

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

**ODJFS:** Angela Terez, 614-466-8390

[Angela.Terez@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Angela.Terez@jfs.ohio.gov)

**COTA:** Jeff Pullin, 614-275-5938

[PullinJD@cota.com](mailto:PullinJD@cota.com)

## *In-Demand Jobs Week*

### **ODJFS Toured COTA as Part of In-Demand Jobs Week *Pre-Apprenticeship Program Spotlights One Pathway to Good Jobs***

COLUMBUS, OHIO – Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Director Matt Damschroder toured a Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) facility today to learn about a pre-apprenticeship program for vehicle maintenance technicians. The tour, held during [In-Demand Jobs Week](#), highlighted pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs as one pathway to good jobs.

“Ohio has 141 pre-apprenticeship programs, and they are excellent pathways to good careers,” Damschroder said. “High school students who complete these programs can get an early taste of what it’s like to work in an occupation. If they enjoy the work, they’ll already have one foot in the door with an employer ready to train and hire them.”

COTA currently has 15 high school students training to be vehicle maintenance technicians, through a partnership with the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio. All of them also are students at either Fort Hayes Metropolitan Education Center or Tolles Career & Technical Center. When they complete the pre-apprenticeship program, they’ll be eligible for up to 12 points toward their high school graduation requirements. They’ll also have the basic technical and job-readiness skills they need to enter COTA’s Registered Apprenticeship program for vehicle maintenance technicians, an in-demand occupation.



*ODJFS Director Matt Damschroder toured COTA's vehicle maintenance facility and met with pre-apprentices, apprentices, and COTA administrators and training staff.*



“We are honored Director Damschroder and ODJFS are highlighting COTA’s extraordinary vehicle maintenance pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs because both are vital to sustaining the workforce that keeps our fleet running safely and smoothly,” said Joanna M. Pinkerton, COTA President/CEO. “To date 38 pre-apprentices have graduated from COTA’s program, and nearly half have joined our workforce full-time after high school. This month, a new class graduates, and 11 will become full-time employees this summer. This program is creating the next generation of skilled professionals who are earning good-wages and benefits as soon as they enter adulthood.”

ODJFS oversees [ApprenticeOhio](#), which registers programs that meet national criteria for quality and safety. Apprentices earn while they learn under the guidance of a skilled mentor. They receive at least 2,000 hours of structured on-the-job training and 144 hours of classroom training, typically at a local college or university.

In-Demand Jobs Week is a statewide celebration of the jobs, industries, and skills that are in demand in Ohio. This year, In-Demand Jobs Week is highlighting Ohio’s top jobs that stem from career tech center educations, and the different paths Ohioans can take to land a successful career. For an interactive map of In-Demand Jobs Week activities, visit [topjobs.ohio.gov/week](http://topjobs.ohio.gov/week).

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*The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services manages vital programs that strengthen Ohio families. These include job training and employment services, unemployment insurance, cash and food assistance, child care, child and adult protective services, adoption, and child support services.*

