8. Assurances and Certifications – SF 424B – Assurances for Non-Construction Programs; 29 CFR Part 31, 32 – Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Assurance (and Regulation); 29 CFR Part 93 – Certification Regarding Lobbying (and Regulation); 29 CFR Parts 94 and 95 – Drug Free Workplace and Debarment and Suspension; Certifications (and Regulations).



**Summit & Medina Counties**  
A proud partner of the  
American Job Center network

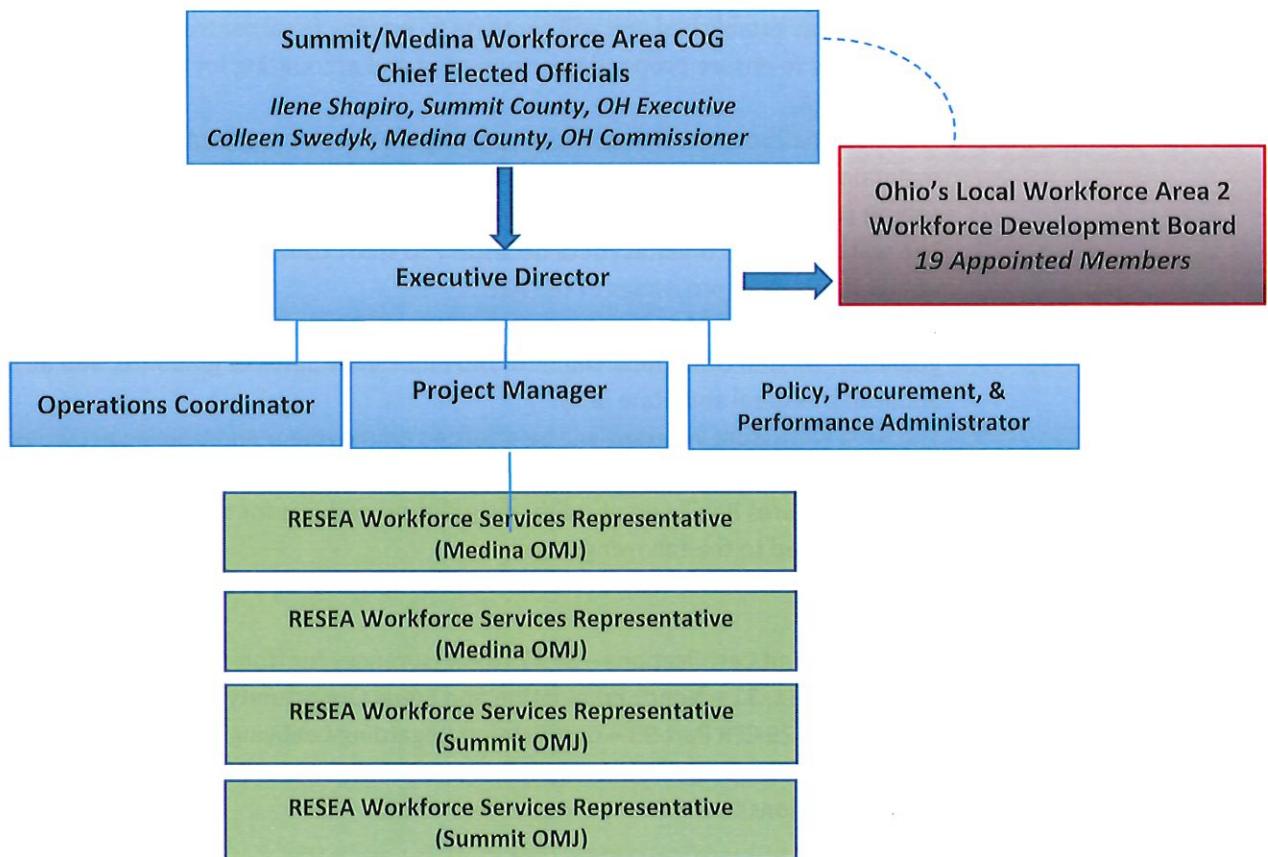


**Summit and Medina  
Workforce Area**  
Council of Governments

Exhibit

TABLE of ORGANIZATION

March 2021





## Area 2 – Signatures

By signing my name below, I hereby attest each of the following for the NOW Regional Plan and the Area 2 Local Plan Addendum, effective from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2025:

- All of the Assurances indicated in the NOW Regional Plan and of the Area 2 Local Plan Addendum have been met and that this plan represents the Local Area WDB's efforts to maximize resources available under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and to coordinate these resources with other state and local programs within the planning region.
- The Area 2 WDB will operate the WIOA program in accordance with the regional plan and applicable federal and state laws, regulations, policies, and rules.

DocuSigned by:

454017EB2CEA474...

Jessica Heid, Chair

Area 2 Workforce Development Board

6/17/2021 | 3:35 PM EDT

Date

DocuSigned by:

31D0A53AE9CB48C...

Christine Marshall, Executive Director

Area 2 Workforce Development Board

6/17/2021 | 1:12 PM EDT

Date

DocuSigned by:

8E29C583BED44C3...

for Ilene Shapiro, County Executive

County of Summit

6/19/2021 | 12:19 PM EDT

Date

DocuSigned by:

EB0A5B8000A243A...

Colleen Swedyk, Commissioner

Medina County

6/17/2021 | 3:58 PM EDT

Date



Summit & Medina Counties

A proud partner of the  
American Job Center network



**Area #3 Local Workforce Plan  
Cleveland/Cuyahoga County  
2021-2025**



**Cleveland-  
Cuyahoga  
County**

A proud partner of the  
American Job Center network

**May 25, 2021  
Year 2 Review May, 2023**

## I. INTRODUCTION

There is a great deal to be excited about regarding the delivery of Workforce Services in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County. Since the submission of the previous Workforce Development Plan, this community has successfully launched several promising initiatives. Highlights include:

- Sector Partnerships
- Ohio to Work Pilot
- Coordination between OhioMeansJobs|Cleveland-Cuyahoga County (OMJ|CC), JobsOhio and Team NEO
- Updated Strategic Plan for the Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Board (CCWDB)

We continued to provide the critical elements of WIOA's workforce development system while navigating the COVID-19 Crisis and pivoting to remote service provision. Key Elements:

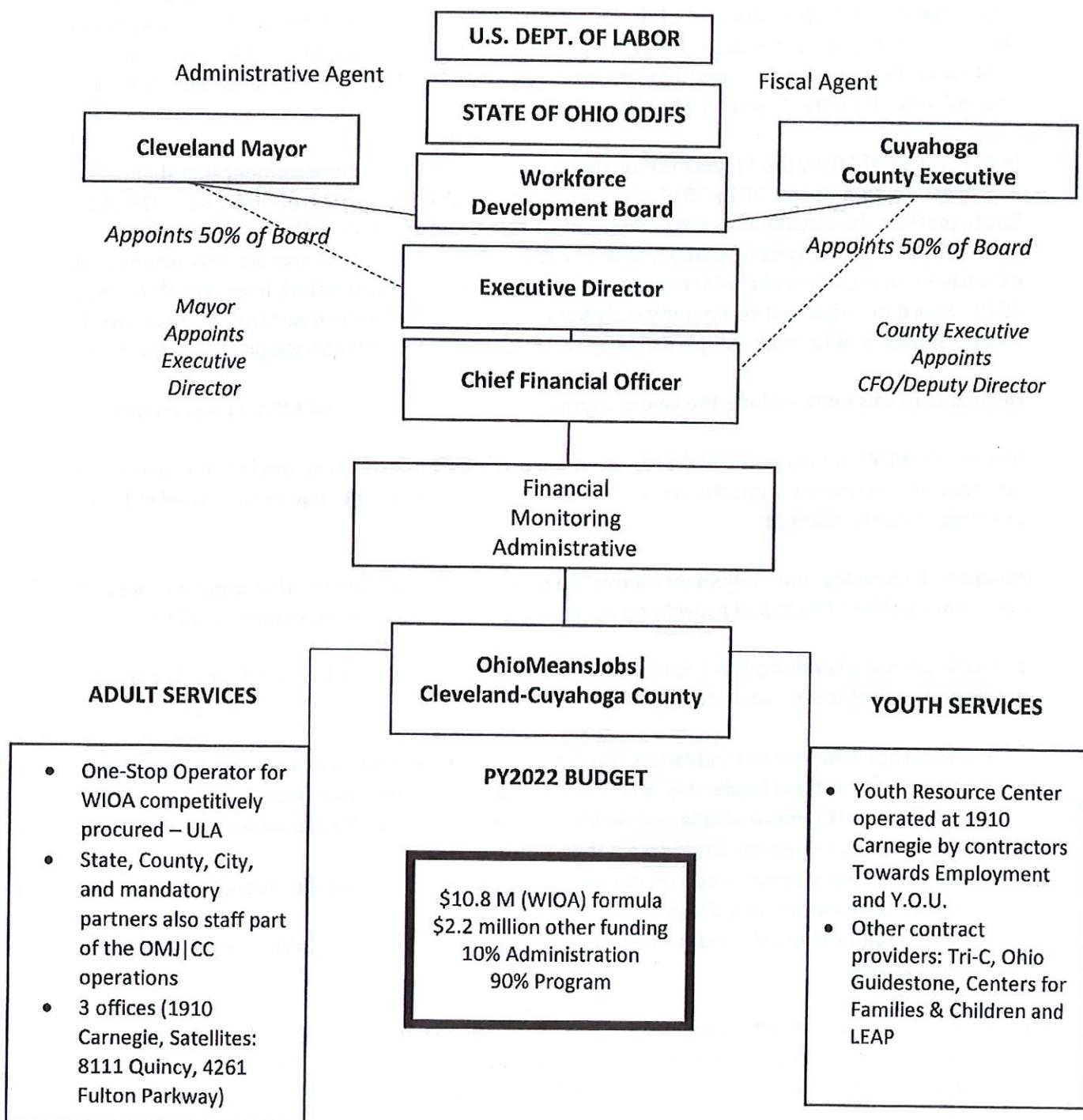
- Provide *Universal Access* to anyone who seeks employment and training services through a local *One-Stop Career Center* (here called OhioMeansJobs|Cleveland-Cuyahoga County). WIOA requires that ten other workforce programs be *Integrated and Located* at the Center so that job seekers can get what they need in "one stop."
- The ten required partner programs each execute a *Memorandum of Understanding* (MOU) with OhioMeansJobs|Cleveland-Cuyahoga County annually to describe the commitment being made to the one-stop center operations. The most recent approved MOU is attached.
- Services must be *Demand-Driven* to match training investments to the skills needed by employers for current and projected jobs. WIOA emphasizes the development of *sector strategies and career pathways* with employers.
- Results must be *Outcomes-Based* across a *Common Set of Performance Measures*. Specific local performance metrics are negotiated with the state based on the local priorities and strategies. Performance Measures are attached.
- *Priority of Services* for all programs to veterans; the adult program's priority is to low-income, public assistance recipients and those with a fundamental skills deficiency.

Now is the time to keep our foot on the gas. While there is significant momentum, there remains misalignment within the talent pipeline, specifically within the in-demand, high-growth Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Information Technology fields. A report completed by Team NEO titled *Aligning Opportunities in Northeast Ohio* highlighted the demand and supply imbalance in the region's workforce. The challenge remains for the Workforce Development System to (1) understand the skills needed for the in-demand, high growth fields; and (2) focus on those who want promising careers and are under-skilled and in need of assistance to move into jobs with career paths and family-sustaining wages.

## II. CCWDB WIOA STRUCTURE

### Description of Local Workforce Area

For Cleveland/Cuyahoga County, the local structure continues as follows:



## **Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Board (CCWDB)**

A twenty-four-member board, appointed by Mayor Justin M. Bibb and County Executive Chris Ronayne. The majority represent local businesses and the balance representing higher education, economic development, organized labor, and other workforce-related programs. The Governor designated the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County to continue as local Workforce Area #3 under WIOA. CCWDB is also one of the five distinct Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) in the Northeast Ohio Workforce (NOW) Region, made up of Cuyahoga, Lorain, Lake, Geauga, Ashtabula, Portage, Summit and Medina counties. This Local Workforce Development Plan is appended to the NOW Regional Workforce Development Plan.

In the winter of 2019, the Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Board initiated a process to update its 2015-2019 Strategic Plan for the 2019-2023 period. The 2019-2023 Strategic Plan development process involved ongoing consultation with Board members and Board Committees between February and July 2019. The development process also included an extensive community stakeholder engagement and input-gathering effort from March to May 2019. Board member and community stakeholder feedback drove the new Strategic Plan, which was presented and formally adopted on August 16, 2019. The CCWDB Strategic Plan is attached.

Highlights of this work include the values characterized in the Vision and Mission statements.

**Vision:** CCWDB will establish and provide impactful workforce services driving the success of business and economic opportunity, improving racial and economic equity for Cleveland and Cuyahoga County residents.

**Mission:** To develop and implement innovative partnerships and services that meet businesses' needs for qualified talent and provide residents access to careers and economic mobility.

The CCWDB has established the following goals, which are drivers of its work and key to the development of this four-year local plan:

- **Leverage Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act programs, services, and investments to provide system leadership and address workforce needs and issues.**
- **Make OMJ|CC more visible and well recognized as a place for businesses for residents and partners to go for workforce needs and services.**
- **Support innovation and continuous improvement in public workforce system operations and service delivery.**
- **Play a leadership role and pursue innovation opportunities within the larger workforce ecosystem**

The CCWDB created a structure to implement its goals, five Standing Committees to develop and implement the work plan: Executive, Strategic Functions, Youth, Governance, and the Communication & Outreach committee. A newly established key subcommittee is the

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee, whose goal is to support the Vision statement: to integrate fair, inclusive, and equitable practices in all aspects of the Board's work and focus its activities towards education and awareness.

The list of Board members is attached. See Appendix A

### **Location of OhioMeansJobs | Cleveland-Cuyahoga County (OMJ|CC) Centers**

The CCWDB oversees the operation of a comprehensive American Job Center located in downtown Cleveland (1910 Carnegie Avenue). Two satellite centers are located at 8111 Quincy Avenue, Cleveland and 4261 Fulton Parkway, Cleveland. A strategic alliance between OMJ|CC and various public library systems (Cleveland, Cuyahoga County and East Cleveland) enables presence regularly (both on-site and virtual) in numerous branches to expand neighborhood services. Due to the pandemic, OMJ|CC pivoted to virtual program delivery. As OMJ|CC emerges from the pandemic; services are provided both on-site as well as virtually to expand OMJ|CC's community presence.

Presently, the "One-Stop Operator" of the OMJ|CC centers is the United Labor Agency which was competitively procured, as were the Young Adult Resource Center operators, Towards Employment and Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.). Four additional Youth providers were also competitively procured, including Cuyahoga Community College, Ohio Guidestone; Centers for Families and Children; and Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential (LEAP). Additional contractors procured for OMJ|CC adult operations include Dynamic Workforce Solutions (business services), Vantage Aging and Towards Employment (ex-offender services). As required by WIOA, ten mandatory partners also provide services to jobseekers needing extra assistance in literacy, GED, English as a Second Language, disabilities, etc., through OMJ|CC under MOUs with the CCWDB.

In Program Year 2021, OMJ|CC served thousands of jobseekers and businesses, despite continued service interruption due to the pandemic. Highlights include:

- 3,825 adults/dislocated workers attended orientation and registered for services
- 1,201 adults/dislocated workers were placed in jobs at an average hourly wage of \$19.63
- 532 adults/dislocated workers received career technical training
- 2,950 candidates were referred to job orders
- 31 specific recruitment events were planned and executed for employers with job vacancies
- 542 Young Adults (16 – 24) were served, with 131 receiving work experiences
- 282 Young Adults were placed in jobs at an average hourly wage of \$14.34

## **Measuring and Embracing Continuous Improvement of Providers and Services to Meet the Needs of Local Businesses and Job Seekers**

OMJ|CC ensures quality services through a combination of the following:

- Analysis of provider's performance compared to negotiated WIOA performance measures;
- Provider's performance against additional metrics identified by the CCWDB such as number of individuals trained, number of individuals trained and/or employed in key sectors, and wage earnings of those trained;
- Meeting or exceeding one-stop certification standards.

In its efforts to embrace continuous improvement, the CCWDB competitively procured a nationally recognized organization in Workforce consulting to analyze service delivery to businesses and job seekers. The purpose of this engagement is to:

- Ensure the design and delivery of services are driven by the needs and preferences of job seekers and businesses to meet those needs and preferences.
- The extent to which customer outreach and service delivery are aligned with and supportive of the workforce needs of critical regional industry sectors, like manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology.

Additionally, the following key initiatives allow for the continuous improvement of the workforce system:

### **Sector Partnership Initiative**

OMJ|CC embraces the promotion of sector partnerships - industry-driven partnerships that align the efforts of education, training, economic development, and other organizations and recognizes that this is a key component of WIOA. By connecting businesses and workforce development training and service provider partners together in innovative ways through business-led sector intermediaries, the workforce development ecosystem becomes more efficient, effective, and equitable.

This Initiative was launched by public and private workforce funders consisting of representation from Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Workforce Development, Cuyahoga County and City of Cleveland leadership, philanthropy, and other community workforce stakeholders. Leadership of these groups forms the Workforce Funders Group that oversees the Sector Partnership initiative.

The **Workforce Funders Group** created an action plan to develop a coordinated, well-functioning workforce system in the county. Three industry sectors in Cuyahoga County are fundamental to the region's economic development strategy, a significant source of projected job growth in the area, and essential for its competitiveness in the global economy. These are:

- Manufacturing
- Healthcare; and
- Information Technology

OMJ|CC is deeply involved in the **Sector Partnership Initiative** in Cuyahoga County to address the workforce talent needs in Healthcare, Manufacturing, and Information Technology. Sector intermediaries have been chosen for each of these sectors to connect education, training, and economic development with employer champions in their respective industries to lead and manage these partnerships. The sector intermediaries are:

- MAGNET, Inc. – Manufacturing
- Cuyahoga Community College – Healthcare
- RITE Board – Information Technology

OMJ|CC is positioning to be the key talent pipeline for these. Besides the WIOA mandated performance measures, OMJ|CC has developed metrics to track job placements and career training in these sectors. Goals and efforts to-date include:

- Provide career training to 700 WIOA enrolled adults and young adults;
- Funding innovative training initiatives such as Manufacturing Access (an employer designed curriculum) for WIOA enrolled Adults and Young Adults;
- Customized training for major Healthcare providers to onboard new WIOA enrolled individuals;
- Aligning business services with each sector.

For the period of July 2019 through March 2023, over 1,030 job seekers have been assisted through this Workforce initiative. The Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Workforce Board has been intricately involved in this success, funding cohorts of classes in an employer-designed Manufacturing program and shaping on-ramps to bring new workers into these sectors.

### **Amplification of OMJ|CC Services Through Ohio to Work Pilot**

The State of Ohio in partnership with JobsOhio launched the Ohio to Work initiative to help employers find the workers they need and to ensure workers have the skills employers desire. OMJ|CC is an essential partner in this pilot initiative. Ohio To Work enhances exiting resources, designed to connect job seekers to career coaching and training services that help individuals transition into promising, long-term careers with leading local employers in Manufacturing, Information Technology and Healthcare who have immediate openings. OMJ|CC collaborates

with other local partners to provide job seekers with access to life-changing career resources. Amplified resources provided through this collaboration include:

- a. Personalized career coaching and career navigation support,
- b. Talent evaluation tools that help match an individual's skills to real job opportunities with local employers,
- c. Access to accelerated career training options,
- d. Virtual career fairs with employers who need help immediately.

While the Ohio to Work initiative was an original three-month pilot, this has been extended due to the initial success. OMJ|CC looks forward to continuing to collaborate on this initiative to help 2,000 residents find employment and 500 residents successfully receiving in-demand career training.

### **Access to Services Provided through OMJ|CC Service Delivery System Through the Use of Technology**

During the pandemic, OMJ|CC's contracted service providers successfully pivoted to virtual services. Emerging from the pandemic, OMJ|CC has embraced a hybrid model - both virtual and on-site services. Embracing both on-site and virtual service delivery promote greater efficiency of time and allow increased access to career services. The following are available both on-site and virtually: orientation, career coaching, workshops on various workforce topics (interviewing, resume development), career fairs, recruitment events. OMJ|CC will continue to partner with the Library System and other community centers to virtually connect with proposed job seekers.

The digital divide prevents too many eligible residents from receiving workforce services that would be of great value. OMJ|CC remains committed to assisting Individuals with Workforce Services Impacted by the Digital Divide by:

- Continued partnership with PC's for People – to-date nearly 1,000 computers and 400 hotspots have been provided to assist individuals with their job search/career training needs
- Co-Chair the Greater Cleveland Digital Equity Coalition Workforce Committee to address digital inequities *"To build and nurture the ecosystem of foundational and basic digital skills courses for un- and underemployed adults."*
- Create and distribute a community resource asset map to guide residents to digital skills training resources.

## **Access to Services for Individuals with Disabilities**

OMJ|CC complies with Section 188 of WIOA and the applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). OMJ|CC received certification from the State of Ohio recognizing appropriate ADA compliance. The One-Stop Center provides the following:

- Computer devices for those with visual impairments;
- Translator services for those with hearing impairments;
- Handicap accessible doors;
- Accessibility to all rooms and offices

## **Coordination with JobsOhio and Team NEO**

JobsOhio has established Team NEO as the regional agent for Northeast Ohio. CCWDB routinely engages Team Neo for workforce intelligence. This workforce intelligence helps shape how resources are deployed and used. JobsOhio routinely includes OMJ|CC in deals where businesses are looking to grow talent in Northeast Ohio, and OMJ|CC identifies available employer services and training resources.

The Ohio to Work pilot is further evidence of OMJ|CC's working relationship with JobsOhio and Team NEO. What started as a 3-month pilot has turned into a two-year commitment on JobsOhio's part to amplify the work OMJ|CC performs.

## **Roles and Resource Contributions of the One-Stop Center Partners**

The roles and resource contributions of each center partner operating within OMJ|CC are established as follows:

- The terms and conditions of the WIOA statute and regulations governing each partner's program and grant appropriations.
- Ohio's combined state plan governs and dictates each mandated partner's role in workforce development.
- The terms and conditions each center partner as negotiated and reduced to writing as part of OMJ|CC's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

## **Description of Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers**

WIOA authorizes and OMJ|CC provides "career services" for adults and dislocated workers. There are three levels of career services offered:

1. Basic career services,
2. Individualized career services, and
3. Follow-up service

These services can be provided in any order; there is no sequence requirement for these services.

Essential career services are made available to all individuals seeking services from OMJ|CC, and include:

- Eligibility Determination: Determining whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance through adult or dislocated worker programs.
- Outreach, Intake and Orientation to services available through the OMJ|CC network
- Initial Assessment of skill levels, including literacy, numeracy, English language proficiency, aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs.
- Provision of workshops, including orientation to services and other workshops that meet the customer's career service needs.
- Labor exchange services, including job search and placement assistance, and, when needed by an individual, career counseling, including the provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations as well as regional labor market information
- Information and referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including those within the OMJ|CC delivery system and other workforce development programs;
- Information and referrals to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services including:
  - Child Care
  - Child Support
  - Medical or child health assistance available through Medicaid or other insurance programs
  - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
  - Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Information and assistance and referral to ODJFS staff and/or unemployment compensation information to individuals seeking assistance on claims for unemployment compensation.
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs.

Individualized Career Services are designed to meet the unique needs of the individual and include:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and supportive service needs of eligible adults and dislocated workers, which may include:
  - Diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and
  - In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals
- Development of an individual employment plan (IEP) to determine the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives and appropriate combination of services for the individual to achieve his or her employment goals
- Group and/or individual counseling and mentoring
- Career planning (e.g., case management)

- Short-term, pre-vocational services, including the development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training
- Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers
- Workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire a combination of essential academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills and self-management skills
- Financial literacy services
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs

Follow-up services are provided as appropriate and include and include counseling regarding the workplace. These services are provided for a minimum of twelve (12) months after the first date of employment for those Adults and Dislocated Workers who were placed in unsubsidized employment with OMJ|CC staff's assistance.

#### Training Services

Individuals seeking employment assistance are assessed to determine whether they are job-ready or in need of career training to obtain or retain employment, leading to self-sufficiency.

To be eligible for training services, OMJ|CC determines whether participants are appropriate for training services. Determination of appropriateness is done by completion of an interview, evaluation or assessment, and career planning. Assessment may include:

1. A combination of standardized tests;
2. Inventory of participant's interests, skills assessment, career exploration, and
3. Available labor market information.

#### **Comprehensive Case Management & Employment Program (CCMEP)**

Cuyahoga County has designated Cuyahoga Job and Family Services (CJFS) as the lead agency for CCMEP. In concert with OMJ|CC, CJFS has drafted and submitted the CCMEP Plan, with an effective date of June 1, 2020, to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). This plan identifies how service delivery to Young Adults will be delivered in Cuyahoga County. ODJFS has approved the plan.

CJFS and OMJ|CC worked together on a joint RFP for CCMEP service providers. OMJ|CC served as the lead on the procurement process. The RFP process was led by a collaborative team of CJFS and OMJ/CC staff. Efficient and effective processes regarding the referral and enrollment of CCMEP participants were a primary outcome. Through the competitive solicitation process, six service providers were contracted to provide CCMEP participants with a range of options for career pathways through credential training, work experiences/internships, job readiness, job search activities and assistance with permanent job placement.

In WIOA Area 3, a Young Adult Resource Center (YRC) continues to be available. Located at the OMJ|CC comprehensive center, the YRC is a drop-in center for teens and young adults ages 14 – 24. Young adults can receive employment and career planning assistance, educational support, and referrals to WIOA Young Adult Providers and other community partners for ongoing training, paid work experiences, employment placement assistance and case management.

### **Local Board and OMJ|CC Coordination to Improve Service Delivery**

OMJ|CC oversees partner entities to ensure statutory and contractual obligations outlined in the One-Stop Memorandum of Understanding. Additionally, OMJ|CC looks to maximize coordination and improve service delivery as follows:

- Competitive procurement solicitation of the one-stop operator.
- Regular, frequent meetings with all partners to address relevant workforce issues and opportunities
- Monitoring of State of Ohio certification and continuous improvement initiatives.
- Gathering and evaluating customer service data.

### **Executed Cooperative Agreements Defining Service Provider Requirements**

OMJ|CC, through its fiscal agent Cuyahoga County, enters all the following agreements, which set the terms and conditions requiring integration of and access to the entire set of services available through the OMJ|CC system:

- One-stop operator
- WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker eligibility determination and job seeker services.
- Services to businesses.
- Youth eligibility and the provision of services for eligible individuals.

### **Board Actions Taken to Become or Remain a High Performing Board**

The CCWDB has taken the following actions to remain high performing:

- Completion of a Strategic Plan that highlights goals and identifies a plan to achieve those goals.
- Procurement of a consultant to analyze service delivery to businesses and job seekers and identify best service delivery practices.
- Alignment with the Workforce Funders Group in Cuyahoga County to strategically address supply and demand issues in critical sectors (Healthcare, Information Technology and Manufacturing).

## **Identification of Fiscal Agent**

Through an Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County, it was agreed that Cuyahoga County would serve as the fiscal agent responsible for the disbursal of grant funds. Cuyahoga County employs a CFO to oversee all fiscal functions.

## **Competitive Process to Award Subgrants and Contracts**

OMJ|CC follows all federal, state, and applicable local provisions established regarding the award of subgrants and contracts. These procedures include:

- A pre-competitive design and planning process that takes into consideration the Board's strategic plan.
- A pre-competitive solicitation cost analysis that sets forth an estimated range of the expected bids for the provision of services.
- Where required, the publication within an area media outlet and publication on the local website of the opportunity to submit proposals.
- Outreach to any provider on the OMJ|CC bidder list.
- A published Request for Proposal document sets forth all terms and conditions relating to the information that an interested party desiring must submit to provide the services, including the basis on how the OMJ|CC will decide to award a contract.
- A decision-making process includes reviewing all proposals submitted, including an analysis, and where required, scoring of the proposals submitted.
- A timely notification of the decision of which entities were and were not selected based upon the submission of information, including a period and procedure for those entities to appeal any decisions made.
- A negotiation of the final terms and conditions regarding the provision of services, with the same reduced to a written agreement when required, will govern the parties' performance to the agreement.

