


# **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act**



**Ohio Annual Report  
Program Year 2019**  
(July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020)

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# Introduction

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

# Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act



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

By supporting the alignment of workforce investment, education and economic development systems, WIOA provides Ohio with the opportunity to enhance its service delivery system by coordinating activities and promoting consistency of services among the core programs. During program year (PY) 2019, Ohio continued to work toward the goal of integrating the WIOA Title I programs with the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services program and other workforce programs our OhioMeansJobs centers.

This PY 2019 WIOA Annual Report provides a summary of how Ohio has used workforce integration to support the goals of each program.

# Ohio's Pandemic Response

In March 2020, when Ohio had its first confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19), Ohio Governor Mike DeWine acted quickly, declaring a state of emergency and working with the Ohio Department of Health to issue several orders to limit the spread of the virus. Ohio received praise nationally for its quick response efforts. We were the first state to close schools, and one of the first to close restaurants, after learning from the tragic experiences of China, Italy and other nations that reacted more slowly to the crisis.

We know Ohio's quick actions flattened the curve and saved lives. Like every other state in the nation, we had to adapt to a new way of doing business and communicate the safety measures that would allow schools and business to safely reopen. Ohio had a "Stay at Home" order in place from March 22 through May 1, 2020. From May 1 through the end of PY 2019, Ohio operated under a "Stay Safe Ohio Order" that allowed

businesses to restart responsibly. Throughout the emergency, Governor DeWine prioritized the health, safety, and welfare of Ohioans while also taking measures to protect Ohio's economy and spur economic recovery.

## **Employment Services during COVID-19**

During the last quarter of PY 2019, Ohio's employment services professionals quickly transitioned to a remote-access environment, with staff teleworking and using technology to assist clients and conduct work. New trainings were developed to assist clients, such as "Job Searching in the Digital Age," and virtual hiring events replaced in-person job fairs. Whether assisting customers in person or virtually, Ohio has continued to make employment services a priority, to help displaced workers reskill and restart their careers and to assist both unemployed workers and employers impacted by COVID-19.

## **Statewide Workforce Development Initiatives**

### **OhioMeansJobs Centers**

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

### **Ohio's Workforce Mission**

Throughout PY 2019, the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation worked in collaboration with the Ohio Departments of Education, Higher Education, Job and Family Services (ODJFS), and the Development Services Agency to close the gap between growing workforce needs and the goals of job seekers. The mission of the Office of Workforce Transformation is to connect Ohio's business, training and education communities to build a dynamically skilled, productive and purposeful workforce.

Advancing the DeWine Administration's commitment to leading an aggressive, innovative path toward a better and stronger Ohio, InnovateOhio's mission is to use technology in government to improve services, reduce costs and spur a culture of innovation in Ohio. The InnovateOhio Platform provides integrated and scalable capabilities that enable state agencies to become more customer-centric and data-driven, delivering on InnovateOhio's vision to better serve Ohioans.

## **Path of OhioMeansJobs Center Customers/InnovateOhio**

InnovateOhio, the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation and ODJFS are partnering with g2o, an innovative high-tech company, to conduct a holistic review and redesign of **OhioMeansJobs.com**. Changes will be made to the site's mission, tailoring to various audiences, delivery effectiveness, information architecture, site and content heuristics, and overall format. In addition, **OhioMeansJobs.com** will move to the InnovateOhio Platform. These changes will improve the ability of employers and job seekers to use this state resource and better support ongoing improvements and new requirements.

While the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the implementation timeline, the project continues to move forward. During calendar year 2020, g2o will conduct a series of workshops, interviews and focus groups with stakeholders to gather information regarding their experience with the website, content they view as essential, and suggest improvements. The website redesign is slated to launch in 2021.

## **The ARIES Project**

The ODJFS Office of Workforce Development partnered with Monster Government Solutions to begin the development of Ohio's new case management system: the Advancement through Resources, Information and Employment Services (ARIES) system. This system will replace the current 19-year-old Ohio Workforce Case Management System.

Five teams were assembled to provide a comprehensive approach to system development: A New System Team, Implementation Team, Data Analysis and Ad Hoc Reporting Team, County Finance Information System Team, Performance Team and Project Support Team. The system is expected to go live by early 2022.

