Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Ohio Annual Report Program Year 2022

(July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023)

Table of Contents

Introduction

In accordance with the 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

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

By supporting the alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development systems, WIOA provides Ohio with the opportunity to enhance its service delivery system by coordinating activities and promoting consistency of services among the core programs. During program year (PY) 2022, Ohio continued to work toward the goal of integrating WIOA Title I programs with the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services program and other workforce programs that our OhioMeansJobs Centers deliver.

This PY 2022 WIOA Annual Report provides a summary of how Ohio has used workforce integration to support the goals of each program.

Statewide Workforce Development Initiatives

OhioMeansJobs Centers

Eighty-eight local OhioMeansJobs Centers (also known as American Job Centers), one in each county, provide services to local businesses, as well as to individuals who are employed, underemployed, and unemployed. The OhioMeansJobs Centers connect workforce partners – such as the WIOA Title I program, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Literacy programs, and other programs – to deliver a variety of employment and training services to meet the needs of their communities. Additionally, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) recently certified ten specialized OhioMeansJobs Centers in seven adult correctional facilities and in three youth correctional facilities. Each center includes a virtual classroom with webcams and television monitors that allow training providers to deliver interactive workshops from remote locations. These centers also have computers that individuals can use to search for jobs, view instructional videos, and access employment resources.

Ohio's Workforce Mission

Throughout PY 2022, the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation (OWT) continued to work in collaboration with the Ohio Departments of Education, Higher Education, ODJFS, and the Department of Development to close the gap between growing workforce needs and the goals of job seekers. The mission of the OWT is to connect Ohio's business, training, and education communities to build a dynamically skilled, productive, and purposeful workforce.

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

Path of OhioMeansJobs Center Customers/ InnovateOhio

In PY 2020, InnovateOhio, OWT, and ODJFS partnered with g2o, an innovative high-tech company, to conduct a holistic review and redesign of OhioMeansJobs.com. Changes were made to the site's mission, focusing on tailoring the content to various audiences, delivery effectiveness, information architecture, site and content heuristics, and overall format. These changes improved the ability of job seekers to use this state resource and better supported ongoing improvements and new requirements. The second phase of the project went live on May 17, 2023.

The ARIES Project

In PY 2022, the ODJFS Office of Workforce Development (OWD) continued to partner with Monster Government Solutions in the development of Ohio's new case management system: *Advancement through Resources, Information and Employment Services* (ARIES). This system replaced the previous 20-year-old Ohio Workforce Case Management System.

Six teams were assembled to provide a comprehensive approach to system development: a New System Team, Implementation Team, Data Analysis and Ad Hoc Reporting Team, County Finance Information System Team, Performance Team, and Project Support Team.

The ARIES system went live on April 26, 2022. Statewide trainings were provided both in person and virtually prior to launch. Continued trainings were conducted in fall 2022 and spring 2023. System users have access to continued support, including videos and handouts for learning and reference. Monthly combined trainings with program areas have continued throughout the reporting period. Additional internal staff trainings will continue monthly.

OWD created an all-systems help desk in winter 2022 to provide centralized assistance for ARIES, OhioMeansJobs.com, the County Finance Information System, the Workforce Inventory of Education and Training, and a new reporting tool: Systems, Applications, and Products in Data Processing – Business Objects.

In-Demand Occupations

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

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

Under the leadership of Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor 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. Consequently, 48 occupations in 12 career clusters were identified as critical in Ohio. These clusters align with the following eight goals of the DeWine-Husted Administration:

- Children and Community Health

- Early Childhood Education

- First Responders

- Lead Abatement and Construction

- Mental and Behavioral Health

- Nurses

- Physicians

- Wellness Research and Technology

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

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

TechCred

Ohio's TechCred program reimburses employers up to $2,000 for training costs incurred when one of their employees earns a short-term, industry-recognized technology credential. A collaboration between OWT, the Ohio Department of Higher Education, and ODJFS, the program has been very successful. After 20 application periods, over 60,000 tech-focused credentials have been awarded to more than 2,500 Ohio employers. As of June 2023, 2,476 credentials were on the pre-approved list.

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

Industry-Sector Partnership Grants

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

For the first three rounds of Industry Sector Partnership Grants, 38 partnerships have been awarded funds. The Industry Sector Partnerships represent various industries, including manufacturing and technology. The fourth round of applications is currently under review.

Individual Microcredential Assistance Program

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

Training providers can include universities, colleges, Ohio technical centers, and private sector training businesses. They can be reimbursed up to $3,000 for each completed credential issued, up to $250,000 per provider. Eligible Ohioans work directly with the awarded training provider of their choice to enroll in the most suitable training program at no cost to them.

To date, more than $6.1 million has been awarded to 24 training providers to help up to 4,278 Ohioans. Additionally, of the 136 training programs offered, 128 can be completed online from anywhere in the state. This program is open for applications in November 2023.

National Dislocated Worker Grants and Other Federal Grants

Holistic Care Management SUPPORT Act Grant

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

To build the behavioral health field in these communities, the grant is also funding training to eligible individuals seeking to transition to or obtain skills in professions that support individuals with a substance use disorder or those at risk of developing one. Eligible participants include dislocated workers, individuals with barriers to employment, new entrants to the workforce, and incumbent workers (employed or underemployed). Funding also allows training to be provided for employers, first responders, and early childhood educators to help them better understand substance use disorders and trauma-informed care.

The grant began on October 1, 2020, and will continue through September 30, 2024. As of July 2023, a total of 369 participants have been enrolled, and 911 services have been provided within these communities.

Fresh Start Grant

To continue with efforts to assist individuals and employers who are impacted by opioid use disorder, Ohio received an $8.5 million, two-year National Health Emergency Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant from USDOL. As a continuation of employment services that started under a prior opioid-focused USDOL grant, which ended March 2022, the new Fresh Start grant was awarded in March 2022 and continues providing employment services to eligible dislocated workers and long-term unemployed individuals across the state. Using the same community-identified concept, Fresh Start grant services are mirrored to provide services that are tailored to each county's local needs.

Opioid use disorder and overdose deaths continue to be pressing public health issues that cause workforce challenges. According to the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, half the businesses surveyed say they suffer the consequences of substance abuse in the form of absenteeism, decreased productivity, and worker shortages.

The funding goals include:

- Testing innovative approaches to combating the opioid problem – for example, by supporting employers that develop second-chance policies and hire individuals in recovery.

- Providing job training, career services and supportive services to dislocated workers and long-term unemployed individuals, including those impacted directly or indirectly by the opioid crisis. Supportive services can include anything from outpatient mental health and addiction treatment to drug testing, help purchasing work clothes, or transportation assistance.

- Providing temporary disaster-relief employment to help alleviate issues caused by the opioid crisis.

- Building the addiction and substance use disorder treatment, mental health, and pain management workforce.

- Facilitating peer learning and sharing of best practices through cross-discipline learning collaboratives across partner agencies.

Approximately 411 dislocated workers and long-term unemployed individuals were expected to be served. As of July 2023, the grant had exceeded those expectations, serving 558 eligible participants and providing 1,714 services across the state.

We plan to continue the numerous partnerships at the state and local level that have enabled Ohio's public workforce system to comprehensively address the education, training, mental health, health, transportation, housing, and other diverse needs of individuals served with grant funds.

The Fresh Start grant period will end March 30, 2024. We anticipate requesting a one-year extension or applying for another grant to continue addressing the opioid epidemic in Ohio.