### III. LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS

Workforce development strategies must be responsive to the needs of businesses for jobs and skills in demand and an understanding of the supply-side. Included in this plan is an updated review of the labor market of Cuyahoga County as reported by Team NEO through the calendar year 2020. Top takeaways of this report include:

- As of 2020, the region's population declined by 2.2% since 2015, falling by over 27,000. The population is expected to decrease between 2020 and 2025 by 1.7%
- From 2015 to 2020, jobs declined by 1.2% in Cuyahoga County from 787,370 to 778,044. This change lagged the national growth of 3.1%. As the number of jobs declined, the labor force participation rate decreased from 58.7% to 56.2% between 2015 and 2020.
- Concerning educational attainment, 19.3% of Cuyahoga County residents possess a bachelor's degree, and 8% hold an associate degree
- The top three industries in 2020 are General Medical and Surgical Hospitals, Restaurants and Other Eating Places and Education and Hospitals (Local Government)

Talent demand remains high for Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Information Technology. Analysis conducted by TeamNeo indicates the following number of job postings for January 2021 in those sectors:

#### Manufacturing

##### Top roles by job postings

1. Maintenance and Repair Workers, General – job openings: 225
2. Production Workers, All Other – job openings: 158
3. First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers – job openings: 58
4. Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers – job openings: 47
5. Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers – job openings: 43

##### Top employers by job postings

1. AK Steel – job openings: 10
2. Stanley Black & Decker – job openings: 10
3. Swagelok Company – job openings: 9
4. Lincoln Electric Company – job openings: 7
5. Nestle USA Incorporated – job openings: 7

#### Healthcare

##### Top roles by job postings

1. Registered Nurses – job openings: 558
2. Nursing Assistants – job openings: 175
3. Home Health Aides – job openings: 160
4. Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses – job openings: 154

5. Critical Care Nurses – job openings: 88

Top employers by job postings

1. University Hospitals – job openings: 330
2. Cleveland Clinic – job openings: 287
3. Case Western Reserve University – job openings: 49
4. Department of Veterans Affairs – job openings: 25
5. Southwest General Health Center – job openings: 24

### **Computer & IT**

Top roles by job postings

1. Software Developers, Applications – job openings: 296
2. Computer User Support Specialists – job openings: 124
3. Computer Systems Analysts – job openings: 107
4. Information Technology Project Manager – job openings: 79
5. Web Developer – job openings: 66

Top employers by job postings

1. Progressive Insurance – job openings: 31
2. The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. – job openings: 27
3. Accenture – job openings: 26
4. Cleveland Clinic – job openings: 23
5. Keycorp – job openings: 22

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Cleveland Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Board Member List 2022-2023
2. Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Board 2019-2023 Strategic Plan
3. Team NEO Economy Overview of Cuyahoga County

**CITY OF CLEVELAND/CUYAHOGA COUNTY  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
2022-2023  
Ethan Karp, CCWDB Chair**

<b>Camille Ali,</b> <i>Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor</i> Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency	<b>Shana Marbury, CCWDB Vice Chair</b> <i>General Counsel, Executive VP Workforce, Community &amp; Economic Development</i> Cuyahoga Community College	<b>Felton Thomas, Jr.,</b> <i>Executive Director &amp; Chief Executive Officer</i> Cleveland Public Library
<b>Cathy Belk, Strategic Functions Co-Chair</b> <i>President &amp; Chief Executive Officer</i> Deaconess Foundation	<b>David Merriman,</b> <i>Director</i> Department of Health & Human Services	<b>Mayor Kim Thomas, Youth Chair</b> <i>President &amp; Chief Executive Officer</i> Christopher Amira Studio
<b>Marzell Brown,</b> <i>Talent Management Lead Control &amp; Visualization Business</i> Rockwell Automation	<b>William Moore,</b> <i>Program Delivery Manager,</i> Bureau of Workforce Services ODJFS/Office of Workforce Development	<b>Holly Trifiro</b> <i>Chief Education Officer</i> City of Cleveland
<b>Senayt Fekadu,</b> Owner The Crispy Chick	<b>Dan O'Malley,</b> <i>Executive Secretary/Principal Officer</i> North Shore AFL-CIO	<b>James Vaughan, III.,</b> <i>Communications &amp; Outreach Chair,</i> <i>President &amp; Chief Executive Officer</i> Kleen-Tech
<b>Grace Gallucci,</b> <i>Executive Director</i> Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA)	<b>Joshua Perkins McHamm,</b> <i>Vice President, Business Development</i> McTech Corp.	<b>Sheila Wright,</b> <i>President,</i> Good Community Foundation
<b>Paul Herdeg,</b> <i>Chief Economic Development Officer</i> Cuyahoga County Dept. of Development	<b>Jason Shank, Governance Chair</b> <i>Training Director, Plumbers Local 55</i> Cleveland Plumbing Contractors Joint & Training Apprenticeship Committee (JATC)	
<b>Pamela Jankowski,</b> <i>Director</i> Literacy and Learning Division Cuyahoga County Public Library	<b>Kim Shelnick, Strategic Functions Chair</b> <i>Vice President, Talent Acquisition</i> University Hospitals	
<b>Ethan Karp, CCWDB Chair</b> <i>President and Chief Executive Officer</i> Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth Network, Inc. (MAGNET)	<b>LaToya Smith,</b> <i>Vice-President, Talent Acquisition</i> Fifth Third Bank	



Economy Overview



## Cuyahoga County, OH

Team Northeast Ohio

**Teamneo**

## Contents

Report Parameters .....	1
Economy Overview .....	2
Historic & Projected Trends .....	4
Population Characteristics .....	8
Industry Characteristics .....	10
Business Characteristics .....	16
Workforce Characteristics .....	18
Educational Pipeline .....	25
In-Demand Skills .....	26

## Report Parameters

### 1 County

39035 Cuyahoga County, OH

### Class of Worker

QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed

The information in this report pertains to the chosen geographical area.

## Economy Overview

**1,231,400**

### Population (2020)

Population decreased by 27,339 over the last 5 years and is projected to decrease by 21,373 over the next 5 years.

**778,044**

### Total Regional Employment

Jobs decreased by 9,326 over the last 5 years and are projected to decrease by 5,858 over the next 5 years.

**\$48.4K**

### Median Household Income (2018)

Median household income is \$11.9K below the national median household income of \$60.3K.

## Takeaways

- As of 2020 the region's population declined by 2.2% since 2015, falling by 27,339. Population is expected to decrease by 1.7% between 2020 and 2025, losing 21,373.
- From 2015 to 2020, jobs declined by 1.2% in Cuyahoga County, OH from 787,370 to 778,044. This change fell short of the national growth rate of 3.1% by 4.3%. As the number of jobs declined, the labor force participation rate decreased from 58.7% to 56.2% between 2015 and 2020.
- Concerning educational attainment, 19.3% of Cuyahoga County, OH residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (0.8% below the national average), and 8.0% hold an Associate's Degree (0.6% below the national average).
- The top three industries in 2020 are General Medical and Surgical Hospitals, Restaurants and Other Eating Places, and Education and Hospitals (Local Government).

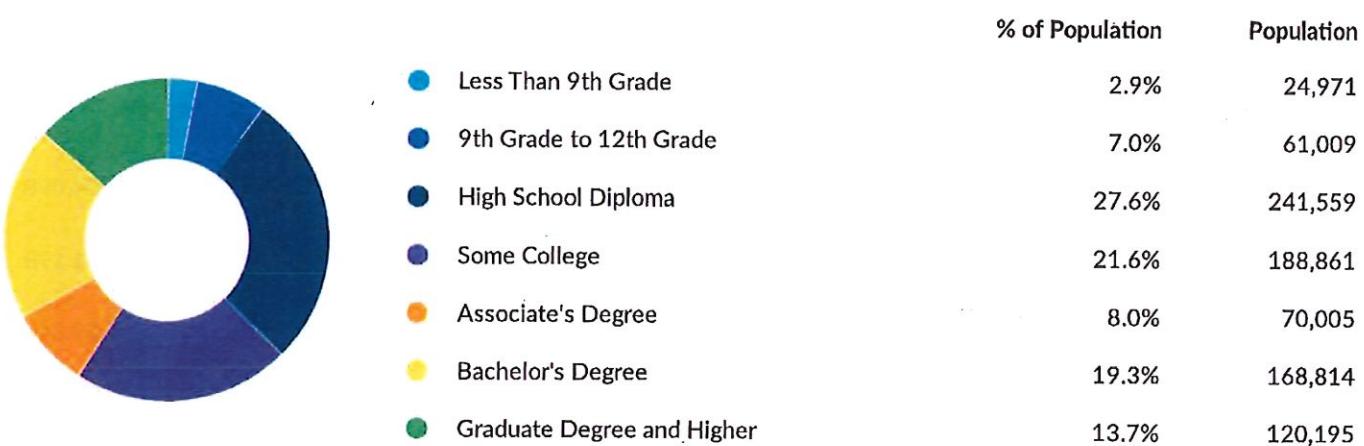
	Population (2020)	Labor Force (2020)	Jobs (2020)	Cost of Living	GRP	Imports	Exports
Region	1,231,400	574,713	778,044	100.4	\$96.69B	\$73.08B	\$104.09B
ClevelandPlus 18 County Region	4,261,012	2,002,730	2,084,301	91.9	\$232.70B	\$217.74B	\$231.19B
Nation	330,768,968	160,016,553	163,214,648	100.0	\$20.80T	\$0	\$9.84T
Cleveland-Elyria, OH	2,048,101	971,300	1,098,202	96.3	\$133.73B	\$121.53B	\$143.30B
Rochester, NY	1,069,779	496,429	532,876	105.0	\$65.02B	\$60.39B	\$62.67B

## 2020 Labor Force Breakdown



## Educational Attainment

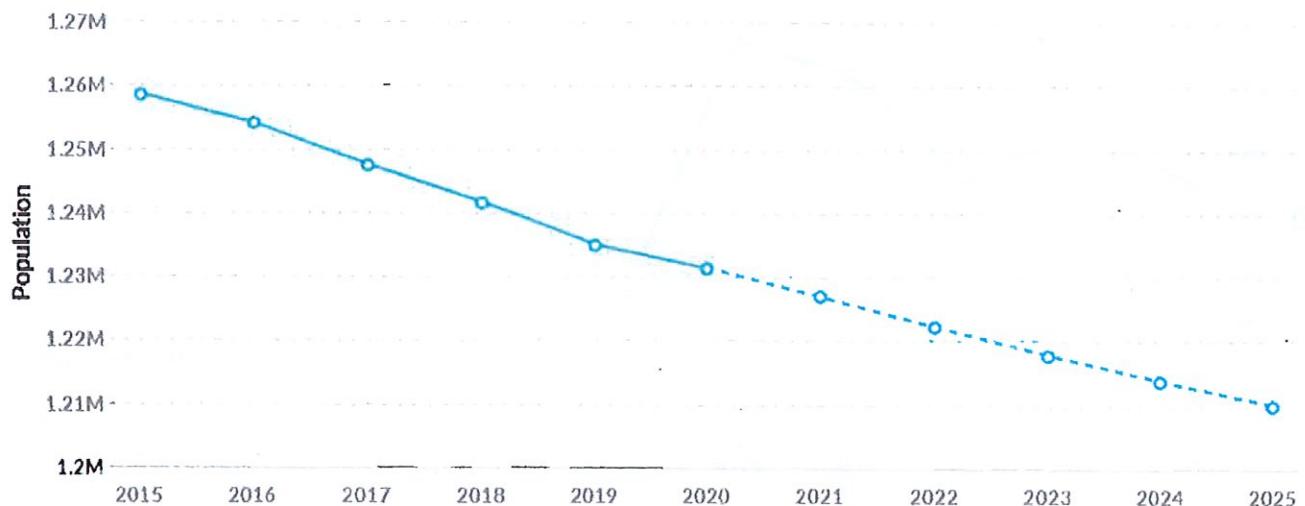
Concerning educational attainment, 19.3% of Cuyahoga County, OH residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (0.8% below the national average), and 8.0% hold an Associate's Degree (0.6% below the national average).



## Historic & Projected Trends

### Population Trends

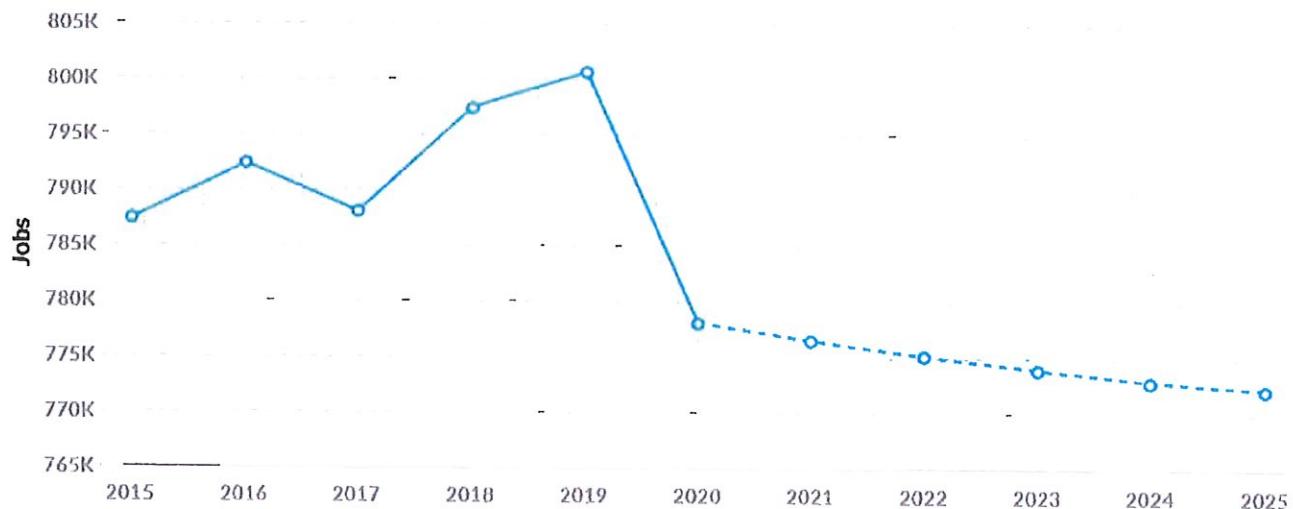
As of 2020 the region's population declined by 2.2% since 2015, falling by 27,339. Population is expected to decrease by 1.7% between 2020 and 2025, losing 21,373.



Timeframe	Population
2015	1,258,739
2016	1,254,144
2017	1,247,581
2018	1,241,718
2019	1,235,072
2020	1,231,400
2021	1,226,846
2022	1,222,187
2023	1,217,778
2024	1,213,764
2025	1,210,027

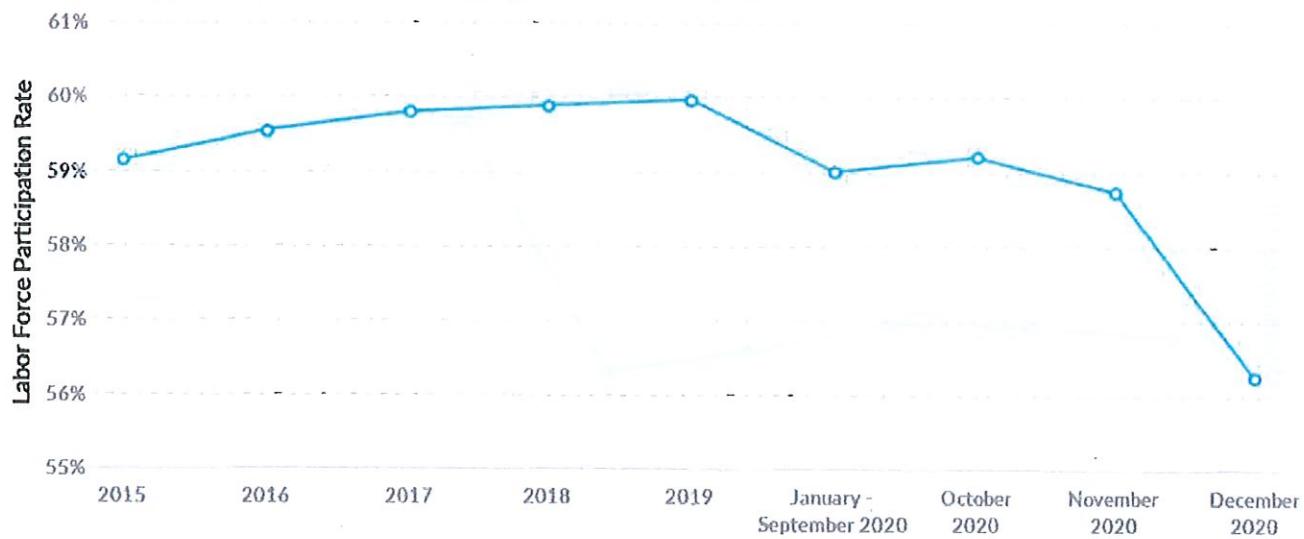
## Job Trends

From 2015 to 2020, jobs declined by 1.2% in Cuyahoga County, OH from 787,370 to 778,044. This change fell short of the national growth rate of 3.1% by 4.3%.



Timeframe	Jobs
2015	787,370
2016	792,370
2017	788,061
2018	797,475
2019	800,620
2020	778,044
2021	776,458
2022	775,115
2023	773,940
2024	772,897
2025	772,186

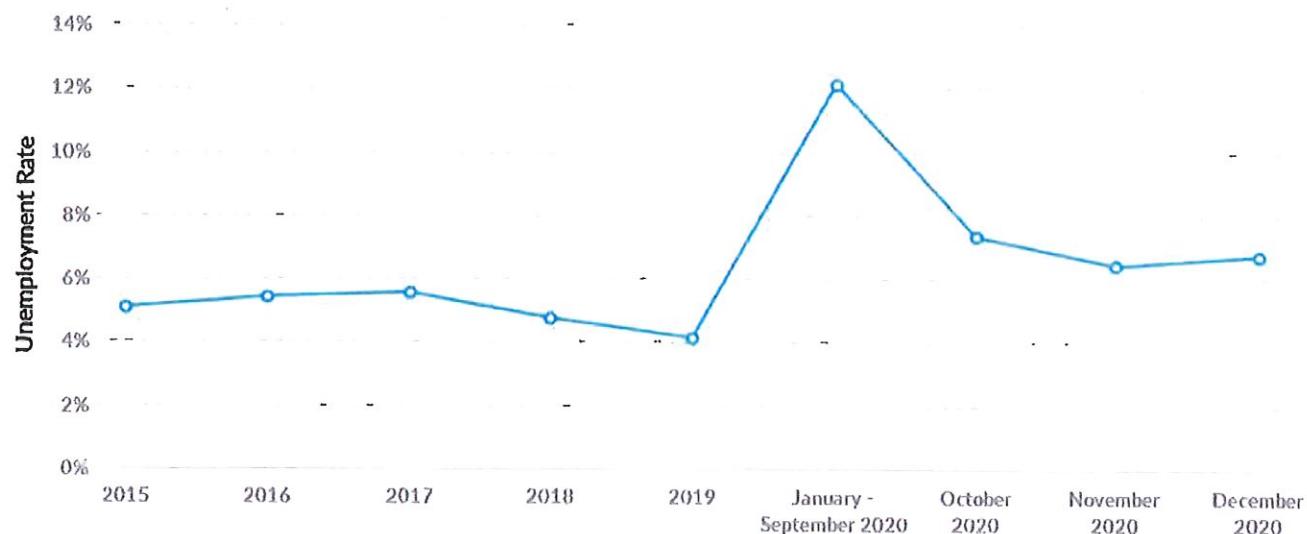
## Labor Force Participation Rate Trends



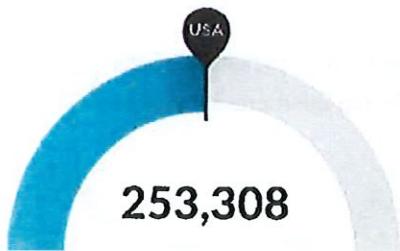
Timeframe	Labor Force Participation Rate
2015	59.15%
2016	59.55%
2017	59.80%
2018	59.89%
2019	59.97%
January - September 2020	59.01%
October 2020	59.21%
November 2020	58.74%
December 2020	56.25%

## Unemployment Rate Trends

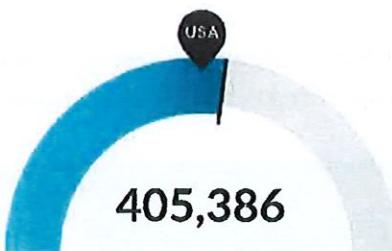
Cuyahoga County, OH had a December 2020 unemployment rate of 6.77%, increasing from 5.11% 5 years before.



## Population Characteristics



Cuyahoga County, OH has 253,308 millennials (ages 25-39). The national average for an area this size is 254,652.



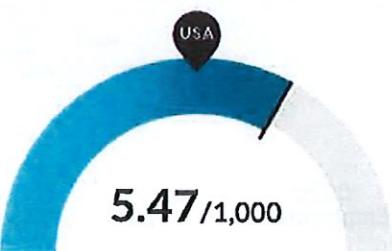
Retirement risk is high in Cuyahoga County, OH. The national average for an area this size is 363,128 people 55 or older, while there are 405,386 here.



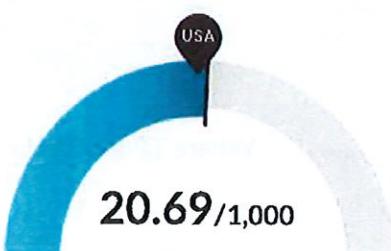
Racial diversity is about average in Cuyahoga County, OH. The national average for an area this size is 492,651 racially diverse people, while there are 511,426 here.



Cuyahoga County, OH has 64,881 veterans. The national average for an area this size is 68,596.



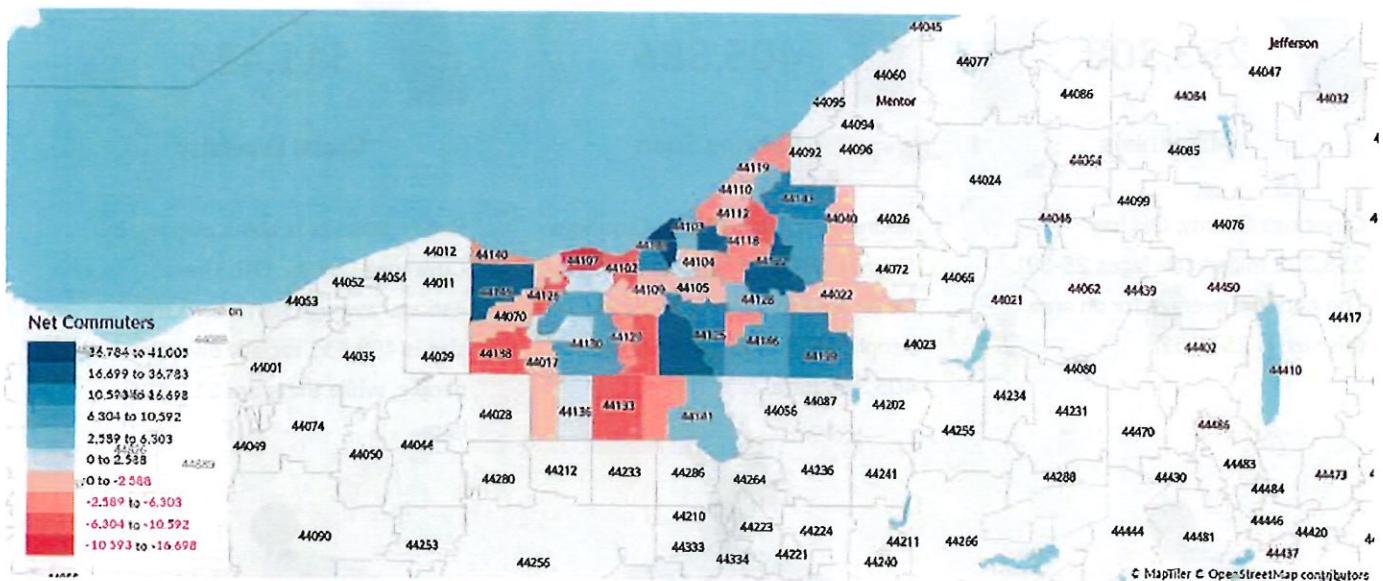
Cuyahoga County, OH has 5.47 violent crimes per 1,000 people. The national rate is 3.53 per 1,000 people.



Cuyahoga County, OH has 20.69 property crimes per 1,000 people. The national rate is 19.79 per 1,000 people.

## Place of Work vs Place of Residence

Understanding where talent in Cuyahoga County, OH currently works compared to where talent lives can help you optimize site decisions. For example, the #1 ranked ZIP for employment ranks #47 for resident workers. The top ZIP for resident workers is 44107.



### Where Talent Works

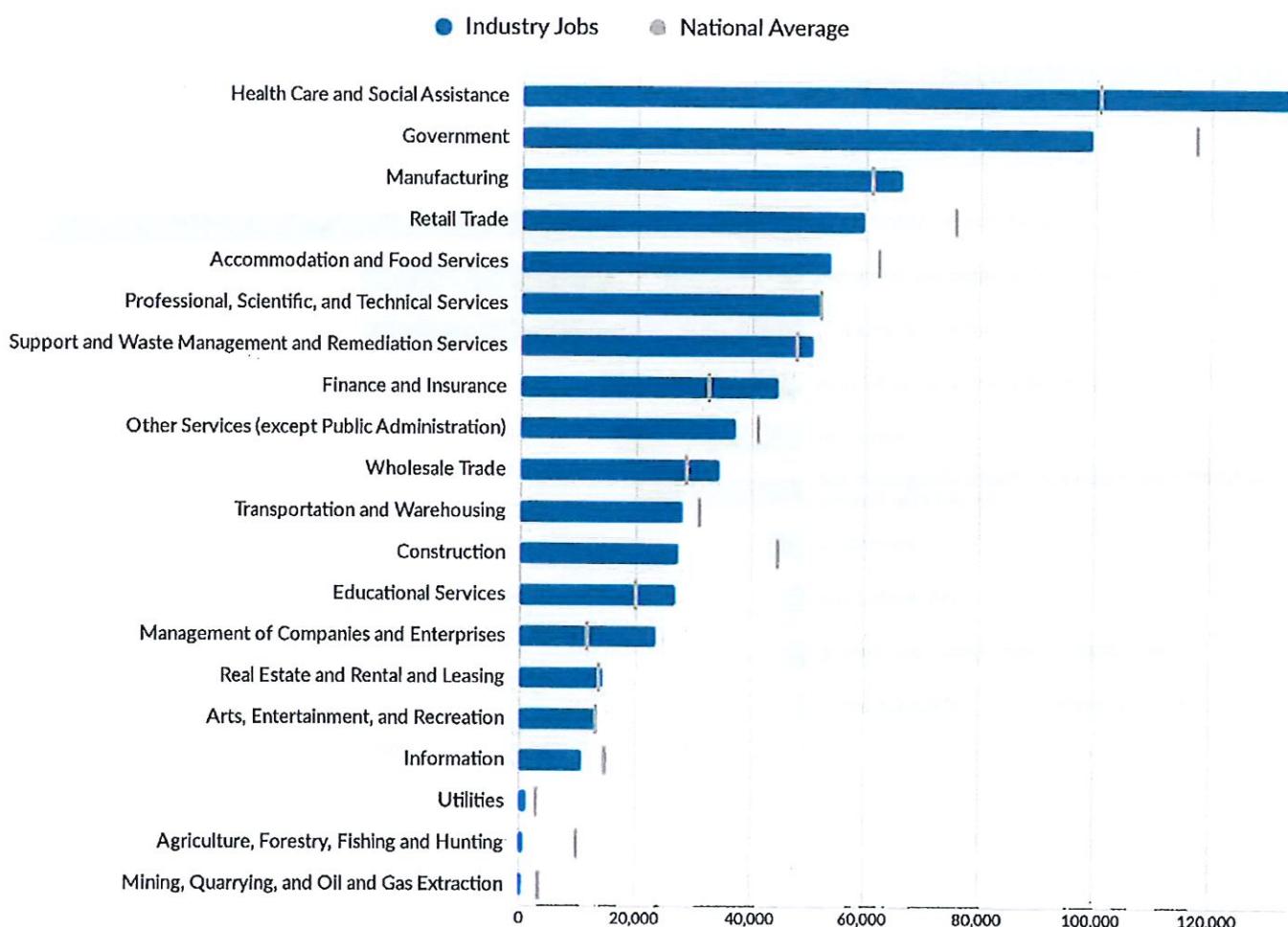
ZIP	Name	2020 Employment
44114	Cleveland, OH (in Cuya...	45,974
44115	Cleveland, OH (in Cuya...	40,132
44130	Cleveland, OH (in Cuya...	37,904
44122	Beachwood, OH (in Cuy...	35,474
44131	Independence, OH (in C...	35,416