## **In-Demand Occupations**

Ohio's efforts to reform its workforce development system are driven by a focus on meeting employers' current and projected needs. To identify those needs, the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, in coordination with InnovateOhio, developed a methodology using three key sources: state labor statistics and projections, electronic job posting trend data, and business responses to an online job forecasting tool. The following criteria were used to define an "in-demand job" in Ohio: 1) 80% of the state median wage, which is \$14.10 per hour, or more; 2) annual growth in the number of jobs higher than the statewide average of 36; or 3) annual job openings greater than the statewide average of 584.

Using the aforementioned methodology, Ohio identified 229 in-demand occupations with more than 20,000 related job titles. When job seekers take the Career Profile assessment on **OhioMeansJobs.com**, they are given a list of occupations they may be suitable for,

with in-demand and critical occupations listed first to improve their chances of finding employment quickly.

Additionally, 52 occupations were identified as critical in Ohio, in eight career clusters aligning with the goals of Governor DeWine's administration:

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

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

In addition, under the direction of Governor DeWine and the leadership of Lt. Governor Jon Husted, Ohio extended its focus to prioritize both Ohio's economy and the health and well-being of Ohioans through Ohio's Top Jobs List. The Top Jobs List includes both in-demand jobs and critical jobs. The Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation and InnovateOhio created a Top Jobs interactive dashboard at [topjobs.ohio.gov](http://topjobs.ohio.gov). The list is a customizable, online tool to help guide Ohioans on promising career pathways. Top jobs can be viewed and sorted by region and/or industry, to allow job seekers, educators, businesses, and community leaders to make more informed decisions to solidify their short- and long-term success.

## **National Dislocated Worker Grants**

### **Opioid Grant 4 – SUPPORT Act**

Ohio received a \$5 million grant award from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) to engage individuals impacted by the opioid epidemic. The grant funded career services, occupational skills training, and supportive employment services to provide a foundation of employment skills, offer hope for recovery, and provide families with economic stability.

To build the behavioral health field, the grant funded training to eligible individuals seeking to transition or obtain skills in related professions that support people with substance abuse disorders or those at risk of developing one. Eligible participants included dislocated workers, individuals with barriers to employment, new entrants in the

workforce, and incumbent workers (employed or underemployed). Funding also allowed training to be provided for employers, first responders and early childhood educators to help them better understand substance use disorders and trauma-informed care.

This grant period began on October 1, 2020, and will continue through September 30, 2022.

### **Opioid Emergency Disaster Recovery**

Ohio received an \$11 million Opioid Emergency Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant from USDOL to serve eligible dislocated workers and long-term unemployed individuals within all 88 Ohio counties. Counties were grouped into nine “communities” with the same combination of one or more of the following four key impacts related to the opioid crisis:

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

Ohio identified the humanitarian, health care, treatment and training needs specific to the key impacts and began implementing the following strategies: provide temporary disaster relief employment up to 2,040 hours (jobs must alleviate issues caused by opioid crisis); build the skilled workforce in professions that could impact the causes and treatment of the opioid crisis; reintegrate individuals who have a history of opioid use or who have a friend or family member with a history of opioid use into employment; and engage employers to become recovery-friendly workplaces.

This grant period began on April 1, 2019, and will continue through March 31, 2021. By the end of PY 2019, Ohio had served 328 individuals.

### **Flooding/Severe Storms – Disaster Grant**



Following severe storms, landslides and mudslides that occurred between February 14 and 25, 2019, and after a Federal Emergency Management Agency Disaster Declaration, ODJFS applied for and received a USDOL Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant for \$8.8 million.

Six Ohio local workforce areas, totaling 15 counties, received funding. Ohio and local workforce areas were able to hire up to 300 eligible dislocated workers to work up to 2,080 hours each assisting with clean-up, recovery and humanitarian efforts for disaster victims and/or helping with the demolition, deconstruction, cleaning, repair and re-construction of public structures, facilities, waterways and lands within the disaster area.

This grant period began on April 1, 2019, and continued through December 31, 2020. By the end of PY 2019, Ohio had served 246 individuals.