QUEST Grant

On September 27, 2022, OWD was awarded a $9 million *Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy, and Training* (QUEST) Dislocated Worker Grant. Funds are being used to engage in an innovative partnership with OWT, the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies (OACAA), The Ohio State University (OSU) College of Engineering, the Wireless Infrastructure Association (WIA), and our local OhioMeansJobs Centers. This collaborative project will prioritize training and employment opportunities in the infrastructure and manufacturing industries with a focus on the broadband industry.

OWT has a well-developed collaboration with WIA, OSU, and other collegiate entities to train interested individuals in the critically needed 5G and Broadband Connectivity sectors. WIA is serving as the lead industry intermediary and helps the sector partnership create and produce training and curriculum solutions to meet the workforce and skills gap demand of the broadband industry.

Through the 5G and Broadband Connectivity Center, OSU is working to design and implement curricula and programming for Ohio's Broadband and 5G Sector Partnership. The grant focus will be to establish new career pathways, provide K-12 outreach to minority populations, and form statewide partnerships between education and industry providers in the six JobsOhio regions.

The following six colleges/universities have been selected to assist with training:

- OSU
- Youngstown State University
- Ohio University
- Miami University
- University of Dayton
- University of Findlay

Six Community Action Agencies have been selected, one in each JobsOhio region, to assist with outreach and to collaborate with the Ohio Manufacturers' Association to connect constituents, who may not be interested in broadband opportunities, with traditional manufacturing and trade-related training and job opportunities.

Outreach is designed to engage the following marginalized and underserved populations: individuals who are Latino or African American, veterans, single mothers who are heads of their household, justice-involved citizens, and other individuals dislocated or laid-off due to the pandemic. Robust and comprehensive outreach methods will be used to engage these populations. A media consultant will be hired to develop customized outreach materials and a social media campaign that is culturally and linguistically competent. In addition, the OACAA will

hire additional navigators to conduct outreach in each county. Further, community colleges will conduct outreach to make underrepresented individuals aware of the excellent and numerous career opportunities in the broadband industry.

COVID-19 Economic Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant

In June 2020, the USDOL approved Ohio's request for special grant funding of $8.5 million from the COVID-19 Employment Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant. The funding was used to reduce the financial impact to our economy and assist individuals and communities that were impacted by job loss. All affected industries and eligible dislocated workers could be served under this grant; direct impact from COVID-19 was not required. The grant was extended for an additional year and closed on June 30, 2023. It provided 1,244 services to 678 eligible participants.

This grant allowed career services, supportive services, on-the-job training, and customized and occupational skills upgrading training services to be provided to those who could not return to their former positions (for example, because their employers had permanently closed their businesses). The goal of the grant was to help dislocated workers find employment in top jobs, for both their own good as well as for the good of their communities. The supportive services also included safety-related training, equipment, and accommodations used for reopening businesses during the pandemic.

Broadband and 5G Sector Partnership

The Ohio Broadband Strategy is a strategic plan to bridge the digital divide and establish high-speed internet access to unserved and underserved areas of the state. Significant investments are being made to expand broadband service to every household and business. In addition to the substantial financial resources Governor DeWine and the Ohio General Assembly have made available for broadband expansion, Ohio expects to receive nearly $800 million in federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) dollars over the next several years to provide high-speed connectivity in rural communities.

To ensure enough skilled workers are available to build the critical broadband and 5G infrastructure, ODJFS and other state agencies, private-sector companies, and educational institutions formed the Ohio Broadband and 5G Sector Partnership led by OSU and WIA.

The primary objectives are to raise awareness about occupations and career pathways in the telecommunications industry, to establish new education and training programs leading to employment in broadband, and to leverage state and federal funding streams that can cover tuition costs and support implementation of broadband and 5G workforce strategies.

Recently, the partnership formed six regional nodes to accelerate the launch of new educational programs at universities, community colleges, and career centers in each region and to tailor service plans and training curricula to the needs of local communities.

As the central convening entity, the state-level partnership will continue to reduce duplicative efforts among regions and share best practices. The ultimate goal is to increase the broadband workforce, ensuring that Ohio remains a prime destination for new, innovative technology companies to form and utilize the next generation of wired and wireless communications.

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

- Applying for and receiving the federal QUEST grant to fund the costs of staff and infrastructure in the six regional nodes,

- Investing additional federal workforce dollars to purchase supplies and materials needed by training providers to launch new programs,

- Adding institutions that implement new training programs in this field to the state's eligible training provider list, so that they qualify for local workforce dollars to train eligible students,

- Guiding employers in setting up Registered Apprenticeship programs to train the workers they hire through both classroom instruction and on-the-job learning.

Simply stated, the development of high-speed internet ensures that Ohio's families and businesses can participate in the modern economy. Providing reliable statewide access to data and resources is critical to the state's economic and employment future. The Ohio Broadband and 5G Sector Partnership is working to help individuals enter telecommunications careers by providing tuition dollars and other supports, to keep Ohio businesses competitive in the global marketplace, and to reduce the technology gap so families in rural communities can access online services, innovations, and opportunities.

Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network

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

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

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

Enrollment began in January 2022 and will continue through May 2024, followed by six months of service delivery and follow-up. As of June 2023, the study had enrolled 2,500 of the planned 3,500 patients.

A third-party evaluator will use rigorous methodology to identify program outcomes. In addition, throughout the project, a RETAIN Roundtable – which is 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, the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation, the Ohio Department of Health, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, Bon Secours Mercy Health, and Workforce Development Boards in Areas 9, 12, 13, 17, and 18.

Ohio Pathway Home Program

The Ohio Pathway Home program is now in its second full year of implementation. The program provides evidence-based employment services to justice-involved individuals while they are incarcerated. After participants' release, services are continued at the OhioMeansJobs Center in the county where the individual lives. The grant submission proposed that Ohio would serve up to 540 adults transitioning from state correctional facilities to six of Ohio's largest urban counties: Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Montgomery, Stark, and Summit. With approximately one quarter remaining for active recruitment, the program has already enrolled over 682 participants. Follow-up services for all participants will take place during calendar year 2024.

The Pathway Home program also made it possible for Ohio to certify six O.N.E. (Offender Network for Employment) Stops as Specialized OhioMeansJobs Centers and to create two additional job centers in that process. In calendar year 2022, OWD established ten Specialized OhioMeansJobs Centers in the following correctional facilities: Grafton, Noble, Trumbull, Pickaway, Lake Erie, Lorain, Northeast Reintegration Center, Ohio Reformatory for Women, Marion, and Belmont Correctional Institution. These centers improve the quality of workforce services available to incarcerated individuals, enhance the ability of restored citizens to locate their OhioMeansJobs Center after their release, and create continuity between the services received before and after their release.

In calendar year 2024, OWD will seek to establish an additional nine Specialized OhioMeansJobs Centers in correctional facilities throughout the state.

Integrated Workforce Programs

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families and WIOA Youth Program

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

To increase the quality of case management services being provided, CCMEP identified a goal-focused career coaching model designed by Mathematica called Goal4 It! Ohio is in the process of implementing this career coaching model across the state. This model is trauma-informed and designed using the science of motivation along with motivational interviewing techniques. This model empowers participants to identify their own life and career goals and priorities. This helps them focus on their future and develop self-regulation and executive functioning skills. The

program helps them work toward achieving their goals, reflect on progress, and identify solutions to obstacles.

Over half of the state is implementing this career coaching model. Ohio just completed a leadership academy to prepare local champions to help the remaining areas learn and implement this model.

