

Help Wanted: A lead state workforce official

A blueprint for strengthening workforce development in Ohio

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Community Research Partners

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Community Research Partners is a nonprofit research center based in Columbus that strengthens Ohio communities through data, information, and knowledge. Since 2000, CRP has undertaken over 230 research, evaluation, and data projects on a wide array of issues, both within and outside of central Ohio. CRP is the Ohio state partner agency for the national Working Poor Families Project, receives funding from The Joyce Foundation to undertake policy research and advocacy on issues related to improving the skills and income of Ohio's low-wage adult workforce, and is the convener of the Ohio Workforce Coalition.

Strengthening Ohio communities through data, information, and knowledge.

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Contents

- Executive Summary iii**
- 1.0 Introduction 1**
 - Why Ohio needs a lead state workforce official 1
 - Figure 1. Ohio state agency adult workforce resources and functions 4
- 2.0 What other states are doing 6**
 - Virginia 6
 - New Mexico 7
 - Michigan 7
 - Putting the pieces together: Comprehensive state workforce initiatives 8
 - Profiles of state workforce officials 9
- 3.0 The position description 10**
 - Job responsibilities 10
 - Skills and experience 11
- 4.0 The to do list 12**
 - Table 1. The lead state workforce official’s to do list 12
 - Goal: Prepare workers for middle-skill jobs 13
 - Figure 2. Ohio jobs and workers by skill level, 2007 13
 - Figure 3. Ohio job openings 2006-2016 13
 - Priority tasks for a lead state workforce official 14
 - Task #1: Meet the current and future needs of employers 14
 - Job training in a jobless recovery: Giving workers the right skills 15
 - Task #2: Support success for adults in education and training 16
 - Table 2. Resource opportunities: Federal funds for workforce development 19
 - Task #3: Establish strong policies and a national presence 20
- 5.0 The team 22**
 - In our own backyard: Bringing local practices to scale 23
- Appendix**
 - Table A-1. Ohio occupations by skill level, 2006 and 2016 A-1
 - Table A-2. Ohio middle-skill occupations, 2006-2016 employment projections A-2
- Endnotes A-3**

Executive Summary

As Ohio emerges from the national recession, the state faces a dual-pronged employment crisis—a shortage of jobs and, at the same time, a deficit of workers with the 21st century education and skills needed by employers. Job creation efforts will not turn the Ohio economy around without a skilled workforce to fill the jobs. However, 46% of Ohio adults ages 18 to 64—3.3 million—have no postsecondary education, a figure worse than 35 other states. About one quarter of this group does not have a high school diploma. Added to this figure are the many recently dislocated workers who may have postsecondary education but need new job skills for an economy in transition.

State policies and programs can play important roles in strengthening the skills of the workforce; however, Ohio's complex and decentralized workforce system presents barriers to accomplishing this goal. Although the state has taken important steps to reorganize, coordinate, and put a greater focus on workforce development, a leadership gap remains. Unlike in a number of other states, *in Ohio workforce development is not the primary mission of any state agency or cabinet level official*. The fragmented state system and lack of clear state-level policy direction have a ripple effect, producing complexity and inconsistency in local workforce services throughout Ohio.

Community Research Partners (CRP) believes that there is an urgent need for a state-level workforce development leader in Ohio to assure the most effective use of an estimated \$2+ billion in state and federal resources, administered by at least nine state agencies, that directly or indirectly support workforce development. This report, which provides a blueprint for strengthening workforce development in Ohio, (1) makes the case for appointing a lead state workforce official; (2) presents examples from other states that can guide Ohio in creating this position; (3) details the position description for an Ohio lead workforce official; (4) identifies the top issues that should be tackled to strengthen the Ohio workforce, with a focus on low-skilled adults and middle-skill jobs; and (5) highlights existing state and local initiatives that provide a foundation for the work of a lead state workforce official. The goal of these recommendations is to support a strong economic recovery and improve the lives of Ohio's working families.

What other states are doing

Examples from other states illustrate three different approaches to aligning roles, programs, and resources to support and elevate state workforce policy goals:

- **Virginia:** Appointed a high-level official on the governor's staff to direct all state workforce functions through a sub-cabinet structure and moved WIA workforce services to the community college system
- **New Mexico:** Merged functions from multiple agencies to create a new workforce-focused, cabinet-level department
- **Michigan:** Expanded the role of a deputy director in the workforce agency to lead workforce development across state government on behalf of the governor

The position description

Ohio needs a strong, experienced individual, reporting to the governor, to lead workforce development activities across all state agencies. To be successful, this official needs a clear mandate from, and the support and engagement of, the governor in order to overcome resistance to change from state agencies and local systems. This position should (1) provide leadership and visibility for state government workforce development activities; (2) link and leverage state, federal, and private resources for workforce development; and (3) drive

system improvement through policy development, innovation, stakeholder involvement, and performance measurement and reporting.

CRP is not recommending a specific agency or position to assume the lead workforce role for the state. CRP is recommending that Ohio (1) quickly identify a person with the experience, skills, and personal attributes to take the lead on workforce development and (2) give that individual the authority, resources, and tools to do the job. This should not be merely a ceremonial or coordinator role. To achieve state workforce goals, Ohio's lead workforce official must be able direct funding, staff, and policymaking, and effect state and local system alignment.

The to do list

Although it is appropriate for state workforce development efforts to address the full range of occupations, there is a need specifically to focus on middle-skill jobs. Despite high unemployment, there are not enough Ohio workers with the skills to fill current and projected middle-skill jobs: those that require more than a high school diploma, but less than a four-year degree, including technical jobs in fast-growing STEM occupations. The state projects that there will be 841,570 middle-skill job openings from 2006 to 2016, about half of all openings in Ohio. Helping adults attain the credentials needed for these jobs will provide a skilled workforce for employers and economic security for Ohio families.

To achieve this goal, the following tasks should be at the top of the agenda of Ohio's lead state workforce official:

1. Meet the current and future needs of employers

Ohio's workforce system needs to have additional components in place to meet both the short-term and long-term skill needs of employers. A lead state workforce official should (a) assure that Ohio's workforce system is demand-driven and can quickly respond to employers' immediate skill needs, (b) facilitate statewide development of industry sector strategies and career pathways to position Ohio for federal funding and long-term economic growth, and (c) support a network of local workforce intermediaries to link workers, employers, and training.

2. Support success for adults in education and training

Ohio needs stronger policies and more targeted use of state and federal resources to support the success of the adult workforce in education and training. A lead state workforce official should (a) provide state need-based financial aid for adults pursuing credit or noncredit training for in-demand middle-skill jobs, (b) use WIA funds primarily for training and support services, and remove barriers to accessing WIA services for disadvantaged populations, (c) tap all available state and federal funds for training, (d) expedite policy and program reforms to strengthen the adult education and training pipeline, and (e) encourage employers to provide adults with work-based training experiences.

3. Establish strong state policy and a national presence

Ohio needs clear state policies and measurement systems to assure that effective workforce services are available statewide and to have a greater impact at the federal level. A lead state workforce official should (a) facilitate development of coordinated, consistent policies to guide the state and local workforce systems, (b) establish performance measurements and issue a comprehensive workforce report card, and (c) advocate for Ohio's priorities at the national level, and position Ohio to access federal workforce resources.

A new lead workforce official will certainly not be starting from scratch; a number of important activities and resources in Ohio provide a foundation for moving forward (Table ES-1). However, more can be done. Although one person alone cannot accomplish all of these tasks, a strong state workforce leader can align, enhance, and expedite disconnected activities to have a greater, and more immediate, impact for workers and employers throughout the state.

Table ES-1. The lead state workforce official's to do list

Goal: Prepare workers for middle-skill jobs		
TASK	STRATEGIES	FOUNDATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES
1. Meet the current and future needs of employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Establish a more nimble, demand-driven workforce system <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop industry sector strategies and career pathways statewide <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support a workforce intermediary network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIA business services moved to ODOD • Regional workforce directors • Ohio Workforce Guarantee • OhioMeansJobs.com • Ohio Skills Bank • Project HIRE • ARRA sector training grants • Manufacturing Skills Certification System
2. Support success for adults in education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provide need-based aid for students in two-year institutions or technical training <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use WIA funds for training and increase access to services for disadvantaged adults <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tap all available funds for workforce training <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expedite reforms that strengthen the adult education pipeline <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provide work-based learning experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State WIA ARRA policy • UI payments for persons in training • Adult education programs moved to OBR • Stackable Credentials Pilot • Ohio Shifting Gears Initiative • Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation postsecondary initiatives • Community College Success Points • Constructing Futures • TANF Subsidized Employment Program • Ohio Co-op and Internship Program • Third Frontier Internship
3. Establish strong state policy and a national presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop clear, consistent state policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Measure performance and issue a workforce report card <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advance the interests of Ohio at the national level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USO and ODOD strategic plans • Interagency Workforce Policy Committee • Ohio Shifting Gears data activities • Statewide Longitudinal Data System • Higher Education Outcomes-Based Funding • Ohio Anti-Poverty Task Force Report

The team

Diverse local stakeholders and the state legislature should be active partners in strengthening Ohio's workforce development policies and programs. One way to jump-start the activities on the agenda of Ohio's lead state workforce official is to bring to scale, and incorporate into statewide policy, successful local and regional workforce initiatives. The following are just a few examples:

Streamlined and efficient access to resources and services for businesses

- The Cleveland Industrial Retention Initiative, a program of the City of Cleveland managed by WIRE-Net to meet the needs of local manufacturers
- The Business Resource Network, an initiative of the Mahoning and Columbiana Training Association, regional chambers of commerce, government agencies, universities, and other business services organizations

Aligned, comprehensive regional workforce policies, strategies, and funding

- The Employers First Regional Workforce Team, a collaboration of the directors of Workforce Investment Boards covering 12 counties in southwest Ohio and Kentucky
- The Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network, a funding collaborative managed by the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, with support from the National Fund for Workforce Solutions

Industry sector strategies and career pathways working together

- The Logistics-ART industry sector strategy, coordinated by the Center for Workforce Development at Columbus State Community College, the Ohio Skills Bank lead for Region 1

1.0 Introduction

Labor force availability is the number one concern of Ohio businesses.