## **General Motors – Lordstown Layoff**

In April 2018, General Motors issued a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) announcing the layoff of second-shift production operations at its Lordstown facilities. In addition, several auto industry suppliers in the same area issued WARN notices indicating layoffs would occur in their businesses between June and September 2018. These layoffs were projected to impact 1,686 potential workers.

To help impacted workers become reemployed as quickly as possible, ODJFS applied for and received a two-year \$1.75 million National Dislocated Worker Grant from the USDOL. This grant made it possible for up to 337 affected participants to receive needs-related payments, career plan development assistance, access to workshops and assessments, and individualized career services, such as case management and counseling. Services were provided at a nearby transition center.

This grant is available through December 31, 2020. By the end of PY 2019, Ohio had served 168 individuals.

## **Trade and Economic Transition**

Ohio received an \$8 million Trade and Economic Transition National Dislocated Worker Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to address the disruption in skill and labor availability and serve dislocated workers within the 16 counties hit hardest by the opioid crisis. These counties are within the following seven local workforce areas: 1, 7, 12, 13, 17, 18 and 20. The goals of the grant were as follows:

- Provide training for in-demand industries, career services, and supportive services to dislocated workers, including those impacted by the opioid crisis;
- Provide supportive services to eligible participants such as health, mental health and addiction outpatient treatment; help purchasing work clothes, transportation assistance, or referral to housing and other social services;
- Build the substance-abuse treatment, mental health and pain management workforce through education and training;
- Utilize peer recovery specialists to support individuals in recovery during treatment, training and employment; and
- Establish collaborative partnerships across social service agencies assisting with the opioid epidemic.

This grant was available through September 30, 2020. Ohio was able to serve 411 individuals.

## **Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN)**

Research has shown that individuals with non-occupational back, knee and/or shoulder injuries who work in the manufacturing industry are at high risk of becoming unemployed. To determine whether providing intensive return-to-work coordination hastens their recovery and improves their chances of remaining employed, ODJFS



applied for and received a \$2.5 million RETAIN grant from the USDOL Office of Disability Employment in 2018 and a \$1 million extension in 2020. This grant allowed Ohio to develop and pilot a model that, if successful, can be replicated across the state.

**Who is served?** 18- to 65-year-old workers in Columbiana, Mahoning and Trumbull counties who have non-occupational musculoskeletal injuries primarily to the back, knee and/or shoulder.

**What services are provided?** At the time they seek treatment, eligible individuals are given the opportunity to participate. If they agree, their treatment is facilitated by a health services coordinator, who communicates with the individual's employer, health care provider and insurer. When needed, the coordinator refers the individual to OhioMeansJobs center partners for additional assistance. In addition, a nurse hotline is available to all participants.

**When will this demonstration project take place?** Planning and implementation are taking place through March 30, 2021. If the pilot is successful, additional funding and services will be provided for a 42-month period.

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

The project's leadership team includes representatives from the Governor's Executive Workforce Board, Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation, Ohio Department of Health, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, Bon Secours Mercy Health and Workforce Development Boards in Areas 17 and 18. Additional key partners include the Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition, Ohio Manufacturers' Association, Ohio Department of Medicaid, and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

## **Integrated Workforce Programs**

### **WIOA Youth Program and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families**

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

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

CCMEP engages participants in meaningful employment and training activities that help build lifelong, sustainable and in-demand careers. These services include work experiences, career coaching, occupational skills training, tutoring, supportive services, financial literacy, leadership development, and comprehensive guidance and counseling.

It focuses on people, not programs, and gives case managers the flexibility to offer more constructive services that build on participants' strengths, increase their skills, and meet their unique needs.

As CCMEP integrates both WIOA and TANF funding, it requires communication and collaboration between Ohio's county departments of job and family services and the 20 local workforce development boards. CCMEP aims to leverage WIOA and TANF funds to serve more youth, moving case management to person-centered, goal-oriented coaching, and reducing the benefits gap that often keeps young adults from becoming self-sufficient.

Using approximately \$90 million in TANF and \$36 million in WIOA Youth funding, CCMEP served approximately 22,025 participants during PY 2019, with 13,058 participants funded only through TANF, 3,728 participants funded only with WIOA Youth, and 5,239 participants co-funded with TANF and WIOA Youth. In PY 2019, the program served 12,714 participants identified as basic skills deficient, 7,318 participants who have a disability, and 8,777 participants who were pregnant or parenting. Approximately 67% of participants were female, and 27% cited lack of transportation as barrier to employment.