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

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

- Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies
- Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services
- Paid and unpaid work experiences
- Occupational skills training
- Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster
- Leadership development
- Supportive services
- Adult mentoring
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling
- Mental and behavioral health-related services and referrals
- Financial literacy education
- Entrepreneurial skills training
- Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors
- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training
- Follow-up services

Trade Adjustment Act and WIOA Dislocated Worker Program

Ohio continues to improve services for workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced due to increased imports. On July 1, 2022, the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program was terminated, and a gradual phase-out began. USDOL stopped investigating petitions for worker group eligibility, and no new TAA determinations have been issued. Benefits and services to current participants and eligible workers have continued.

From May 9 through July 8, 2022, USDOL conducted a compliance review for TAA and Trade Readjustment Allowance. The purpose of the review was to measure progress, identify areas of compliance, offer opportunities for technical assistance to help resolve non-compliance issues, and ensure that federal funds are used responsibly. The exit meeting was conducted on July 8, 2022. Two findings were identified that needed to be resolved with corrective action. To address the non-compliance issues and prevent future discrepancies, Ohio's TAA staff updated and created new written procedures conducted training sessions in October 2022. USDOL was given copies of all updated policies, procedures, and training conducted in response to the report.

TAA regulations require that all Trade participants be co-enrolled in the WIOA Dislocated Worker program. ODJFS launched the co-enrollment protocol statewide in August 2022. The efforts of the co-enrollment workgroup were successful in improving Ohio's performance. In fact, USDOL tasked Ohio with creating a webinar on co-enrollment to provide guidance for other states. The webinar was held on January 11, 2023. In addition, USDOL requested that Ohio create three blogs addressing co-enrollment for the Workforce GPS website:

1.) [Minimizing the Burden of Co-Enrollment Choice: OPT IN "Why not? Why wouldn't we?" (posted 2/27/23)](#)
2.) [Creating Buy-In (leadership, ongoing training, feedback channels etc.) (posted 3/14/23)](#)
3.) [Continued Co-enrollment Engagement "Ask Away Sessions" (posted 3/22/23)](#)

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

- During PY2022, a TAA Padfolio was developed for Trade-impacted workers to receive upon their completion of the Benefits Rights Information session and initial assessment with the case manager. The padfolio is designed to assist with job search and reemployment.

- The BRI presentation video was upgraded to include Rapid Response information. This aligns with the TAA Reversion 2021 law. The new presentation will be accessible and available to customers to view and complete online at OhioMeansJobs.com.

TAA is collaborating with WIOA with reviewing and updating the On-the-Job Procedure Manual (WPPL 20-01 OJT Policy), ensuring co-enrollment between WIOA and TAA is covered satisfactorily.

ApprenticeOhio and WIOA Title I Programs

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

Registered Apprenticeship programs are industry-driven, high-quality career pathways where employers can develop their future workforce and individuals can obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, and receive a nationally recognized credential. Ohio has impressive numbers and continues to be a national leader in Registered Apprenticeship programs:

- Currently, Ohio ranks third in the nation for the number of registered apprentices, with more than 21,000 apprentices enrolled. Of those enrolled, 1,806 are female, and 1,336 are veterans.

- Ohio was fourth in the nation for new apprentices in fiscal year 2023 (program year 2022), with approximately 7,000 new apprentices.

- Ohio graduated over 2,500 apprentices in fiscal year 2023.

- Ohio has 608 Registered Apprenticeship sponsors that administer apprenticeships in 267 occupations.

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

ApprenticeOhio received a no-cost, year-long extension to the 2020 "Building State Capacity to Expand Apprenticeship through Innovation" grant to further strengthen the state's Registered Apprenticeship system and expand the number of apprenticeship opportunities available for Ohioans. Among other things, the grant was used to develop pre-apprenticeship programs to teach basic technical and job readiness skills and help prepare participants for apprenticeship programs. Currently, Ohio has 145 active pre-apprenticeship programs.

ApprenticeOhio also received a State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula grant. The purpose of this grant is to increase the state's ability to serve, improve, and strategically expand the National Apprenticeship System. Specifically, the grant will allow Ohio to expand the number of programs and apprentices, diversify the industries that utilize registered apprenticeship, and increase access to and completion of Registered Apprenticeships for underrepresented populations and underserved communities. The grant period is July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024.

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

The OWD Bureau of Labor Market Information and ApprenticeOhio collaborated on a Statewide Registered Apprenticeship Dashboard. The dashboard is interactive and allows users access to a variety of statewide and local apprenticeship data. The dashboard is housed on OhioLMI.com and Apprenticeship in Ohio.

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

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

ApprenticeOhio also used expansion grant funds to offer training and tool reimbursement grants to eligible ApprenticeOhio sponsors and employers. Through July 31, 2023, sponsors and employers could apply for up to $25,000 each to help cover training and tool costs incurred since July 1, 2020. Sponsors and employers could receive reimbursement of up to $2,500 per apprentice. To receive funding, they must have both a state of Ohio OH|ID and a federal Registered Apprenticeship ID and apply at Apprentice.Ohio.gov.

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

RESEA and WIOA Dislocated Worker Programs

The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program continues to lead unemployed Ohioans into their local OhioMeansJobs Centers, both virtually and in-person. All 20 Local Workforce Areas provide RESEA services. The program serves as a pathway to WIOA Title I programs for additional individualized career and training services. In some areas, the RESEA delivery staff also provide WIOA services. In other areas, referrals or "warm handoffs" of customers allow collaboration between programs.

Technical assistance calls are held biweekly with Local Workforce Area delivery staff and quarterly with local area leaders who oversee RESEA and other trainings throughout the year. The intent of these discussions is to analyze the current delivery models and strategize ways to enhance services, improve co-enrollments, and improve outcomes.

Rapid Response and WIOA Adult & Dislocated Worker Programs

Rapid Response
Since last program year, the number of Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notifications (WARNs) received, and workers impacted, has increased.

From July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023, the Rapid Response team received 70 WARNs impacting 7,306 workers across the state.

From July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023, the Rapid Response team received 100 non-WARNs impacting 3,916 workers across the state.

During federal fiscal year 2023, there were no funding requests for state Rapid Response Emergency Assistance or Layoff Aversion funds.

State merit staff continued to deliver Rapid Response Reemployment Sessions both virtually and in person, based on the employer's request. The state Rapid Response team continues to build stronger partnerships with the local workforce areas and their business service teams.

WIOA Adult & Dislocated Worker Programs
With the onset of the pandemic in 2020, along with the creation of Ohio's new case management system, ARIES, the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker (ADW) Training and Technical Assistance Unit was forced to delay training. During summer 2022, the training team was revived and began laying the foundation to effectively support Ohio's Local Workforce Delivery System.

The WIOA ADW Training and Technical Assistance Unit first collected feedback from Ohio's Workforce Development Board Directors to identify their staff's needs. As a result of this collaboration, a robust structure was put in place.

First, eight monthly, quarterly, and bimonthly trainings were created to provide ongoing WIOA education moving forward. These modules are delivered based on staff's "just in time" training needs, policy and guidance updates, and staff turnover rates. The training topics include WIOA ADW Fundamentals, WIOA ADW Eligibility and Source Documentation, WIOA ADW Co-Enrollment with our Partner Programs, and WIOA ADW Training Services, such as On-the-Job Training and Incumbent Worker Training. Most of these modules were collaboratively created and delivered by partnering with other interrelated state program partners and local workforce development areas. The WIOA ADW Training and Technical Assistance Unit has also provided live demonstrations of the new case management system to show effective WIOA case management and data entry. Our combined WIOA training attendance for the 2022-2023 program year was 1,821 local area and state participants.

Next, this team created a public-facing library to house their recorded webinars and training materials for round-the-clock access.