—Ohio Department of Development, Ohio Economic Development Incentive Study, May 2009

Employment is the top priority of leaders in Ohio as the nation emerges from the worst economic environment since the Great Depression. The focus of policymakers is on how to create jobs in order to get people who are unemployed back to work and those who are underemployed into family-sustaining jobs. However, the state faces a dual-pronged employment crisis—a shortage of jobs and, at the same time, a deficit of workers with the 21st century education and skills needed by employers.¹

Job creation efforts will not turn the Ohio economy around without a skilled workforce to fill the jobs. However, 46% of Ohio adults ages 18 to 64—3.3 million—have no postsecondary education, a figure worse than 35 other states. About one quarter of this group (764,000) does not have a high school diploma.² These underprepared adults are more likely to be unemployed and to live in poverty.³ Added to this total are thousands of recently dislocated workers who may have postsecondary education but need retraining to be qualified for new jobs. State policies and programs can play important roles in strengthening the skills of the workforce; however, Ohio's complex and decentralized workforce system presents barriers to achieving this goal.

Community Research Partners (CRP) believes that there is an urgent need for a state-level workforce development leader in Ohio to assure the most effective use of an estimated \$2+ billion in state and federal resources, administered by at least nine state agencies, that directly or indirectly support workforce development (Figure 1).⁴ This report, which provides a blueprint for strengthening workforce development in Ohio, (1) makes the case for appointing a lead state workforce official; (2) presents examples from other states that can guide Ohio in creating this position; (3) details the position description of an Ohio lead workforce official; (4) identifies the top issues that should be tackled to strengthen the Ohio workforce, with a focus on low-skilled adults and middle-skill jobs; and (5) highlights existing state and local initiatives that provide a foundation for the work of a lead state workforce official. The goal of these recommendations is to support a strong economic recovery and improve the lives of Ohio's working families.

Why Ohio needs a lead state workforce official

Who is in charge of workforce development for the State of Ohio? This question has never been easy to answer in the Buckeye State. Depending on your vantage point, you may cite one of several state agencies that have program functions related to workforce education and training or employment services. The more likely answer, however, is “no one” or “I'm not sure.”

Although state leaders emphasize the importance of a skilled workforce to Ohio's economic recovery, its importance is not reflected in the state's program and policymaking structure. Unlike in a number of other states, *in Ohio workforce development is not the primary job of any state agency or cabinet-level official.*

A leadership gap remains

Ohio has taken steps to reorganize, coordinate, and put a greater focus on workforce development. House Bill 119, the fiscal year 2008-2009 state budget bill, transferred adult career-technical education programs from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) to the Board of Regents (OBR).⁵ In March 2008, Governor Ted Strickland announced the reassignment of workforce functions among three agencies. The following changes were

made “to help meet his goal of dramatically expanding the level of training and education of Ohio workers...” and to improve performance and accountability, better align resources, reduce redundancy, and share information:⁶

- The Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) assumed responsibility for all services related to employers through the transfer of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) discretionary programs and One-Stop business support programs from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and the transfer of targeted-industry training grants from OBR. ODOD created a Workforce and Talent Division, hired regional workforce directors, and continued to staff the Governor’s Workforce Policy Advisory Board.
- OBR assumed responsibility for the Ohio Skills Bank (OSB), formerly housed at ODJFS.
- ODJFS remained responsible for workforce services for individuals and families.

These changes have elevated workforce development within these agencies, but two years after the reorganization was announced, none is the clear lead. While each agency represents an important component of the of the overall workforce development system, silos remain. Each agency has a unique culture and local delivery system, and each addresses workforce development from a different perspective—OBR, higher education; ODOD, economic development; ODJFS, employment services. In addition, there have been a number of changes in key workforce staff within all of these agencies.

In mid-2009, policy staff from OBR, ODOD, ODJFS, and the Office of the Governor began meeting as the Interagency Workforce Policy Committee. The committee’s purpose is to better coordinate workforce activities and advance program and policy recommendations within their organizations. Although this effort is laudable and represents progress, it is not a structure that can quickly react to emerging needs and changing conditions, nor is it a transparent process, where progress is evident to external stakeholders.

A ripple effect on local services

The multi-agency state workforce structure, lack of clear policy across state agencies, and decentralized policymaking authority, have a ripple effect, producing complexity and inconsistency in local workforce services throughout Ohio. The local system includes: the WIA delivery system, with 20 local workforce boards, 11 sub-boards, and 90 One-Stops; 12 regional workforce directors housed in state regional offices; and the University System of Ohio (USO), with more than 260 sites.⁷ Each of these systems has a different geographic service area configuration. In addition, local governments, chambers of commerce and other economic development organizations, proprietary schools, and non-profit and community-based organizations are involved in local workforce development activities.

In some areas of Ohio, the local workforce system—the “front door” for employers and workers—has strong, collaborative players who work well together. In other parts of the state, this is not the case. Too often, local workforce system customers are on their own to connect the dots among organizations, programs, and resources that differ from place-to-place throughout Ohio.

The time for bold steps

The need for strong state workforce leadership, clear state policy, and streamlined, accessible programs was a recurring theme in discussions with Ohio stakeholders—employers, workforce boards, education and training providers, and advocacy groups—as CRP collected information on public policy priorities for the Ohio Workforce Coalition.⁸ Local stakeholders cited the following problems with the current system:

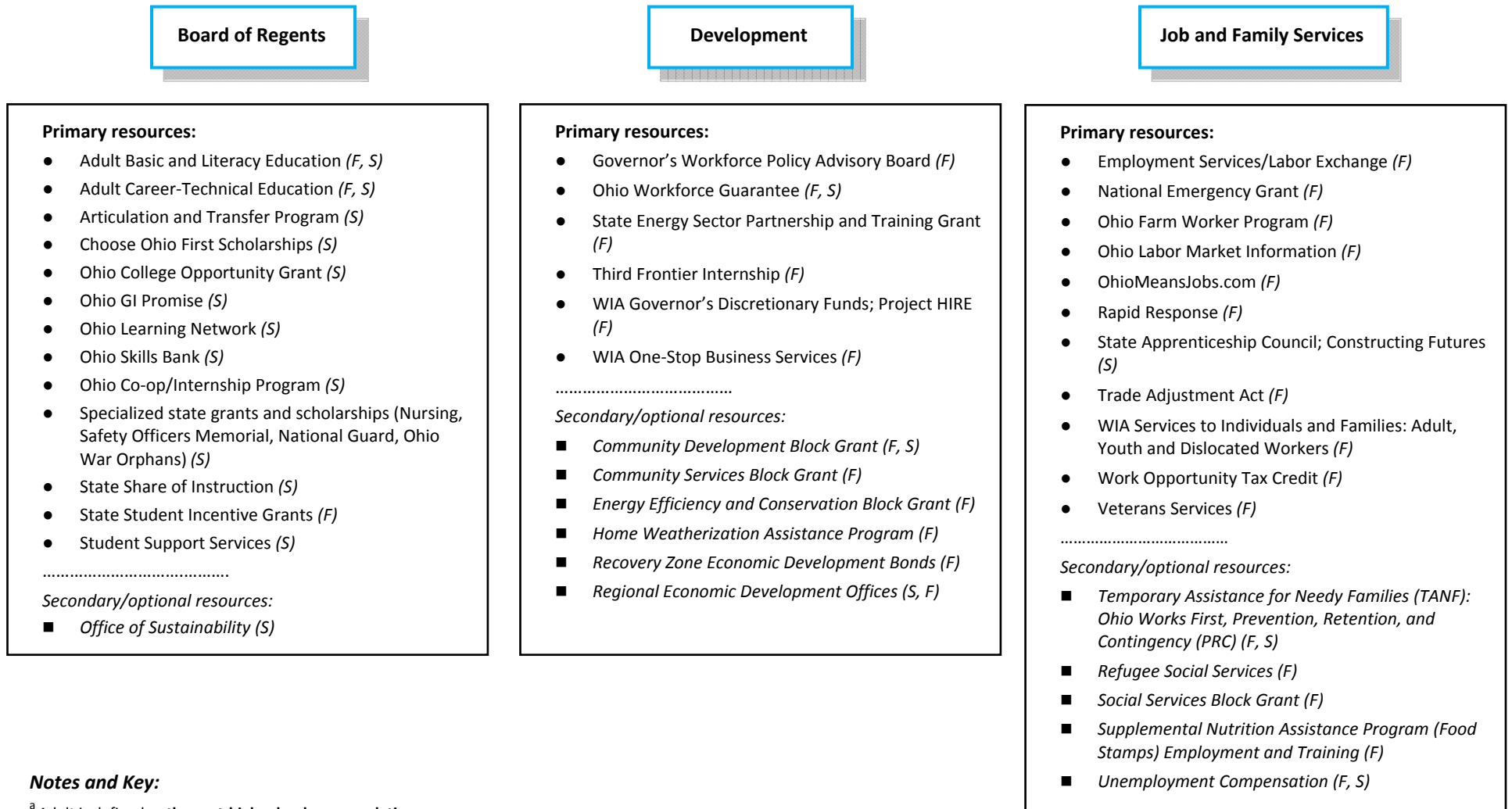
- There is confusion as a result of frequent changes in state workforce programs and staff.