As of November 2020, Ohio expanded piloting the Goal4It™ coaching model by approximately 20 counties. The goal of this model is to increase case management quality and participant engagement and success by leveraging motivational interviewing techniques and using a common model. Based on positive feedback from local stakeholders, Ohio plans to implement this model throughout the state.

One recent example of the program's many successes occurred in Portage County. A young man enrolled in CCMEP contacted a local insurance agent about a possible work experience. The employer connected with CCMEP to arrange an opportunity performing administrative tasks. He remains employed by the agent, performing customer service and electronic filing tasks while attending college.

## **Rapid Response**

During the Great Recession, new claimants entered the unemployment system gradually. When large employers were forced to lay off staff, our Rapid Response teams would often set up shop on site, to walk people through the process of applying for unemployment benefits, searching for work, and possibly taking advantage of retraining opportunities. After the onset of the pandemic, in March 2020, instead of layoffs happening gradually, they came all at once, from many employers in many industries. In addition, because the crisis was the direct cause of a public health emergency, setting up in-person, on-site rapid response teams was not an option. Still, Ohio's Rapid Response team persevered and continued its commitment to collaboratively serving Ohio's employers.

During PY 2019, the Rapid Response team received 298 WARNs impacting 46,843 workers across the state. Many did not meet the "thresholds" established by USDOL, but the Rapid Response team treated them equally and developed a system that differentiated between standard WARNs and those triggered by COVID-19 and also assigned them a status of temporary, indefinite or permanent.

Between January and July 2020, 237 WARNs were filed in Ohio. Of those, 156 were temporary and COVID-19-related, impacting 33,915 workers. The Rapid Response team also tracked non-WARNs, which are layoffs and closures that the state was made aware

without an official WARN. In PY 2019, Ohio had 949 non-WARN events, 545 of which occurred from March to June 2020. For the entire program year, 20,430 employees were affected by non-WARN events; from March to June, 12,771 employees were affected by non-WARN event.

During federal fiscal year 2020 (October 2019 – September 2020), Ohio's local workforce areas made four requests totaling just over \$286,903 for Rapid Response Emergency Assistance and Layoff Aversion funding. All four applications were approved. In August and September 2019, increment awards totaling \$237,603 were allocated for three of the four funding requests.

As Ohio continues to build stronger partnerships with its local areas, the Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed (RACI) Rapid Response protocol activity was updated once again. These protocols were completed in six of the 20 local workforce areas before an indefinite postponement due to COVID-19.

During PY 2019, the Rapid Response team also worked with a vendor to upgrade and improve its mobile application. This app now offers two-way communication and additional links to resources such as OhioMeansJobs centers and help filing for unemployment benefits. In addition, virtual Rapid Response Reemployment Sessions were being developed when the pandemic struck. As a result, development was expedited and virtual sessions were implemented.

## **Trade and WIOA**

Ohio continues to provide assistance to workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of increased imports. On April 13, 2018, Ohio received a WARN from General Motors announcing the elimination of the second shift at the Lordstown facility in Warren, Ohio, affecting approximately 1,500 workers. Ohio later received notification of the permanent closure of the facility, effective March 6, 2019. In total 3,107 workers were impacted.

A previous General Motors Trade petition was set to expire on March 7, 2019; therefore, a new petition was certified on March 22, 2019, to safeguard Trade eligibility for the workers affected by the closure of Lordstown and five related businesses. At the onset, state and local partners – including Ohio Workforce Areas 1, 17 and 18 – worked together to provide Trade and Reemployment services to this workforce. These services were made possible by a two-year \$1.75 million National Dislocated Worker Grant. Collaborative efforts ensured that impacted workers were knowledgeable of the accessibility of all Reemployment, Trade and local resources. A Transition Center was established at the local United Auto Workers hall to engage impacted workers with on-site programs and services to assist with reemployment efforts.

The following services were readily available at the Transition Center:

- Rapid Response Reemployment workshops;
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Benefit Rights Information sessions;
- Career fairs with training providers and local businesses;
- Career services assessments;

- Resume, job search and computer workshops;
- Unemployment insurance assistance;
- WIOA eligibility and support services;
- One-on-one in-person Trade and WIOA assessments, Trade Adjustment Assistance contract development and on-site approvals.