### Where Talent Lives

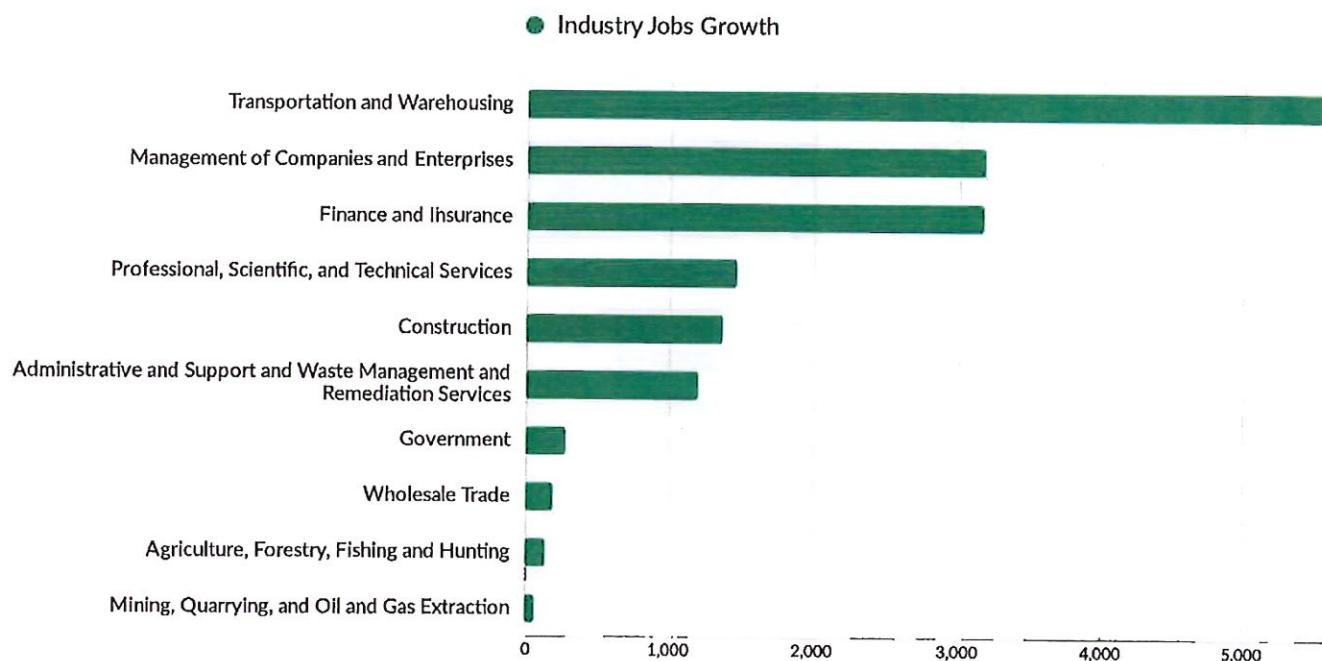
ZIP	Name	2020 Workers
44107	Lakewood, OH (in Cuya...	29,874
44130	Cleveland, OH (in Cuya...	29,003
44124	Cleveland, OH (in Cuya...	21,483
44134	Cleveland, OH (in Cuya...	21,090
44111	Cleveland, OH (in Cuya...	19,037

## Industry Characteristics

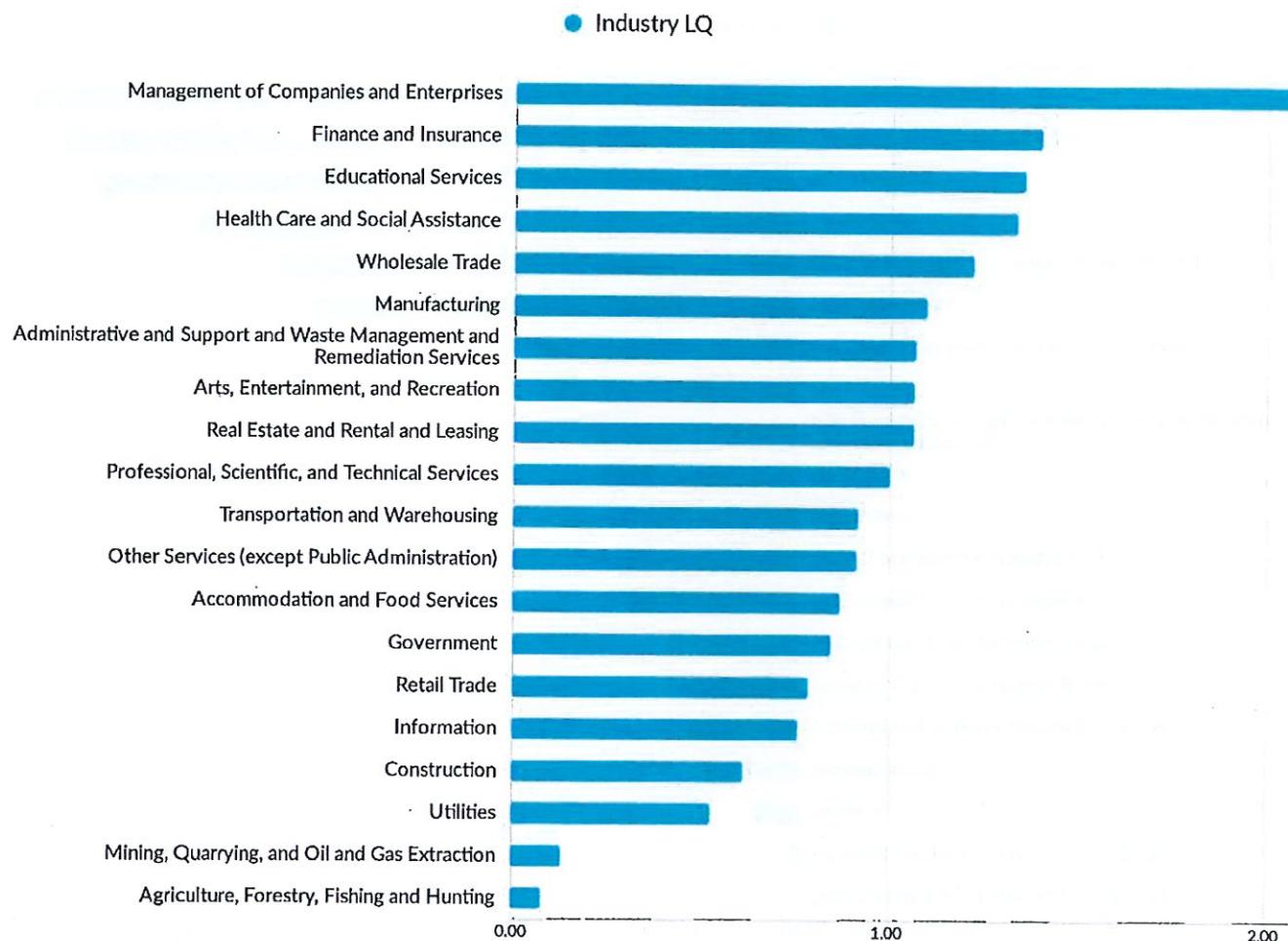
### Largest Industries



## Top Growing Industries

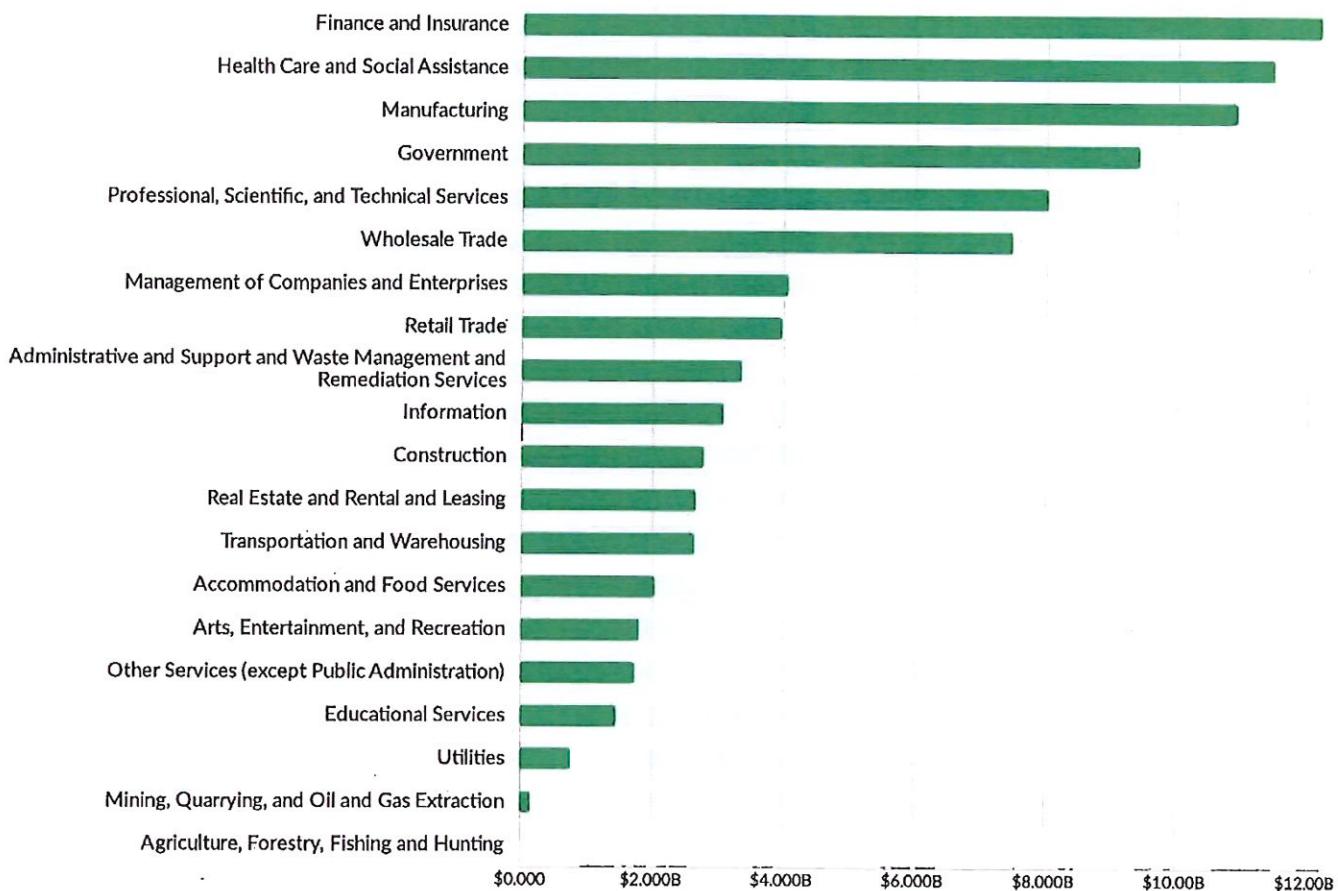


## Top Industry LQ

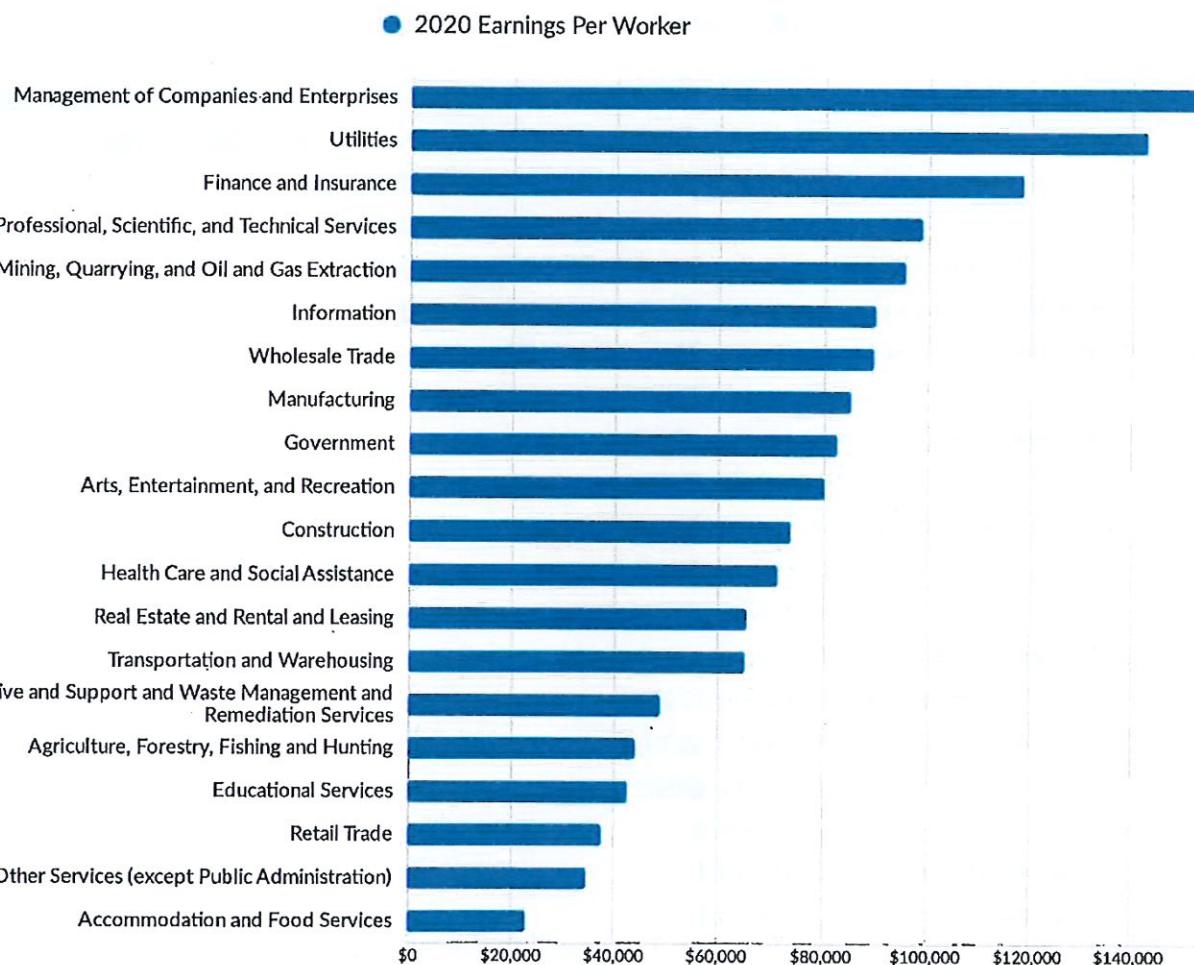


## Top Industry GRP

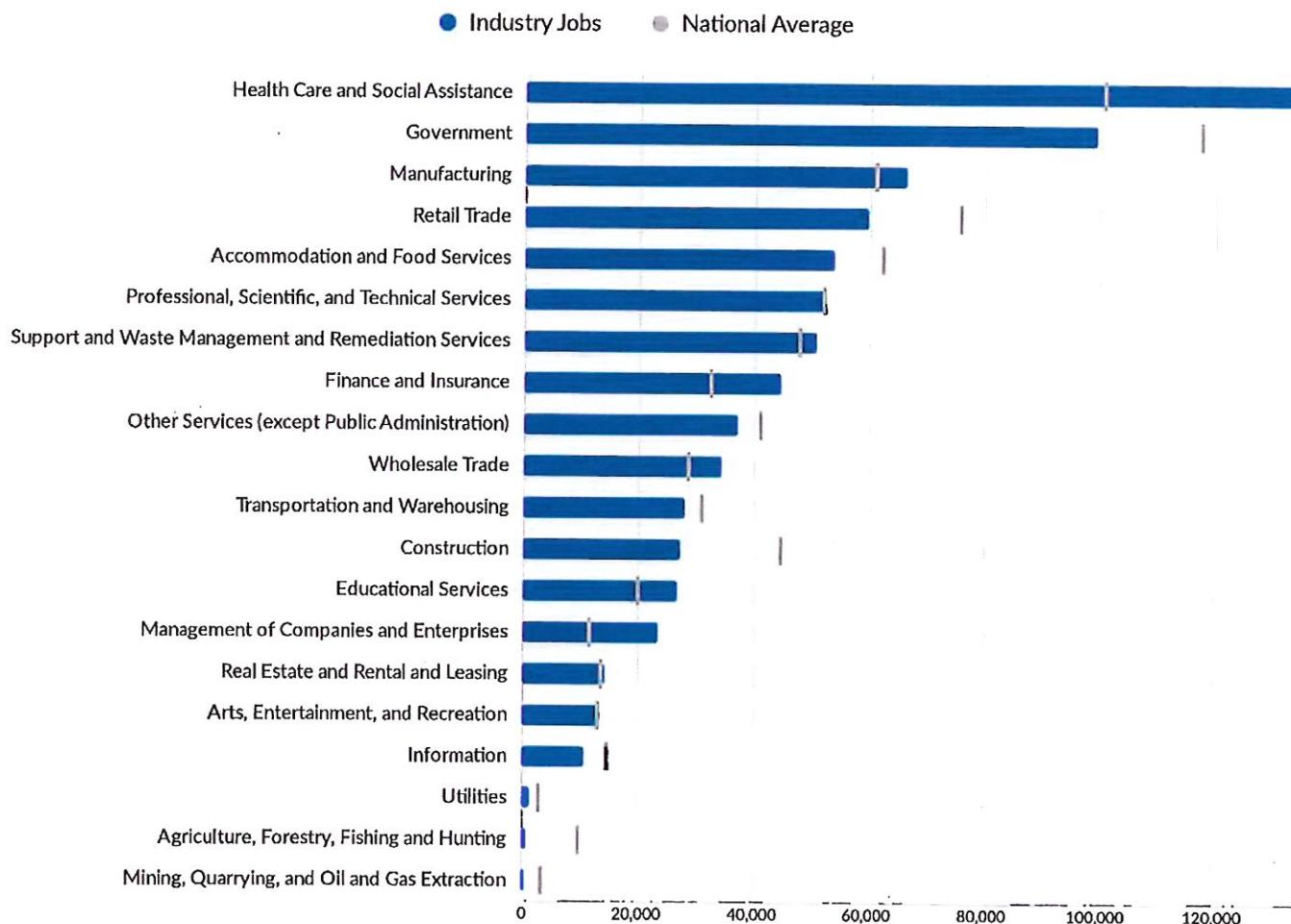
● 2020 Gross Regional Product



## Top Industry Earnings



## Largest Industries



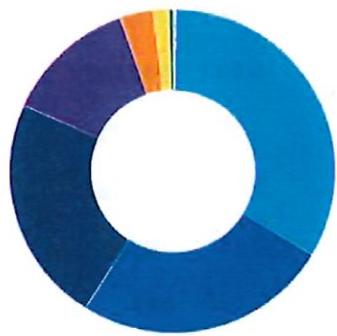
## Business Characteristics

### 123,204 Companies Employ Your Workers

Online profiles for your workers mention 123,204 companies as employers, with the top 10 appearing below. In the last 12 months, 17,050 companies in Cuyahoga County, OH posted job postings, with the top 10 appearing below.

Top Companies	Profiles	Top Companies Posting	Unique Postings
The Cleveland Clinic Foundation	19,124	Cleveland Clinic	8,643
University Hospitals of Cleveland	7,145	University Hospitals of Cleveland	6,059
Search Associates Inc	5,420	General Healthcare Resources, ...	5,638
Case Western Reserve University	4,996	Oracle Corporation	3,426
Keycorp	4,173	The Cleveland Clinic Foundation	2,620
PNC Bank	3,515	Area Temps, Inc	1,863
The Sherwin-Williams Company	3,127	Keycorp	1,638
The Metrohealth System	2,502	Giant Eagle, Inc.	1,624
Cleveland State University	2,471	Carvana, LLC	1,458
Cleveland Municipal School Dist...	2,424	Amazon.com, Inc.	1,429

## Business Size

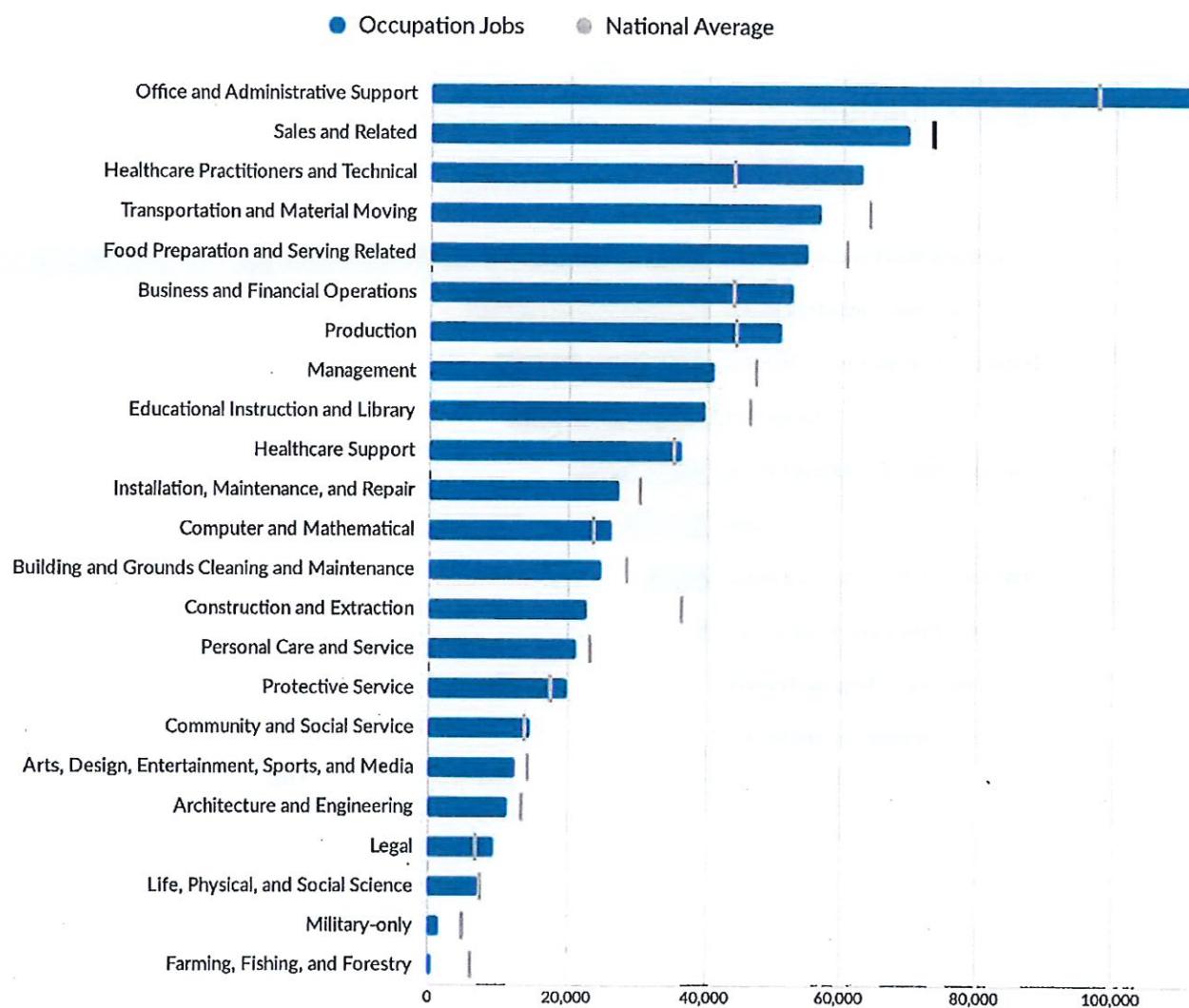


	Percentage	Business Count
1 to 4 employees	33.5%	15,824
5 to 9 employees	25.3%	11,947
10 to 19 employees	22.6%	10,686
20 to 49 employees	13.2%	6,214
50 to 99 employees	3.2%	1,524
100 to 249 employees	1.6%	739
250 to 499 employees	0.4%	191
500+ employees	0.2%	78

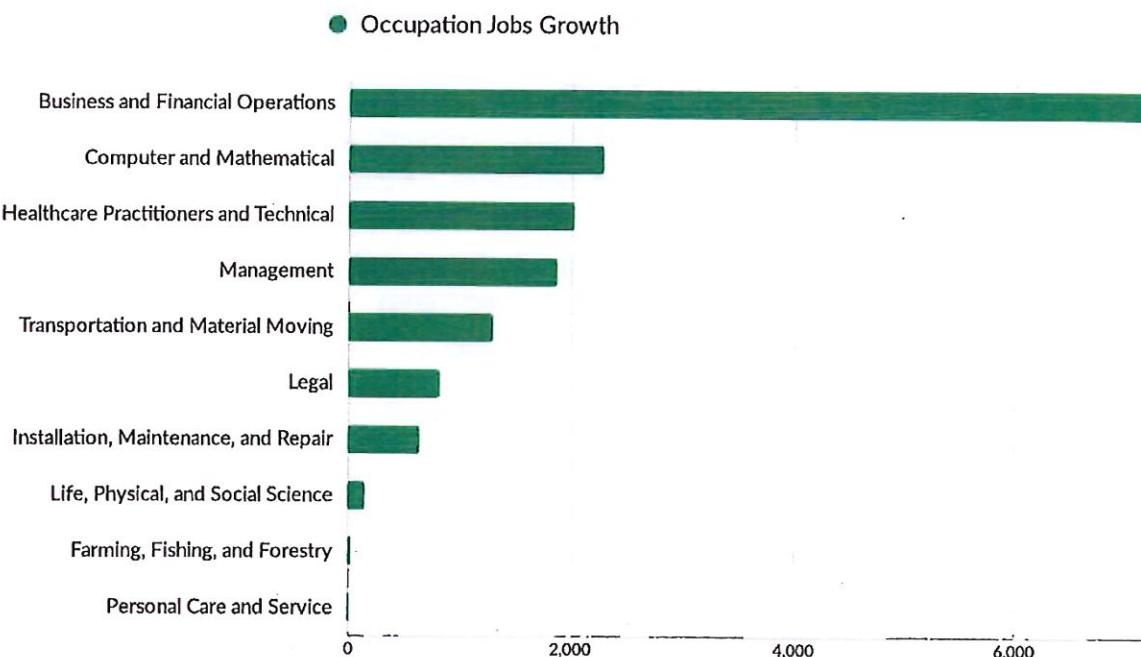
*\*Business Data by DatabaseUSA.com is third-party data provided by Emsi to its customers as a convenience, and Emsi does not endorse or warrant its accuracy or consistency with other published Emsi data. In most cases, the Business Count will not match total companies with profiles on the summary tab.*