- The geographies of Ohio’s regional offices and workforce areas are not aligned.
- State administrative requirements limit flexibility in the use of funds by local agencies.
- State funding for training programs has been cut or eliminated.
- Local workforce boards adopt additional layers of policies and procedures that make it more difficult for employers and workers to access services.
- All of the potential partners in the local workforce system, including USO institutions and nonprofits, are not fully used, and there is duplication of services.

Businesses indicated that although workforce resources may be accessible to large employers, assistance is less available, and more difficult to access, for smaller businesses. Problems with the workforce system were also identified in the Ohio Economic Development Incentive Study conducted by ODOD in 2009. The report notes that “compared to other states, Ohio’s workforce development assistance...appeared to be less well-organized and its service delivery capacity more fragmented.” Employers surveyed for the study expressed a need for (1) more state resources for incumbent worker training; (2) comprehensive, in-depth services, including assistance with recruitment, screening, orientation, and training; (3) a single point of contact to help navigate a complex array of local programs and service providers; and (4) a streamlined application process.⁹

Although there have been improvements, Ohio’s current workforce education, training, and development system remains inefficient, has less impact than it could, and creates unnecessary hurdles for employers, workers, and local organizations. This situation is not unique to Ohio and is, to some extent, driven by federal program regulations. However, other states have taken bold, creative steps to focus and elevate workforce development functions. Ohio should now do the same.

Figure 1. Ohio state agency adult workforce resources and functions^a



Notes and Key:

^a Adult is defined as the post-high school age population

- **Primary resources:** Workforce education/training/development is a **primary purpose** of the program.
- **Secondary/optional resources:** Workforce education/training/development is a **secondary purpose** or **allowable/discretionary activity**.
(Funding source: S=state F=federal; if both are shown, the former is the largest funding source)

Education

Rehabilitation and Correction

Transportation

Primary resources:

- Career-Technical Education Grants (F, S)
- General Equivalency Diploma Testing (S)
- Honors Scholarship Program (F)
- Ohio Career Information System (S)
- Post-Secondary Education Option (S)
- Tech-Prep Consortium (S)

.....

Secondary/optional resources:

- Advanced Placement (F)
- Longitudinal Data Systems (F)

Primary resources:

- Institution Education Services: academic, career-technical, job training, apprenticeship (S, F)

.....

Secondary/optional resources:

- Community Residential Programs (S)
- Community Nonresidential/Diversion Programs (S)

Primary resources:

- On-the-Job Training/Supportive Services (F)

.....

Secondary/optional resources:

- Surface Transportation Workforce Development, Training, and Education (F)

Rehabilitation Services Commission

Veterans Services

Aging

Primary resources:

- Vocational Rehabilitation (F, S)
- Supported Employment (F)

Primary resources:

- Troops-to-Teachers (F)
- Veterans Training (F)

Primary resources:

- Senior Community Service Employment Program (F)

Notes and Key:

^a Adult is defined as **the post-high school age population**

- **Primary resources:** Workforce education/training/development is a **primary purpose** of the program.
- *Secondary/optional resources: Workforce education/training/development is a secondary purpose or allowable/discretionary activity.*

(Funding source: S=state F=federal; if both are shown, the former is the largest funding source)

Sources: Ohio Department of Development, Inventory of State and Federal Workforce Programs and Services, 2007; Ohio Legislative Services Commission Greenbook: Analysis of Enacted 2010-2011 State Budget, September 2009; state agency and federal agency websites.

2.0 What other states are doing

Ohioans are sometimes hesitant to look to other states for models, citing the unique “Ohio way” of doing things. However, understanding what other states are doing can prevent reinventing the wheel in Ohio. Examples from other states can also provide a basis of comparison for assessing what is working well, and what is not working well, in Ohio.

This section includes examples of recent steps taken by states to elevate the prominence of workforce development.¹⁰ The examples illustrate strategies that states have employed to send a message within state government and to external stakeholders about the importance of workforce development. They are also examples of three different approaches to aligning roles, programs, and resources to support state workforce policy goals:

- **Virginia:** Appointed a high-level official on the governor’s staff to direct all state workforce functions through a sub-cabinet and moved WIA workforce services to the community college system
- **New Mexico:** Merged functions from multiple agencies to create a new workforce-focused, cabinet-level department
- **Michigan:** Expanded the role of a deputy director in the workforce agency to lead workforce development across state government on behalf of the governor

This section also includes descriptions of comprehensive workforce initiatives in Michigan and Pennsylvania and the biographies of Michigan and Pennsylvania workforce officials.

Virginia: A chief workforce development officer and workforce sub-cabinet¹¹

In 2006, legislative and executive action resulted in a plan for workforce reform, Virginia’s Workforce Development Strategic Plan, and the appointment of a lead state workforce official. Former Governor Tim Kaine named his deputy chief of staff to the position of chief workforce development officer, with the following responsibilities as outlined in state statute:

- Coordinate and streamline workforce development efforts
- Serve as a liaison among state agencies, the Virginia Workforce Council, local workforce boards, local communities, and the business community
- Coordinate policies, programs, evaluation, and service delivery among cabinet agencies
- Develop uniform policies and procedures for One-Stop centers and evaluate their performance
- Monitor federal legislation and policy to maximize effective use of and access to funds
- Report annually on progress in coordinating workforce resources statewide and strategies for statewide resource and program coordination
- Advise the governor regarding workforce development and training issues and advocate for resources and program revisions that will increase the effectiveness of the system

In 2007, the governor established through executive order the Workforce Sub-Cabinet under the chairmanship of the chief workforce development officer. The sub-cabinet coordinates state workforce efforts and includes the secretaries of commerce and trade, education, higher education, finance, and health and human resources, and the governor’s policy staff.

In 2008, WIA workforce programs were placed under the responsibility of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). The VCCS staffs the Virginia Workforce Council, which provides policy direction to local workforce boards. The move was designed to streamline programs and services and have a greater focus on training, skill development, career pathways, and developing workers into lifelong learners.

New Mexico: A new cabinet-level workforce department¹²

In 2006, the New Mexico legislature passed House Bill 1280, which combined all functions and staff of the Governor's Office of Workforce Training and Development with all functions and staff of the New Mexico Department of Labor. The legislation, effective July 1, 2007, created a new state agency called the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions and a cabinet-level workforce official. The Department of Workforce Solutions is charged with developing and maintaining a skilled and productive workforce for the competitive global economy. Priority goals in the New Mexico 2007-2009 WIA Plan include the following:

- Restructure New Mexico's workforce system into the new Department of Workforce Solutions that will provide consistent, high quality services and accountability through a user-friendly system that is responsive to business, job seekers, and workers
- Integrate services provided by separately funded workforce development programs, including those in the private sector, to provide the best possible service to customers
- Provide New Mexico's adults (including those with barriers to education and employment) with access to lifelong education, training, and workforce services
- Establish business as a primary driver of the New Mexico workforce system to ensure their employment needs are met through consistent, timely, and quality services

The Department of Workforce Solutions coordinates most state workforce-related functions, including business services, job seeker services, labor market information, public information, and the state workforce board and workforce policy mechanism.

Michigan: A chief workforce officer¹³

In November 2009, Governor Jennifer Granholm gave state workforce point person Andy Levin a broader and more prominent role by designating him the state's chief workforce officer. The new job title and duties are in addition to his responsibilities as deputy director of the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth (DELEG), where he oversees Michigan's No Worker Left Behind Initiative. The new position expands on his DELEG role, carrying it across other departments in state government and heightening work with outside partners.

"Preparing our workforce for the 21st century economy is crucial for Michigan's economic turnaround," Granholm said. "Michigan's No Worker Left Behind program has become a national model for workforce policy. We must continue to innovate and provide Michigan's citizens every chance to succeed, and that's why I am creating the position of chief workforce officer."

"It's saying that this governor is elevating workforce to a higher level," Levin said. He said he hopes to enhance integration and collaboration, and new workforce initiatives may be launched. His duties include the following:

- Ensuring all levels of government make maximum use of resources to train and re-employ workers
- Working under the direction of the lieutenant governor to rationalize and consolidate workforce services in state government as part of a streamlining government initiative
- Leading Michigan efforts to develop recommendations for national workforce policy

Since his appointment to DELEG in 2006, Levin eliminated several workforce and career education programs and replaced them with the Bureau of Workforce Transformation. Levin led efforts to acquire additional federal funding for workforce programs in Michigan through aggressive and creative use of all available avenues, including the Workforce Investment Act, Trade Adjustment Assistance Act, and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Putting the pieces together: Comprehensive state workforce initiatives

Michigan: No Worker Left Behind

In 2007, Governor Jennifer Granholm announced the No Worker Left Behind (NWLB) free tuition program. The vision of NWLB is to (1) accelerate worker transitions through learning, (2) support the state's employers and economic development needs, and (3) align existing training resources. NWLB represents a fundamental shift from focusing on short-term training and job search assistance, to investing in longer-term educational attainment that carries market-useful credentials.

In 2009, NWLB became the permanent workforce policy for the state and the umbrella for all state and federal workforce funds, establishing uniform eligibility requirements and benefits for WIA participants statewide. NWLB, which initially received state funds, is now being funded with a mix of federal training resources across several programs. Local agencies and training providers are required to leverage federal and state financial aid resources, federal employment and training resources, and resources from employer buy-out packages.