Lastly, the unit continues to provide technical assistance through the WIOA ADW Mailbox and Office of Workforce Development WIOA phone line daily, to answer policy-specific, reemployment and case management questions across the state. The mailbox and phone system received and answered 2,188 questions during this program year.

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. All veterans and their eligible spouses receive priority of service access to the full range of OhioMeansJobs Center services. Emphasis is placed on meeting the employment needs of veterans who are economically or educationally disadvantaged, especially disabled veterans and those with significant barriers to employment. The Veterans Program continues to deploy a strong social media presence with @OMVetJobs to promote OhioMeansJobs Center services, including job fairs, other events, and veteran community resource information.

Program staff continue to conduct Transition Assistance Program briefings at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. They also attend Ohio Inter-Service Family Assistance Committee meetings to target transitioning service, National Guard, and Reserve members. All transitioning service members receiving unemployment benefits are given priority of service in the RESEA program to help them transition to civilian life. Wagner-Peyser staff also identify veterans on registration reports, providing reemployment services and partner program referrals.

A new outreach mechanism was launched in OhioMeansJobs.com for transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses. OhioMeansJobs.com users with a military affiliation are now prompted to complete a brief questionnaire to see if they would like to receive one-on-one help from an employment professional. Completed questionnaires are routed in real time to staff to reach out for assistance. Non-registered transitioning service members, veterans, and spouses can also now request individualized assistance with an employment professional by completing a veteran questionnaire survey. The survey is located on the OhioMeansJobs.com Military Service

One-on-One Assistance resource page. Additionally, a Veteran Partner Programs and Events page was created to list reputable third-party programs offering free events and workshops to the military and veteran community.

Lastly, veterans' resumes are highlighted in OhioMeansJobs.com with a "V," and resumes of military spouses are now highlighted with a "S" to increase visibility for military-friendly employers.

The Veterans Program promoted its annual "Hire-a-Veteran Month" in November. Military veteran staff received recognition for their military service and continued public service. Online trainings were shared with WIOA partners to promote consistency in the veteran intake process and to increase their awareness of community resources for veterans. Additionally, an @OMVetJobs social media campaign ran to increase awareness of available employment services to members of the military community.

Through the efforts of Ohio's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program specialists, the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program served 1,642 veterans in PY 2022. More than 66% (66.5%) of participants were employed in the second quarter after they left the program; more than 66% (66.7%) were employed during the fourth quarter after they left the program. Furthermore, the median earnings of these participants in the second quarter after their program exit was $9,779. All performance measures exceeded standards negotiated with the USDOL.

Labor Market Information

During PY 2022, the Ohio Bureau of Labor Market Information (OhioLMI) increased its level of outreach to stakeholders in a variety of ways. The goal was greater visibility of labor market information to support its use in workforce decision-making in the public and private sectors. OhioLMI implemented a new customer satisfaction survey, in addition to reaching out to information requestors, so that product offerings can be tailored to what is valuable to customers. As part of this increased outreach, OhioLMI worked with the ODJFS Office of Communications to develop educational and marketing materials. These materials have been shared via the agency's various social media platforms.

OhioLMI has also increased its efforts in data visualization. The Ohio County Economic Profiles, National Labor Exchange, and ApprenticeOhio dashboards are examples of new visualizations that have been created by OhioLMI team members. Further development is underway and will continue.

OhioLMI also continued its participation in the statewide Economic Data Workgroup. The Economic Data Workgroup, which includes staff from the ODJFS Bureau of Labor Market Information and eight other state agencies, is an effort to collaborate across multiple state agencies to monitor and report on the state of the economy using real-time economic indicators. The group continues to meet monthly to discuss the future of the economy in Ohio.

OhioLMI also works with local areas to provide local businesses information using the Workforce Information Database. As part of the bureau's training and outreach efforts, staff presented information on the county economic profiles to the workforce development community, discussed labor market data resources with workforce employment services, and spoke to business associations about changes in the labor market. The Bureau of Labor Market Information also conducted the following activities to present information in a user-friendly manner:

- Continuously provided information for the monthly statewide employment situation news release

- Updated industry and occupational employment projections, including projected annual openings for occupations

- Published the 2021 Annual Economic Report, which reviewed Ohio's employment situation, past employment trends, and employment outlook

- Updated the annual county economic profiles, the county occupational estimates, and the county inflow-outflow reports

- Revised the monthly Ohio leading economic indicators model, which uses annualized growth rates to predict employment changes over a six-month horizon

- Developed a dashboard to analyze job postings data from the National Labor Exchange (NLx)

- Developed a dashboard to display program information for ApprenticeOhio

Reemployment Services

Reemployment continues to be a priority in Ohio. The state remains committed to developing strong connections between the unemployment insurance programs and the OhioMeansJobs Centers while strengthening partnerships with other state agencies. During PY 2022, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services staff members continue to prioritize meeting customers where they are and providing services in a manner in which they are most comfortable. Although in-person services are still available, the state's OhioMeansJobs Centers now also hold virtual job fairs, workshops, and appointments. Wagner-Peyser staff also prioritized the following initiatives:

Targeted Outreach
An extensive outreach effort was undertaken to help Ohio's veterans and military spouses obtain employment. Wagner-Peyser staff contacted over 150,000 current or former military members living in Ohio asking them to take a brief survey indicating whether they or their spouses would like free job search assistance. The survey also asked questions to identify veterans with significant barriers to employment. Those who expressed interest in one-on-one services were scheduled for a virtual or in-person appointment. Veterans who indicated they had a significant barrier to employment were referred to the Jobs for Veterans State Grants program for assistance.

Helping Ohioans Pursue Employment (HOPE) Program
In PY 2021, ODJFS's Office of Transformation commissioned McKinsey & Company to survey Ohioans who had recently either applied for unemployment benefits or registered on OhioMeansJobs.com. In response to survey results, Wagner-Peyser staff developed the HOPE initiative. In 2022, the department began emailing unemployment applicants extensive information about the free in-person employment services available at the state's 88 OhioMeansJobs Centers, in addition to the self-service features available at OhioMeansJobs.com.

In 2023, the department began a pilot of Phase II, which includes three additional touchpoints after a customer's unemployment benefit application is approved. These touchpoints include videos related to services available at OhioMeansJobs Centers, as well as a needs questionnaire. Completing the needs questionnaire allows the customer to be connected to an employment professional in an OhioMeansJobs Center within one business day. The pilot encompasses 10 counties in three workforce development areas.

<u>Business Services</u>
Ohio's Wagner-Peyser Business Services team is committed to identifying new and innovative ways to connect employers and job seekers. In May 2023, the Business Services and CCMEP teams hosted a Gen Z Virtual Career Fair for job seekers 16 to 28 years old. The event had 170 booths represented by employers and program areas, and 216 job seekers participated. The event was held on the Brazen platform. Going forward, the Business Services team is exploring additional ways to use technology to help meet employers' workforce needs.

<u>Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW)</u>
Agriculture continues to be Ohio's leading industry. Over the past year, the MSFW team implemented OhioMeansJobs.com enhancements to simplify agriculture-related job applications for less tech-savvy job seekers. These enhancements include the development of a job interest questionnaire tailored to identify farmworkers' needs. A new OhioMeansJobs.com webpage also was created, with critical information and interactive features in English and Spanish for employers and job seekers. Ohio's MSFW team hosted USDOL for a federal audit and strengthened partnerships with PathStone and other significant partners. As a result of this visit, a shared Microsoft Teams channel was created to enhance communication with partners and significant offices. The MSFW program is making strides toward becoming fully staffed, with four full-time outreach specialists and three intermittent employees. When this report was completed, were in the process of hiring two intermittent employees and one full-time outreach specialist.