## Workforce Characteristics

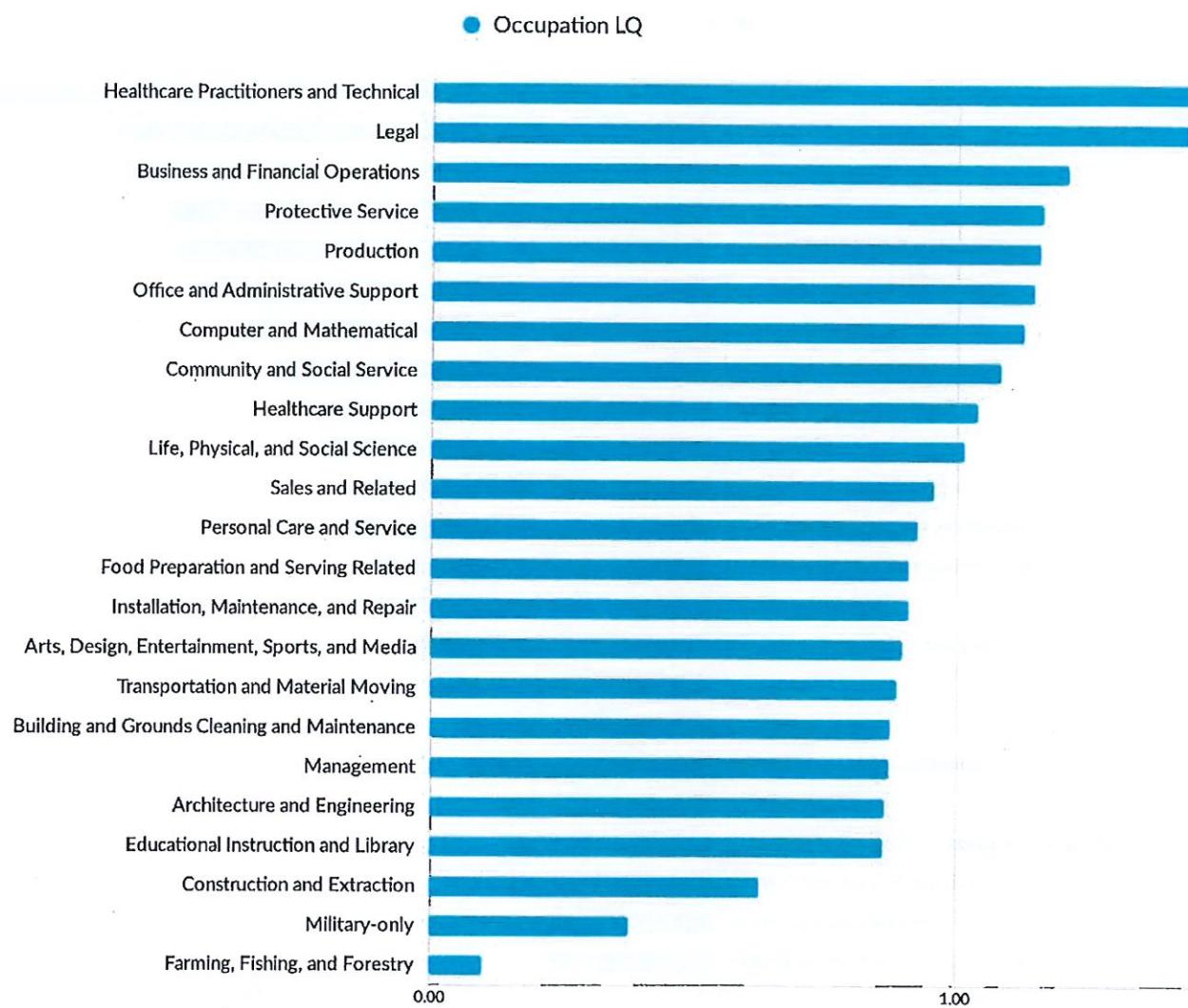
### Largest Occupations



## Top Growing Occupations



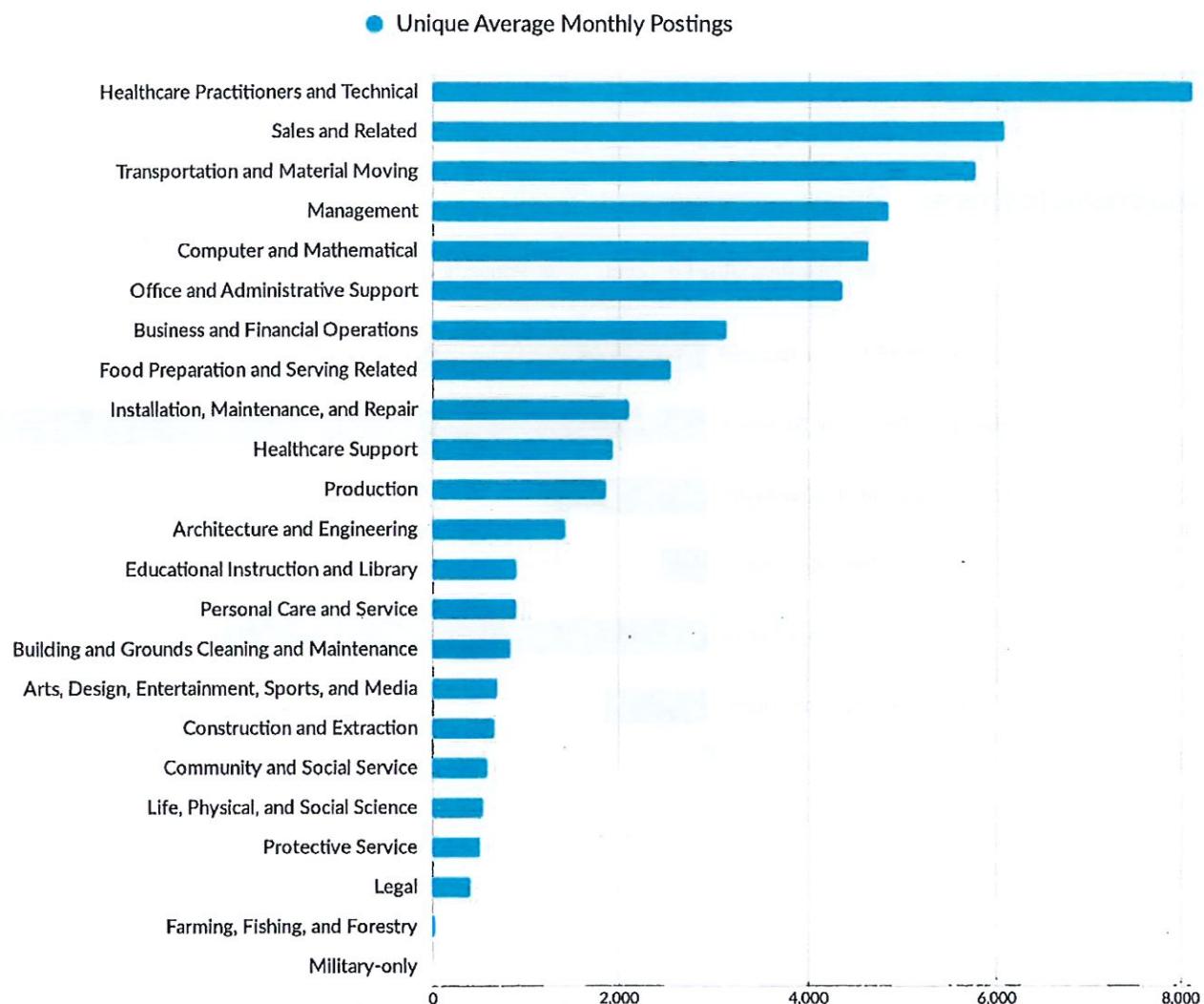
## Top Occupation LQ



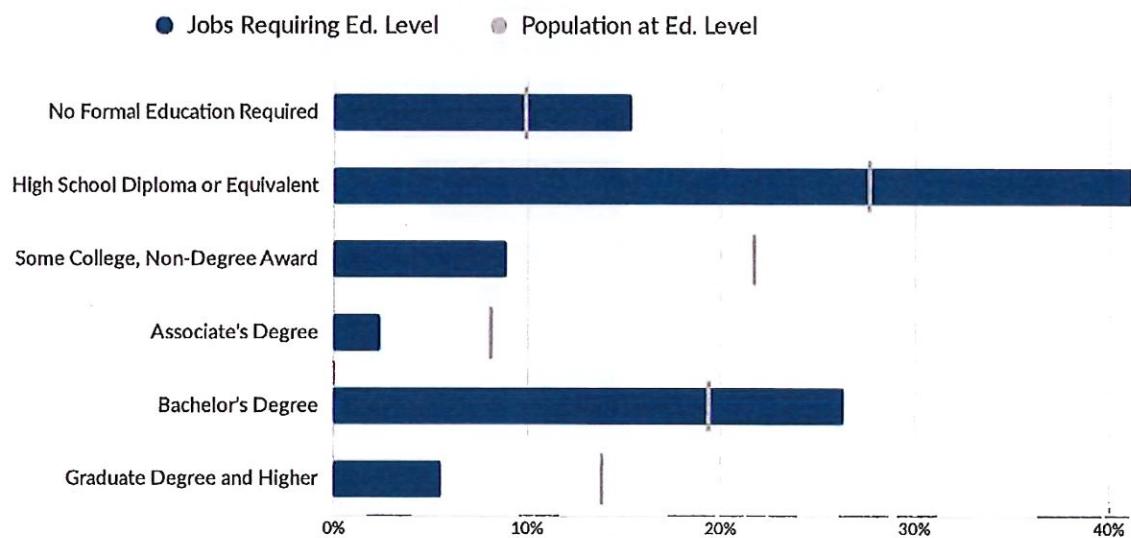
## Top Occupation Earnings



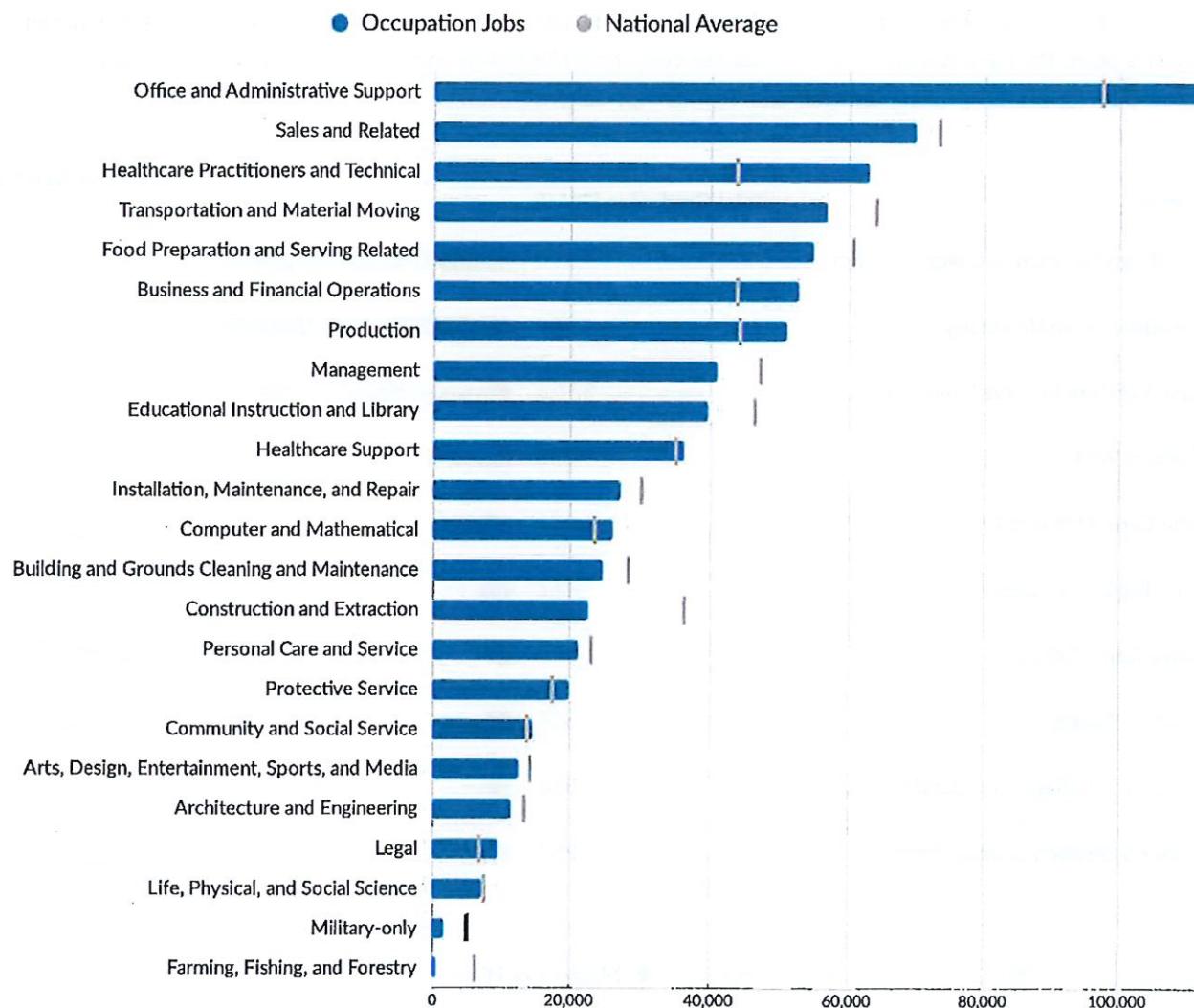
## Top Posted Occupations



## Underemployment

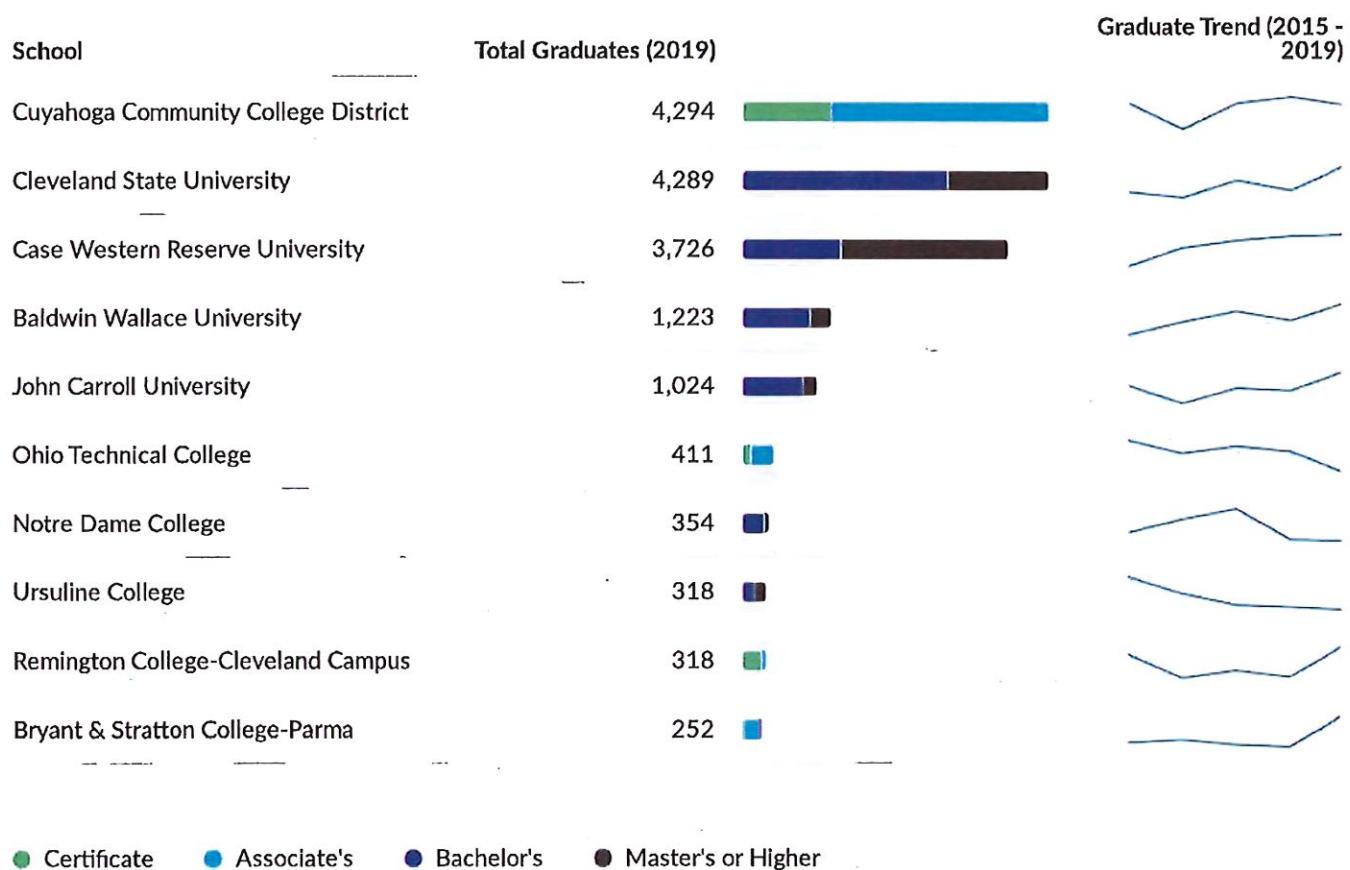


## Largest Occupations

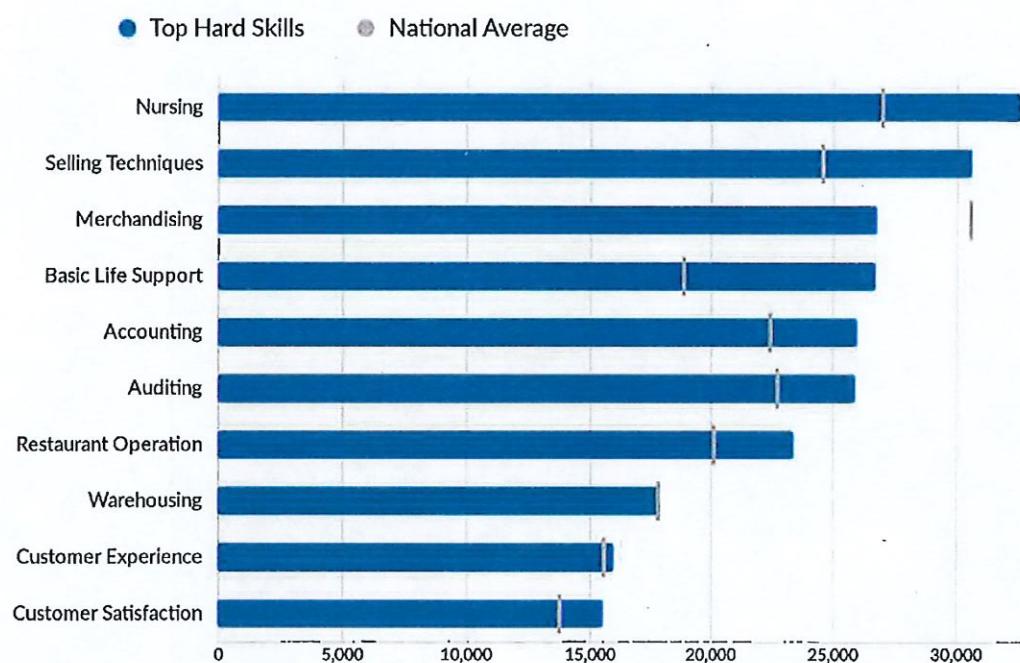


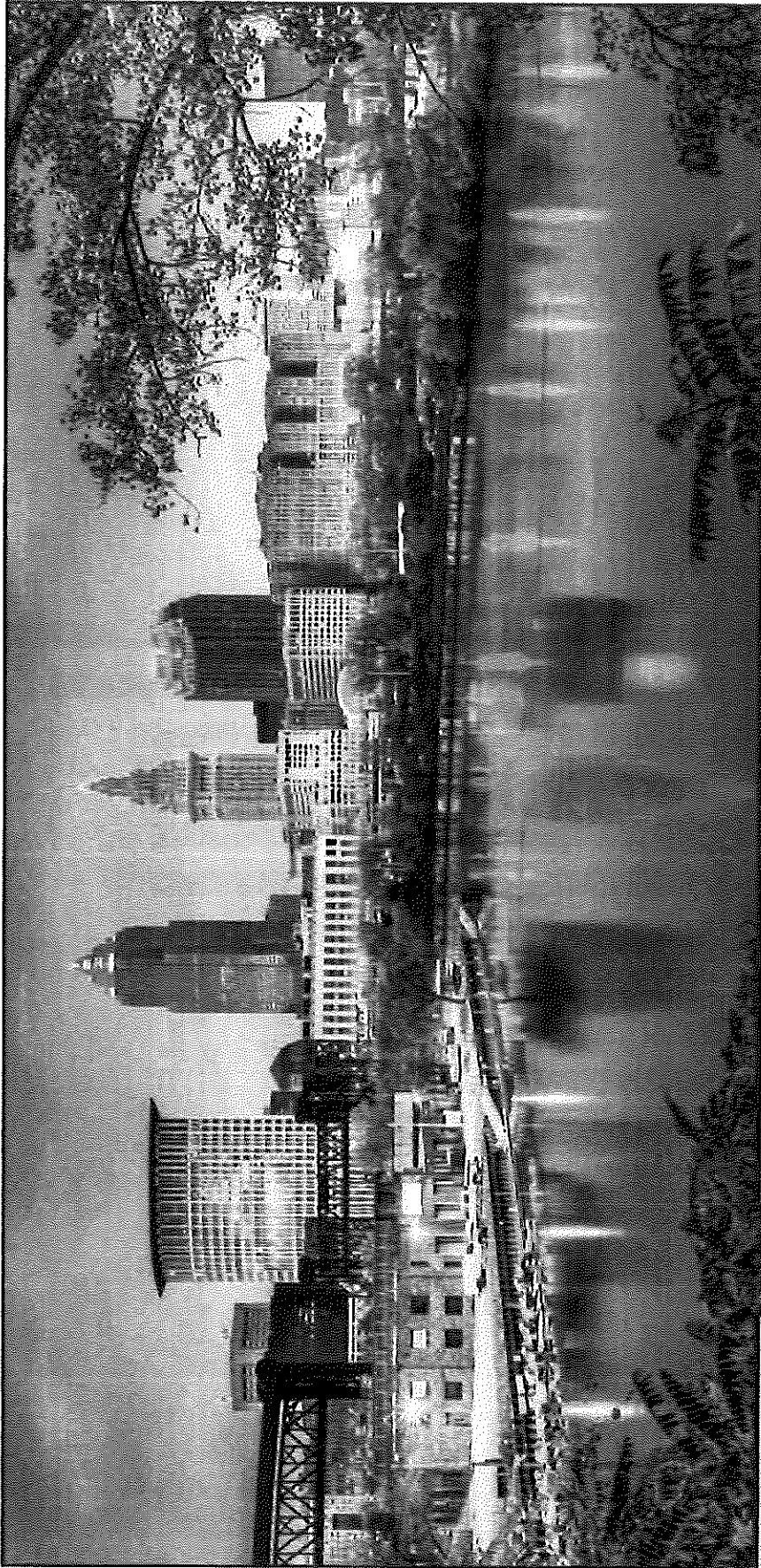
## Educational Pipeline

In 2019, there were 17,608 graduates in Cuyahoga County, OH. This pipeline has remained stable (neither grown nor shrunk) over the last 5 years. The highest share of these graduates come from Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, "Business Administration and Management, General", and "Psychology, General".



## In-Demand Skills





# Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Board

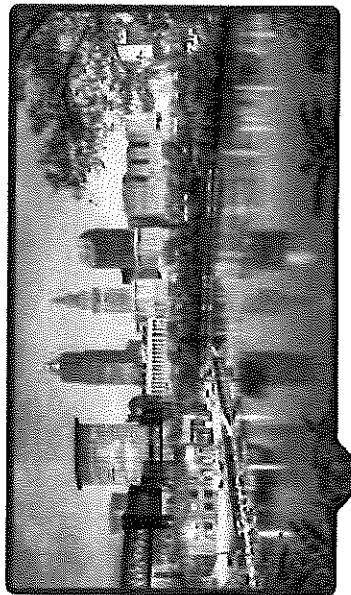
2019 - 2023 Strategic Plan

**Cleveland –**  
**Cuyahoga County**  
A proud partner of the  
**Ohio MEANS Jobs®**  
American Job Center network

# Introduction

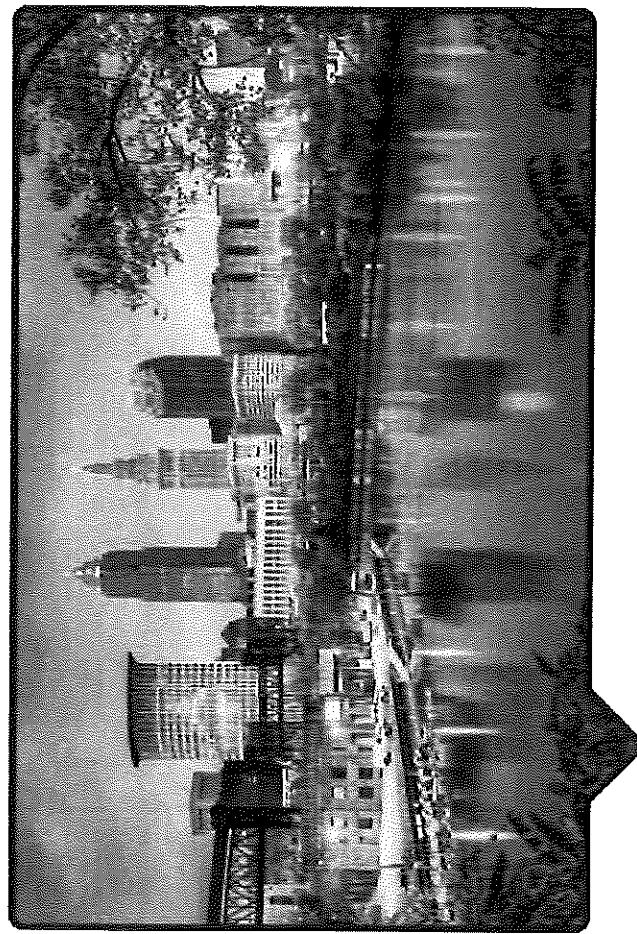
## *Introduction*

In the winter of 2019, the Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Board initiated a process to update its 2015-2019 strategic plan for the Board for the 2019-2023 period. The 2019-2023 strategic plan development process involved ongoing consultation with Board members and Board Committees between February and July 2019. The development process also included an extensive community stakeholder engagement and input-gathering effort from March to May 2019, accomplished via an online stakeholder survey, several focus groups, and multiple individual and small group interviews. Board member and community stakeholder feedback drove the development of the new strategic plan, which was presented to and formally adopted by the Board in August 2019.



# Vision

## *Vision*

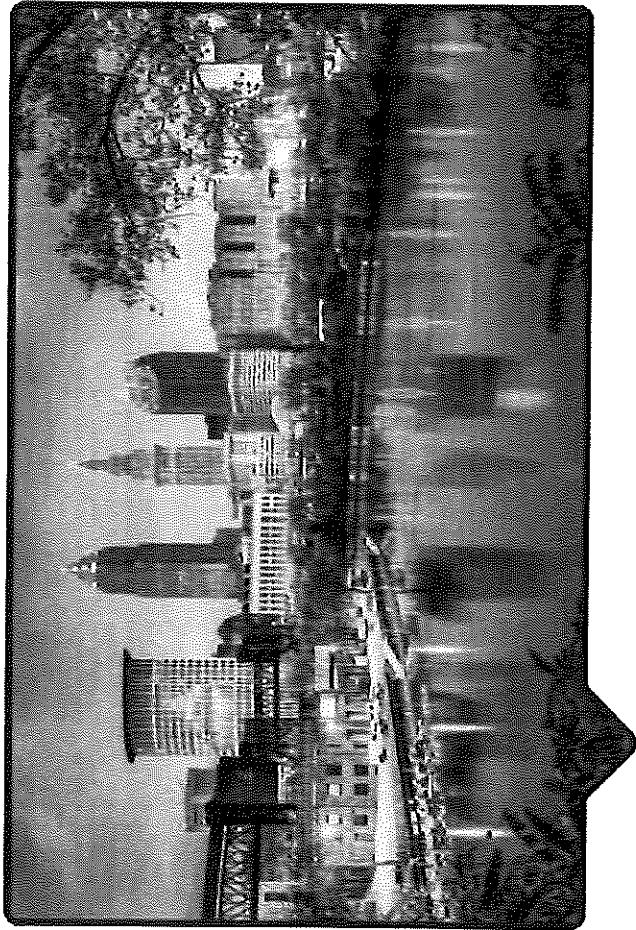


CCWDB will establish and provide impactful workforce services driving the success of business and economic opportunity, improving racial and economic equity for Cleveland and Cuyahoga County residents.

# Mission

# *Mission*

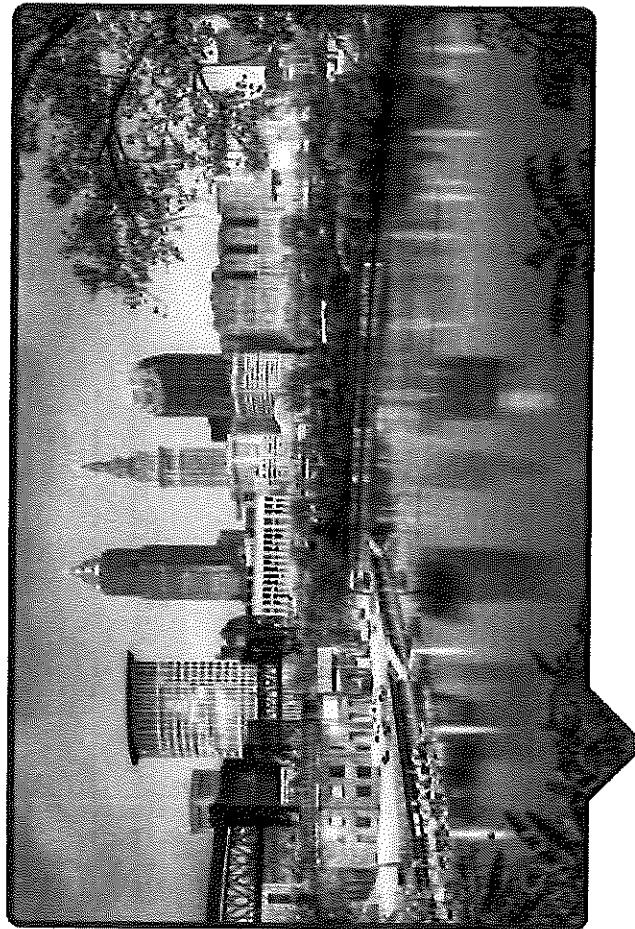
To develop and implement innovative partnerships and services that meet businesses' needs for qualified talent and provide residents access to careers and economic mobility.



# Goals and Strategies

Leverage Workforce  
Innovation and  
Opportunity Act  
programs, services,  
and investments to  
provide system  
leadership and  
address workforce  
needs and issues.

## Goal 1



# Goal | Strategy 1

- Serve as a leader, in collaboration with other workforce ecosystem partners, to support alignment of resources and efforts, convening around issues, collective problem-solving, and provision of coordinated support.
  - Ensure that OMJ|CC provides workforce employment and training services to meet the demands of businesses for talent and prioritizes job seekers who need the most help in connecting to jobs. Ensure that OMJ|CC operates as an integrated American Job Center (i.e. career center) with all partner programs available to customers.
  - Collaborate with other workforce ecosystem partners to improve accessibility and navigability of workforce development programs and services.
  - Collaborate with partners to implement strategies to increase racial equity and inclusion.
  - Expand strategic alliances with libraries and city and county partners to make services available in the neighborhoods, as resources permit. Explore ways to work with Aspire and other partners on two-generation programming in the libraries.

# Goal | Strategy 2

## ► Identify, explore, and communicate about critical regional workforce issues and address those issues in service delivery

- How may we ensure that economic growth creates job opportunities for all? How may we address diversity, equity, inclusion, and economic mobility needs, particularly for disenfranchised communities and populations?
- How may we help address the impact of the opioid crisis with services to address the workforce needed to respond as well as the work needs of those in recovery?
- How may we expand “earn and learn” opportunities for those not in the workforce? How may we further engage employer partners in the design of work-based learning activities?
- Implement a pilot with DHHS, Cuyahoga County Public Library, Cleveland Public Library, and Euclid Public Library partners with cohorts of customers in three library locations (County, City, and Euclid). The pilot will target library customers who are in the Aspire GED prep program and combine Aspire/GED prep programming; career coaching and career development assistance from OMJ|CC; benefits screening and eligibility application and maintenance assistance and case management support from DHHS staff; and work experience for participants, provided by the libraries.

## Goal I Strategy 3

- Contribute thought leadership by developing improved capacity to better analyze OMJ|CC data.