The program provides up to two years' free tuition (up to \$5,000 a year) at any Michigan community college, university, or other approved training program, and a skills assessment and job placement assistance by a Michigan Works! Agency. The worker must pursue a degree or occupational certificate in a high-demand occupation or emerging industry, or an entrepreneurship program. NWLB's primary focus is on the attainment of certificates or associate degrees. Eligibility for NWLB includes adults who are unemployed, or have received a termination notice, or an employed person whose annual family income is \$40,000 or less.

In October 2009, 62,206 people had enrolled in training, 34,355 had completed training, and 72% of completers had obtained or retained jobs. The percentage of unemployed and underemployed workers in training is double the national average, and 77% are in programs of one year or longer.

Source: State of Michigan, No Worker Left Behind Fact Sheet, January 2010, and No Worker Left Behind News December 2009

Pennsylvania Industry Partnerships

In 2005, the State of Pennsylvania created Industry Partnerships (IP) as a new workforce development tool. Designed to overcome longstanding frustrations employers had with the workforce and education systems, IPs are regional employer/worker consortiums that bring together companies with similar products, markets, and human resource needs in industry clusters identified by the state. They are led by a workforce intermediary experienced in the targeted industry, such as a workforce board, business consortium, labor-management partnership, or nonprofit.

The role of the IP is to (1) identify labor force shortages, skill gaps, and training needs; (2) align educational curriculum to industry demands; (3) develop new career pathways for employees; (4) help employers identify and address human resource challenges; and (5) stimulate industry-wide innovation. By applying resources across multiple employers in an industry, IPs provide companies with a more cost-effective way to address their workforce needs.

The IP project places priority on programs that combine assessment, case management, and career development to ensure that job seekers and lower-skilled employees have opportunities to advance and increase their financial stability by contributing to the productivity of their employers. Through IPs, industry-recognized credentials can be developed that enable workers to advance with their current employers or seek better opportunities elsewhere.

State funds support incumbent worker training for job opportunities in high-priority occupations and workforce intermediary staffing and organizing activities. Additional investments come from employers, foundations, workforce boards, vocational schools, and community colleges.

As of January 2009, there were more than 6,300 businesses involved in nearly 80 Industry Partnerships across Pennsylvania, and more than 70,000 workers had been trained. Workers who received training through IPs saw their wages rise by an average of nearly 13%.

Sources: State of Pennsylvania, "Industry Partnerships in Pennsylvania," 2009; Community Research Partners, "Aligning Workforce Development and Economic Development: Opportunities for Ohio," 2007

Profiles of state workforce officials

The following are the biographies of workforce officials in Michigan and Pennsylvania, both visible workforce policy leaders at the state and national levels. Although their backgrounds differ—one in labor and the other in economic development—they both have a track record of bringing together the diverse state and local players required for comprehensive workforce system change.

Andy Levin, Michigan Chief Workforce Officer and Deputy Director, Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth

Andy Levin joined the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth as deputy director in February of 2007. He oversees operations of Workforce Programs, Commission for the Blind, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Career Education, Commission on Disability Concerns, Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives, and Employment Relations. Levin is a lifelong advocate for good jobs, economic growth, healthy labor-management relations, and workers' rights.

In the 1980s, Levin organized health care workers for the Service Employees International Union and co-founded a nonprofit to respond to workplace implications of the federal Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. From 1994 to 2006, Levin worked on a wide range of national workplace policy issues in Washington, DC. He served as the staff attorney to the presidential Commission on the Future of Worker-Management Relations. In the Deputy Secretary's office of the U.S. Department of Labor, he worked closely with employers, unions and other groups on policies ranging from the National Labor Relations Act's Section 8(a)(2); the proposed TEAM Act; the Federal Transit Act's provisions affecting mass transit workers; and reform of the overtime pay requirements of the FLSA. At the national AFL-CIO, he created and led the innovative Union Summer program, engineered experimental multi-union organizing projects in five targeted cities across the U.S., and led the Voice@Work Campaign to transform U.S. labor laws to fit 21st Century realities. He earned a BA from Williams College, a JD from Harvard Law School, and an MA in Asian Languages and Cultures from the University of Michigan's Rackham Graduate School.

Source: Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth, http://www.michigan.gov/documents/SpeakerBureau_170343_7.pdf.

Fred Dedrick, Deputy Secretary for Workforce Development Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry

Note: In March 2010, Fred Dedrick became the Executive Director of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions.

Fred Dedrick is the Deputy Secretary for Workforce Development in the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, where he is responsible for overseeing \$250 million in workforce development funding aimed at helping workers find, keep, and advance in careers paying family-sustaining wages, especially in the commonwealth's targeted industry clusters.

Mr. Dedrick has more than 30 years of experience in improving workforce development through partnerships. He served as Governor Edward G. Rendell's appointee as executive director of the Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board. In this position he was a key leader in creating Pennsylvania's Industry Partnerships, as well as the Center for Health Careers, a public/private initiative to address Pennsylvania's critical health care shortages. He was also instrumental in the design of Pennsylvania's first Performance Management Plan, as well as the development of Pennsylvania's unified workforce development strategy, Job Ready PA.

Mr. Dedrick was previously the director of workforce development for The Reinvestment Fund (TRF) in Philadelphia, where he also served as president of the Regional Workforce Partnership. Prior to joining TRF, he was director of economic development for Greater Philadelphia First, a regional business leadership organization. He earned a Bachelor's Degree in English from the University of Notre Dame and an MPA from Princeton University.

Sources: Job Opportunity Investment Network, <http://www.joincollaborative.org/investors.html>; National Fund for Workforce Solutions, <http://nfwfsolutions.org/media/press-releases/fred-dedrick-joins-national-fund>

3.0 The position description

Ohio needs a strong, experienced official, reporting to the governor, to lead workforce development activities across all state agencies. As the examples in the previous section illustrate, this position can take a variety of forms within state government. No matter which organizational structure Ohio chooses, the lead state workforce official must have a clear mandate from, and the support and engagement of, the governor. This will be needed to overcome resistance to change from state agencies and local systems.

CRP is not recommending a specific agency or position to assume the lead workforce role for the state, nor is CRP proposing, in the short-term, major reorganization or mergers of departments, although this may be an appropriate long-term strategy. CRP is recommending that Ohio (1) quickly identify a person with the experience, skills, and personal attributes to take the lead on workforce development and (2) give that individual the authority, resources, and tools to do the job. This should not be merely a ceremonial or coordinator role. Ohio's lead workforce official must be able direct funding, staff, and policymaking, and effect state and local system alignment, for the purpose of achieving state workforce development goals.

Job responsibilities

The following outlines the responsibilities of the lead state workforce official:

1. Provide leadership and visibility

- Articulate a vision and strategy for the Ohio workforce, incorporating applicable elements of existing initiatives and state strategic plans
- Advise the governor, cabinet, and legislature on workforce policy
- Serve as the public face of workforce development for state government
- Advocate on behalf of the Ohio workforce, including low-income, disadvantaged, and underserved populations
- Have the authority to speak on behalf of the governor and the State of Ohio on workforce development issues
- Represent the interests of the State of Ohio at the federal level and actively participate in national organizations and forums

2. Link and leverage resources

- Align state government workforce resources, functions, and regional geographies
- Increase the impact and cost-effectiveness of state investments in workforce education, training, development, and support services
- Identify additional state and federal resources for workforce development
- Proactively access non-state resources—federal, private, philanthropic—to support state and local workforce development activities

3. Drive system improvement

- Set cross-agency, state-level policy to assure that uniform, quality workforce services are available and accessible throughout Ohio
- Reduce “red tape” and streamline state and local programs
- Encourage and support innovation and best practices
- Involve local stakeholders in state system-change efforts
- Establish, track, and report performance measures for state and local workforce functions and use data for accountability and quality improvement

Skills and experience

Because Ohio has a long history of administering its workforce system through multiple state agencies and independent local policymaking and service delivery, it will take a unique individual to step into the role of lead state workforce official. The following skills and experience will be required to be successful in this new position:

- A vision for workforce development in Ohio
- High energy, credibility, a strong public presence, and excellent communication skills
- Creativity, strategic thinking skills, and a track record of moving from planning to action
- Experience in developing workforce policy at the local, state, or national levels
- Knowledge of the key programs that make up the workforce system and models and best practices in workforce development
- Experience in working with, and successfully forging partnerships among, key workforce system stakeholders, including businesses, workforce boards, labor, education and training, and social services
- Ability to work with local, state, and federal elected officials of both parties
- Familiarity with the history, structure, and operations of the program components of Ohio's current systems, including WIA, postsecondary education, economic development, and county-run human services
- An understanding of the culture of each of the principal state agencies involved in workforce development in Ohio and what will be required to better align their workforce functions and develop cross-agency collaboration

4.0 The to do list

Policy research, best practices, and stakeholder input indicate that the following tasks should be at the top of the agenda of Ohio’s lead state workforce official:

1. Meet the current and future needs of employers
2. Support success for adults in education and training
3. Establish strong state policy and a national presence

Together, these activities can help Ohio achieve an important goal: *filling the current and projected deficit of middle-skill workers*, the skill level with the greatest mismatch between demand and supply. Although this goal should not be the sole focus of state workforce efforts, it is an area often overlooked by policymakers that can provide immediate gains for the Ohio economy.