<u>Foreign Labor Certification (FLC)</u>
The FLC unit has been working to improve the quality of housing provided by employers for H2A workers by strengthening the inspection process. We removed loose language in the housing inspection checklist to ensure that screens and screen doors are free from rips and holes and in good working order. We also removed self-attestation for rented and leased housing and now require an inspection from the Ohio Department of Health for employers wishing to use such housing. The FLC team became fully staffed with the addition of a customer service assistant 1. The team now consists of two customer service representative 1s and one account executive who shares his time with the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program.

<u>Work Opportunity Tax Credit</u>
Over the past 12 months, the WOTC program adjudicated a backlog of more than 342,000 applications, bringing the total number of outstanding applications down to 57,000. The backlog adjudication effort prioritized applications for designated community resident group members, veterans, ex-felons, and long-term-unemployed individuals. Certification amounts exceeded $300 million (estimated based on the lowest award amount of $2,400). The WOTC unit now has a full staff, including seven full-time and two part-time employees. To streamline the approval of applications involving veterans, the team conducts a quarterly crossmatch with Service Member Civil Relief Act data to obtain military service records and automate part of the approval process.

In addition, the WOTC website was updated to ensure correct links to forms and resources. Other ongoing projects include updating internal and external forms and systems, developing an out-of-state adjudication process, and enhancing the application queue to allow for more automation.

Waiver Usage

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.

Ohio is completing a comprehensive evaluation of the CCMEP program, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2023. This evaluation is expected to provide some additional insight regarding the success of waivers as well as the potential need for technical assistance.

Waiver: Allow TANF funds to count toward the 75% expenditure requirement for out-of-school youth and allow the expenditure requirement to be calculated on a statewide basis. This waiver supports the implementation of Ohio's expanded youth program, CCMEP, by using both WIOA and TANF funding sources to support the unique needs of the same customer while easing administrative burdens associated with managing two federal funding streams. The large infusion of TANF dollars allows WIOA Youth dollars to have a greater impact, and it also allows more disconnected youth to be served. Additionally, by allowing the expenditure rate to be calculated statewide, the waiver gives local workforce development areas more flexibility to address the unique needs of participants in their communities.

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

Using this waiver, the out-of-school youth expenditure statewide rate for the PY 2021 funds was 86.1%, and for the PY 2022 funds, it was 82.4%. The number of WIOA participants co-funded with TANF dollars was 4,821, which was an increase from the previous program year (4,721 participants). Also, the overall percentage of co-funded participants increased from 24.9% to 25.7% in PY 2022.

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

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

- Increase the quality of learning opportunities.

- Increase employment and training opportunities.

- Improve coordination by reducing fragmentation of service delivery.

- Improve customer choice and empower youth to make responsible career choices.

- Reduce unnecessary paperwork.

- Develop an emerging workforce of prepared candidates ready for work.

- Increase accountability.

Waiver to allow TANF funds to count toward the 20% work experience expenditure requirement.
The purpose of this waiver is to increase participant enrollment in work experiences by having TANF-funded, co-enrolled participants count toward the 20% requirement defined in 20 CFR 681.590. The waiver supports the principles of streamlining services and increasing accountability and accessibility, state and local flexibility, and ease of administration.

Both WIOA Youth and TANF expenditures will count toward the 20% expenditure requirement for paid or unpaid work experience for youth co-enrolled in those programs. In addition to WIOA local youth program funds spent on paid and unpaid work experiences – including wages and staff costs for developing and managing work experiences – local areas in Ohio may include TANF work experience expenditures in the calculation of the 20% work experience expenditure requirement.

For PY 2020, Ohio's youth programs (TANF, WIOA, and co-enrolled) had a total of 18,942 participants. Of those, 8,465 (44.7%) were enrolled in work experience programs. For PY 2021, Ohio's youth programs had a total of 18,779 participants. Of those, 8,022 (42.7%) were enrolled in work experience programs. For PY 2022, Ohio's youth programs had a total of 18,845 participants. Of those, 7,872 (41.8%) were enrolled in work experience programs.

The number of work experiences decreased slightly for PY 2022 due to local workforce areas struggling with several challenges. These included a tight labor market that made youth less likely to be interested in subsidized employment opportunities and workforce areas needing time to adjust wages provided in work experiences.

Waiver associated with the requirement at WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410 that the State expend 75% of Governor's reserve youth funds on out-of-school youth.
Ohio requested a waiver to lower the minimum out-of-school youth expenditure requirement for providing direct services to youth to 50%. This was needed to allow more flexibility in supporting special projects with WIOA Statewide Activities funding, especially during the pandemic and school closures.

The goal of this waiver is to promote innovative special projects through the implementation of evidence-based programs and strategies that increase services to at-risk, in-school youth in local schools and communities, despite their education status.

This waiver will allow local areas to partner with Ohio schools to identify students who are most in need, provide necessary services, and leverage federal funding for positive results.

All four waivers' indirect effects on performance and various at-risk priority populations served.
A review of the PY 2022 WIOA Youth participants identified the following: 11.5% were justice-involved; 8.2% were homeless or runaways; 19.8% had disabilities; 17.0% were single parents; and 6.9% were in foster care.

The percentage of WIOA youth who obtained employment or enrolled in training and were able to maintain employment or training was 70.0%, which was a decrease from PY 2021 (72.0%).

Effectiveness in Serving Employers

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

All "effectiveness in serving employers" performance measures remained in pilot for PY 2022. As described in the Joint WIOA Final Rule and the Joint WIOA Performance ICR (OMB Control No. 1205-0526), the departments have developed three approaches for measuring effectiveness in serving employers, although only two approaches are required. Ohio has chosen the following two measures – Retention (retention with the same employer) and Repeat Business Customers (percentage of repeat employers using services within the previous three years) – but is awaiting further guidance from the USDOL.

Common Exit

Ohio has a common exit process. Titles I and III, TAA, JVSG, and RESEA are all included in the common exit policy. Within ARIES, the ODJFS case management system, state administrators determine if a program should be included in the common exit. When a new program or grant is created, they ask the program manager if it should be included as part of the common exit. The exit date calculation uses the USDOL definition. If no services have been provided within the last 90 days across all programs included in the common exit group, the case will exit, and the most recent service date will be reported as the exit date.

Statistical Adjustment Model

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

  a. The characteristics of the participants being served.

  b. The labor market conditions in which those participants are being served.

WIOA specifically requires that both factors be taken into consideration. The use of a statistical model when negotiating performance levels is intended to account for these variations.

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

Using similar methodology, Ohio adjusts the performance standards for each WIOA local workforce area after the close of the program year, following guidance set forth in Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 11-19. The final evaluation is made against these adjusted standards to determine if each area performed successfully. Failure of any WIOA performance

measure by a local workforce area will result in technical assistance and a program improvement plan. Failure of the same performance measure two years in a row may impact a subsequent local workforce area designation. Following guidance from TEGL 11-19, after the close of PY 2021, a statistical adjustment model was used to adjust the PY 2021 negotiated levels of performance for the actual economic conditions experienced and actual characteristics of participants served, creating the adjustment factors and adjusted levels of performance.