The Transition Center remained open until March 16, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it began offering mostly virtual reemployment services and in-person services by appointment only.

## **ApprenticeOhio, Veterans Program and WIOA**

In PY 2019, the ODJFS Office of Workforce Development and ApprenticeOhio developed 19 new Registered Apprenticeship sponsors. Half of those sponsors were either an Ohio university, community college, or career center, all focused on non-traditional occupations.



Embracing the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Office of Workforce Development and ApprenticeOhio developed new strategies and created virtual connections to ensure continuous service to sponsors and stakeholders. They began providing technical assistance and presentations via Skype, Microsoft Teams, and WebEx, and documents by secure electronic means instead of paper. ApprenticeOhio also created a virtual completion certificate for Registered Apprenticeship sponsors.

ApprenticeOhio received a 2019 Apprenticeship State Expansion grant in July 2019 to add new Registered Apprenticeship occupations and integrate them into Ohio's case management system for future reporting. The funding was used for system enhancements and to offset costs of training new program sponsors.

The ApprenticeOhio team also updated their website to provide additional information and links to interested employers and individuals. Funds were used to update connectivity with **OhioMeansJobs.com** through the agency's partnership with **Monster.com**. These updates allow Registered Apprenticeship sponsors to post apprenticeship opportunities on **OhioMeansJobs.com**. Individuals were able to indicate whether they were interested in apprenticeships, allowing vetted sponsors to search for targeted resumes. Further enhancements will include the ability to identify needs for supportive services, allowing true integration with Ohio's WIOA local areas.

The Ohio Department of Administrative Services – which serves state agencies, boards and commissions, as well as local governments and state universities – registered as a sponsor, allowing multiple state agencies to hire apprentices. Most recently, the Ohio Department of Commerce posted positions for information technology apprentices.

ApprenticeOhio continues to collaborate with the ODJFS Office of Workforce Development, other state agencies, and local workforce areas. Key stakeholders include the Ohio State Apprenticeship Council, the Ohio Department of Higher Education, the Ohio Association of Community Colleges, the Ohio Department of Education, the Ohio Department of Commerce and the Ohio Department of Administrative Services.

Ohio also continues its partnerships with entities such as the Ohio Department of Veterans Services, Ohio Department of Youth Services, Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, and the Ohio State Highway Patrol.

# Veterans' Employment Services



OhioMeansJobs centers offer a full range of individualized employment and training services for veterans and eligible spouses who are unable to obtain employment through basic career services. Emphasis is placed on meeting the employment needs of veterans who are economically or educationally disadvantaged, including priority service to disabled veterans and those with significant barriers to employment. The Veterans

Program continues to build a strong social media presence with **OhioMeansVeteranJobs.com** via @OMVetJobs.com to promote OhioMeansJobs centers services, including job fairs, various events and veteran community resource information.

Additionally, the Veterans Program sent 44 workforce team members to the 2019 National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) Veterans Conference. Attendees participated in a variety of educational workshops and panels, resulting in takeaways to incorporate into the veteran populations they serve. The program also continues to conduct Transition Assistance Program briefings at Wright-Patterson Air Force base to target transitioning service members. All transitioning service members receiving unemployment benefits are given priority of service in the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program to help assist with their transition to civilian life.

The Veterans Program team also collaborated with local WIOA partners during technical assistance visits to 23 counties across the state. The goal of the visits was to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the implementation of veterans' priority of service and sharing best practices. A Priority of Service training module was shared with WIOA partners to promote consistency. This module is available online and covers common priority of service scenarios, Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) duties and responsibilities, and the veteran intake process.

Ohio has also taken an innovative approach to increasing apprenticeship opportunities for veterans. Veteran Apprenticeship Service Providers were integrated into local WIOA Business Service Teams, funded through the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) Local Veteran Employment Representative program. OhioMeansJobs centers partner program staff can refer veterans to locally assigned Veteran Apprenticeship Service Providers, where they connect businesses and apprenticeship sponsors in their area of responsibility with job-seeking veterans.