A new lead workforce official will not be starting from scratch, and this section also highlights important initiatives, activities, and resources in Ohio that provide a foundation for moving forward (Table 1). However, more can be done. Although one person alone cannot accomplish all of these tasks, a strong state workforce leader can align, enhance, and expedite disconnected activities to have a greater, more immediate impact for Ohio’s workers and employers throughout the state.

Table 1. The lead state workforce official’s to do list

Goal: Prepare workers for middle-skill jobs		
TASK	STRATEGIES	FOUNDATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES
1. Meet the current and future needs of employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Establish a more nimble, demand-driven workforce system <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop industry sector strategies and career pathways statewide <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support a workforce intermediary network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIA business services moved to ODOD • Regional workforce directors • Ohio Workforce Guarantee • OhioMeansJobs.com • Ohio Skills Bank • Project HIRE • ARRA sector training grants • Manufacturing Skills Certification System
2. Support success for adults in education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provide need-based aid for students in two-year institutions or technical training <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use WIA funds for training and increase access to services for disadvantaged adults <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tap all available funds for workforce training <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expedite reforms that strengthen the adult education pipeline <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provide work-based learning experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State WIA ARRA policy • UI payments for persons in training • Adult education programs moved to OBR • Stackable Credentials Pilot • Ohio Shifting Gears Initiative • Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation postsecondary initiatives • Community College Success Points • Constructing Futures • TANF Subsidized Employment Program • Ohio Co-op and Internship Program • Third Frontier Internship
3. Establish strong state policy and a national presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop clear, consistent state policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Measure performance and issue a workforce report card <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advance the interests of Ohio at the national level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USO and ODOD strategic plans • Interagency Workforce Policy Committee • Ohio Shifting Gears data activities • Statewide Longitudinal Data System • Higher Education Outcomes-Based Funding • Ohio Anti-Poverty Task Force Report

Goal: Prepare workers for middle-skill jobs

Even during these times of high unemployment, employers are having difficulty finding workers with specific technical skills and certifications. A 2009 employer survey by Manpower Inc. identified the following ten jobs, ranked in order, as the most difficult to fill in the United States: (1) engineers, (2) nurses, (3) skilled/manual trades,¹⁴ (4) teachers, (5) sales representatives, (6) technicians,¹⁵ (7) drivers, (8) IT staff, (9) laborers, and (10) machinist/machine operators.¹⁶ Within this list are many middle-skill jobs: those that require more than a high school diploma, but less than a four-year degree.

In Ohio, the mismatch between available jobs and workforce skills is most acute for middle-skill jobs. In 2007, there was an excess of workers qualified for high-skill and low-skill jobs but a deficit for middle-skill jobs. The state projects that there will be 841,570 middle-skill job openings from 2006 to 2016, about half of all openings in Ohio. These are good jobs, with average wages of more than \$17.00 an hour in 2007 (Figures 2 and 3; Appendix).

Figure 2. Ohio jobs and workers by skill level, 2007

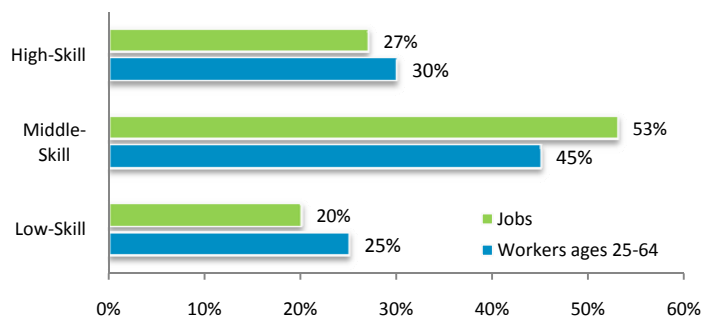
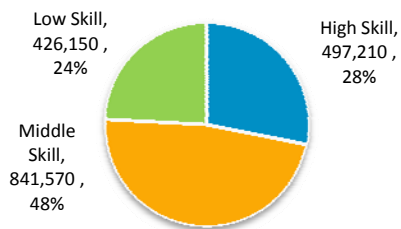


Figure 3. Ohio job openings 2006-2016



Sources: Ohio Department of Job and Family Services; U.S. Census; National Skills Coalition; CRP analysis

Supply a STEM workforce

Many in-demand jobs are in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) occupations. Business and political leaders understand the importance of a highly-skilled workforce to the state's economic growth and often call for increasing the number of students receiving a bachelor's or advanced degree in STEM fields. However, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, a large percentage of the workforce that requires STEM knowledge and skills are middle-skill technicians,¹⁷ and about 34% of STEM occupations do not require a four-year degree.¹⁸ For example, every researcher and scientist requires another 1.6 persons working in related support occupations, including administrative support, technical, equipment maintenance, and installation workers.¹⁹ Ohio workforce programs need to assure that employers have access to skilled STEM workers at all levels.

Increase the earning potential of Ohio families

A trained middle-skill workforce is critical to Ohio's economic recovery and to the economic security of Ohio families, many of whom, though employed, do not have an income sufficient to avoid economic hardship. In 2008, one in four Ohio jobs was in an occupation with a median annual pay below the poverty level for a family of four.²⁰

The most direct path to increase the income of working adults is through education and training that leads to a credential or degree in an in-demand occupation. In 2008, 24.3% of Ohio adults age 25+ without a high school diploma or equivalent were living in poverty, compared to 8.7% of those adults with some college or an associate's degree.²¹ Middle-skill training programs can produce the specific skills required by employers now, while setting Ohio workers on career pathways that provide opportunities for advancement to higher paying positions in the future.

Priority tasks for a lead state workforce official

This following details three key tasks that should form the initial agenda of Ohio's chief state workforce official, as well as existing activities and resources that can further the agenda.

Task #1: Meet the current and future needs of employers

The bottom line: *Ohio's workforce system needs to have additional components in place to meet both the short-term and long-term skill needs of employers. A lead state workforce official should (a) assure that Ohio's workforce system is demand-driven and can quickly respond to employers' immediate skill needs, (b) facilitate statewide development of industry sector strategies and career pathways to position Ohio for federal funding and long-term economic growth, and (c) support a network of local workforce intermediaries to link employers, workers, and training.*

a) Establish a more nimble, demand-driven system

During times when new jobs are scarce, the state must move quickly when any job creation opportunity arises (see box on the next page). Employers who are hiring need very specific skills and are looking for workers who can be job-ready within a short period of time. However, employers report that the process in Ohio to obtain training assistance is unpredictable and can take weeks or even months; they indicate that processes in other states are much faster. Ohio's workforce system must be nimble enough to quickly meet the training needs of employers, even if the jobs are entry-level positions.

The redesign of the Ohio Skills Bank (OSB) can help to accomplish this. Initially launched in 2008, the OSB was intended to target the resources of the University System of Ohio to meet workforce training needs articulated by employers. As implemented, however, much of the focus was on coordination, planning, and data collection. In the next iteration of OSB, the state should provide local OSB partners with flexibility and resources to quickly respond to local employer needs, which might be quite different throughout the state.

b) Develop industry sector strategies and career pathways statewide

Industry sector strategies and career-pathways are long-term strategies that link education and training to jobs in targeted industry clusters with projected job growth. These approaches support economic development, provide advancement opportunities for workers, and position Ohio to take advantage of federal funds for sector-based initiatives.

Foundation grants and OSB funding have been used to design sector strategies and career pathways in some areas of the state. Recently, state and local organizations have secured ARRA grants for workforce training in green jobs, and in the energy, IT, logistics, and health care sectors. Some of these projects include a focus on career pathways for low-income and disadvantaged populations. In addition, the state is in the process of establishing a statewide Manufacturing Skills Certification System.

Job training in a jobless recovery: Giving workers the right skills

By Maureen Conway, Director, Workforce Strategies Initiative, the Aspen Institute, and Robert P. Giloth, Vice President, Annie E. Casey Foundation

The folks who do job training at Per Scholas in the South Bronx have a tradition of ringing a bell every time one of their graduates gets a job. One recent afternoon, they rang the bell 22 times as a whole class of computer technicians found work with the same employer.

That's quite an accomplishment at any time, but amid today's jobless recovery ... it's downright remarkable. The approach is simple: pick an industry. Build relationships to find out what jobs are available and skills are needed. Then adapt training specifically to those jobs and skills. In Milwaukee, that means teaching laid-off bricklayers to do caulking. In Los Angeles, that means retooling a training program that targets local ports to focus instead on security firms. In Baltimore, that means creating a pipeline to move low-wage workers into health care careers.

These should be flush times for the workforce development field. The \$4 billion promised in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is finally starting to reach nonprofit and local agencies, the first real infusion of cash after many lean years. Department of Labor spending on employment and training dropped from \$17 billion in 1979 to \$5.5 billion in equivalent dollars in 2008.

But the new money is arriving amid the worst recession in memory, leaving some program leaders worried about where to find work for their trainees. Some of the most reliable employers are simply not hiring—or have thousands of seasoned pros sitting on the bench. Consider construction: with much of the workforce due to retire in the next few years, there should be room for new hires and apprentices. But right now the unemployment rate in construction is a staggering 18.7 percent...Employers simply aren't hiring.

Earl Buford is witnessing this in southern Wisconsin, where placements are down at Big-Step, a unique collaboration he runs among construction businesses, organized labor and workers. Recently, though, the bricklayers union asked him to train laid-off workers how to do caulking, a skill suddenly in greater demand. As his staff created a program, Buford found the public and private dollars to pay for it.

At Per Scholas, CEO Plinio Ayala was delighted when an employer came to him looking for computer technicians. But they had to be certified to work on Apple computers, something the Bronx training program had never handled. Ayala sent a trainer to a two-week crash course and found 30 discarded Apples in his warehouse. Within a month, Per Scholas modified its curriculum to include Apple repair, which led to the bell ringing.