During PY 2022, OWD finalized and published the Adjusted WIOA Performance Report for the prior program year (PY 2021) using the adjustment factors specified by the state's statistical model. Originally, guidance from TEGL 11-19 suggested the Median Earnings, Employment 2nd Quarter after Exit (Employment, Education, or Training 2nd Quarter after Exit for Youth), and Measurable Skill Gains measures would be evaluated for PY 2021. However, release of Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 14-21 postponed the Measurable Skill Gains evaluation to PY 2022, due to insufficient WIOA data to inform the statistical adjustment model for this measure. Following this guidance, only two WIOA performance measures were adjusted and evaluated for PY 2021: Employment 2nd Quarter after Exit (Employment, Education, or Training 2nd Quarter after Exit for Youth) and Median Earnings. During PY2023, the remaining performance measures (Employment 4th Quarter after Exit (Employment, Education, or Training 4th Quarter after Exit for Youth), Credential Attainment, and Measurable Skill Gains) will be adjusted and evaluated for PY 2022 (after the close of PY 2022).

Data Validation

WIOA's goal is to help participants enter suitable employment or training opportunities. States submit data to USDOL to provide information on programs, participants served and outcomes. Data validation is a series of internal controls or quality assurance techniques established to verify the accuracy, validity and reliability of the data submitted to USDOL.

For PY 2022, the ODJFS Office of Fiscal and Monitoring Services' Bureau of Monitoring and Consulting Services will conduct the data validation reviews of the local areas. In addition to monitoring, the bureau will provide training and resources to state and local staff on the methodology and process for monitoring, as well as for the completion of data validation reviews. Training venues will include discussions and presentations via videoconferences and in-person meetings whenever possible. The monitoring tools will be made available to local areas and may be referenced or adopted for use in their data validation reviews.

The sample size for this validation will be 1,000 PY 2022 WIOA participants. Participants will be randomly selected from a list of closed and active WIOA core and Dislocated Worker Grant participants located in the ARIES data reporting system.

Elements targeted for validation will consist of those noted in the WIOA TEGL 23-19, Change 2, and will be reported to OWD. Areas of significant concern will require the local areas to respond with continuous improvement plans. Local area data validation monitoring efforts and review results will be shared with the local areas and OWD. OWD's Program Measures and Performance Outcomes Unit, Operations Unit, the CCMEP Unit, and/or the OWD Systems Unit will be responsible for resolving any issues identified within the reports. They will also provide any training and/or technical assistance deemed appropriate.

The Bureau of Monitoring and Consulting Services will provide a written summary of the local areas' data validation results, which will include areas of significant concern and a spreadsheet with elements that need corrected for each participant reviewed. This information will be shared with the local areas and OWD. OWD's Program Measures and Performance Outcomes Unit, Operations Unit, the CCMEP Unit, and/or the OWD Systems Unit are responsible for resolving any issues identified within the reports, including documenting that any missing and erroneous data have been corrected. They also provide any training and/or technical assistance as deemed appropriate.

The bureau will provide follow-up training and resources to state and local staff on the methodology and process for data validation monitoring, as well as any areas of concern that may be identified. Training venues will include discussions and presentations via video conferences and in-person meetings whenever possible.

The bureau will maintain results and records in accordance with the agency's records retention policy. OWD relies on the Office of Unemployment Insurance Operations to ensure wage record data is maintained in accordance with USDOL requirements.

The state follows established monitoring and evaluation protocols to ensure reported data is accurate. These protocols include:

- Annual monitoring of each local area, including quality case file reviews to verify documentation, timeliness, and accuracy of reported information. These reviews utilize written procedures and monitoring guides to ensure consistency, accuracy, and quality in the state's monitoring efforts. Reviews are documented with written reports that are shared with OWD and the local areas. Areas of significant concern will require a continuous improvement plan.

- Monitoring staff participate in monthly webinars and other trainings provided by OWD to keep up to date on state rules, policy, and guidance, Staff also participate in USDOL webinars and training to gain additional insight and guidance. The program monitoring unit manager provides training to staff when updates occur and also trains new staff, provides refresher training, and observes staff and their work, as needed. Peer reviews are performed on regular monitoring reviews to detect any issues prior to exit conferences and the issuance of reports. Peer reviews have been beneficial to ensure the quality of the monitors' work and/or to detect issues with interpretation of law, rule, or policy.

- The bureau reviews the prior year's data validation results and incorporates that information into the next year's regular monitoring reviews. Areas of high error will be included in the program review. The prior year's data validation results will be reviewed and assessed in comparison to current data validation results to identify any changes and/or anomalies to include in the local area training sessions and discussions.

- OWD participates in the Quarterly Report Analysis and uses this information to implement procedure and system enhancements to improve data quality. Additionally, OWD performs edit checks against USDOL's Workforce Integrated Performance System to help ensure data quality and that the correct logic is being used to calculate performance measures and demographics.

Evaluative Studies
Department of Labor Behavioral Insights Pilot

The USDOL Behavioral Insights team, which includes researchers from the American Institutes for Research (AIR), worked with 11 Ohio counties to design, implement, and assess a texting behavioral intervention to encourage CCMEP participants to maintain engagement in the program and benefit fully from available program services. The goal of the pilot was to learn how to improve service use and secure continued youth engagement in youth workforce programs, especially in the context of remote service delivery. This study was funded by USDOL. The resulting report can be found here: ETAOP-2023-15-DOL-BI-Remote-Services-Study.pdf

Selected CCMEP participants were randomly placed in either one of two groups: intervention (treatment) or no intervention (control). Participants in the treatment group received a series of encouraging text messages, one per week for 12 weeks starting a week after program registration. Messages were sent from a centralized and automated messaging system at the state level. All participants in the treatment group received the same sequence of messages aimed to foster engagement and prompt continuation with the CCMEP program. There were 530 participants overall, from 11 counties, enrolled between November 2021 and April 2022 (see page 12 in the report).

Outcome measures, including services received and completed, were compared for the two groups to understand the effectiveness of utilizing an external prompt (the text messages) on CCMEP participants' engagement and success. Within the first 60 days, weekly text messages informed by behavioral science: a) increased the number of services started, and b) increased the services completed. The pilot found that the text messages had higher impacts for participants who were a) younger than 18 years old, b) basic skills deficient, and c) were not parents (see pages 18-21 in report). Although there were no significant impact findings on the number of services started or completed within 90 days, this may be the result of the study ending six months earlier than planned. ODJFS launched a new case management system in April 2022, and the study had to be ended at that time to enhance reporting functionality in the new system.

A takeaway from this evaluation is that a sustained messaging effort can increase participant service use and service completion rates among youth. Also, text messages can be incorporated at a relatively low cost for the state and counties that already have access to mass-messaging technology. Additionally, automation can play a constructive role in supplementing staff outreach efforts.

For PY 2022, there have been no requests from US DOL or from the U.S. Department of Education contractors for data or survey responses. Nor have there been any site visits from USDOL or U.S. Department of Education contractors.

CCMEP Evaluation

The Ohio Workforce Association (OWA) was enlisted to organize an evaluation of the CCMEP program in 2023, with funding from ODJFS. After a competitive bidding process, ICF was selected to evaluate program performance for PY 2017 through PY 2021. This evaluation is in progress. It will leverage a mixed-methods approach, with both a participant outcomes study and an implementation study to provide qualitative context to the findings. The implementation approach will assess fidelity, identify best practices, present expansion opportunities, uncover challenges,

and document solutions. It will include state- and county-level components, including document reviews, surveys, and interviews with staff, as well as focus groups with staff and participants.

This evaluation will also review data for specialized groups – including racial groups and cash assistance recipients – to identify opportunities to improve equity. It will also look specifically at Ohio's coaching case management model, which is being implemented statewide, with over half of counties currently using it.

The outcome evaluation will examine five years of data (PY2017 to PY2021) to identify the characteristics, types of services offered and received, and outcomes of CCMEP participants. The study's findings will provide insights into how well the program recruited and served young adults. The timeframe of this study is limited to these five years given that PY2022 data were not available due to issues with the new case management system launched by ODJFS in advance of PY2022. This evaluation is scheduled to be completed by December 2023.