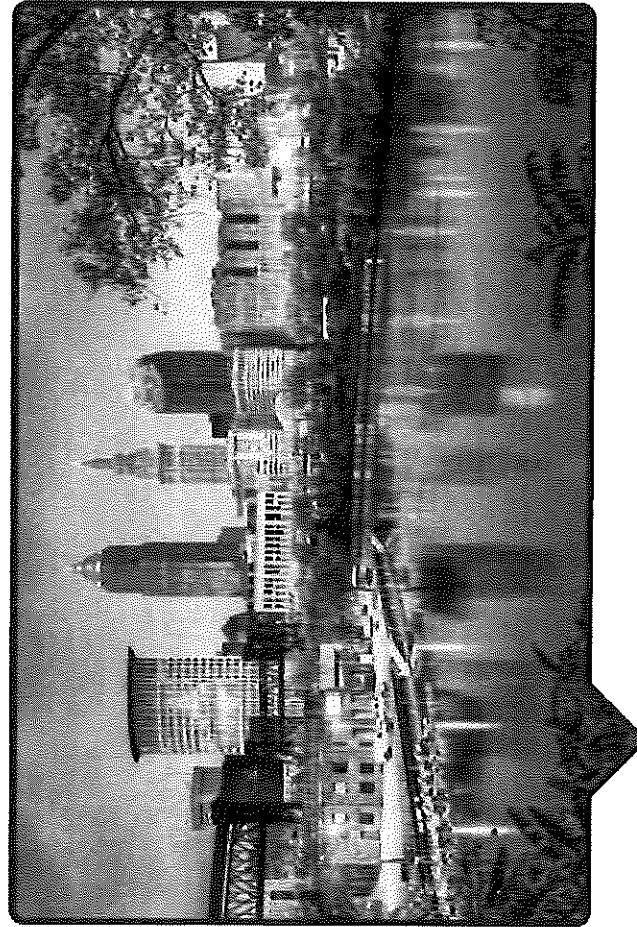
## Goal 1 Strategy 4

- Actively support implementation and operation of industry sector partnerships in manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, or others as identified. Participate as a member of the Workforce Funders Group.

## Goal | Strategy 5

- Coordinate and lead a county-wide discussion resulting in better connected workforce development and economic development efforts in areas such as assessing and aligning resources, understanding talent demands, emerging business opportunities, etc.

Make OMJ|CC more visible and well-recognized as a place for businesses, residents, and partners to go for workforce needs and services.



*Goal II*

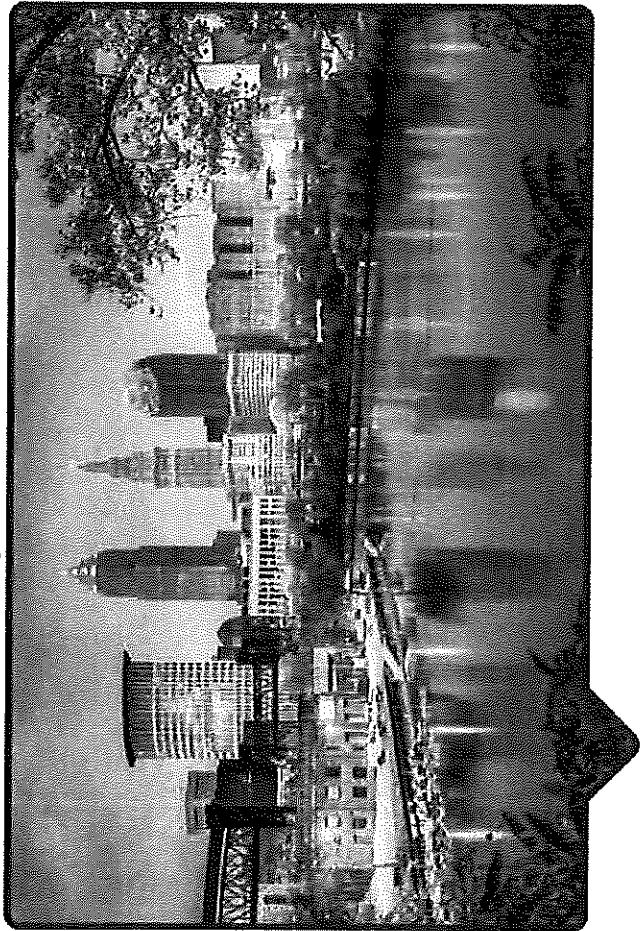
# Goal II Strategy 1

- Develop and implement an outreach and communications plan for OMJ|CC. The plan may include areas such as:
  - Regular dissemination of information about OMJ|CC achievements and impacts, through a wide variety of avenues and platforms.
  - Better utilization of social media and other outreach and communications channels to share information about services and success stories and raise awareness.
    - Address need to build trust and dispel “government” perception with job seeker and business customers.
  - Engagement of Board members (especially business members) to serve as champions and ambassadors for the OMJ|CC system and utilization of Board membership and networks as “spheres of influence” to build consensus and create and implement policies.
  - Targeted outreach and communications efforts aimed at youth ages 18-24.
  - Strategies that aim to communicate OMJ|CC’s workforce expertise and service quality.
  - Messaging that conveys OMJ|CC’s commitment to racial equity and inclusion and supporting opportunity for diverse customers.
  - Implementation of an annual “State of the Workforce” presentation hosted by CCWDB/ OMJ|CC.

## Goal II Strategy 2

- Collaborate with partners and providers who may have access to additional populations and resources to increase the number of business and individual customers served by the OMJ|CC system.

Support innovation  
and continuous  
improvement in  
public workforce  
system operations  
and service delivery.



*Goal III*

## Goal III Strategy 1

- Fully harness the Board's role in setting policies and guidance and making budget decisions to address local workforce development needs and priorities.

## Goal III Strategy 2

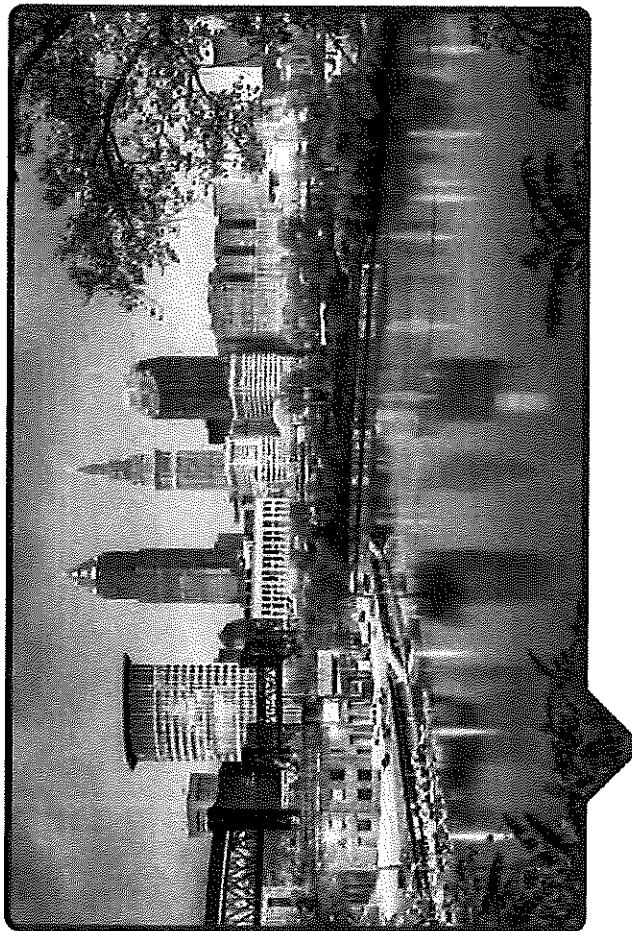
- Regularly review OMJ|CC employment and training services, outcomes, customer service, and performance results to propose improvements in operations.
  - Regularly evaluate service delivery design for all customers and recommend improvements to providers based on new innovations, best practices, and technology advancements.
  - Solicit and regularly assess business and resident customer feedback data to inform implementation of customer-driven service enhancements. This includes OMJ|CC directly soliciting feedback from customers in addition to providers surveying customers.
  - Provide a forum for service providers to share input on challenges, needs, and opportunities from their perspective.

(continued on next page)

## Goal III Strategy 2 (continued)

- Review innovative ideas/solutions for OMJ | CC to test or pilot along with the needed resources in order to:
  - Improve responsiveness, agility, innovation, and service for business customers.
  - Ensure that job seeker services are demand driven.
  - Target new strategies focused on specific issues or populations.
  - Enhance equity and inclusion, particularly for disenfranchised and/or underserved populations and residents.
  - Continue the pilot project to raise the Labor Force Participation Rate in low-income neighborhoods and set a schedule for review and evaluation.
  - Determine actions to support the workforce development priorities of the new state administration such as the implementation of stackable credentials (e.g., micro-badges" and "micro-credentials").
  - Evaluate results regularly and adopt processes for continuous improvement of services.

Play a leadership role in and pursue innovation opportunities within the larger workforce ecosystem of government entities, private sector and employer-serving organizations, job seeker-serving organizations, education and training providers, and philanthropic organizations.



## Goal IV

## Goal IV Strategy 1

- Collaborate with other workforce ecosystem partners to maximize collective impact by government, philanthropic, private sector, education and training, and service provider partners.
  - Further explore the possibility of adopting this ecosystem taxonomy to rationalize and better organize the workforce system and the organizations within each ecosystem partner group. Explore opportunities to foster collaboration among the partners in each part of the five-part ecosystem and across the ecosystem more broadly from an operational perspective.
  - Determine the possibility of adopting common overarching goals across the workforce ecosystem. If viable, implement a process to develop them.
  - Develop a workable approach to address the oft-cited problems of “navigating” the workforce system.
  - Deepen partnerships with workforce ecosystem partners to ensure service equity, inclusion, accessibility, and coordination for potentially underserved populations.

## Goal IV Strategy 2

- Conduct an analysis regarding and explore the possibility and pros and cons of creating a more manageable and nimble structure for the Board – e.g., non-profit Board, non-profit arm of the Board, or Council of Governments.
  - Build capacity and better leverage and diversify funding streams.

## Goal IV Strategy 3

- ▶ Explore whether the Workforce Development Board needs to create a new “definition of success” for its work. Develop recommendations regarding how to evaluate workforce programs, services, and investments across the entire ecosystem to determine whether they are continued, expanded, ended, etc.
  - Explore possibility of implementing a report card/scorecard approach.
  - Identify common metrics for workforce ecosystem partners to jointly pursue and achieve (e.g., improved Labor Force Participation Rate).

## Goal IV Strategy 4

### ► Develop and adopt new/“next gen” technologies to:

- Improve services and reach more customers with employment and training services (e.g., “importing” services and assistance via technology vs. physical referrals out to services).
- Be better prepared for economic downturns, funding cuts, or other unanticipated events.
- Integrate data across systems, including with businesses, for enhanced ease of use, efficiency, and effectiveness.
  - Pursue data/data systems integration solutions to better meet the needs of large employers in particular (state/local jobs systems interface challenge).
  - Leverage new tools and technologies to advance the work of the OMJ | CC system.

## Goal IV Strategy 5

- Convene a process at the workforce ecosystem level to assess current programs and strategies, pilot new/promising programs and strategies, scale successful ones, and discontinue unsuccessful ones.

# Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act

## Area #4 – Local Workforce Plan

### Lorain County, Ohio

#### *Background*

As defined in the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services (ODJFS), Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Policy Letter No. 16-03, this plan serves as an addendum to the Northeast Ohio Workforce (NOW) Plan and is specific to Lorain County – WIOA Area #4.

#### *Description of Local Workforce Area*

Lorain County is located in northeast Ohio and is bordered by the counties of Erie and Huron to the west, Ashland County to the south, Medina County to the southwest, Cuyahoga County to the east and Lake Erie to the north. Lorain County is included in the Northeast Region as defined by the Ohio Department of Family Services – Office of Workforce Development.

With approximately 316,447 residents, Lorain County is the 9<sup>th</sup> most populated county in the State of Ohio. The county is comprised of two (2) urban centers with the cities of Lorain and Elyria, which also serves as the county seat, and also consists of many rural communities that are located in the southern portion of the county. The county is rich in educational resources which include Lorain County Community College (LCCC), Oberlin University, and the Lorain County JVS. LCCC was the first community college in Ohio to establish a University Partnership program where students can access over 100 different bachelor's and master's degree programs offered by 14 other colleges and universities.

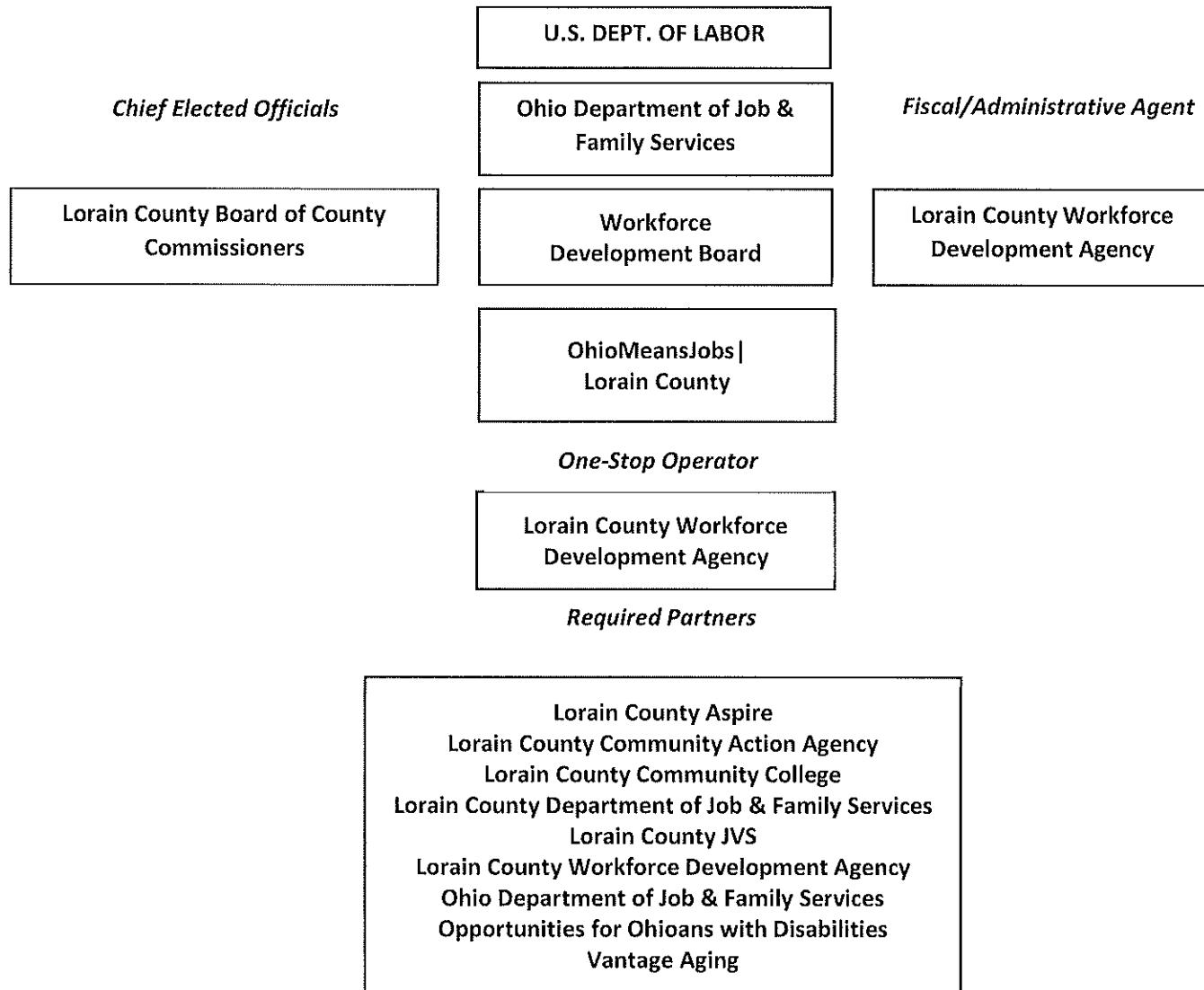
#### *Lorain County Workforce Development Board*

The Lorain County Workforce Development Board (LCWDB) currently consists of 19 members and is appointed by the Lorain County Board of Commissioners. The board composition stands at 52.63% of the seats assigned to representatives from the business community, 21.05% of the seats assigned to representative from the workforce category and the remaining 26.32% of the seats for representatives of education/training and government and economic development. Of the 19 members, the LCWDB currently includes optional representation from one (1) community-based organization who contribute to the field of workforce development, and also includes representation from the local human services system. The current LCWDB roster is included as **Attachment A**.

The LCWDB utilizes the Workforce Institute of Lorain County (WFI) to serve as the staff to the board. The WFI was formed in January 1996 through a partnership between the Lorain County

Chamber of Commerce, the Center for Leadership in Education, Lorain County Community College, the Lorain County JVS and Lorain County.

### Lorain County WDB WIOA Structure



The Lorain County Workforce Development Board is committed to the following guiding principles:

- To link employers to a world-class labor pool that meets current and future workplace needs.

- To empower individuals to achieve self-sufficiency and embrace life-long learning through career pathways and strategies that support personal development and upward mobility.
- To continually assess the interests, skills and needs of employers, job seekers and workers and integrate those needs with education, training and service providers to deliver responsive, customized services.
- To build strong linkages between economic development, the K-12, adult and higher education systems and workforce development entities.
- To market and deliver high quality, cost-effective services and explore opportunities to generate revenue that supports the delivery of these services to all potential customers.

### **OhioMeansJobs Lorain County (OMJ LC)**

The LCWDB oversees the operation of the OhioMeansJobs Lorain County (OMJ LC) center located at 42495 North Ridge Road, Elyria, OH, and has selected the Lorain County Workforce Development Agency to serve as the One-Stop Operator. The OMJ LC center has representation from all required partners who operate in the area which include:

- Lorain County Aspire
- Lorain County Community Action Agency
- Lorain County Department of Job & Family Services
- Lorain County Workforce Development Agency
- Lorain County Community College
- Lorain County JVS
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities
- Vantage Aging

The LCWDB completed Phase 1 of the certification process of the OMJ LC center on June 29, 2016 and submitted documentation of this with all required elements to ODJFS on July 8, 2016. The LCWDB approved for the team to be compiled of representatives from partner agencies who were best suited to perform the review. This certification included satisfying all ADA physical and programmatic accessibility that is required through WIOA and the applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The OMJ LC remains focused on providing access to all jobseekers in complying with Section 188 of WIOA, and applicable sections of ADA as it relates to the programmatic and physical accessibility of the facilities and programs. Some of these accommodations that are provided include:

- Computer software and devices for those with visual impairments
- Handicap accessible/powered doors
- Handicap designated parking spaces with compliant signage
- Signs posted in Braille format to identify meeting spaces

- Handicap accessible restrooms

Phase 2 of the certification process of the OMJ LC center was completed by the LCWDB on August 29, 2019 with the review consisting of the same team of partner representatives who assisted with the first phase. This process included completion of a Balanced Scorecard that was provided by the ODJFS – Office of Workforce Development, and covered a review of three key categories, including;

- Customer Service to Job Seekers, Workers & Businesses
- Innovative and Effective Service Design
- Integrated Management Systems and High-Quality Staffing

The outcome of the review showed that the OMJ LC center was compliant with the established levels that were needed in order to maintain certification.

Phase 3 of the certification process was completed by the LCWDB on May 26, 2022 with the review consisting of representatives from partner agencies, including the Lorain County Department of Job & Family Services, the Lorain County Workforce Development Agency, and the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services. This phase included completion of the Balanced Scorecard and covered review of the same key categories that were reviewed in Phase 2.

The outcome of the review showed that that OMJ LC center was compliant with the established levels satisfying 58 of 60 points.

In Program Year 2021, OMJ LC saw an increase in jobseekers accessing services compared to Program Year 2020 with an increased demand for assistance with funding for occupational skills training. Our OMJ approved 175 individuals who accessed career technical training, using over \$1,086,000.00 in workforce funding, which was a record for our area.

The OMJ LC center continues to utilize various forms of technology to assist the jobseekers who access our system, including the County Fiscal & Information System (CFIS) that is used to track the jobseekers visiting the center, utilizing our Resource Room, and accessing other basic career services and workshops. Through our Career Success Workshop, we teach jobseekers how to utilize the OhioMeansJobs.com system to post resumes, search for jobs, perform career research and access the numerous assessments that the system offers. During the COVID-19 crisis, we have also used technology to offer our center orientation through YouTube.

### ***Program/Partnership Highlights***

The Lorain County Workforce Development Board continues to be involved in a number of special initiatives that were launched when the initial plan was drafted. An overview of each of the initiatives follows.

## **Work Ready Lorain County**

The Lorain County Workforce Development Agency continues to serve as the lead for the Work Ready Lorain County (WRLC) initiative that was approved by the Lorain County Board of Commissioners in October 2015, and is supported and being promoted by the partners of the Lorain County Growth Partnership (LCGP).

The LCGP was developed by the Lorain County Board of Commissioners and is a collective vision among partners for the successful future growth of Lorain County. The purpose of the LCGP is to bring together resources of government, education and training and business organizations to better align workforce and economic strategies. The partners of the LCGP currently include:

- Lorain County Aspire
- Lorain County Chamber of Commerce
- Lorain County Community College
- Lorain County Community & Economic Development
- Lorain County JVS
- Lorain County Port Authority
- Lorain County Solid Waste
- Lorain County Workforce Development Agency
- Small Business Development Center

Lorain County was the 3<sup>rd</sup> county in Ohio to become part of the ACT Work Ready Community initiative, and in August 2018 met the initial goals that were established by ACT in becoming a Certified Work Ready Community. In November 2020, Lorain County also successfully achieved meeting the goals to maintain this certification.

Through the WRLC initiative, the partners have implemented the usage of ACT WorkKeys assessments that are being promoted in our community as a means of connecting employers to job seekers through skills-based hiring. The WorkKeys assessments being used focus on three foundational skills that are essential to success in most jobs and include:

- Applied Mathematics
- Workplace Documents
- Graphic Literacy

Successful completion of ACT WorkKeys assessments will lead to the earning of a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), a portable evidence-based credential that certifies essential skills needed for workplace success. All job seekers coming through the OMJ LC system are currently completing the WorkKeys assessments as part of the Career Development Workshop our system offers. Job seekers are able to earn the NCRC at the Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum level by minimally scoring 3 on each assessment (Bronze), 4 on each assessment (Silver), 5 on each assessment (Gold) or 6 on each assessment (Platinum).

The OMJ LC partners are utilizing the preferred scores that are noted in the OMJ.com system to make a sure that job seekers being considered for referrals to employers in our community possess the established levels. Job seekers who are not able to satisfy the required levels have access to both self-directed tools to help increase their scores and/or classroom led instruction that is offered through Lorain County Aspire.

To date, through the Work Ready Lorain County initiative;

- 8,542 individuals have been assessed in WorkKeys and have earned a NCRC as broken down in the following categories:
  - 2,096 - Emerging Workforce - which includes high school students, recent high school graduates, college students and recent college graduates
  - 2,465 – Current Workforce - which includes any individuals who are currently employed that complete the assessments
  - 3,981 - Transitioning Workforce – which includes individuals who are currently unemployed, are participating in adult education programs or have recent or current active military status
- 329 employers have shown their support for the initiative and recognize the value of the NCRC

We have been successful at continuing to meet the new goals that ACT has established to maintain our status of a Work Ready Community, achieving our initial maintaining status in November 2022, followed up with achieving our 2<sup>nd</sup> maintaining status in February 2023. We now have new goals that must be achieved to continue our certification for a 3rd phase, and are currently meeting 40% of these goals.

#### ***Lorain County Growth Partnership***

As previously explained, the LCGP was created with the purpose of bringing together resources of government, education and training and business organizations to better align workforce and economic strategies. Through this partnership we have been able to build upon our relationship with Team NEO, who serves as the JobsOhio entity in our region. As representatives of Team NEO, and our local economic development partners engage in business expansion and attraction efforts in our area, the OMJ LC system has been invited to participate in the discussions to help coordinate and provide workforce services that are presented.

#### ***Memorandum of Understanding with Local Libraries***

As required under House Bill 49, 132<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly, revised section 6301.06 of the Revised Code, the Lorain County Workforce Development Board has established collaborations with two (2) local libraries that include; the Lorain Public Library and Avon Lake Public Library.

The LCWDB and library systems have come together with the shared belief that communication and coordination of respective services can enhance the quality and quantity of employment and training resources and services to job seekers, unemployed, and under-employed individuals. Working together, the libraries and our OMJ center can make it easier for job seekers to access employment and training services that can lead to better jobs, improved career pathways, and sustainable wages.

Through the MOU's we are focusing on;

- Increasing awareness to library customers of employment and training resource availability within the Lorain County area
- Educating and informing library staff on resources and services available to assist Lorain County residents with employment and training needs available through the OhioMeansJobs center partnership
- Educating and informing OhioMeansJobs staff of the services available through the library system that may assist job seekers
- Informing Youth Development Specialists, assisting young adults, of the importance of early literacy services and the availability of those services through the library system

#### ***Lorain County Manufacturing Sector Partnership (LCMSP)***

In November 2019, OMJ LC was approved to participate in the LCMSP as an affiliate partner joining the founding companies and other affiliate partners, including Lorain County Community College and Lorain County JVS in the effort. This employer-led group is committed to promoting manufacturing and growing the available workforce in the region for manufacturing companies. In November 2021, the Executive Director of the LCMSP was added to the membership of the Workforce Development Board to provide a direct linkage to the work being addressed through the employers who are members of the LCMSP.

#### ***Description of Services for Adults***

All services that are required under WIOA are available through the OMJ LC center. The list of services is outlined below:

##### **Basic Career Services**

1. **Outreach and Recruitment** - techniques include monthly mailing to new claimants of unemployment benefits identified through the data sharing agreement we have in

place with the ODJFS, and others who are being identified on End of Benefit reports we also receive through our data sharing agreement.

2. **Orientation** - includes information on the full array of services available through our system. Information shared also includes a description of how to access the various services. Orientation is mainly provided through group sessions; however one-on-one appointments are offered on a case-by-case basis if needed.
3. **Intake** – is mainly performed upon completion of an orientation session for all individuals who choose to access staff-assisted services. This intake includes completion of all required forms; Registration Form, EEO Summary of Complaints and other local forms; Commitment to Service and Employment Verification Form.
4. **Pre-Assessment** - upon completion of Orientation OMJ LC center staff conduct a "triage" session where they gather eligibility documentation that may have been brought in by individuals who attended orientation and also to advise individuals who did not bring in the required documentation what they will need to provide in order for eligibility to be established at a future meeting date. The triage session is also used for staff to perform an initial assessment to determine if the individual will be best served through a Workforce Development Specialist, the staff who assist with career counseling and access to training, or an Employment Specialist, the staff who help with job referral and other job readiness services. The applicants are provided with additional one-on-one direction on how to access the services provided through these functions.
5. **Eligibility** – is conducted to determine if individuals are qualified to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, youth or other partner programs. In some instances, eligibility may be determined during the intake process, for others it may be satisfied during a follow up appointment with a Workforce Development Specialist, Employment Specialist or other One-Stop partner staff.
6. **Information and Referral** – individuals that do not meet enrollment requirements of a particular program or are not eligible for WIOA services are offered assistance in accessing organizations that may be able to provide additional assistance.
7. **Labor Exchange Services** – are provided and include:
  - Job Search & Placement Assistance
  - Career Counseling that includes; providing information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations in addition to information on non-traditional employment opportunities
8. **Other Basic Career Services** include providing:
  - Workforce and labor market employment statistics on local, regional and national level

- Job postings
- Performance information and program cost for eligible providers of training services
- Information on filing claims for unemployment
- Information on the performance of the local area and the one-stop delivery system
- Information on the availability of supportive services and follow services
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for other activities and programs of financial aid assistance for training and education
- Workshops on resume development, interviewing skills, on-line employment applications and basic computer skills

### **Individualized Career Services**

Individualized Career Services are provided if determined appropriate in order for an individual to obtain or retain employment. The OMJ LC center provides the following Individualized Career Services:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments, such as diagnostic testing for skill levels, interests and aptitude, including WorkKeys and MyPlan Career Assessment
- Group counseling and career planning
- Individual counseling and career planning
- Development of an Employment Plan to identify employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives and appropriate services needed to help participants meet established goals
- Delivery of workshops focused on soft skill and other job readiness topics
- Case Management
- Job search assistance, including out-of-area job search and relocation assistance if needed
- Financial literacy services
- Access to internships and work experiences that are linked to careers

### **Follow up Services**

Follow up services are provided, as appropriate, and include: counseling regarding the workplace, for participants in adult or dislocated worker WIOA activities who are placed in unsubsidized employment through with the assistance of OMJ LC staff. These services are available for a minimum of twelve (12) months after the first day of employment.

### **Training Services**

Training Services are considered for eligible individuals who after having an interview, evaluation, or assessment and career planning are unlikely or unable to obtain or retain

employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services, and for individuals who have the skills and qualifications to participate successfully in the training. Customers may access these services by being determined eligible for one of several funding sources.

The OMJ LC center assists eligible clients in completing the procedures that have been established by the Lorain County Workforce Development Board (LCWDB) to access an Individual Training Account (ITA). These procedures will minimally include; ensuring that the requested training is for an approved career or career path as identified in the state demand occupations or other locally defined demand occupations, that the training provider has satisfied the requirements to be on the local Eligible Training Provider List that will be maintained by LCWDA and that the customer satisfies any other requirements that have been approved by the LCWDB.

Current policy in place that was approved by the LCWDB includes having a cap in place that limits ITA's approved for a specific occupation to 20% of total funds approved for training. Exceptions to this policy are available should we be assisting with a business expansion, a customized training or a layoff aversion activity. The board also has an approved policy in place that prioritizes the preference of training providers considering the lowest-cost option locally for the selected training, and according to the hierarchy of pursuing the training at a Lorain County publicly supported institution, a publicly supported institution beyond Lorain County, or a private/proprietary institution from within the County in this order.