Both the Bronx and Wisconsin programs are part of a recent study by Public/Private Ventures that found workers trained in such sector-based approaches earned more money and were more likely to remain employed than similar workers not chosen for the programs. Many of these employees were young, poor, African-American or Latino—among the groups hit hardest by unemployment.

Yet for every success, there are hundreds of programs and thousands of workers who fail to connect training to jobs. We cannot simply conclude that training doesn't work...Training works if it's done right: linked to actual job openings or to skills missing in a region's economy.

This is important to remember in the amorphous field of "green jobs," a priority in the recovery act. The national emphasis needs to take into account regional realities: training for solar power installation, for instance, makes more sense in Arizona than Michigan.

Congress...could overhaul the Workforce Investment Act next year, reforming a system that many say is focused on supplying workers rather than meeting industry demand. As the White House and Congress consider a job creation agenda, they should bear in mind the chief lesson of the sector-based approach: the best money is spent training for a job that's waiting to be filled.

Source: Excerpted from "Job Training in a Jobless Recovery," December 7, 2009, <http://spotlightonpoverty.com/ExclusiveCommentary.aspx?id=721d245c-746c-40c2-8652-b1974fb735ac>

These initiatives provide a foundation in Ohio for comprehensive sector strategies and career pathways, but the efforts must be employer-driven and specific to local and regional economies. The state should provide data, funding, training, and technical assistance to enable local groups to fully develop these important workforce strategies throughout Ohio.

c) Support a workforce intermediary network

The state has taken steps to make workforce services more accessible to employers. These include hiring regional workforce directors; creating OhioMeansJobs.com, a free, comprehensive job and resume posting site; and consolidating multiple business training grants into the Ohio Workforce Guarantee program. These large-scale initiatives, however, have limitations. Technology, such as OhioMeansJobs.com, cannot take the place of a person who performs the linking function among workers, training providers, and employers. A single regional workforce director, who covers a multi-county region, has limited capacity to work intensively with large numbers of employers over a long period of time.

A system of workforce intermediaries can fill these gaps. Workforce intermediaries proactively address workforce needs using a dual customer approach—one that considers the needs of both employees and employers—often focusing on low-income and less-skilled job seekers.²² Intermediaries typically specialize in an industry sector, building relationships with multiple employers and serving as a single point of contact for the diverse parts of the workforce system. They implement a range of strategies to address communities' workforce needs and economic development agendas, such as training, education, and employment support services.²³ Intermediaries can be found in a variety of organizational structures, including nonprofits, workforce boards, labor organizations, community colleges, or local government.

Although in some parts of Ohio there are organizations currently performing this function, the state does not have a program to develop a statewide intermediary structure.²⁴ Ohio should provide funding and technical assistance to support a network of local workforce intermediaries in targeted industries, linked to industry sector strategies.

Task #2: Support success for adults in education and training

The bottom line: *Ohio needs stronger policies and more targeted use of state and federal resources to support the success of the adult workforce in education and training. A lead state workforce official should (a) provide state need-based financial aid for adults pursuing credit or noncredit training for in-demand middle-skill jobs, (b) use WIA funds primarily for training and support services, and remove barriers to accessing WIA services for disadvantaged populations, (c) tap all available state and federal funds for training, (d) expedite policy and program reforms to strengthen the adult education and training pipeline, and (e) encourage employers to provide adults with work-based training experiences.*

a) Provide need-based aid for students in two-year institutions or technical training

Budget cuts have reduced, or in some cases eliminated, state funding for workforce education and training programs.²⁵ One of the most significant was a 57% cut in the Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG), the state need-based financial aid program. This resulted in program changes that eliminated aid for students at two-year institutions, many of whom are adults.²⁶ In 2007, 48% of students at Ohio's two-year campuses were older than age 24.²⁷

Previously, the combined federal Pell grant and OCOG enabled students to have resources for living expenses after paying tuition and fees. Without state aid, education is out of reach for many low-income adults, who must choose between working to support themselves and their family and going to school. A recent study found that the primary reason adults leave school before completing a certificate or degree was the "need to work and make money."²⁸ Even before the budget cuts, Ohio's poorest families paid 30% of their income to attend the

state's lowest-price colleges, ranking Ohio 38th among all states in college affordability.²⁹ In addition, state aid has never been available for Ohio students in noncredit technical training.

Ohio should adjust the OCOG funding formula to ensure that low-income students are able to receive the support they need when they are pursuing either credit or noncredit technical training for documented middle-skill job openings. This will provide a high return-on-investment for a state that is concerned about the "brain drain." OBR data shows that 87% of students with an associate's degree from a state public two-year institution were employed in Ohio six months following graduation.³⁰

b) Use WIA funds for training and increase access to services for disadvantaged adults

In the current environment of economic restructuring and cuts to state training programs and need based financial aid, it is more important than ever that federal WIA funds are used effectively. This means focusing more resources on education and training than on job search activities and increasing access to services for disadvantaged populations—those who are low-income or have limited skills or other barriers to economic success. However, Ohio has historically provided a low percentage of WIA participants with training services, and the Ohio WIA program is serving a decreasing percentage of low-income adults.

In program year 2006-2007 (the most recent period for comparative data), Ohio reported that 16.4% of unemployed WIA adult program exiters received an Individual Training Account, ranking Ohio 44th nationally. In Delaware, the top-ranked state, the figure was 93.2%.³¹ In 2007, only 31% of Ohio WIA clients who received training or intensive services were low-income, down from 81% in 2000, and 20 percentage points below the national figure.³² Ohio can reverse these trends by (1) enacting state-level policies and streamlining state program administration, (2) providing training, technical assistance, and incentives, (3) seeking federal waivers, and (4) advocating for changes in the federal WIA program (see Task #3). The state began some of this work in its implementation of WIA ARRA funds.

In its 2009 WIA ARRA guidance to local areas, Ohio issued a first-ever policy requiring that at least 30% of ARRA adult and dislocated worker funds be used for training. Although this was a promising move, thresholds of other states were as high as 60% to 70%.³³ Ohio should now establish a policy requiring that at least 60% of WIA adult formula funds be spent for education and training that leads to a credential or degree and for related support services. In addition, state reporting systems should track the amount of WIA funds spent for training.

Ohio's WIA ARRA policy guidance to local areas also emphasized that disadvantaged populations should be a priority for services. The state should now proactively identify and address barriers to workforce services for these populations. Examples cited by local stakeholders include (1) requiring clients to take multiple assessment tests, because workforce boards and training providers use different assessment tools; (2) minimum wage requirements for post-training employment that preclude funding training for entry-level jobs; (3) lack of a statewide definition of "limited funds," when priority for WIA intensive and training services must be given to disadvantaged adults. In addition, large cuts in state administrative funds to counties, during a time of increasing demand for safety net services, has reduced their staff capacity to help low-income clients access training resources.³⁴

To achieve changes across the WIA system, Ohio should remove unnecessary state administrative requirements and provide training, technical assistance, and incentives for local areas. Local areas may need assistance in expediting the WIA sequence of services, administrative time tracking, maximizing expenditure rates, contracting, performance measurement, and local policy development.³⁵ Training in WIA innovations and best practices should be provided for workforce boards, county agencies, and their collaborators. In addition, the state should use Governor's WIA Discretionary Funds or other unspent WIA funds to provide administrative resources for local areas as an incentive for policy reform.

c) Tap all available funds for workforce training

There are many funding streams that can be used, at the discretion of the state, to support the costs of workforce education and training and living expenses and supportive services for persons in training (Figure 1). For example, in 2009, Ohio announced that persons enrolled in a full-time, accredited training program could continue to receive Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits.³⁶ Also in 2009, ODJFS made \$10 million from the Unemployment Compensation Special Administrative Fund available for local TANF subsidized employment programs.³⁷ Both of these actions further the development of the Ohio workforce.

However, there are federal training funds not fully used in Ohio, in part because decisions about their use are left to the discretion of local agencies (Table 2). Ohio needs to establish statewide policies and programs to assure that the state takes full advantage of these resources. The state should also take steps to increase awareness of their availability and provide technical assistance to facilitate use of these resources for training initiatives.

d) Expedite reforms that strengthen the adult education pipeline

Research by the State of Washington found that one year of college and a credential is the “tipping point” where adults have a tangible payoff from postsecondary education in the form of a measurable earnings boost.³⁸ However, the education “pipeline” is not always smooth for adults seeking to upgrade their skills. More often than not, they leave school before attaining a credential or degree.³⁹ ⁴⁰ In addition to affordability, barriers include (1) lack of basic literacy skills, (2) the need to take remedial math and English, (3) the time it takes to earn a credential with value in the workplace, (4) transitions between parts of the education and training systems, (5) class scheduling that conflicts with work and family obligations, and (6) the need for support services, such as transportation and child care.⁴¹

There are a number of initiatives underway in Ohio, funded by national foundations, to establish and implement state policies and programs that increase success for low-income adults in postsecondary education and workforce training. These include the Ohio Shifting Gears Initiative, funded by the Joyce Foundation, and initiatives of the Lumina Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

They build upon steps that Ohio has taken to strengthen adult education and training, including the transfer of adult education programs from the ODE to OBR and the Stackable Credentials Pilot. In addition, Success Points—student attainment of specific steps toward higher education achievement—will determine 5% of state funding for community colleges beginning in FY 2011. This is part of a broader OBR effort to develop an outcome based formula for higher education.⁴²

Although currently there is a great deal of activity and momentum on these issues, historically it has been difficult for Ohio to move from planning and pilots to full-scale implementation of new policy initiatives. It is important that the state expedite policy changes that have tangible benefits for adult postsecondary education success. In addition, these initiatives, which are being led by and primarily focused within OBR, should be integrated into a comprehensive, cross-agency workforce development strategy.

e) Provide work-based learning experiences

Over the past year, there has been a policy debate within Ohio state government about whether WIA resources should be focused on placing workers in jobs or into job training. Through investments in work-based learning, it is possible to do both. Providing Ohioans with an opportunity to obtain training within a specific work environment, typically while earning a wage or stipend, will enable these individuals to move more quickly into jobs paying family-sustaining wages. It will also provide an incentive for employers to take a chance on workers who lack relevant employment experience.