Given that this evaluation is in progress, there is no report with results to share at this time. For PY 2022, there were no requests from USDOL or from the U.S. Department of Education contractors for data or survey responses. Nor have there been any site visits from USDOL or the U.S. Department of Education contractors. The total cost of this evaluation is $272,417.50. It is being funded using Ohio WIOA statewide funds.

RESEA Program

USDOL contracted with the Abt Associates to provide technical assistance and guidance to states to help them adopt a culture of evidence and align their FY 2023 RESEA State Plans and program design with federal evaluation and evidence-based requirements. OWD's RESEA Section is responsible for managing this evaluation in Ohio.

As a result of this study, Ohio hopes to learn whether there are differences between unemployment insurance claimants who: 1) receive RESEA services as delivered today, 2) received RESEA services with enhanced workshop experiences, and 3) did not receive any RESEA services.

A randomized controlled trial will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the RESEA program, including an implementation and impact study. A pilot study is planned to begin in fall 2023, with statewide randomization of 30,000 unemployment claimants to begin in 2024.

Ohio meets one-on-one biweekly with Abt Associates. We also meet with them quarterly as part of a multi-state cohort, to learn more about evidence-based studies and how they can benefit Ohio's RESEA program. Ohio is currently in the research and design phase of its study. We are working closely with OSU, which will be the evaluator.

A workgroup was formed to include RESEA program administrators, OSU staff, and local WIOA delivery staff and leadership. The workgroup is developing a workshop to help job seekers understand the job market and undertake more impactful job searches. This workshop will be added to the current RESEA delivery model and piloted soon.

The cost of this study is $953,000: $469,000 for 2023 and $484,000 for 2024. For 2023, Ohio has set aside $720,145.90 and will follow DOL's guidance for the 2024 RESEA grant award. For more information on this study, please see the RESEA Statement of Work found in Appendix A.

Customer Service Satisfaction

Customer awareness and satisfaction for both employers and job seekers remain vital pillars in the strategies deployed to effectively serve the workforce needs of Ohioans. Ohio's OhioMeansJobs Center certification requirements include an assessment of the center's process to obtain customer feedback on the received services, the way such services were received, and implementation of such feedback into their center workflow. As part of certification, ODJFS has provided mystery shopping to various centers across the state to further gather customer feedback and aid in the local WDBs' certification process. The local WDBs will next certify the centers in PY 2024.

In PY 2022, the Ohio Auditor of State conducted a performance audit on Ohio's re-employment programs. This review included an examination of local workforce area operations, including the services offered at the OhioMeansJobs Centers. Additionally, the Auditor of State examined the success of OhioMeansJobs.com, the state's online job board, as it relates to effectively helping Ohioans obtain meaningful employment. During this audit, the Auditor of State interviewed various ODJFS staff in OWD as well as staff in various OhioMeansJobs Centers across the state. The resulting report was released by the Auditor of State in February 2023.

As a result of this audit, ODJFS convened a committee of workforce development board directors to assist in implementing the following recommendations:

1. Evaluate how to improve service delivery within Ohio's local workforce development boards.

2. Take inventory of services available in Ohio's 88 OhioMeansJobs Centers and determine how to present this information on the Office's website as well as on OhioMeansJobs.com.

3. Continue to increase the development and deployment of training for case managers working in the OhioMeansJobs Centers to improve their understanding of policies, procedures, and systems and to obtain specialized skills.

4. Work with appropriate entities to develop a process to effectively communicate with the OhioMeansJobs Centers.

5. Explore ways to provide information that promotes the ability of OWD and local workforce areas to provide oversight and to strategically plan for Ohio's workforce programs.

During the next program year, OWD will implement these strategies which will increase not just our collaboration with local workforce areas but will allow greater coordinated service strategies for job seekers and businesses.

Appendix A – Ohio RESEA Evaluation Statement of Work

Glossary

APPAM: Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management
DOL: Department of Labor
EDR: Evaluation Design Report
ETA: Employment and Training Administration
IRB: Institutional Review Board
RESEA: Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment
RCT: Randomized Controlled Trial
ODJFS: Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services
OLDA: Ohio Longitudinal Data Archive
OMJ: Ohio Means Jobs
Q2 Employment: Employment two quarters after receiving UI benefits.
UI: Unemployment Insurance
UI weeks: number of weeks claimants staying on UI benefits.

1. Project Description

In this project, we will conduct a randomized controlled trial (RCT) to evaluate the effectiveness of Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. The program provides job search assistance to Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants who are likely to exhaust their benefits. In the summer of 2023, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) will include a series of upgraded workshops as part of the RESEA services, which aim to help disadvantaged UI claimants (such as low-income or elderly workers) adapt to the fast-changing job market. Our goal is to examine whether the overall enhanced RESEA program can reduce the number of weeks UI claimants staying on UI benefits (UI weeks) and whether it can increase UI claimants' employment rate two quarters after receiving the first UI benefits (Q2 Employment).

In order to obtain statistically meaningful results and to meet the Department of Labor's (DOL) standard for high-rating evaluation designs, we aim to randomize at least 30,000 UI claimants statewide in one year. Roughly half of them will be assigned to the treatment group, i.e., required to receive RESEA services, including the new workshops, and half will be assigned to control group, i.e., receive no services or alternative services. The specific number of eligible UI claimants and allocations between the treatment and control groups will depend on the labor market condition during the randomization year and the capacities of RESEA offices across counties.

2. Project Activities

This project will have four stages, including pre-evaluation assessment, pilot study, implementation study, and impact study. There will also be administrative activities during each stage. We will provide a draft Evaluation Design Report (EDR) by the end of summer 2023. The EDR will include literature review, detailed randomization procedures, evaluation design, and data requirements. We will use the EDR as a roadmap throughout the project.

2.1 Pre-evaluation Assessment
The purpose of the pre-evaluation assessment is to investigate the characteristics and outcomes of prior RESEA service recipients, to understand and adjust the selection model for RESEA service recipients, and to check data quality and address any data issues. Information obtained during the assessment will

help us design the randomization model and prepare for any uncertainties during the randomization. We will start the assessment during the summer of 2023. Conditional on acquiring access to necessary datasets, we expect to finish by winter 2024. We will write our findings during the pre-evaluation assessment in a report.

2.2 Pilot study

We propose to conduct a pilot study in two to three counties before the statewide randomization. The pilot study will help us identify the challenges and potential problems we may face during the randomization. This way, we can adjust the evaluation design and prepare coping strategies for the more expensive statewide study. The pilot study also allows ODJFS to check the format and attendance rates of the new RESEA workshops. Moreover, we will use the data collected during the pilot study to estimate the expected impacts of RESEA services. Given the small sample size of the pilot study, the results may not be statistically significant. However, we can still utilize the expected program impacts to conduct power analysis, which will inform us of a more precise minimum sample size for the statewide randomization.

The counties selected for the pilot study should have UI claimants who are representative of the overall Ohio UI claimants. We expect to include a mix of rural, urban, and Appalachian counties. These counties should also represent a mix of OhioMeansJobs Centers. We will provide descriptive statistics which compare the pilot counties' and statewide UI claimants' characteristics and local economic conditions.

The specific starting date of the pilot study depends on when the enhanced RESEA workshops become available and when the selected counties agree to participate in the study. We aim to start the pilot randomization around late summer or early fall of 2023. The randomization and the treatment (RESEA services) will last about two to three months. We will submit the pilot study report in two deliverables because the UI weeks outcome will become available much sooner than Q2 employment outcome. We expect to deliver the first part of the report during the summer of 2024 and the second part of the report during summer of 2025.