Once staff have assisted the customers in completing the outlined process, and have deemed the individuals eligible and appropriate for training, the ITA and all supporting documentation is submitted for review and approval by the LCWDA. Each participant that is determined eligible will have an ITA with an established amount of funds in the account based on an individual needs-based assessment. The funds are allocated to the individual based on total training costs and funding availability.

Training services available through OMJ LC center include:

- Occupational skill training
- On-the-Job training
- Incumbent Worker training
- Workplace training and related instruction
- Skill upgrading and retraining
- Job readiness training
- Entrepreneurial training
- Adult education and literacy activities
- Customized training

The OMJ LC center staff maintain constant contact with the customers assigned to their caseload and are expected to provide case notes for all interactions that take place to support

progress or lack of progress that may be identified through these interactions. Upon completion of training, customers are provided with guidance on how to access the services provided by the Employment Specialist.

***Description of Services for Youth***

**Comprehensive Case Management & Employment Program (CCMEP)**

In May 2016, the Lorain County Board of Commissioners designated the Lorain County Workforce Development Agency to serve as the lead agency for CCMEP. The CCMEP Plan for Lorain County was drafted and submitted to ODJFS shortly after on May 31, 2016. In June, 2016 the Lorain County Workforce Development Board submitted a Letter of Intent to authorize the use of WIOA Youth funding to the operation of CCMEP and a resolution was approved by the LCWDB in August 2016 and submitted to ODJFS as required to finalize our areas involvement.

The LCWDB has authorized the Lorain County Workforce Development Agency, who is the Fiscal Agent for the Board, to deliver the services that are being made available through CCMEP. Youth who are required to participate in CCMEP are referred to the OMJ LC center by the LCDJFS. The required participants who are referred are scheduled to attend an orientation that is designed to educate them about the services they will access through CCMEP, in addition to reinforcing of the requirement they have to participate. The WIOA Youth & Young Adult Program Eligibility Application and other required paperwork is completed as part of the orientation session, in addition to the completion of the CCMEP Comprehensive Assessment. OMJ LC center staff meet individually with each participant to make sure the fully completed the forms and to answer any questions that they may have.

Most of the youth who are referred to CCMEP, are scheduled the same week of the orientation to participate in a two-week Career Success Workshop that covers both soft skill and job readiness skills. During the first week of the workshop, participants are provided with employer-driven soft skill training to help them understand what employers are looking for in an employee and also equips the participant with skills to retain employment. Some of the topics that are included in the curriculum include;

- Job Expectations & Work Ethic
- Problem Solving & Priorities
- Elements of Communication
- Good Customer Service

During the second week of the workshop, participants are provided with information and training necessary to be success in today's job market. Some of the topics that are included in the curriculum include;

- Transitional Curve, Stress, Confidence, Recognizing Transferable Skills & the Job Application
- Networking & Social Media
- Salary Negotiations & Job Search Methods

The second week of the workshop also includes an optional Career Assessment that is conducted through the use of a Career Exploration tool, MyPlan, that is offered through Lorain Community College, in addition to the administration of the WorkKeys assessment that is in support of our Work Ready Lorain County initiative. Participants are encouraged to access the practice WorkKeys assessment that is available through the OhioMeansJobs.com site to be prepared for the actual assessment they will complete.

Upon completion of the Career Success Workshop, participants are scheduled to meet with a case manager who will work with them in helping to create the Individual Opportunity Plan (IOP) that is required for their involvement in the CCMEP program. The IOP will be developed based on the individual's hourly requirement and staff will include the results of the MyPlan and WorkKeys assessment in addition to information that was provided in the Comprehensive Assessment in helping to access the 14 elements that are offered through CCMEP.

Individuals who may not be able to participate in the Career Success Workshop, including those who may be actively engaged in training, employed, or just not fit to participate will be scheduled for a one-on-one appointment where the case manager will assist in creating an IOP based on their individual needs.

Additional details on the OMJ LC CCMEP programming can be found in the Local Plan that was submitted as required in rule 5101:14-1-03 of the Administrative Code.

#### ***Roles and Resource Contributions of the OMJ Partners***

The roles and resource contributions of each partner of the OMJ LC system are established by the following:

- The terms and conditions of the WIOA statute and regulations governing each OMJ center partner's program and grant appropriations.
- Ohio's combined state plan which governs and dictates each mandated OMJ center partner's role in workforce development.

- The terms and conditions of each OMJ center partner as negotiated and reduced to writing as part of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

A determination of the partners adhering to the agreed upon roles and responsibilities shall be the joint responsibility of the Department of Labor, the State of Ohio, as the drafting agent of the combined state plan, ODJFS as the grant issuing authority, and the LCWDB who is responsible for oversight of the OMJ LC center operator.

The current terms and conditions that were agreed to were outlined in the MOU that was created and agreed to in July, 2022 and is effective from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

The LCWDB will be working with the partners of the OMJ LC system to consider acceptance of a two-year MOU that will be effective from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2025.

#### ***Identification of Fiscal Agent***

The LCWDB recommended and the Lorain County Board of Commissioners approved for the Lorain County Workforce Development Agency to serve as the Fiscal Agent that is responsible for the disbursal of grant funds described in section 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(iii).

#### ***Description of Competitive Process to be Used to Award Sub-grants and Contracts***

The LCWDB will follow all rules that have been established when going through the competitive procurement process should there be a need to award sub-grants or other contracts. These procedures shall minimally include:

- A pre-competitive solicitation design and planning process that takes into consideration how the services sought should be designed.
- A pre-competitive solicitation cost analysis that sets forth an estimated range of the expected bids for the provision of goods and/or services.
- When required by local policy, the publication within one or more area media outlets, as well as publication on the local website of the opportunity to submit proposals, quotes, and/or bids.
- Outreach to any vendors on the Lorain County bidder's list and/or those known in within the area to be in the market to offer applicable goods and services.
- A published, Request for Proposals, or other document that sets forth all of the terms and conditions relating to the information that must be submitted by an interested entity desiring to provide goods or services, including the basis for which the LCWDB will make the decision to award a contract.
- A decision-making process that includes review of all proposals submitted, including an analysis and where required, a scoring of the proposals submitted.

- A timely notification of the decision of which entities were and were not selected based upon the submission of information, including a period and procedure for those entities to appeal any decisions made.
- A negotiation of the final terms and conditions regarding the provision of goods and/or services, with the same reduced to a written agreement when required, that will govern the performance of the parties to the agreement.

***Description of Local Levels of Performance***

The LCWDB has successfully met the established levels of performance for all measures over the past program year. The following table's support these outcomes for PY 20.

<b>WIOA Performance Measure</b>	<b>PY20</b>
<i>Adult Employment 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit</i>	Success
<i>Adult Median Earnings 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit</i>	Success
<i>DW Employment 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit</i>	Success
<i>DW Median Earnings 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit</i>	Success
<i>CCMEP WIOA Youth Education, Training, or Employment 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit</i>	Success
<i>CCMEP WIOA Youth Median Earnings 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit</i>	Success

***Action Board Will Take Towards Becoming or Remaining a High Performing Board***

County Administration is always evaluating the membership of the board to make certain that the representation is comprised of individuals that would continue to efforts in helping the board be high performing. This evaluation includes making sure that members satisfy the following criteria:

- All employers who are represented are deemed to either be in-demand industries, or employed in demand occupations
- All employers who are represented are chosen because the representation of their industry or commitment to the community provides for unique and valued perspectives
- All employer representatives are managerial level, and in most cases will be the most senior of their organization's management, or business owners
- As required, the chair and vice-chair positions on the LCWDB will be reserved for employer representatives in order to make sure that the board is led by those with a perspective for serving the needs of industry
- The LCWDB design includes representatives from community based/interest organizations to ensure that we are providing for the needs of impoverished or other specialized job seeker groups, representatives in these areas
- The LCWDB design includes representatives from other agencies that are that focus on the needs of impoverished

Through the bylaws that were created by the LCWDB, it is expected that each board member attends all board meetings and that any board member not being able to fulfill their responsibilities will be contacted to ascertain their interest in continuing to serve on the board. Any member missing two consecutive meetings within a year will be forwarded to the Board of Commissioners or their designee the Lorain County Administrator for consideration of removal from the board. This requirement was put into place to make sure that those serving on the board are providing the necessary input and decision making that is needed to continue to be a high performing board.

#### ***Assurances***

The LCWDB agrees to all assurances that have been outlined in the Northeast Ohio Workforce (NOW) Regional Plan.

#### ***Signatures***

The Area #4 required signatures for the Regional NOW Plan and the Lorain Local Area Plan can be found in the Signatures section of the NOW Regional Plan.



## Area #5/Lake County Local Workforce Development Plan

*Lake County, Ohio: Who are we? We are the north coast neighbors to Cuyahoga County, home of the 20<sup>th</sup> President of the United States James A. Garfield, home of the Major League Baseball affiliate Lake County Captains, and birthplace of legendary Ohio State Football coach Jim Tressel. Lake County has a diverse population and economy, with a variety of historic, recreational, and cultural offerings that provide for a high quality of work and life. But, we are much more than twenty-three communities, nine cities, nine villages and five townships. We represent.... "The Gateway to Lake County", "Great Living on a Great Lake", "Where the City Meets the Country", "Together We Take Pride", "The City of Choice", and "A City of Faith & Beauty". These tag lines used by some of our cities and villages, symbolizes our identity, says something about the people that live here along with their values and what they view as important. We might be small, but we are mighty!*

Lake County is geographically the smallest of the 88 counties in Ohio but ranks 11<sup>th</sup> in population. Located on the Lake Erie Coast, about twenty miles east of Cleveland, Lake County is situated near Interstate 90 and State Route 2. The Grand River and the Chagrin River dissect the County and provide the area with many economic and recreational activities in the area. The plentiful Lake Erie water source supplies public, domestic and industrial uses.

Currently, the leading industrial products are medical and metal products, musical and scientific instruments, chemicals, plastics, packaging and labeling. Lake County's employers are diverse and represent a variety of industries:

- Lake Health (now part of University Hospitals) is Lake County's largest employer and has been an integral part of our community for over one hundred years. Lake Health/University Hospitals is a private, non-profit leader in community healthcare in Northeast Ohio and has nine healthcare facilities throughout Lake and Geauga County. The network includes 600 physicians, 2,900 healthcare professionals and boasts 1,000 volunteers.
- Steris Corporation is a global leader in infection prevention, decontamination, and surgical products and services. Their World Headquarters is located in Mentor, where they focus primarily on healthcare, pharmaceutical and research markets. Steris operates at four locations in Lake County. They employ approximately 1,043 individuals in Lake County.
- Avery Dennison, is a giant in the packaging industry as a leader on the cutting edge of the labeling business. In 2016, they struck a deal with the "Facebook for things" firm, named "Evrythng", to create unique web identities for at least ten billion pieces of apparel over the next three years on brands such as Nike, Adidas, and Hugo Boss. They have a total of six facilities in Lake County, employing approximately 1,454 people.
- Lubrizol Corporation, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway is an innovative, technology-driven global company that employs about 1,300 people from their local base of operations in Lake County. They are a leader in Lake County and in

our Region as an International producer and distributor in specialty chemicals in global transportation business and industrial and consumer markets.

- Lincoln Electric employs approximately 3,000 individuals. They are the world leader in the design, development and the manufacturing of arc welding products, robotic arc-welding systems, plasma and oxyfuel cutting equipment and have a leading global position in the brazing and soldering alloys market.

In addition to our largest employers, Lake County's economy is driven by several industry clusters including: Manufacturing, Agriculture and Energy. These industry clusters play a crucial role in the maintenance and expansion of our communities.

- Manufacturing plays a huge role in Lake County's employment and overall quality of life. In 2020, there were 22,000 people employed in manufacturing in Lake County. A 5% increase from 2015 and is expected to grow by 2% by 2025. Statewide, manufacturing was 17% of Ohio's GDP, the largest sector in the state. In addition to adding the most jobs, Manufacturing also has the highest location quotient (LQ). Industry LQ provides a measure of how "concentrated" an industry is in a region compared to the nation, with a measure of 1.00 indicating the same concentration as the nation. In this analysis, LQs greater than 1.25 are considered to be the threshold for identifying an industry as relatively strong for the county's economic base. The only other sector that meets that threshold in Lake County is Utilities (2.62).

Organizations like Alliance for Working Together (AWT) and Chamber of Commerce organizations play an active role in promoting rewarding careers in manufacturing. They are changing the face of manufacturing by introducing grade school students to careers in manufacturing, providing apprenticeship programs to high school students starting in the ninth grade and through their much-publicized robotics competitions. These endeavors promote partnerships between students and businesses in manufacturing industries. The AWT foundation realizes that there is a critical shortage of skilled workers to satisfy growing demand. As a result, the AWT has partnered with Lakeland Community College to develop Associate of Applied Science degree in Manufacturing. AWT also promotes training programs in manufacturing/machine trades at Auburn Career Center, Cleveland Industrial Training Center, and Precision Machining Institute. These Programs are identified on the States' Eligible Training Provider List. In 2020, OhioMeansJobs Lake County partnered with AWT to launch the first apprenticeship in Lake County funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA) Act.

- Lake County's agricultural economy is buoyed by horticulture and viticulture (the wine and grape industry). These industries produce sales from goods and services valued at over \$160 million annually and supports an estimated 1,500 job and a payroll of approximately \$30 million annually. Viticulture is making a significant and growing contribution to the Lake County economy with an estimated output of \$15 million annually. Lake Counties Nursery industry is ranked #1 in the state of Ohio. It is estimated that over one-half million people annually visit the regions wineries as a destination location.

- The Perry Nuclear Power Plant is the largest single unit in the FirstEnergy generating fleet and one of the largest plants of its type in the United States and provides about 720 high quality jobs. The skill level of these jobs led to the creation of the Nuclear Engineering Technology Program at Lakeland Community College. In addition, Auburn Career Center, Lakeland Community College and Willoughby –Eastlake Schools offer a variety of Training Programs in Welding. These programs are identified on the States’ Eligible Training Provider List. As of 2020, utilities provide 926 jobs with an average annual wage of \$188,000, the largest average wage in Lake County.

The Perry plant produces enough electricity to power more than 1 million homes daily. It is also one of the largest taxpayers in Lake County, paying more than \$14 million annually to support local schools and vital services. Employees at Perry contribute their time to the community through organizations such as the Perry Plant Community Action Group, which raises thousands of dollars and devotes countless hours each year to charitable causes.

The Lake County Workforce Development Board’s mission is to understand the employment skills needed by our businesses for their job openings to both efficiently match job seekers with jobs and provide job training programs for in-demand industries. We focus training individuals who are unemployed, under-employed, under-skilled, or in need of assistance to move into jobs with family-sustaining wages.

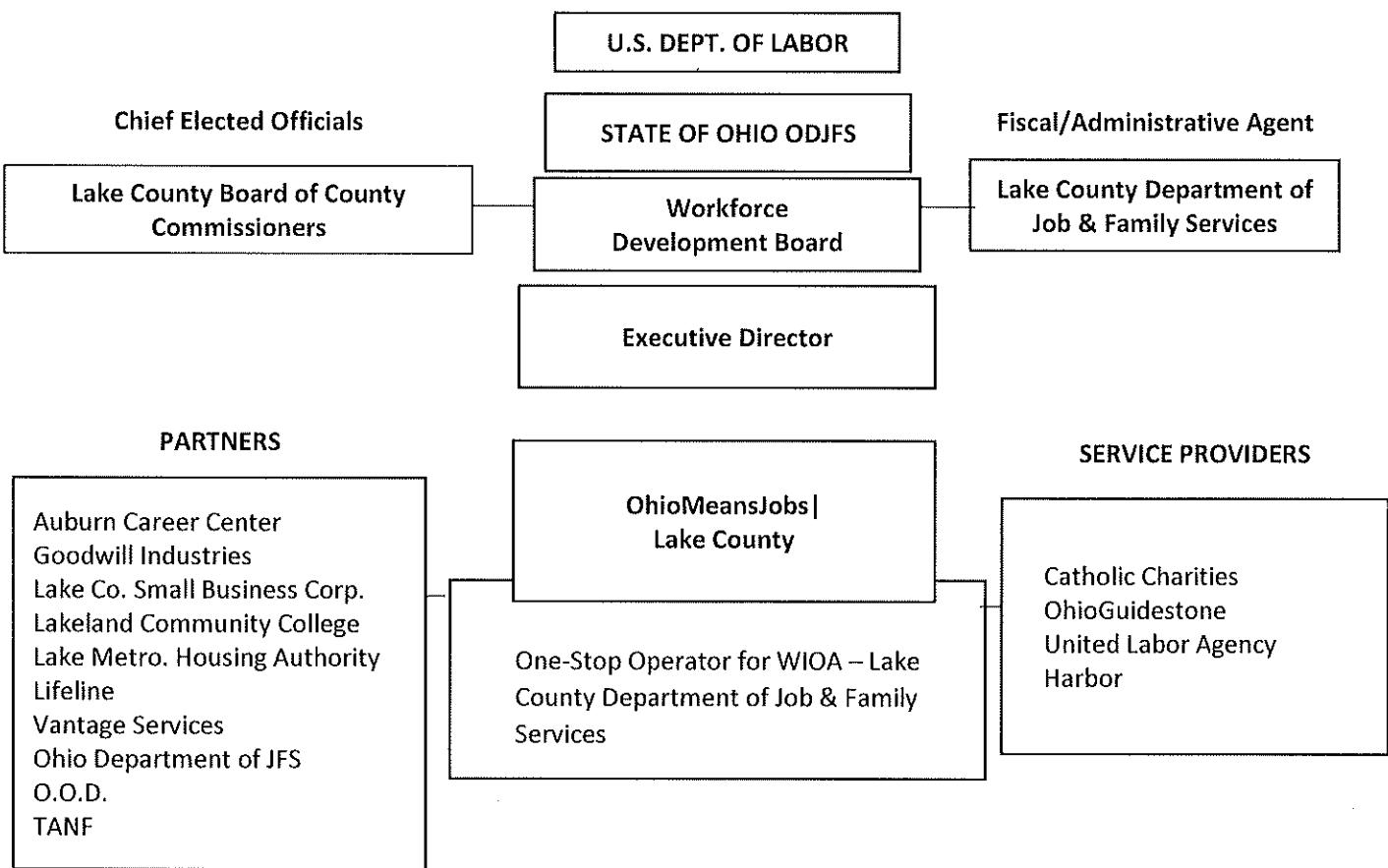
## LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD & STRUCTURE

### Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA):

Congress passed WIOA with broad, bi-partisan support to replace the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Most of WIOA's provisions for the nation's employment and training system became effective on July 1, 2015. WIOA continues a federal-state-local structure for workforce programs that provides flexibility to the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs) and to the required local Workforce Development Boards that they appoint. WIOA requires the development of Local, Regional and State Workforce Development Plans.

For Lake County, the structure is:

### **Lake County WDB WIOA Structure**



The key elements of WIOA's workforce development system are:

- Provide *Universal Access* to those who seeks employment and training services through a local *One-Stop Career Center* (OhioMeansJobs Lake County). WIOA requires that ten other workforce programs be *Integrated and Located* at the Center so that jobseekers can get what they need in “one stop.”
- The ten partner programs must each execute a *Memorandum of Understanding* (MOU) with OhioMeansJobs Lake County annually to describe the commitment being made to the one-stop center operations. MOU attached.
- Services must be *demand driven* in order to match training investments to the skills needed by employers for current and projected jobs. WIOA emphasizes the development of *sector strategies and career pathways* with employers.
- Results must be *Outcomes Based* across a *Common Set of Performance Measures*. Specific local performance metrics are negotiated with the state based on the local priorities and strategies. Performance Measures are attached.
- *Priority of Services* for all programs to veterans; priority *of services* for the adult program are to low-income, public assistance recipients and those with basic skills deficiencies.

### **Lake County Workforce Development Board (LCWDB)**

The Lake County Workforce Development Board (LCWDB) is a twenty-three (23) member board appointed by The Lake County Commissioners, with the majority representing private businesses and the balance representing higher education, economic development, organized labor and other workforce related programs and partners. The Governor designated Lake County to continue as Local Workforce Area #5, one of the twenty Ohio Workforce Boards under WIOA. LCWDB is also one of the five distinct Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) in the new Northeast Ohio Workforce (NOW) Planning Region made up of Cuyahoga, Lorain, Lake, Geauga, Ashtabula, Portage, Summit and Medina counties. Lake County’s Local Workforce Development Plan is a supplement to the NOW Regional Workforce Development Plan.

The Lake County Workforce Development Board (LCWDB) has established itself as one of Ohio’s Workforce Development leaders. Under the Board’s direction, Area #5 has regularly led the state or been at the top of the statutory Common Measures performance outcomes.

The Board’s development of a local Return on Investment Tool (ROI) is unparalleled in its methodology of measuring the taxpayer’s ROI in payback months. Ongoing operational goals are set and monitored on the Lake County Balanced Scorecard which has been recognized as an industry best practice.

The Lake County Workforce Development Board is committed to the following guiding principles:

- *Generate a jobs-driven system based on business retention and expansion.*
- *Create an economy that works for all people willing and able to work.*
- *Make Lake County a premier place to live, work, and play.*
- *Continuously strive to strengthen both our public and private sector partnerships.*
- *Strive to provide excellent customer service and to be proactive to effectively meet the changing needs and expectations of our employers and job seekers.*
- *Remember that our local employers, big and small, are the lifeblood of our economy.*
- *Continue to implement strategies and approaches that are data driven and recognized best practices.*
- *Commit to offering training services for in-demand occupations with the belief that our investment of time and money in human capital most always provides a significant return.*
- *Believe that everyone deserves the dignity that comes from employment and self-sufficiency.*

The LCWDB created an operating structure to assist in accomplishing its goals which includes the creation of five Standing Committees. The committees are: Executive Committee; Planning & Programs Committee; Youth Committee; One-Stop Committee, and Marketing Committee. Board members through these committees, have been engaged in the development of this plan. Our dedicated Board members come from a vast representation of disciplines and industries get things done and they are actively and regularly engaged. The list of Board members and their representation is attached.

#### **OhioMeansJobs Lake County (OMJ|LC)**

The LCWDB provides oversight to the Ohiomeansjobs center located at 177 Main Street in Painesville, Ohio. Satellite services are offered at library branches throughout Lake County to expand services.

The “One-Stop Operator” of the Ohiomeansjobs center is the Lake County Department of Job and Family Services (LCDJFS). LCDJFS is a quadruple-combined agency which provides Income Maintenance Programs, Medicaid/ Food stamps, Child Support, Child and Adult Protective Services and Employment and Training Services. Partners and their staff located in and around the “one stop” expand and improve the quality of services making this a true “one-stop” system.

## The Planning Process

- The five Workforce Development Board Directors representing the eight counties in northeast Ohio (Cuyahoga, Lorain, Lake, Summit, Medina, Geauga, Portage and Ashtabula) began working together in the fall of 2015 on an approach to conduct the regional planning process. Regional planning funds were provided by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to the Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Board (CCWDB); a Planning RFP was issued, and a consultant team was selected and began work on the Regional Plan. All five Workforce Boards are represented on a Northeast Ohio Workforce (NOW) Steering Committee which met and worked with the consulting team on a regular basis.
- In addition, input was solicited from: Local Elected Officials; all five WDBs and Committee members; four community colleges; various economic development entities; a number of businesses and business intermediaries and associations; workforce employment and training providers; OMJ staff; and, other leaders in education, philanthropy, research institutions, etc.
- The planning team conducted and extensive analysis of the regional economy and labor market which is incorporated into the Regional Workforce Plan.
- The WIOA Youth Program is now part of The Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program CCMEP as mandated by the state of Ohio. CCMEP is driven by its own plan. The data and information obtained from the CCMEP planning process is an integral part of local workforce initiatives.
- Action strategies were developed for the Regional and Local plans based on the data analyses and all the input received through the planning process and supportive of the State Workforce Plan.
- The Draft Plans will be published for public comment and once those are received and incorporated, the Final Plans will be submitted to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services by May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Once approved, they set the workforce agenda for the next four years to 2025.

## Workforce Resources

Included in this report is a review of the labor market of Northeast Ohio. Workforce development strategies must be responsive to the needs of businesses for jobs and skills in demand as well as an understanding of the supply-side. These notes summarize Workforce Demand and Workforce Supply highlights from the following sources:

### CHARACTERISTICS OF LAKE COUNTY'S WORKFORCE

#### Workforce Demand:

- 53% of jobs in the eight county region are located in Cuyahoga County while 20% are located in Summit County.
- The identified commuting patterns helps us to understand our workforce relationship with other counties.
  - The Lake County workforce of 125,900 people. A total of 119,900 are currently employed. Approximately 37,515 workers commute to Lake County from other counties for employment. 41,635 live here and work here, while 56,850 live here and work outside of the county.
  - The City of Mentor has the largest number of employed workers working within the city, with 35,000 people going to work within city limits every day. Followed by the City of Willoughby with 23,945 people working within their city limits every day.
- Lake Health/University Hospital Systems, Inc. and Lake County Government are the #1 and #2 employers in Lake County based on number of employees followed by Lubrizol Corporation and Steris Corporation.
- About 91% of businesses in Lake County are small businesses with 49 or fewer employees; only 4 employers have more than 1000 employees.

The following charts provide a more in-depth look of the Lake County Workforce:

Salary for Job Ads for 2022

Salary Range	Ads
Entry Level Jobs (less than \$30K)	15.0%
Middle Income Jobs (\$30K-\$49K)	33.1%
Upper Middle Income Jobs (\$50K-\$79K)	31.0%
High Income Jobs (\$80K-\$99K)	9.9%
Six Figure Jobs (\$100K+)	11.0%

Education for Job Ads for 2022

Education Range	Ads
GED/High School	47.2%
Associate Level	20.4%
Bachelor's Degree	28.2%
Master's Degree	2.1%
Doctoral Degree	2.1%

Top Certifications for Job Ads for 2022

Certifications	Ads
Driver's License	1,820
Basic Life Support	1,133
Certified Registered Nurse	1,025
Commercial Driver's License	609
Advanced Cardiac Life Support	588
Licensed Practical Nurse	470
Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation	405
Class A Commercial Drivers License	377
Occupational Safety & Health Administration Certification	312
First Aid certification	275

Top Skills for Job Ads for 2022

Skills	Ads
Customer service	2,883
Operations	2,784
Scheduling	2,235
Nursing	1,870
Supervision	1,779
Computer usage (basic)	1,287
Organizational skills	1,248
Microsoft Office	1,094
Mathematics	951
Prioritization	902

Top Employers with the Most Area Job Ads for 2022

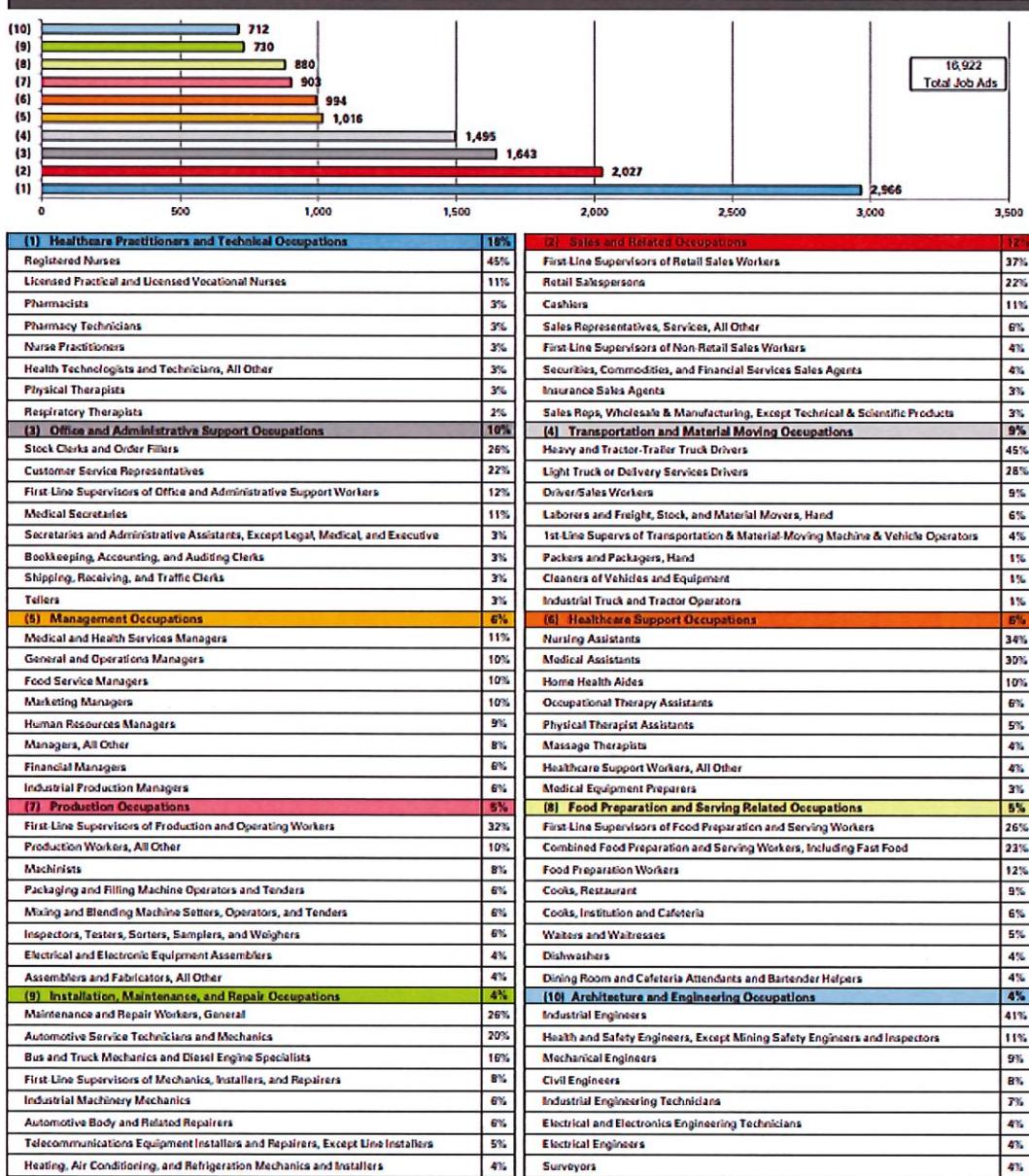
Employer	Ads
University Hospitals	2,403
STERIS	825
Avery Dennison Corporation	548
Lubrizol	415
Amazon	320
Promedica	252
Signature Health Inc.	215
Giant Eagle	181
Parker Hannifin Corp	169
The Dollar General	152
Great Clips	135
Henkel Corporation	130
Cleveland Clinic	123
Varsity Tutors	123
Walgreens	122
MENTOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS	116
TT electronics-ims	113
Carvana	106
Walmart	88
ProMedica Senior Care	88
Precision Castparts Corp.	87
C.R. England, Inc.	82
BROOKDALE	77
McDonald's Corporation	74
Lake County Department of Utilities	71
U.S. Customs & Border Protection	69
Swagelok Company	67
PENSKE	65
CVS Health	63
Massage Envy	63
Lake Erie College	62
Frontage Laboratories, LLC	62
Wickliffe Country Place	61
GetGo Caf + Market	61
Ohio Living Breckinridge Village	60

Top Occupations with the Most Area Job Ads for 2022

Occupation	Ads
Registered Nurses	1,348
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	750
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	666
Retail Salespersons	442
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	431
Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	413
Customer Service Representatives	362
Nursing Assistants	334
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	321
Medical Assistants	297
Industrial Engineers	294
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	289
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	228
Cashiers	223
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	202
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	201
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	190
Medical Secretaries	174
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	143
Sales Representatives, Services, All Other	131
Driver/Sales Workers	130
Teachers and Instructors, All Other	124
Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	116
Medical and Health Services Managers	115
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	114
Food Preparation Workers	109
Software Developers, Applications	108
Personal Care Aides	105
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	105
Computer Occupations, All Other	105
Computer User Support Specialists	105
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	103
Social and Human Service Assistants	103
General and Operations Managers	103
Home Health Aides	101

## Online Job Postings—Occupational Focus

Top Jobs in Lake County: Annual 2022



Source: Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Labor Market Information Division

## **REGIONAL DATA**

Team NEO initiated a “deep dive” analysis of this issue in northeast Ohio ad published its 6<sup>th</sup> annual edition of its work on “Aligning Opportunities in Northeast Ohio, 2022 Report.” This report provides excellent documentation regarding the skills in-demand and the credentials being produced. This work focuses on the three key industries in this region which are: Healthcare, Manufacturing, and IT. ([Team NEO's 2022 Annual P&I Report \(northeastohioregion.com\)](http://Team NEO's 2022 Annual P&I Report (northeastohioregion.com).)).