Through the efforts of DVOP specialists, the Veterans Program served 2,013 veterans in PY 2019, with over 65% participant placement and average earnings of \$28,580. An additional 1,388 veterans were served through the Wagner-Peyser program with 73% placement and average earnings of \$29,232. Through JVSG, DVOP and Wagner-Peyser programs, many other veterans achieved added successful outcomes, such as entering training and obtaining disability benefits or other compensation.

# Labor Market Information

During PY 2019, Ohio made a concerted effort to integrate labor market information into local workforce development decisions and to seek feedback from businesses to identify skill gaps in local labor forces.

As a result, the Data Intelligence Workgroup was formed to coordinate and meet local data needs. The workgroup was comprised of staff from the ODJFS Office of Workforce Development (including the Bureau of Labor Market Information) and staff from several workforce development areas. In addition, the Bureau of Labor Market Information presented information to local workforce development boards and staff to discuss labor market information and explain how to locate needed data.

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

- Redesigned and enhanced the **OhioLMI.com** website to include more data visualizations, a new data search tool, and a streamlined, more efficient organization of data;
- Developed the **County Economic Profile** reports with updated calendar year 2019 data so local areas and individual counties could have a snapshot of their economic profile; and
- Created a new **Industry Employment and UI Claimant Trends** report.

# Reemployment Services

The reemployment of unemployment insurance claimants continues to be a priority in Ohio. The state remains committed to developing strong connections between the unemployment insurance program and the OhioMeansJobs centers, through coordinated efforts, streamlined participant data and information sharing, and the use of cutting-edge technology to expedite the return to suitable work.

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) activities are provided in 12 of Ohio's 88 highest-traffic OhioMeansJobs centers. Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) are also provided to all claimants who meet program eligibility requirements and are not served under RESEA. Using this framework, Ohio can provide reemployment services to transitioning veterans receiving unemployment benefits, Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service Members, and claimants likely to exhaust their unemployment benefits. Additionally, Ohio has prioritized educating claimants regarding services available through the WIOA program.

Ohio also enhanced its operating systems to support reemployment innovations and services. Through a partnership with the ODJFS Office of Unemployment Insurance Operations, the ODJFS Office of Information Services, and a private vendor, the ODJFS Office of Workforce Development developed a cutting-edge self-scheduler application. This self-scheduler app allows claimants to view an introduction video, complete an assessment, and schedule a date/time for the initial RESEA appointment through **OhioMeansJobs.com**. As part of the development of this application, enhancements

were made to various systems: the Ohio Workforce Case Management System, Ohio's main repository for case management services, Ohio Job Insurance, and **OhioMeansJobs.com** to capture and house RESEA program data.

Ohio is also committed to developing evidence-based interventions that will measure the effectiveness of information provided by the state (via "notices") and their rate of use for RESEA and WPRS programs long-term. In addition, the state began participating in a study with the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) and the Behavioral Insights Team (BIT) to improve RESEA/WPRS participation rates. NASWA/BIT provided "plain language" notices with implicit information to be sent to claimants selected to participate in the study. Ohio is developing a randomized control trial that will randomly assign some claimants to receive these notices, while others will receive the state's current version of information. The objective of the "plain language" notices is to improve claimant compliance with RESEA/WPRS participation requirements.

## Waiver Usage

Ohio requested and received approval in PY 2017 for two U.S. Department of Labor waivers to support workforce development activities and provide flexibility for individuals using WIOA programs. In PY 2019, Ohio requested and received approval of an additional waiver pertaining to the collection and reporting of eligible training provider performance for students. These waivers were consistent with key guiding principles that outcomes are improved through cross-program alignment, increased streamlined services, increased accountability and accessibility, state and local flexibility, and fewer administrative burdens.

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

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

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

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

Using this waiver, the out-of-school youth expenditure statewide rate was 83%.

### **Waiver: Allow the use of individual training accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth.**

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

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

- Improve the ability of local workforce development boards, youth program providers and CCMEP lead agencies to respond quickly to the needs of in-school youth;
- Increase the quality of learning opportunities;
- Increase employment and training opportunities;
- Improve coordination by reducing fragmentation of service delivery;
- Improve customer choice and empower youth to make responsible career choices;
- Reduce unnecessary paperwork;
- Develop an emerging workforce of prepared candidates ready for work; and
- Increase accountability.