A potential drawback of conducting a short-term pilot study for this project is that the job opportunities for summer/fall UI claimants are seasonal. For example, it's likely that some of the UI claimants in the randomization had summer jobs and would not return to work until the next spring or summer. Depending on the timing of the pilot study randomization, we will discuss in the report how the estimated impacts of RESEA services may be different from true impacts.

2.3 Implementation study

Our research team will conduct a qualitative study to evaluate the design and the implementation of the upgraded RESEA workshop. We will use multiple qualitative evaluation methods, such as interviews, focus groups, and document review, to obtain comprehensive information from state and county RESEA program staff, ODJFS, and other stakeholders. The results will inform and improve the randomization evaluation process. We will provide a brief report of the qualitative study by winter of 2024.

2.4 Impact Study (Statewide Randomization)

After we test the randomization process in the pilot counties and obtain the preliminary results, such as show-up and completion rates of RESEA services and UI weeks outcome, we can start to randomize eligible UI claimants for RESEA services statewide. Based on Abt's 2022 report, the statewide randomization process for a large state can take at least one year to detect an impact. Specifically, according to DOL Employment and Training Administration (ETA) 9128 reports, in fiscal year (FY) 2019, when the US (United States) economy was in its longest expansion, around 10,000 UI claimants were selected for RESEA services in Ohio. This number increased to 18,000 in FY2021, when the economy was recovering from the pandemic recession and labor shortage. If we assume that around half of eligible UI claimants were selected for RESEA services, as suggested in the 2022 Abt report, we should be able to reach the 30,000-sample size in about one to one and half years. However, the specific number of eligible UI claimants will depend on the economic condition in the next two years and the

expected program impacts. The smaller the program impacts, the larger sample size we need to detect the impacts.

This proposed research focuses on evaluating the impacts of the whole program, i.e., are there any differences between outcomes of UI claimants who received RESEA services and those who did not receive RESEA services? Evaluations of specific RESEA services, such as whether the new workshops are effective, and evaluations of specific RESEA services for specific groups, such as whether the new workshops are effective for UI claimants without bachelor's degrees, are not in the scope of this research, because they require much larger sample size and longer evaluation time.

Moreover, based on Abt's 2022 report, the most appropriate and the least time-consuming evaluation method is the RCT design. The alternative evaluation methods either require a much larger sample size or do not apply to the RESEA program. For example, the regression discontinuity design will require a sample size of around 200,000 and the interrupted time series design will need the state to relaunch the RESEA program on a rolling basis to fit the requirements for this design. Therefore, it is important to conduct the pilot study to ensure that the randomization process is implemented at the county level correctly and the treatment and control groups receive services based on their assignments. We will include more details of the randomization process in the EDR.

We plan to start the statewide randomization around fall 2024 (after we have preliminary UI weeks results from the pilot study). The randomization process will take about a year. Given that UI claimants can receive benefits up to 26 weeks (about 6 months) and they also need time to receive RESEA services, we expect that the UI weeks outcome of the earliest randomization groups occur around spring 2025. We will monitor the sample during the entire process. Around winter 2026, we can start to conduct preliminary analysis and check if the sample size is large enough for us to detect an impact on UI weeks. If our sample size is large enough after one year of randomization, we will analyze UI weeks outcome and draft the report during spring and summer 2026. We will send the report to ODJFS for review and feedback during fall 2026. The Q2 employment outcome occurs later, and the associated UI wage records data has a three to six months delay. We expect to conduct Q2 employment analysis and write the report during fall 2026 and winter 2027. The final report will be delivered to ODJFS for review and feedback by spring 2027. However, if the sample size is not large enough after one year of randomization, we expect there will be at least a six-month delay for each step.

2.5 Administrative Activities
There will be administrative activities throughout the project. First, we will need more administrative data to conduct the analysis. Ohio Longitudinal Data Analytics (OLDA) staff will work with ODJFS on the data sharing agreement, contract, and data delivery process. Second, we will file an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application at The Ohio State University to ensure that the proposed research complies with the regulations on human subjects' research. Finally, the research team will meet with state and county RESEA program staff to learn the details of the program and to coordinate the randomization process. We will also meet with ODJFS regularly to report on the evaluation progress.

3. Project Timeline and Deliverables

Given the contract starts on July 1, 2023, our best estimate of the timeline at the time of writing (March 2023) is:

Tasks & Deliverables	Expected Time	Notes
1. EDR	**July – November 2023**	
EDR draft	September 2023	
Final EDR	November 2023	Depend on review time
2. Implementation Study	**July – December 2023**	Given new workshops become available by summer 2023
Implementation Study Report	Winter 2024	
3. Pre-Evaluation Assessment	**July 2023 – February 2024**	Given data delivered to OSU on time
Pre-evaluation assessment report	February 2024	
4. Pilot Study	**July 2023 – March 2025**	Given pilot counties get onboard on time
Pilot Study Report 1 (UI weeks)	Summer 2024	
Pilot Study Report 2 (Q2 Employment)	Summer 2025	
5. Impact Study	**October 2024 – July 2027**	Expect at least a six-month delay if we do not have enough study participants within one year of randomization
Impact Study Report 1 (UI weeks)	Fall 2026	
Impact Study Report 2 (Q2 employment)	Spring 2027	
Final Impact Study Report	Spring – Summer 2027	Depend on review time

4. Dissemination

The project will initially be registered as an RCT in the OSF or the AEA Registry for trials. Following that, we will provide the initial evaluation design report, the pre-evaluation design and final study results to the OSF project associated with this trial. Secondly, we expect to disseminate the results on an annual basis through our state and national research network, such as through the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) or other research networks. Finally, we are open to working with the JFS staff to prepare regular updates for the team working on RESEA, and to state-wide communities of practice with an interest in Unemployment Insurance.

5. Project Administration

The project will be administered through Ohio State University according to rules set up by the Office of Sponsored Projects. Dr. Tian Lou and Josh Hawley will serve as co-principal investigators on all tasks for the project. Each month we will prepare a short briefing and report for the agency showing progress and deliverables.

The data management for the project will occur in collaboration with the CHRR at Ohio State University. CHRR is a large social science research unit at OSU. Dr. Hawley is the Associate Director, and Dr. Lou is a Research Scientist. While IOP security rules are maintained by the Department of Administrative Services, the CHRR systems are under separate security rules. This will come into play when data are analyzed under tools that are required but unavailable from the IOP. The following paragraphs briefly summarize our IT security system at the center.

CHRR maintains an enterprise security program for all components of its information systems that is compliant with NIST 800-53. CHRR's security program is based on a risk management framework that addresses security control selection based on a FIPS 199 worst-case impact analysis. CHRR information systems are considered 'Moderate' under the NIST impact categorization system. Therefore, CHRR has implemented the applicable security controls under the moderate baseline from the NIST Special Publication 800-53B, revision 5. The security program covers the 19 operational, managerial, and technical NIST control families. CHRR maintains comprehensive security and privacy procedures in its Security Manual, including, but not limited to, the following major topics.

6. Budget

	Year 1	Year 2
Personnel Costs	$420,000	$435,000
Travel	$10,000	$10,000
Computing Fees	$31,000	$31,000
Training Costs	$8,000	$8,000
Total	**$469,000**	**$484,000**

Total Cost Years 1 &2: $953,000

We propose years 1 and 2 at this time. Future years would have an expected increase in personnel costs like the costs reflected above. However, staff utilization in future years will depend on assigned tasks. The tasks themselves will change after the project data collection is done and we are monitoring in years 3-5. Therefore, we should expect less staff hours in future budgets.