Some of the key findings are:

- The region is not producing enough high-skilled workers.
  - By 2025, 65% of workers will need a 2- or 4-year degree to qualify for the available jobs. Currently, 38% of the population have a 2- or 4-year degree, and 21% have some college/training but no degree.
  - The workforce in the region does not possess the skills that employers are seeking to fill their jobs in sufficient numbers. In 2021, the number of unfilled entry level jobs in these key industries was: Manufacturing: 10,191; Healthcare: 18,259; and IT: 5,902. This totals over 34,000 entry-level jobs going unfilled in these three industries.
  - African American, Hispanic and other minority groups have lower levels of educational attainment, higher unemployment rates, and are more likely to work in lower wage occupations.

### Soft/Essential/Work Readiness/Baseline/Foundational Skills:

- These skills are most needed in occupations that involve higher levels of personal interaction relative to technical activities. Customer Service Support, Clerical and Administrative, Human Resources, Hospitality, Sales, and Management are all areas where employers place an emphasis on these skills. LightCast (a proprietary LMI tool) has conceptualized the broad range of these skills into six clusters: customer service, presentation & persuasion, detail oriented, supervision, positive disposition, and project management, research & strategy.

### **Workforce Supply:**

- We continue to experience a relatively low unemployment rate in Lake County. According to the Ohio Office of Workforce Development - Bureau of Labor Market Information, Lake County has an unemployment rate of 3.3 % as of December 2022, which is around the state average of 3.9%.
- The labor force in Lake County is approximately, 125,900. With 6,000 being unemployed.
- We have a 5.9% poverty rate in Lake County, approximately 13,581 people.
- An estimated 17,340 Individuals receive assistance through The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) designed to expand buying power and safe guard the health and well-being of low-income individuals.

- Collectively, 95.2% of our population has a GED or higher.

Jobseekers have other barriers to employment:

- In neighboring Cuyahoga County, an estimated 3,700 Ex-offenders are returning citizens to the community per year. This is the highest in the state.
- Lake County has an estimated 20 ex-offenders per month returning to the community.
- In Lake County there are 221 Adults receiving TANF, 16 have a disability noted in Ohio Benefits.
- We have 10,138 adults on SNAP, 4,350 are over 60 or have a disability noted in Ohio Benefits.
- Transportation to jobs can be a barrier for those working nontraditional hours or for those who are not on a bus line or employers who are not on a bus line. Some jobseekers are unable to pass a drug test as part of the hiring process.

Hurdles to improving skills:

- Weak literacy, numeracy and academic skills leave some in need of remediation to increase reading, math, etc. before they can start job training/skill upgrading courses.
- Lack of information about labor market, colleges, career technical training courses and, therefore, good jobs and career paths.
- Enrollments/completions of post-secondary courses in fields with little labor market value or low demand for workers. Students expect to transfer a Liberal Arts associate degree to a four-year school, but most don't follow through.
- High School Diploma or Equivalency is not easily accessible. GED has become more challenging academically, more expensive to take, and only accessible on the internet.
- Support services like childcare are not widely available.
- Many low-skilled workers are working and cannot stop working to take training.
- Not enough "Learn and Earn" opportunities like apprenticeships, internships, co-ops, work experience opportunities, etc.

Lake County Population

Table 1: Population by Age, 2020

	2020 Population	2020 % of Cohort	Change (2015-2020)	Projected Change (2020-2025)
Under 5 years	11,556	5.0%	(32) (0.3%)	1,502 13.0%
5 to 19 years	38,548	16.8%	(2,654) (6.4%)	(2,074) (5.4%)
20 to 34 years	40,788	17.7%	1,335 3.4%	(609) (1.5%)
35 to 54 years	55,427	24.1%	(4,622) (7.7%)	(1,352) (2.4%)
55 to 64 years	35,200	15.3%	(24) (0.1%)	(4,228) (12.0%)
65+ years	48,668	21.1%	6,347 15.0%	6,967 14.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>230,187</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>349 0.2%</b>	<b>206 0.1%</b>

Table 2: Population by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	2020 Population	2020 % of Cohort	2015-2020 % Change	2020-2025 % Change
White	200,666	87.18%	(2.1%)	(1.5%)
Hispanic	11,128	4.83%	18.6%	11.9%
Black	10,860	4.72%	26.8%	14.3%
Two or More Races	3,727	1.62%	11.5%	7.3%
Asian	3,481	1.51%	7.0%	3.4%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	281	0.12%	17.2%	6.7%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	43	0.02%	2.3%	7.2%

Table 3: Poverty Rate & Median Household Income 2020

	Poverty Rate	Median Household Income
Lake County, OH	5.9%	\$65,814
Ashtabula County, OH	15.3%	\$47,925
Cuyahoga County, OH	15.9%	\$51,741
Geauga County, OH	6.3%	\$83,730
Ohio	13.4%	\$58,116
United States	12.8%	\$64,994

Table 4: Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over, 2020

Education Level	2020 County Pop. 25 and Over	2020 % of County Pop. 25 and Over	2020 % of OH Pop. 25 and Over	2020 % of U.S. Pop. 25 and Over
Less Than 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	2,637	1.6%	2.7%	4.8%
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade to 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	5,466	3.2%	5.5%	5.9%
High School Diploma	53,943	31.9%	32.8%	26.3%
Some College	36,382	21.5%	19.2%	19.3%
Associate's Degree	17,506	10.4%	9.0%	8.8%
Bachelor's Degree	34,054	20.2%	18.9%	21.2%
Graduate Degree & Higher	19,010	11.2%	11.8%	13.8%

Source: U.S. Census, 2020 American Community Survey

## Four-Year Action Strategies

The goals and reform principle strategies identified in the Combined State Plan are supported by Regional Plans. In conjunction with the State and Regional Plans, by utilizing effective “One-Stop” operations and following the Workforce Development Board’s guiding principles, locally we will strive to accomplish the following:

- Assist more individuals to join the workforce;
  - Expand outreach efforts to identify potential consumers to our services.
  - Require all job seekers to register and to utilize the [ohiomeansjobs.com](http://ohiomeansjobs.com) system.
  - Operate an effective CCMEP enabling approximately 100 young adults (age 16-24) on TANF to move into jobs with continued support and training and provide career services to approximately 50 WIOA young adults, annually.

- Facilitate an effective WorksFirst Program for TANF adults over age 25 to move into jobs with continued coaching support, and training when appropriate.
  - Continue to place between 150-200 Adults and Dislocated Workers into jobs annually.
  - Provide Priority of Service to valuable, talented Veterans as a “ready workforce”.
- Assist low-skilled workers to improve their skills to meet workforce demands in the labor marketplace;
  - Encourage and assist school-aged youth to remain through graduation.
  - Promote the use of ABLE Services to help reduce the number of residents without a high school diploma/GED.
  - Perform statewide common assessment strategies to identify literacy and numeracy deficiencies and other barriers that deter employment.
  - Provide and promote case management programs that offer assistance in mitigating barriers to those that have the potential of entering the workforce and retaining employment.
  - Promote paid and unpaid work experience opportunities.
  - Fund soft skills and skills training when appropriate for in-demand occupations
- Assist workers to improve their skills to meet employer demand for talent and to earn better wages;
  - Provide labor market data so consumers can understand workforce needs and have confidence in their career decisions.
  - Ensure career counseling opportunities for individuals accessing workforce programs.
  - Promote “learn and earn” opportunities, including apprenticeships, try-out employment, on-the-job and incumbent worker training with businesses.
  - Embed job readiness and soft-skills preparation in all workforce training programs.
  - Provide programs that allow co-enrollment between programs and services.
  - Identify and develop career pathways and promote awareness of good “middle-skills” jobs and careers for in-demand industries.
  - Pursue the acquisition of non-traditional sources to fund new and innovative program offerings.
  - Assist dislocated workers with timely and effective re-employment services to limit the duration of their unemployment.
- Work with employers to develop and implement employer specific on-the-job training, customized training and incumbent worker training opportunities;
  - Work with industry groups and clusters to define and promote careers.
  - Operate a high performing demand facing business services unit to assist employers with talent needs.
  - Identify, develop and initiate career pathways opportunities
  - Collaborate with economic development entities to identify avenues to new and expanding employer needs.

- Provide skills training for in-demand occupations for new job seekers and upskilling employees.
- Promote the use of [ohiomeansjobs.com](http://ohiomeansjobs.com) to employers as a resource for finding candidates and posting job openings.

The Lake County Workforce Development Board (LCWDB) will implement the action strategies identified below within the next four years to work toward the following workforce goals:

1. A workforce with the skills that are needed for business growth.
2. Career Pathways to prepare under-skilled and low-income workers for family-sustaining wage jobs.
3. A coordinated local workforce system.

Additionally, LCWDB will ensure compliance with all requirements of WIOA, will oversee the operations and performance of programs provided through the OMJ|LC centers and other contractors and operators, and will provide local leadership on workforce issues. There are five categories of Action Strategies:

- Regional Action Strategies developed in the NOW Regional Plan.
- Lake County Workforce Development Board Strategies.
- Business Strategies.
- Strategies for Adults, including Dislocated Workers.
- Youth Strategies.



# **Addendum to the Northeast Ohio Workforce Development Regional Plan**

## **Area 19 Local Workforce Plan for the Period of July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2025, As updated and revised in May of 2023.**

### **I. Introduction.**

This is the Area 19 Workforce Development Board (“WDB”) Local Workforce Plan (“local plan”). The local plan shall be in effect from the period from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2025. It is submitted as an Addendum to the Northeast Ohio (“NOW”) Regional Plan (“regional plan”), as required by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (“ODJFS”).

The required contents of this local plan are as set forth within ODJFS’ WIOAPL 16-03, including Attachment D of the same. ODJFS established the contents of this local plan pursuant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (“WIOA”), and its applicable final rules, which are set forth within the Code of Federal Regulation.

ODJFS has duly recognized and certified Area 19, and its WDB as the authorized recipients of WIOA funding for Ashtabula, Geauga, and Portage Counties, pursuant to its Subgrant Agreement with the same. Attached and incorporated to this local plan by this reference are a number of Appendices, which help to explain the structure of the Area 19 WDB. They include:

• <b>Appendix One</b>	<b>Intergovernmental Agreement (“IGA”)</b>
• <b>Appendix Two</b>	<b>Bylaws of the NOC COG</b>
• <b>Appendix Three</b>	<b>Roster of Employees of the NOC COG</b>
• <b>Appendix Four</b>	<b>Organizational Chart</b>
• <b>Appendix Five</b>	<b>Bylaws of the Area 19 WDB</b>
• <b>Appendix Six</b>	<b>Multi-Function Agreement</b>

### **II. Local Plan Descriptions Required by Attachment D of ODJFS’ WIOAPL 16-03.**

#### *A. A description of the workforce development system in the local area.*

##### *1. Identification of the programs that are included in the system.*

Attached and incorporated to this local plan addendum by this reference is an organizational chart. See **Appendix Four**. As referenced by the organizational chart, the Area WDB is on a horizontal plane with the Northeast Ohio Consortium Council of Governments (“NOC COG”).

The NOC COG is council of governments, a form of local government recognized pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code. The NOC COG is made up member representatives, one each from Ashtabula, Geauga, and Portage counties. The member representatives are duly elected county commissioners who are appointed to serve by their respective boards of county commissioners.

The NOC COG serves in multiple simultaneous capacities at once for workforce purposes. The NOC COG creates and appoints the WDB, as a standing committee. The NOC COG assigns to the WDB, all of the enumerated rights and responsibilities provided to a WDB by WIOA, its final rules, and all other binding federal and state laws, regulations, policies, etc. The NOC COG reserves to itself all of the enumerated rights and responsibilities assigned to local elected officials, including the Chief Elected Official (“CEO”). Where WIOA, its final rule, and all other binding federal and state laws, regulations, and policies enumerate rights and responsibilities to the CEO for the WDB, those are assigned to the NOC COG and CEO respectively of the same as set forth within the IGA and bylaws of the NOC COG. Where a right or responsibility assigned to the CEO is not assigned by the IGA and/or bylaws specifically to the NOC COG’s members collectively, they are assumed by the CEO for the NOC COG.

Within the IGA and bylaws for the NOC COG, the NOC COG is identified as the agent of the WDB. As the WDB’s agent, the NOC COG conducts the business required to be performed by the WDB. As the WDB’s agent, the NOC COG has the ability to contract with agents and/or to hire employees to perform the duties required of board staff, and a fiscal agent. See **Appendix One**. The NOC COG adopted a new set of bylaws on September 7, 2016, in which they assigned to employees that the NOC COG employs, the duties of board staff and fiscal agent. See **Appendix Two**. The identities and contact information for the employees of the NOC COG are set forth within **Appendix Three**.

The remainder of the WDB staff is managed and supervised by the Executive Director employed by the NOC COG. Up until mid-November of 2020, the NOC COG employed a Financial and Budget Officer, who served as the fiscal agent for the WDB. Following the fiscal agent’s resignation, the Area 19 WDB assigned the fiscal agent duties in part to the Executive Director and the Administrative Assistant, with the remaining being assigned to a third party contractor, the CPA Office of Salvatore Consiglio. How those fiscal agent duties have been divided for the near future is set forth within **Appendix Three**.

The functional responsibilities of the WDB staff are set forth within Article II. A., of the Multi-Function Agreement. See **Appendix Six**. The functional responsibilities of the WDB fiscal agent are set forth within Article II. B., of the Multi-Function Agreement, which has been temporarily modified as set forth within **Appendix Three**. See **Appendices Three and Six**. The WDB staff share information and work together on all assigned responsibilities to complete all business required of the WDB and NOC COG. See **Appendices Three and Six**.

The WDB staff and fiscal agent report directly to the CEO and members of the NOC COG, which in turn takes direction from the Area 19 WDB. The bylaws of the Area 19 WDB are attached as **Appendix Five**.

This local plan was drafted pursuant to the direction and oversight provided by the NOC COG, and the Area 19 WDB. The local planning process included planning for how the Area would proceed with securing the provision of the following list of program services, including all of the terms and conditions associated with the same.

2. *Location of the OhioMeansJobs ("OMJ") centers in the local workforce development area.*

The Area 19 WDB is committed to directing the operation of at least one OMJ center centrally located based upon the residential pattern of its population, within each of the Area's three (3) counties.

The Area WDB is committed to competitively procuring the operation of each OMJ center at least every four (4) years as required by ODJFS state policy. In the spring of 2017, the OMJ center operators were procured, for the three OMJ Centers, the locations of which were dictated by the WDB and NOC COG. At the time of the drafting of this plan, the pertinent information regarding each of the Area's three (3) OMJ centers is provided for below, including the Operators competitively selected in the spring of 2017. During May and June of 2021, the OMJ Center operators were procured again, with the same three (3) operators submitting the sole bids to provide the services, and with the same three providers identified below awarded the contracts to provide the services expected of an OMJ Center operator.. At this time, the comprehensive OhioMeansJobs center is located at Ashtabula, with the two other centers serving as affiliate centers. The location and selection of the comprehensive vs. affiliate centers can change from year to year, or every two years depending upon the length of the term of the MOU that has been entered into.

<u>County/Type of OMJ</u>	<u>Operator/Manager</u>	<u>Location/Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Ashtabula Comprehensive	ACDJFS Hattie Grubke-Barnard	2247 Lake Avenue Ashtabula, OH 44004	(440) 994-1234
Geauga Affiliate	GCDJFS Margo Reda	12611 Ravenwood Dr. Chardon, OH 44024	(440) 285-1220
Portage Affiliate	PCDJFS Mandy Berardinelli	253 S. Chestnut St. Ravenna, OH 44266	(330) 296-2841

***B. An explanation of the OhioMeansJobs delivery system in the local area.***

1. *How the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and that such providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and jobseekers.*

The services of every provider will be measured against each of the following measures through a continuous review process by Area 19 board staff and the fiscal agent, and through annual monitoring.

- How each provider's services stack up against the negotiated WIOA and/or TANF performance measures negotiated between ODJFS and the Area 19 WDB.

- How each provider's services stack up against any additional performance measures created by the Area 19 WDB and required contractually by the written contract between the NOC COG and the provider.
- How the OMJ center operator's services and facilities stack up against any of the criteria set forth within the OMJ operator certification and continuous improvement standards negotiated with and established by ODJFS.

2. *How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the OhioMeansJobs delivery system through the use of technology and other means.*

In June 2012, ODJFS received twelve million dollars in the form of a Workforce Innovation Fund Grant specifically for the further development of the OhioMeansJobs.com ("OMJ.com website"). In addition to these special grants, ODJFS has made a continuing investment into the development and improvement of the OMJ website using both WIOA and Workforce Investment Act ("WIOA") grant funds. That continuing investment included recent overall of the OMJ.com website in the winter of 2020 and spring of 2021. The purpose of the development and recent redesign of the OMJ.com website is to allow employers, the workforce, and youth, to have self-help access to information about the labor market, education providers, the ability to find job postings and resumes of job seekers, and other miscellaneous workforce information from any location that has access to the internet.

The Area 19 WDB is committed to advancing the use of the OMJ.com website by all Area employers, the workforce, and Area 19 youth. The Area 19 WDB has and will continue to do this via the following methods:

- Educating and requiring all Area workforce entities, including but not limited to providers, to utilize the OMJ.com website as the primary, and in some cases the sole, website to use for the dissemination of information regarding workforce issues.
- Educating at the OMJ centers and within the community at large, all employers, those in the workforce, and youth on how to use the OMJ.com website so that they can access information and search for workforce and employment opportunities on-line.
- Promoting the use by all Area employers of the OMJ.com website, by offering the free service of posting for employers all of their job vacancies on the OMJ.com website.
- Assisting all those in the Area workforce to revise and post their resume and job seeker information onto the OMJ.com website.
- Assisting all of those Area youth, including those in area workforce youth programming, and those in the general population by teaching them how to research in-demand careers and industries, career pathways, and educational opportunities for in-demand careers on the OMJ.com website.

Due to the global Covid 19 pandemic in 2020, it was determined that there was a need for the WDB to procure and purchase a platform that would allow the Area OMJ Centers to conduct virtual job fairs and otherwise facilitate employers connecting with job seekers. After a search in December of 2020, the Area purchased a three (3) year, whole Area license of Premier Virtual

running from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2023. Premier Virtual software can be used to connect jobseekers and students with educators and employers. This technology was viewed as needed in order to allow jobseekers and students to connect virtually with employers and educators at a safe social distance during the pandemic. The Area OMJ Centers will work to review this year whether to continue to use this, or any other software, to provide for virtual job fairs. During the past two (2) years the Area has used the software, but found that virtual job fairs are faced with the same challenges that in-person job fairs are, finding and engaging participating job-seekers and employers.

In addition to promoting the use of the OMJ.com website, the Area WDB will review the provision of each OMJ Center's and each provider's technology offered to employers, those in the workforce, and youth periodically. Should the technology for OMJ centers be deemed to be inadequate, the OMJ center provider will be asked to upgrade the technology through future MOU operations budgets, with all partners paying their fair share to improve the same. Should the technology of the providers be deemed to be inadequate, they will be asked to include within their next contractual budget, a proposal for improving upon the same.

The Area 19 WDB and its OhioMeansJobs Center operators/managers are committed to purchasing and/or leasing virtual reality career exploration and career training headsets/software during the April through June of 2023 quarter. We plan on testing the use of this technology with all jobseekers who want to explore different career pathways including high schoolers including those enrolled and not enrolled within CCMEP services, and adults of all ages. We also plan on using this technology as a tool to provide occupational skills training for those receiving public assistance, and/or those receiving RESEA and/or WIOA programming assistance. We also plan to have our workforce educators within the Area 19 region review and test this technology as an educational tool, either on its own, or used in conjunction with a training curricula.

3. *How entities within the OhioMeansJobs delivery system, including OhioMeansJobs center operators and partners, will comply with section 188 of WIOA, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA") regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.*

ODJFS, as part of its OMJ center certification and continuous improvement policies requires that each OMJ comprehensive center be situated within a location that is deemed by ODJFS Bureau of Civil Rights (BCR), to be compliant with the public accommodation provisions required within the ADA.

In July of 2016, ODJFS Bureau of Civil Rights (BCR), certified that the Area 19 comprehensive OMJ center, located within Ashtabula County, had an ADA physical and programmatic accessibility plan in place that was acceptable to it. Furthermore, at least one staff member of the Ashtabula County comprehensive OMJ center participated in ODJFS' required Windmills training that provides education on the provision of physical and programmatic accessibility for those with disabilities. Acceptable ADA training was also offered to and attended by at least

one member of the Area 19 staff, and of each of Area 19's OhioMeansJobs Centers' staff during 2022.

In the last quarter of 2022, the Area engaged in a certification review of all three of its OhioMeansJob Centers. All three OhioMeansJobs centers were certified by the Area 19 WDB, following a report of certification review committees for each OhioMeansJobs Centers. Each of the review committees contained at least one member or more of the Area 19 WDB. Included in the certification was the application of the ODJFS Bureau of Civil Rights ADA survey/checklist to the OhioMeansJobs Geauga County Center. The OhioMeansJobs Geauga County Center moved locations from 12480 Ravenwood Drive, within a building that solely contained the Geauga County Job and Family Services (GCJFS) staff, to Geauga County's new administrative building. GGJFS staff, including the OhioMeansJobs Geauga County Center, and its and its partner staff occupy part of the first and second floors of that building.

The ADA survey checklist did contain three (3) observations that the ODJFS' Bureau of Civil Rights is expecting to be addressed in some way. As of mid-April of 2023, those three issues are being addressed.

*4. How the local board will coordinate with the regional JobsOhio agent.*

The Area 19 WDB has a signed agreement with JobsOhio in place that goes through December 31, 2024. The agreement is a partnership that allows the Area 19 OMJ Centers to partner with JobsOhio and its regional JobsOhio agent Team NEO to provide talent acquisition services to employers receiving JobsOhio funding.

Team NEO, along with the pre-eminent economic development agencies within each of the Area 19 counties, have been and will continue to be partners with the Area WDB and the Area 19's OMJ Centers. Three of these agencies are also business service agents of Team NEO, the JobsOhio agent for Northeast Ohio. Those agencies are as follows:

<u>Economic Development Agency</u>	<u>Relationship to WDB</u>
Portage County Development Board, Inc. (Serves as Team NEO agent).	Director serves on WDB, and agency has a formal contract to provide business services for OMJ Portage.
Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County (Serves as a Team NEO agent).	Director serves on WDB, agency does collaborate with OMJ Ashtabula to provide services without a formal agreement.
Geauga County's Economic Development Office (Not a Team NEO agent, but collaborates).	Director serves on WDB, agency does collaborate with OMJ Geauga to provide services without a formal agreement.
Growth Partnership for Geauga County (Serves as a Team NEO agent).	Asst. Director serves on WDB as business representative. Agency may bid to provide business services in the near future.

*5. The roles and resource contributions of the OhioMeansJobs center partners.*

The roles and resource contributions of each OMJ center partner operating within the Area 19 WDB are established by the following:

- The terms and conditions of the WIOA statute and regulations governing each OMJ center partner's program and grant appropriations.
- Ohio's combined state plan which governs and dictates each mandated OMJ center partner's role in workforce development.
- The terms and conditions of each OMJ center partner as negotiated and reduced to writing as part of the Area 19 WDB Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU").

A determination of how those partners is adhering to those roles and responsibilities shall be the joint responsibility of Department of Labor, the State of Ohio as the drafting agent of the combined state plan, ODJFS as the grant issuing authority, the board staff of the Area 19 WDB, and the competitively procured OMJ Center operator. Should issues be determined to exist, they may be addressed by any of the entities listed above.

Should action be required locally by the Area 19 WDB to enforce the roles and/or contributions of partners, it shall do so either on its own right, and/or through its OMJ center operator(s). All actions taken by the Area 19 WDB or its OMJ operators will first seek to mutually resolve any and all disputes through either OMJ center partner meetings, and/or through the mechanisms provided for within the MOU.

***C. A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.***

Within Area 19, providers will be selected as a result of Sub-grant Agreement negotiations with CDJFS agencies, competitive procurement, and/or through a combination of the same. The list of services that the Area makes available are as follows.

***1. Basic Career Services (Non-Triggering)***

- a) Determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive WIOA services.
- b) Outreach, intake (which may include worker profiling), and orientation to the information and other services available through the workforce development delivery system.
- c) Initial assessment of skill levels, including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs.
- d) Labor exchange services, including job search and placement assistance, and when needed by an individual, career counseling, including:
  - Provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and
  - Provision of information on nontraditional employment.

- e) Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistical information, which may be found on OhioMeansJobs.com. This service includes the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including:
  - Job vacancy listings in such labor market areas;
  - Information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs; and
  - Information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for such occupations.
- f) Provision of performance information and program cost information on the eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers.
- g) Provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs and services within the OhioMeansJobs delivery system and, in appropriate cases, other workforce development programs.
- h) Provision of information regarding how the local is performing on the local performance accountability measures and any additional performance information with respect to the OhioMeansJobs delivery system in the local area.
- i) Provision of information relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including:
  - Childcare;
  - Child support;
  - Medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program;
  - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
  - Assistance through the earned income tax credit;
  - Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF);
  - Other supportive services and transportation available in the local area.
- j) Provision of permitted information and assistance, and referral to ODJFS staff and/or unemployment contact information to individuals seeking assistance on claims for unemployment compensation.
- k) Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not funded through WIOA.
- l) Group workshops (e.g., interviewing, job search, and resume writing).