During PY 2019, ITAs were provided to 482 in-school youth.

**Waiver: Waive the requirement to collect and report student counts and performance data on all individuals participating in training programs listed on the state's eligible training provider list.**

The Workforce Inventory for Education and Training (WIET) is the automated system that houses Ohio's eligible training provider list (ETPL). Despite efforts to streamline and modernize WIET to achieve the WIOA vision of informed customer choice, some training providers reported that they were struggling to provide the performance data required for all students in all programs. Their challenges fell within several categories:

- Excessive administrative costs associated with tracking former students, surveying their employment outcomes, and reporting the data for each training program;
- Concerns with the protection of sensitive information (i.e., Social Security numbers) that would need to be gathered on all students to conduct wage record matches; and
- Questionable accuracy of performance data if it is based on self-reported student surveys, anecdotal data, and potentially low response rates.

During PY 2019, Ohio partnered with the Ohio Department of Higher Education (which oversees the state-funded post-secondary education institutions) to develop mechanisms to collect data from their institutions so that their data is accurately reported on all students for programs on the ETPL. In addition, ODJFS continues to work with individual training providers on ways to report appropriate data.



## **Effectiveness in Serving Employers**

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

In PY 2019, all effectiveness in serving employer performance measures were still in pilot. Ohio will await guidance from USDOL on which performance indicators will become required. As described in the Joint WIOA Final Rule and the Joint WIOA Performance ICR (OMB Control No. 1205-0526), the departments have developed three approaches for measuring effectiveness in serving employers, while only two approaches are required. Ohio has selected two: Retention (retention with the same employer) and Repeat Business Customers (percentage of repeat employers using services within the previous three years).

The Retention approach is useful in determining whether the core programs are serving employers effectively by improving the skills of their workforce and decreasing employee turnover. The Repeat Business Customers approach is useful in determining whether employers who receive services from the core programs are satisfied with those services and become repeat customers. This approach also assesses the workforce system's ability to develop and maintain strong relationships with employers over extended periods of time.

In May 2020, USDOL partnered with the Urban Institute, a nonprofit research organization based in Washington, D.C., to analyze and collect feedback from key stakeholders in the public workforce system regarding metrics for effectiveness in serving employers. As a part of this study, Ohio completed an online survey. This survey summarizes the array of services available to employers throughout the state, the capacity to collect employer service data, and the ability to interpret and apply findings to improve service delivery.

## **Statistical Adjustment Model**

WIOA section 116, Performance Accountability System, requires the use of a statistical adjustment model when establishing negotiated levels of performance. WIOA requires that levels of performance be negotiated for each of the primary indicators of performance at the state level. State-level actual performance outcomes are a function of (a) the characteristics of the participants being served, as well as (b) the labor market conditions in which those participants are being served. WIOA specifically requires that both factors be accounted for, and the use of a statistical model when negotiating levels of performance is intended to account for these variations.

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

influential in establishing state levels and serving as the benchmark for local area negotiated rates for PY 20 and 21.

## **Data Validation**

Data validation is essential for an accurate reflection of state and grantees' experiences. As a result, for PY 2019, the ODJFS Office of Fiscal and Monitoring Services' Bureau of Monitoring and Consulting Services (BMCS) will undertake a collaborative validation process.

This review will be conducted in two stages: Phase 1 and Phase 2. In Phase 1, the review will be combined with the PY 2019 Comprehensive Programmatic Monitoring Review. The WIOA and CCMEP samples will include 900 PY 2018 participants from all 20 local areas. It also will include a sample of counties within those areas. Participants will be randomly selected from a list of open and closed participant cases located in the Ohio Workforce Case Management System.

In late PY 2019, WIOA Training and Education Guidance Letter (TEGL) 7-18 was released and plans to implement the guidance ensued. As a result, elements targeted for validation will consist of those noted in TEGL 7-18 and will be reported through the Programmatic Monitoring Report issued by BMCS. Areas of significant concern will require the local areas to respond with continuous improvement plans.

In Phase 2, BMCS will select an additional 300 files from a list of PY 2018 exited participant files housed within the Ohio Workforce Case Management System. Again, the elements targeted for validation will include those noted in TEGL WIOA No. 7-18.