Table 2. Resource opportunities: federal funds that can be used for workforce development

PROGRAM	PERMITTED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES	WHAT OHIO IS DOING
Federal Transportation Funds	On-the-Job Training (OJT): States can require contractors to set aside a certain number of on-the-job training and apprenticeship slots and hours for women, minorities, and other disadvantaged individuals. Contractors may pay trainees reduced wages during training and may be reimbursed for a percentage of wages paid to OJT participants.	Participation in the OJT program by Ohio contractors is voluntary.
	OJT/Supportive Services: States can apply for funding from the Federal Highway Administration to enhance training opportunities for members of minority groups and women. Services can include pre-apprenticeship and pre-employment training, remedial training, counseling, transportation, and physical exams.	Ohio received \$318,416 in OJT/Supportive Services AARA funds in March 2010.
	Surface Transportation Workforce Development, Training, and Education: States can use up to one-half of one percent of federal surface transportation funds for workforce development, training, and education. These funds can be used for surface transportation workers not employed by state or local transportation agencies, and no state match is required.	The 2010-2011 Ohio Transportation Budget includes about \$1.5 billion in federal highway funds. Ohio does not use these funds for workforce development.
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (formerly FSET)	<p>Dependent Care and Participant Expense Programs: The SNAP Employment and Training Program provides job training and employment services for food assistance recipients. Three program components fund expenses of participants in education and training, including dependent care, transportation, equipment, supplies, books, vision and dental expenses, housing assistance, and job retention services and program administration costs. States must provide a 50-50 match with non-federal funds that are not also being used to meet other federal match requirements. There is no cap on the amount of federal funds that can be drawn down.</p> <p>Third party match model: Washington and California have established programs that permit community service providers—workforce development, community colleges, adult education, social services—to use their own funds to draw federal funding on a dollar-for-dollar basis. Match funds can include philanthropic grants, nonprofit revenues, employer contributions, and non-federal public monies.</p>	<p>The State of Ohio does not have a third-party match program.</p> <p>At the local level, the Athens County Department of Job and Family Services has been successful in accessing resources for their clients.</p>
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	<p>TANF training and education activities: TANF allows a number of training and education activities to count toward a state’s work participation rate: vocational education training, secondary school attendance (or its equivalent), education directly related to employment, job skills training directly related to employment, and on-the-job training.</p> <p>There are limits to the number of hours per week, and the total number of months, that a participant can be in these activities. Up to 30% of those counted toward the state’s work participation rate may participate in vocational training or be a teen parent in secondary school.</p>	<p>Decisions about use of TANF funds for training are made at the county level.</p> <p>In FY 2008, Ohio spent 0.6% of TANF and state MOE funds for education and training (U.S., 1.5%)</p> <p>In FY 2006, 17.8% of Ohio TANF participants were enrolled in education/training (U.S. average, 8.1%)</p>

Sources: National Skills Coalition, “Overview of Workforce Development Provisions under Federal Transportation Law,” March 2009; U.S. Department of Transportation, March 22, 2010, www.fhwa.dot.gov/pressroom/fhwa1004.htm; Legislative Services Commission, “Analysis of Transportation Budget Bill, May 2009”; National Skills Coalition, “Food Stamp Employment and Training,” Center for Law and Social Policy, “Where the Funds Are: The Use of FSET Funds for Workforce Training Programs,” March 2007; Insight Center for Community Economic Development, FSET Expansion Initiative, www.fsetexpansion.org; Center for Law and Social Policy, Analysis of Fiscal Year 2008 TANF and MOE Spending by States, www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication?id=0659&list=publications; Working Poor Families Project from U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services High Performance Measures Performance Year 2006 (note: the most recent comparative data available).

Work-based learning programs include on-the-job training, subsidized employment, transitional jobs for hard-to-employ populations, apprenticeships, and co-ops and internships. A variety of state and federal funding sources can be used for these programs, including WIA, TANF, federal highway dollars, postsecondary education funds, and state general funds. Examples of existing Ohio initiatives include the Ohio Co-op and Internship Program, Third Frontier Internship Program, WIA-funded Project HIRE and Constructing Futures programs, and TANF Subsidized Employment Program.

The state should direct additional resources to work-based learning. In addition, Ohio should (1) better coordinate existing programs; (2) work with local workforce boards, communities, and employers to encourage their use; and (3) assure that work-based learning experiences are available for nontraditional students and disadvantaged populations. Workforce intermediaries can support these activities. It may also be necessary for Ohio to target additional funding for wage subsidies to encourage employers to expand their workforce and take a chance on hiring someone who has been recently trained, but has no experience in their new career field.

Task #3: Establish strong state policy and a national presence

***The bottom line:** Ohio needs clear state policies and measurement systems to assure that effective workforce services are available statewide and to have a greater impact at the federal level. A lead state workforce official should (a) facilitate development of coordinated, consistent policies to guide the state and local workforce systems; (b) establish performance measurements and issue a comprehensive workforce report card; and (c) advocate for Ohio's priorities at the national level, and position Ohio to access federal workforce resources.*

a) Develop clear, consistent state policy

A feature of the workforce systems of the other states described in this report is clear, consistent state policy on workforce development. These policies are well-known and guide program design, resource allocation, and performance measurement throughout the system, at the state and local levels.

In Michigan, the core policy is expressed in the No Worker Left Behind program, which funds two years of free tuition for adults entering training for in-demand occupations. In Pennsylvania, the policy to establish employer/worker consortiums and workforce intermediaries is the hallmark of Industry Partnerships. In both states, there is a strong dual customer focus—the employer in need of a skilled worker and unemployed and low-income, low-skilled workers in need of education and training for a better job.

Despite major state budget cuts, these programs in Michigan and Pennsylvania have continued to operate, in part with WIA ARRA funds. When this large infusion of WIA dollars was made available with a short timeline for expenditure, these states did not have to scramble to design new programs to make use of the funds. State and local workforce agencies used stimulus funds to advance existing workforce policy. In Michigan “every available dollar of existing federal funds...and ARRA resources is focused in support of NWLB.”⁴³

Clear, consistent policy goes beyond marketing and branding. It is a way of doing business, where everyone in the workforce system has his or her eye on the same goal. However, in Ohio policies that affect workforce development are frequently made independently by a myriad of individual state and local agencies. At the state level, workforce development policy can be found in state agency strategic plans, program descriptions, and planning initiatives. Organizing, clarifying, and publicizing these policies can help to assure that Ohio's state and local workforce systems are moving in the same direction and that a worker or employer will have access to the same services everywhere in the state.

b) Measure performance and issue a workforce report card

A feature of strong state policy is a commitment to rigorous and transparent performance measurement. A system to collect and report performance data is necessary to determine whether a workforce strategy is successful in meeting the needs of workers and employers. In addition, objective performance data can serve as a continuous feedback tool for improving program performance at the state and local levels. Performance data can also be used to document success and support requests for workforce development funding.

The lead state workforce official should work with state and local agencies to establish (1) metrics that reflect policy goals, (2) a data collection system, and (3) a publicly available workforce report card. The metrics should measure progress in increasing the skills, credentials, and earnings of targeted populations—including low-income, low-skilled adults—and in providing skilled workers for priority industry sectors and occupations.

The diversity of workforce development programs and funding sources poses major challenges to implementing common performance measurements and data collection systems. Ohio is beginning to tackle this through the Ohio Shifting Gears data action plan and participation in the federal Statewide Longitudinal Data System initiative to enhance the ability of states to collect and use education data. The strategic plan for the University System of Ohio includes performance measurements related to the education of the adult workforce.⁴⁴ Performance measurement is also addressed in the 2008 report of the Ohio Anti-Poverty Task Force.⁴⁵ Additional metrics will be developed through the creation of an outcomes-based formula for higher education that measures course and degree completion in the University System of Ohio. These initiatives can provide a starting point for an Ohio workforce report card, but they must be coordinated so that they contribute to a consistent, useful, and easy to understand measurement and reporting system that reflects the totality of workforce development in Ohio.

c) Advance the interests of Ohio at the national level

The lack of a lead Ohio workforce official is also noticeable at the national level. Unlike other states, Ohio has not had consistent participation by a high level state official in national workforce advocacy organizations. This is a particularly active time for workforce issues in Washington, and Ohio has members of Congress on key committees.⁴⁶ However, if staff members of the Ohio Congressional delegation or federal agencies seek the state's position on pending legislation—WIA reauthorization, the SECTORS Act, the American Graduation Initiative, the Jobs Bill, the federal budget—it is often not clear who in state government can speak on behalf of the State of Ohio.

There has also been a lack of clarity within state government about who is tracking and taking the lead on applications for competitive federal grants for workforce education and training. Valuable time has been lost while state agencies decided who, if anyone, would be responsible for preparing a state application or supporting local application processes.