2. **Individualized, Triggering Career Services.**

- a) Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include:

- Diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and
- In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals.

b) IEPs are one of the most effective ways to serve individuals with barriers to employment and to coordinate the various services, including training services they may need to overcome these barriers. Therefore, all participants who receive an individualized career service or a training service pursuant to WIOAPL No. 15-09, Training Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers, must receive an IEP. Development of an individual employment plan (IEP) to identify all of the following:

- Employment goals;
- Appropriate achievement objectives;
- Appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals, including providing information on eligible training providers and career pathways to attain career objectives.

c) Group counseling.

d) Individual counseling.

e) Career planning.

f) Short-term prevocational services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training, which include:

- Development of learning skills;
- Communication skills;
- Interviewing skills;
- Punctuality;
- Personal maintenance skills; and
- Professional conduct.

g) Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers.

h) Workforce preparation activities.

i) Financial literacy services.

j) Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance/

k) English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

l) Provision of job club activities.

3. **Training Services.**

Area 19, in working with its employers and educational providers may consider, but do not have to provide for, all of the following types of WIOA Workforce training services. The training services offered will be controlled by the terms and conditions of the Area 19 policies, and/or any Area 19 Agreements or MOU with providers. Where the precise types of training are not dictated or restricted by policy or by agreement, the provider may exercise its discretion the provision of the following types of training, at the provider's established terms and conditions.

- Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment;
- On-the-job training;
- Incumbent worker training;
- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs;
- Training programs operated by the private sector;
- Skill upgrading and retraining;
- Entrepreneurial training;
- Transitional jobs;
- Job readiness training;
- Adult education and literacy activities; and
- Customized training.

**D. *A reference to the Comprehensive Case Management Program (CCMEP) plan for each county within the local area. (This requirement is fulfilled if each county within the local workforce development area submitted the CCMEP county plan as required in rule 5101:14-1-03 of the Administrative Code.)***

In 2016, and at least bi-annual since, each of the following was completed within Area 19, as part of its actions to develop a CCMEP plan within each county that would combine WIOA and TANF Youth services.

- Each County Board of Commissioners designated their County Department of Job and Family Services as the lead agency for CCMEP.
- Each CDJFS as lead agency for CCMEP drafted and submitted to ODJFS a local plan addressing how it would address certain terms and conditions of the CCMEP.
- The NOC COG and WDB submitted correspondence and negotiated with ODJFS the terms and conditions of the Area's decision to initially opt into the CCMEP.
- In September of 2016, and with the execution of every Subgrant Agreement since the NOC COG and WDB passed resolutions and submitted correspondence in which they indicated that they were opting into the CCMEP.
- From October of 2016 to January of 2017, the NOC COG, WDB, and/or lead agencies competitively procured and negotiated contracts relating to the provision of pre-enrollment services, framework design and case management services, and program services. In the first quarter of 2022, the competitive procurement was repeated.

Having completed all of the above listed actions, this portion of the local plan is satisfied.

**E. *How the local board, in coordination with the OhioMeansJobs center operator, maximizes coordination, improves service delivery, and avoids duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services provided through the OhioMeansJobs delivery system.***

The Area 19 WDB shall address the provision of excellent OMJ center operations in each of the following described ways.

- The issuance of a well thought out competitive procurement solicitation for the operation of each OMJ center.
- The negotiation by the WDB and its OMJ center operators of a well thought out Memorandum of Understanding that addresses these issues.
- Enforcing requirement that each OMJ center operator must actively and regularly engage its partners during partner meetings, and in other forums to address these issues.
- The regular monitoring and review of each OMJ center pursuant to Area monitoring policies, along with the OMJ certification and continuous improvement policies established by ODJFS, and Area policies.
- By working with ODJFS and other partners to secure regular secret shopping done by partner and/or other individuals, and addressing any deficiencies discovered as a result of the same.

***F. The executed cooperative agreements which define how service providers will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local OhioMeansJobs system.***

The Area 19 WDB, through its agent the NOC COG, enters into all of the following agreements which set forth the terms and conditions requiring integration of and access to the entire set of services available in each county's OMJ system.

1. All business services work.
2. OMJ center operation.
3. The provision of basic and individualized career services for each county's workforce.
4. The eligibility and case management of all training services for each county's workforce.
5. The provision of pre-enrollment, framework design/case management, and program services for all Youth programming.

***G. An identification of the fiscal agent.***

Within the IGA and bylaws for the NOC COG, the NOC COG is identified as the agent of the WDB. As the WDB's agent, the NOC COG conducts the business required to be performed by the WDB. As the WDB's agent, the NOC COG has the ability to contract with agents and/or to hire employees to perform the duties required of board staff, and as fiscal agent. See **Appendix One**. The NOC COG adopted a new set of bylaws on September 7, 2016, in which they assigned to employees that the NOC COG employs, the duties of board staff and fiscal agent. See **Appendix Two**. Since the fall of 2020, the fiscal agent work for Area 19, has been performed in part by NOC COG employed staff and the CPA office of Salvatore Consiglio. See **Appendices Three, Four, and Six**.

***H. The competitive process that will be used to award the subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.***

The board staff will work with the Area 19 WDB, in order to design competitive procurement solicitations that seek requests for proposals (“RFP”), and/or requests for quotes (“RFQ”) that are compliant with WIOA, and all applicable provisions of the Code of Federal Regulations. All competitive procurements will involve each of the following elements as set forth within the Area’s procurement policy:

1. A pre-competitive solicitation design and planning process that takes into consideration how the services sought should be designed.
2. A pre-competitive solicitation cost analysis that sets forth an estimated range of the expected bids for the provision of goods and/or services.
3. When required by Area 19 policy, the publication within one or more Area media outlets, as well as publication on the Area 19’s website of the opportunity to submit proposals, quotes, and/or bids etc.
4. The outreach to those on the Area 19 bidder’s list, and/or to those known within the Area to be in the market to offer applicable goods and services.
5. A published RFP, RFQ, or other document that sets forth all of the terms and conditions relating to the information that must be submitted by an interested entity desiring to provide goods or services, including the basis for which the NOC COG and/or WDB will make the decision to award a contract.
6. A decision making process that includes a review of all proposals submitted, including an analysis, and where required, a scoring of the proposals submitted. This will be performed by some or all of the following individuals:
  - Area 19 board staff;
  - The fiscal agent;
  - NOC COG members;
  - WDB members;
  - WDB committee members;
  - Those named by the NOC COG and/or WDB who have an interest or expertise in the matters being decided, that does not involve an ethical conflict.
7. A timely notification of the decision of which entities were and were not selected based upon the submission of information, including a period and procedure for those entities to appeal any decisions made.
8. A negotiation of the final terms and conditions regarding the provision of goods and/or services, with the same reduced to a written agreement where required, that will govern the performance of the parties to the agreement.

All of the following program services were competitively procured sometime between June of, 2021, and April 1, 2022:

1. All County Account Executive work associated with the Business Resource Network.

2. OMJ center operation.
3. Possibly some or all of the provision of basic and individualized career services for each county's workforce.
4. The provision of pre-enrollment, framework design/case management, and program services for all Youth programming.

All competitive procurements will be handled by the Area 19 board staff and fiscal agent, as these individuals are truly independent administrative staff, that answer to the NOC COG membership and the Area 19 WDB, as required by ODJFS WIOA policy.

**I. The actions the local board will take toward becoming or remaining a high performing board.**

When WIOA went into effect and the NOC COG Board was required to reconstruct the Area 19 WDB into one that was compliant under the terms and conditions of the act and its final rules, the NOC COG Board thoughtfully and diligently redesigned its workforce board into one that had the potential of being a high performing board. This was done by seeking out both workforce administrators and private employer representatives under the following criteria:

1. All employers who are represented were deemed to either be in-demand industries or were employed within in-demand occupations.
2. All employers who are represented were chosen because the representation of their industry and provided for a unique perspective.
3. All employer representatives are managerial level, and in most cases are the most senior of their organization's management.
4. The top two officer positions (chairperson and vice-chairperson) are reserved for employer representatives in order to make sure that the WDB is led by those with a perspective for serving the needs of in-demand employers.
5. The WDB was designed to include a representative of a community based/interest organization from each County to ensure that we were providing for the needs of our impoverished and most needy citizens (Community Action Council of Ashtabula County; Community Action Council of Portage County; United Way of Geauga County).
6. The WDB was designed to include the director of the leading economic development agency within each county, that was also a partner of Ohio Job's regional agent Team NEO (Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County; Portage Development Board; Geauga County Economic Development Office, and/or the Growth Partnership for Geauga County). The reason for this is that each of these organizations are widely respected to be the authorities on the challenges and opportunities that each county faces with respect to the development of their economies, and the current and emerging needs of each county's employers with respect to workforce.
7. The WDB was designed to include a representative of public transportation as this is one of the Area's greatest workforce challenges.
8. All other workforce agencies represented, including those who are guaranteed spots on the WDB, were selected based upon past outstanding representation on the board, and/or because they are recognized leaders within their respective fields.

At the time of the re-drafting of this plan, there was (1) vacancy out of thirty-three (33) members on the WDB (one business representative for Ashtabula County).

***J. How OhioMeansJobs centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA.***

Beginning in April of 2022 ODJFS, as the grant issuing authority of WIOA, provided access and required the use of a redeveloped intake and case management information system ("ARIES") that is also supposed to be integrated with the fiscal management CFIS system. The transition from the previous OWCMS case management system to the ARIES system has involved more than a year of problems and temporary work arounds. It is anticipated that it will take at least the remainder of 2023, before the majority of remaining material issues associated with the ARIES system have been resolved.

The Area 19 WDB is fully committed to the use of these systems by its office, and by those contracted to provide program services to employers, the workforce, and youth. The Area 19 WDB will promote and encourage its staff, and those staff contracted to perform program services, to engage in all appropriate training opportunities in order to learn these systems. The NOC COG and Area 19 WDB will require and ensure that all program providers utilize these systems.

The Area WDB will work to identify from all staff who utilize the same, any issues relating to the use of these systems. WDB staff shall work through the Ohio Workforce Association, and with ODJFS and its system creator/administrator to seek a redress of any and all issues experience with the usage of these systems.

**III. Area 19 WDB Workforce Challenges and Issues.**

The following table summarizes important workforce demographic information for the Area 19 WDB for the time period from 2020 through 2022:

Statistic	Ashtabula	Geauga	Portage
Population	97,094	95,649	161,745
Med. House Income	\$49,680	\$90,285	\$64,163
Poverty Rate	15.7%	6.2%	12.4%

There are two primary workforce challenges facing Northeast Ohio, including Area 19. Those issues are the labor market gap and the skills gap.

### **A. The Labor Market Gap**

The labor market gap is the numeric gap that exists between the number of workers demanded by regional/local employers and those that are able, willing, and actually are working. The challenge with the labor market gap is that there are not enough able, willing, working individuals to meet the current and projected demand of regional and local employers.

The sub-issues that have caused or contribute to the labor market gap are as follows:

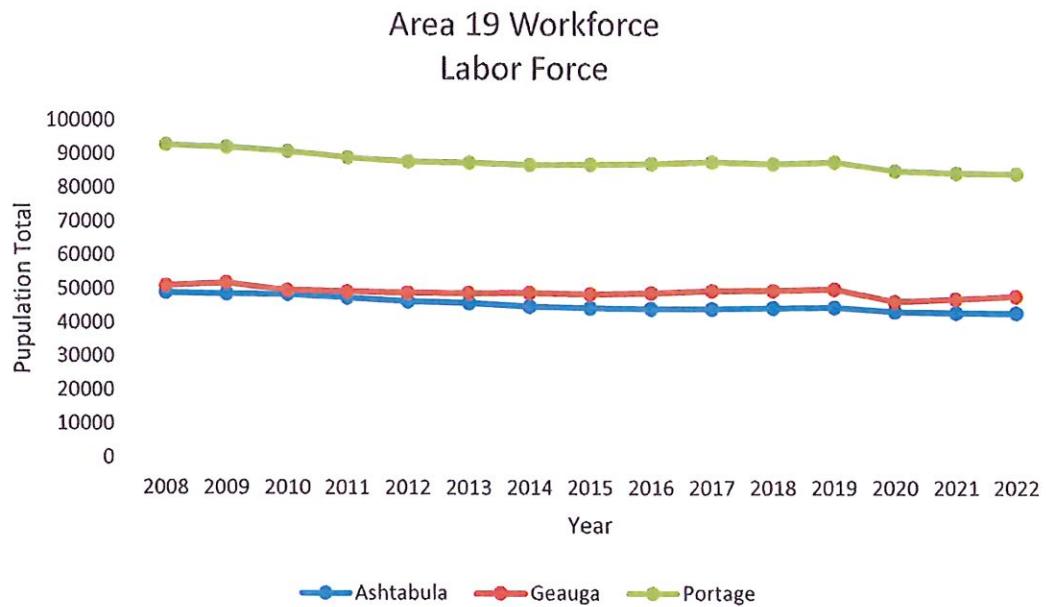
- Stagnant to shrinking population levels.
- Our current stable and skilled workforce is aged and moving towards retirement.
- Exporting our young workforce. A significant portion of our young workforce, regardless of where they are educated after high school do not end up working locally. There is a brain drain to stronger regional economies, Columbus, and Pittsburgh (2 hours or less away), plus a brain drain to stronger national economies, including the east coast, west coast, and pockets of the south including Texas.
- Failure to attract/retain a young workforce. Northeast Ohio has a tremendous post-secondary educational system that educates both our young potential workforce, and the workforce of the rest of Ohio, the nation, and the world. They come and get educated, but do they stay?
- Low worker participation rates. A significant number of those who are able to work, do not necessarily want to work, and/or are not regularly employed in stable, opportunity laden positions of employment.
- Barriers and sobriety issues. A significant number of our workforce have non-vocational skill barriers to working regularly, and or retaining a job in a stable position of employment that allows the individual to be self-sufficient.

At this time, the Area relies on JobsOhio and other State initiatives to grow the State's population.

Since 2008, all three of Area 19's counties have experienced a contraction in the labor market. The following table shows each County's high and low watermark with respect to the size of their monthly labor forces during the past fourteen (14) years.

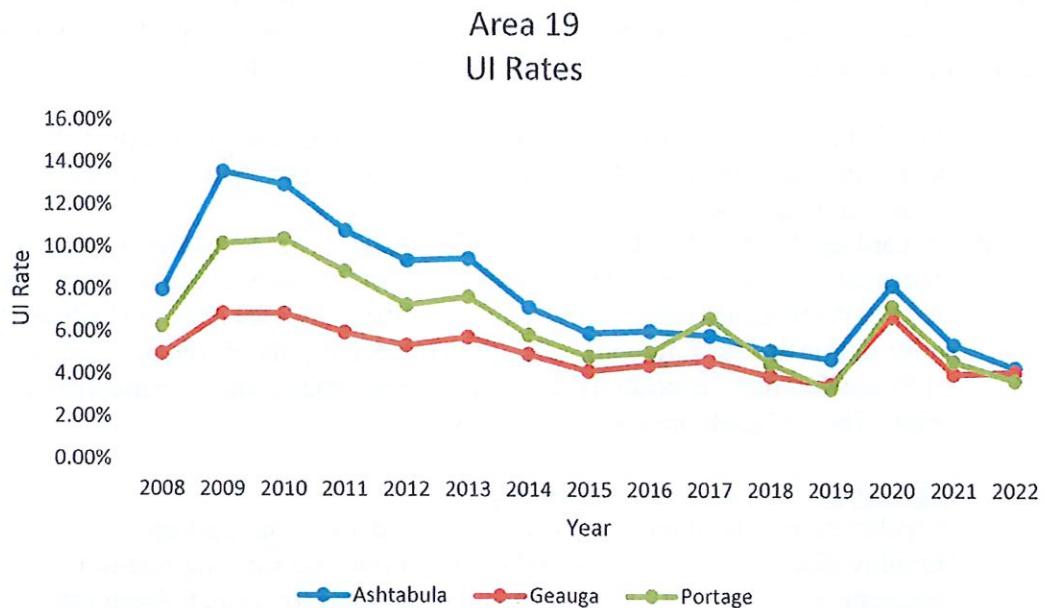
County	High Water/Date	Low Water/Date	Dec 2022	% drop high to 12/22
Portage	94,000 7/2008	81,200 4/2020	84,100	10.53%
Ashtabula	50,800 7/2010	40,900 4/2020	42,900	15.55%
Geauga	53,000 7/2009	43,700 4/2020	48,100	09.25%

As demonstrated by the table above and the graph immediately below, from their high water mark to December of 2022, each of the Area 19 counties, have experienced a workforce contraction between 9.25% and 15.55%. While significant resources have been expended trying to discover where the workers are post-pandemic, in reality, during the past 14 years, Area 19 has experienced, a steady contraction in the size of its workforce.



This contraction is largely attributed to retirements of the very large baby boomer generation. The first of this generation started turning sixty-two in mid-2008, and their retirements are being felt throughout Area 19. In addition to the retirement of the baby-boomers, other impactful trends have been Covid 19 deaths, and a significant number of individuals dropping out of the measured workforce, and becoming independent contractors as gig workers.

While Area 19 has steadily lost workforce supply, demand has remained strong and even increased since 2009. Decreased supply and steady to increased demand has had a dramatic impact on the unemployment rates for the region. After peak highs of unemployment in 2009, all three counties have had their unemployment rates decrease to right around 4.0%. See the graph that follows immediately.



## B. The Skills Gap.

The skills gap is the numeric gap that exists between the soft and vocational skills needed/demanded by regional/local employers and those that are possessed by the available workforce, seeking employment. The issue is that there is a misalignment between the skills desired by employers and those possessed by the workforce. Skills gap challenges are both quantitative and qualitative in nature. All of the sub-challenges assigned within this category have to do with both the number of those with degrees and certificates, along with the quality of their degrees, certificates, training, work experience, and soft employment skills.

The skills gap includes both vocational and soft skills.

1. The vocational skills gap. Vocational skills refer to those skills that are needed to do the job from education and experience.
2. The soft skills gap. Soft skills are those skills that are universally desired and expected by employers from their employees. These abilities include:

reliable transportation	limited absences	punctuality
dressed appropriately	attentive/mentally present	sober
willing to work overtime	appropriate interaction with others	

The skills gap issue has a number of contributing sub-issues. Most of the skills gap issues originate during the elementary and secondary education of our Area's youth and continue into their post-secondary education and beyond.

1. Area 19 WDB's goal is to engage high school students along with H.S guidance in planning for post-secondary school success prior to their graduation.

Depending upon the economic and resource challenges faced by the school district and the resources available, the Area 19 public school districts vary greatly on the post H.S. diploma career pathway planning that is provided. Consider the following statistics:

1. Local H.S. guidance counselors report that they have most of their time absorbed with class scheduling and life issue counseling, as opposed to post-success planning with students.
2. According to the ACCESS post high school success program director in Ashtabula County, only between 30% and 50% of each graduating class has a firm post-secondary career pathway plan in place 6 weeks from graduation. We refer to this as knowing your “E”. “E” representing the development of a post H.S. employment, educational enrollment, enlistment, and/or entrepreneurship plan. The “E” goals are identified below:

<b><u>“E” Goal</u></b>	<b><u>Measure</u></b>
Enrollment in Education.	Accepted with financial aid package.
Employment.	Conditionally hired and working part-time.
Enlistment.	Enlisted with a report for basic training date.
Entrepreneurship.	Business plan or assigned to an apprenticeship.

3. According to TEAM NEO’s 2019 Aligning Opportunities Report:
  - a. A region of 4.3 million should produce 37,600 BA+ graduates per year.
  - b. Team NEO region produces 31,300 BA+ per year.
  - c. Supply needs to grow 20% per year to meet expectations.
  - d. Ohio continues to struggle on FAFSA completion and capturing of financial assistance for post-secondary education. In 2019 Ohio had \$87 million in unused federal financial aid due to students not completing the FAFSA. Approximately 45% of student are eligible for Pell Grants each year, which means that 21,600 high school seniors had the potential to receive a grant and did not.
  - e. Ohio’s Complete to Compete Initiative, has concluded that to support Ohio’s economy we need to move the percentage of those in the workforce with a post-secondary education of any kind from 47% (where it currently is) to 65% of the working population.

As a result of these issues and the statistics that bear out the same, the Area 19 WDB has concluded that its goal should be to reach out and to offer resources to H.S. to help them help their students before graduation form a definite plan with goals to achieve one of the four “Es” of post-high school success.

Assisting H.S. guidance departments is not done just to better the Area 19 Workforce, it also increases the community profile and recognition of the Area’s OMJ Centers. Once H.S. students graduate, they become absorbed within the general population and are difficult to reach as opposed to when they are enrolled within the public education system and they are reachable through the school district. The federal and state educational departments track post-secondary education enrollment and completion, but that is it. The Area OMJ staff struggle with how to interact and help this group after graduation.

How do we get students to plan for a successful post high school career, both prior to and after graduation? The Area Workforce has concluded that the best strategy is to get high school students familiar with their local OMJ Center and staff, and to actively assist high school guidance on helping students to plan for their post-high school success. Some of those strategies are provided for later in Section IV. of this local plan which summarizes programs offered by each of the Area's three (3) OMJ centers.

4. Engaging students to make post high school plans alone is not enough.

Even those high school students that have the grades, aptitude test scores, and have developed post-secondary career pathway plans, do not all necessarily succeed. Many of those that make a pre-graduation plan lose their path along the way or take way longer to complete their education. The sub-issues related to this are as follows:

- Sub-Issue #1. Post-secondary preparation.
- Sub-Issue #2. Post-secondary completion.
- Sub-Issue #3. Post-secondary retention.
- Sub-Issue #4. The High Cost of Education.
- Sub-Issue #5. Misalignment Between Supply and Demand.

a. Sub-Issue #1. Post-secondary preparation.

Ohio is very successful at getting its H.S. students into post-secondary education. However, one of the more concerning things is the remedial education that is needed by many of those matriculating to the same. The statistics published by Ohio's public post-secondary Baccalaureate and Sub-Baccalaureate educational institutions are as follows.

Sub-Bac. Remediation. 58.5% need educational remediation. Of those:

- 48.1% complete their remediation.
- 24.6% complete remediation and courses on time.
- 6.4% graduate within 3 years for 2 year pathway.

Bac. Remediation. 25% need educational remediation. Of those:

- 56.9% complete their remediation.
- 38.4% complete remediation and courses on time.
- 33.6% graduate within 6 years for 4 year pathway.

While these statistics do not include those admitted into out-of-state schools, private not-for-profit, and/or private for-profit educational institutions, the numbers are a good indicator that post-secondary educational preparation needs to improve.

b. Sub-Issue #2. Post-secondary Education completion.

In addition to these statistics, also concerning is the amount of time it takes for Ohio post-secondary students at our public schools to complete their education. The break-out of every 100 Ohio residents that pursue a 2 or 4-year post-secondary degree at an Ohio public school are as follows:

- About 50% pursue 2-year or less, and 50% pursue 4-year degrees. Only 40% ultimately complete their education, with most needing to go into overtime to complete the same. That means that 60% do not finish at all, and many more need more time to finish.
- Of those pursuing 2-year degrees full-time, only about 16% will complete, with half of those that do complete needing 4-years to complete. Only 7% of those that pursue a 2-year degree, part-time will complete.
- Of those pursuing 4-year degrees, about 64% will complete, with more than half of those that do complete needing 6 to 8-years to complete the same.

c. Sub-Issue #3. Post-secondary retention.

The Team NEO region produces 31,300 BA+ graduates per year. The region, based upon its size, should produce 37,600 BA+ graduates per year. The TEAM NEO 16 county region retains 46.7% or 14,608 BA+ graduates annually. The rest move to another region following graduation. If Team NEO could move the retention rate to 57% annually, the region could retain:

- 3,130 more BA+ grads
- 445 more health care BA+ grads
- 162 more IT BA+ grads
- 263 more Architecture and Engineering BA+ grads per year.

d. Sub-Issue #4. The High Cost of Post-Secondary Education.

Consider the following statistics that all reflect the high cost of post-secondary education and the impact it has on today's workforce.

- Approximately 44.7 million Americans (13.6% of pop.) maintain some type of student loan debt.
- Student loan debt nationwide tops \$1.5 Trillion Dollars. Auto loan debt is around \$1.2 Trillion and Credit Card Debt \$0.8 Trillion Dollars.
- Approximately 56% of millennials with student loans have delayed a major life event—including getting married or having kids—because of their debt. Source: Bankrate Money Pulse survey, July 2015, adults ages 18-29.
- That same percentage of millennials, 56% have student loans.
- Consider how the pace of wages has failed to keep pace with the rising costs of a public education. The hours of minimum wage work needed to pay for four years of public college for two distinct generations separated by thirty (30) years, is as follows:

- Boomer 306\*
- Millennial 4,459\*

\*Source: National center for educational statistics. Calculations based on tuition for 4-year public colleges in late 70s and mid-00s, using average debt of a graduating senior.

e. Sub-Issue #4. Misalignment Between Demand and Supply for High Income Jobs in the Region.

For the past four (4) years Team NEO has produced an outstanding report that examines the misalignment between the supply of workforce being produced by post-secondary educational institutions and the region's demand in high paying occupations, broken out by occupations.

Regional occupations fall into an organized division of 96-46-19. There are 96 occupational groups to which you can categorize all workers and professionals in the regional economy. Of those 96 occupational groups there are 46 core demand index occupations that are tied to growing wealth clusters in the regional economy. Of those 46 core occupations, there are 19 that are the most promising based upon factors considering those that show substantial demand, offer family sustaining wages, and hold promise for future employment and income. Of those 19 most promising core occupations, these can be consolidated into 4 categories, Health Care, White Collar Office, Professional/Trades, and Manufacturing. They are listed as follows:

**Health Care**

Health Diagnosing and Treating Practitioners  
 Health Technologists and Technicians  
 Health Therapist Aides and Support Workers  
 Nursing and Home Health Aides

**White Collar Office**

Computer and IT Workers  
 Financial Clerks & Financial Specialists  
 Information and record clerks  
 Secretaries and Administrative Assistants  
 Managers, Professional and Health

**Professions/Trades**

Architects and Engineering Technicians  
 Education  
 Engineers  
 Life science workers

**Construction and Trade Workers**

Manufacturing  
 Installation, maintenance, and repair workers  
 Manufacturing  
 Metal and Plastics Workers  
 Skilled Production Workers

## Supervisors of Skilled Workers

Unfortunately, many of those emerging from post-secondary education have been prepared for occupations that do not align well with these 19 most promising core occupations. The Team NEO reports for the past four years provide exacting detail of which occupations are over supplied by post-secondary graduates, which occupations have a balanced supply and demand, and which occupations are under supplied compared to demand, and by how much.

### **IV. Area 19 WDB Customized and Special Programming.**

The workforce challenges and issues explored within Section III. of this local plan, have been fully analyzed and explored by the Area 19 WDB, and its three (3) OMJ Centers. That analysis gave rise to many of the custom designed programs that follow, which are meant to address many of the skills gap issues existing within Northeast Ohio.

#### **A. Customized and Special Programming Shared by All Three County OMJ Centers.**

As you will notice from a summary of each OMJ Center's County Specific Programming Summary, that follows, the Area has decided to make a concentrated focus on addressing the labor market gap and the skills gap, by focusing on the Area's H.S. youth. The rationale behind this is that the Area does not have enough workers, and it can be difficult to attract outside workers to the Area.

However, the Area does do a good job of attracting post-secondary students from outside of N.E. Ohio and remains an attractive place to live and work for those that have grown up and have family here. Therefore, the focus of workforce for the Area 19 WDB has to be on retaining our home-grown talent, and those that come to N.E. Ohio that are from outside of the region, for the post-secondary education. Improving the educational/career paths of the region's Youth, especially when it comes to helping them select education that will place them in one of the 19 core, well-paying occupations within the region, and connecting those that came here for post-secondary education to local employers, is believed to offer Area 19 and the NOW regional workforce the best opportunity to make meaningful gains against the labor market and skills gaps.

While the programming summarized below is excellent, the Area 19 WDB is looking to add to these programs in the coming four years. In addition to the efforts of improving H.S. student's post-graduation education and career plans, the Area wants to focus on connecting those enrolled within both secondary and post-secondary educational programs with employers for work experience, internship, and apprenticeship placements prior to graduation. The goal of course being to retain as much of our locally educated workforce within the region as possible.

With all of this in mind, the following are the defined goals of the Area 19 WDB:

- To continually identify the challenges opposing workforce and economic development that are slowing the growth of Northeast Ohio's economy.

- To strategically develop, implement, and administer workforce development programming with our secondary and post-secondary educational partners, and economic developers, that is demand driven by the region's employers.
- To build workforce programming that is dynamic and robust enough to command the participation of the region's in-demand employers in developing, investing, and benefiting from the same.
- To ultimately expand and more importantly focus the number, education, and skills of the region's workforce in such a way to make it an attractive and superior asset that will grow and expand the region's economy.

**B. OhioMeansJobs Portage County (“OMJPC”) Specific Programming.**

See Appendix Seven.

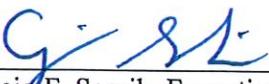
**C. OhioMeansJobs Ashtabula County (“OMJAC”) Specific Programming.**

See Appendix Eight.

**D. OhioMeansJobs Geauga County (“OMJAC”) Specific Programming.**

See Appendix Nine.

  
 Ned Sherry, Chairperson  
 Local Area 19 Workforce Development Board 05/17/23  
 Date

  
 Craig F. Sernik, Executive Director  
 Local Area 19 Workforce Development Board 5-17-2022  
 Date

  
 James Dvorak, Geauga County Commissioner  
 Chief Elected Official  
 Northeast Ohio Consortium Council of Governments 5-16-23  
 Date