Additionally, BMCS will train state staff and provide training resources on the methodology and process for monitoring and the completion of data validation reviews. Training venues will include discussions and presentations via videoconferences and in-person meetings whenever possible.

The monitoring tools utilized by the BMCS staff will be made available to local areas and may be referenced or adopted for use in their data validation reviews. Data validation monitoring efforts and reviews will be verified during Ohio's regularly scheduled Comprehensive Programmatic Monitoring Reviews. The ODJFS Office of Workforce Development's Program Measures and Performance Outcomes Unit will be responsible for resolving any issues identified within the reports issued by BMCS. They will also provide any training and/or technical assistance deemed appropriate.

## **Evaluative Study**

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

The Ohio State University's Ohio Education Research Center (OERC) was enlisted to evaluate the CCMEP program between 2016 and 2019, with funding from the Laura and John Arnold Foundation. This evaluation assessed the employment, education, and human services impacts of participating in services that included comprehensive case management. The evaluation was comprised of the three studies below, allowing for a

comprehensive research design. As of September 2020, all three studies had been completed, and the OERC was finalizing its report. This finalized report will include employment outcome data through March 31, 2020.

*Implementation Study:* The Implementation Study investigated the cross-organization implementation practices of CCMEP during years 1 and 2. This study included a statewide survey in years 1 and 2, followed by focus groups in 11 counties and 6 counties, respectively.

**Outcomes Study:** The Outcomes Study used existing administrative data to understand the education and employment outcomes of early CCMEP participants in years 1 and 2 in comparison to non-participants.

**Impact Study:** The Impact Study was a randomized control trial with an option of two randomization designs: “traditional” and “encouragement.” It investigated the education and employment outcomes of youth participating in CCMEP versus non-participants in year 3. The traditional design randomized Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program participants into a treatment group who received CCMEP services and a control group who did not receive CCMEP services. The encouragement design randomized sending an encouragement (such as a text message) to assess the rate of participation of those who received the encouragement versus those who did not. The Impact Study was completed in June 2019.

## Customer Service Satisfaction

The ODJFS Office of Workforce Development developed a customer satisfaction survey to evaluate the impact of reemployment services on Ohioans and to identify new ways of providing services to individuals and employers. DVOP specialists, employment professionals, RESEA employment professionals and workforce specialists inserted a SurveyMonkey link into their signature blocks on all electronic correspondence. The tag line on the email read: “To provide us feedback on the customer service you received today, please click here!” Survey outcomes are used to enhance and expand internal processes and procedures and to inform continuous improvement efforts. Effective and timely feedback, both positive and negative, is critical to improving both the customer experience and customers’ employability.

## OhioMeansJobs Certification

Local Workforce Development Boards are responsible for certifying the OhioMeansJobs centers in their areas and ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of their local workforce systems. The boards must evaluate the centers to ensure that they are quality-focused, employer-driven, customer-centered, and tailored to meet the needs of the area and planning region's economies. Ohio’s comprehensive workforce system provides all customers access to OhioMeansJobs centers that connect them with a full range of services. The centers help individuals who are seeking jobs, building basic educational or occupational skills, earning postsecondary certificates or degrees, and/or looking for career guidance. They also help employers seeking skilled workers.

WIOA requires local workforce development boards to certify OhioMeansJobs centers every three years. The state, in conjunction with chief elected officials and local board,

must establish objective criteria and procedures to use for certification. Ohio began this process in January 2017, with Phase 1's "Must-Meet" standards review. Standards were tied to Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, such as Civil Rights postings in centers, specialized trainings, and customer service targeted toward individuals with disabilities. All comprehensive and affiliate centers were certified.

Ohio began Phase 2, the Quality Assurance review, in January 2018. Eighteen benchmarks with 33 critical success factors were used to review the quality of the OhioMeansJobs system. The local system must meet a certain level of excellence in each of the benchmarks to attain Phase 2 certification. As of June 2020, all Comprehensive OhioMeansJobs centers have attained Phase 2 certification.

Ohio has now moved into Phase 3, ongoing Continuous Improvement. In this phase, progress for obtaining quality assurance and continuous improvement is reviewed with the same benchmarks and critical success factors in Phase 2. Resources such as mystery shopping, partner assessment surveys and website reviews will continue to inform best practices and help identify innovative improvement opportunities.