A key responsibility of a lead state workforce official should be to facilitate the development of Ohio's policy positions on federal issues, with the input of state agency staff, Ohio elected officials, and local stakeholders. In addition, the recommendations in this paper can inform the state's position on federal policy. Once the state has established policy positions, an advocacy strategy should be developed, in collaboration with business, workforce, and education groups, to assure that Ohio's interests are represented in Washington and that Ohio benefits from federal actions and resources.

5.0 The team

This report has laid out an ambitious, but achievable, blueprint for workforce development in Ohio. The focus has been on improving how state government administers workforce education, training, and development programs, and on establishing an effective, aligned statewide system. However, successful initiatives and promising practices at the local level should not be overlooked. Further, the Ohio General Assembly has begun to take action on key workforce development issues.

The next page highlights several model local and regional initiatives, and there are more that could be cited. Ohio's lead state workforce official should work in partnership with a team of diverse local stakeholders—businesses, economic development organizations, workforce boards, education and training institutions, supportive service providers, local government, labor organizations, and funders—to support and expand successful local efforts and to get practical advice about how to quickly and effectively implement improvements to the Ohio workforce development system.

The Ohio General Assembly is also an important partner in any strategy to strengthen workforce development in Ohio, and state legislators on both sides of the aisle have recognized the need for increased attention to workforce development. Throughout 2009 and early 2010, legislation was introduced that supports recommendations in this paper. Representative Sandra Williams (D-11) introduced HB 423 to establish sector strategies in Ohio and HB 424 to provide state aid to support non-credit classes. Representatives Todd Snitchler (R-50) and Seth Morgan (R-36) introduced HB 360 to provide tax incentives to individuals earning Journeyman status in a skilled trade. Although, to date, these bills have not progressed beyond the committee level, the efforts of Ohio legislators, combined with those of state agency leadership and local area practitioners, and the recommendations in this paper, can advance a workforce development agenda with tangible benefits for all Ohioans.

In our own backyard: Bringing local practices to scale

One way to jump-start the activities on the agenda of a lead state workforce official is to bring to scale successful local and regional workforce initiatives. The following are a few examples:

Streamlined and efficient access to resources and services for businesses

Two programs in northeast Ohio streamline access to services for local businesses. Since 1994, the **Cleveland Industrial Retention Initiative (CIRI)**, a program of the City of Cleveland managed by **WIRE-Net**, has connected manufacturing businesses with resources to improve operations, increase profitability, and remain competitive. CIRI offers manufacturers one point of contact that provides technical assistance and directs them to services to generate new business, access capital, hire and retain skilled employees, and encourage community investment. In 2008, the Mahoning and Columbiana Training Association and a network of 36 regional chambers of commerce, government agencies, universities, and other business services organizations, launched the **Business Resource Network**. This nationally-recognized, innovative business retention and expansion program helps businesses by packaging, leveraging, and delivering economic development incentives, technical assistance, consulting, and workforce training with as little bureaucracy as possible. Network partners identify companies that may be at risk of failing or poised to flourish, presents a comprehensive proposal, and works with them over the long term.

Aligned, comprehensive regional workforce policies, strategies, and funding

In southwest Ohio, workforce leaders have been building a regional success strategy since 2001, when the **Employers First Regional Workforce Team** was formed. Directors of WIBs covering 12 counties in Ohio and Kentucky share ideas, policies, and labor market information, and ensure that customers receive comparable services across the region. The Workforce Team was recently awarded a Regional Innovation Grant of \$250,000 by the U.S. Department of Labor. In 2008, the **Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network (GCWN)**, a funding collaborative managed by the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, with support from the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, joined the effort. GCWN is a regional partnership of philanthropy, government, employers, education, and community organizations that helps employers find and retain skilled employees and low-income residents further their education and get good jobs. Successes include (1) a common data system for workforce programs throughout the area, in partnership with United Way and WIBs; (2) career pathways initiatives in health care, construction, and advanced manufacturing; and (3) receipt of a \$1 million state Constructing Futures grant for pre-apprenticeship construction training and a \$5 million DOL health care training grant.

Industry sector strategies and career pathways working together

The **Center for Workforce Development at Columbus State Community College (CSCC)**, the Ohio Skills Bank lead for Region 1 in central Ohio, took the OSB framework and added a strong industry sector strategy to create **Logistics-ART (Attracting and Retaining Talent)**. During the CSCC-facilitated planning process, logistics employers worked with CSCC staff from credit and noncredit programs to develop curriculum and instruction that includes employers providing technical training at their business sites. All parties recognize that a coalition approach to education and training, based upon regionally defined needs, develops the most successful candidates for hiring and retention and provides adults with the best long-term career outcomes. Logistics ART has five phases: Start Up, Recruitment, Training, Placement, and Retention. Each phase is integral to the success of the program, and because additional training is a component of the Retention phase, career pathways are a project outcome. After the program was designed, all partners advocated with local, state, and federal groups for funding. The Central Ohio Workforce Investment Corporation is funding a pilot in spring 2010, and the U.S. Department of Labor awarded Logistics ART a \$4.6 million High Growth Job Training Grant.

Sources: Pamela Holmes, WIRE-Net; Brian Morris, Mahoning and Columbiana Training Association; Jeff Weber, Workforce One Investment Board of Southwest Ohio (Butler, Warren Clermont Counties); Ross Meyer, Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network; Cheryl Hay, Columbus State Community College.

Appendix

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Table A-1. Ohio Occupations by skill level, 2006 and 2016

Occupation	EMPLOYMENT		JOB OPENINGS	
	2006	2016	#	%
Total, All Occupations	5,842,100	6,132,800	1,737,180	100%
Total, High-skill	1,637,750	1,792,790	497,210	28%
Management	310,360	310,830	70,270	4%
Business and Financial	246,360	271,160	68,590	4%
Professional and Related	1,081,030	1,210,800	358,350	20%
Total, Middle-skill	3,057,680	3,054,970	841,570	48%
Sales and Related	613,280	627,850	211,820	12%
Office and Administrative Support	917,670	943,850	249,440	14%
Construction and Extraction	246,120	263,130	91,850	5%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	230,240	237,360	44,740	3%
Production	597,180	526,700	122,010	7%
Transportation and Material Moving	453,190	456,080	121,710	7%
Total, Low-skill	1,146,710	1,285,020	426,150	24%
Service Occupations	1,131,940	1,270,250	421,910	24%
Farming/Fishing/Forestry Occupations	14,770	14,770	4,240	0.2%

Source: Ohio Workforce Informer, analysis of Employment Projections by Occupation, 2006-2016 projections, by Community Research Partners, adapted from methodology by Holzer and Lerman (2007) America's Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs.

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Table A-2. Ohio middle-skill occupations, 2006-2016 employment projections

Occupation	EMPLOYMENT		NET CHANGE		Total Job Openings	Average Hourly Wage 2007
	2006	2016	#	%		
Computers						
Support Specialists	16,970	18,250	1,280	8%	6,520	\$18.92
Specialists, Other	7,810	8,040	230	3%	2,300	\$33.30
Construction						
Carpenters	41,220	44,930	3,710	9%	9,290	\$17.33
Electricians	30,190	30,400	210	0.7%	7,980	\$22.20
Painters	12,620	13,970	1,350	11%	3,590	\$15.58
Operating Engineers	12,080	12,950	870	7%	3,210	\$22.49
Plumbers	18,120	19,110	990	6%	4,730	\$22.39
Health Care						
Dental Hygienists	6,320	7,640	1,320	21%	2,540	\$29.59
Licensed Practical Nurses	38,690	44,070	5,380	14%	15,930	\$18.42
Medical Lab Technicians	5,280	6,030	750	14%	1,560	\$16.82
Physical Therapy Assistants	4,590	6,050	1,460	32%	2,060	\$22.36
Radiology Technicians	9,740	11,040	1,300	13%	2,620	\$22.67
Registered Nurses	113,050	138,640	25,590	23%	44,260	\$26.92
Respiratory Therapists	5,350	6,540	1,190	22%	1,980	\$22.73
Surgical Technologists	3,440	4,210	770	22%	1,820	\$17.50
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair						
Aircraft Mechanics	3,690	3,880	190	5%	560	\$24.04
Auto Mechanics	29,280	31,420	2,140	7%	8,010	\$16.21
Bus/Truck Mechanics	12,740	13,860	1,120	9%	3,890	\$17.86
Heating and AC Installers	9,860	10,690	830	9%	2,570	\$17.94
Heavy Equipment Mechanics	3,340	3,600	260	8%	920	\$19.59
Telecommunications Line Installers	5,540	5,780	240	4%	1,680	\$19.66
Transportation						
Heavy Truck Driver	74,170	81,020	6,850	9%	20,020	\$17.49
Public Safety						
Fire Fighters	19,830	21,630	1,800	9%	9,030	\$18.70
Police Officers	24,700	26,640	1,940	8%	8,540	\$23.83
Other						
Claims Adjusters	9,520	10,160	640	7%	3,060	\$26.79
Legal Secretaries	9,100	9,910	810	9%	2,250	\$16.66
Paralegals	6,320	7,560	1,240	20%	2,070	\$19.95

Source: Ohio Workforce Informer, analysis of Employment Projections by Occupation, and Occupational Wages and Employment, 2006-2016 projections, by The National Skills Coalition.

Notes: Based on occupational projections for 2006-2016 by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, using categorization of occupations according to Bureau of Labor Statistics Education and Training Categories. Jobs requiring at least moderate-term on-the-job training, related work experience, a postsecondary vocational award, or an associate's degree were classified as middle-skill

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