


Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act



Ohio Annual Report Program Year 2020

(July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021)

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Introduction

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

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act



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

By supporting the alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development systems, WIOA provides Ohio with the opportunity to enhance its service delivery system by coordinating activities and promoting consistency of services among the core programs. During program year (PY) 2020, Ohio continued to work toward the goal of integrating WIOA Title I programs with the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services program and other workforce programs our OhioMeansJobs centers deliver.

This PY 2020 WIOA Annual Report provides a summary of how Ohio has used workforce integration to support the goals of each program.

Operation Restore

Like every other state in the nation, Ohio has had to adapt to a new way of doing business since March 2020, when most states had their first confirmed COVID-19 cases. To address the concerns of local workforce areas during and after the pandemic, Ohio created the Operation Restore workgroup. The workgroup meets monthly and is made of local workforce development board Directors, county association directors, and state workforce development staff. Throughout PY 2020, the group discussed, developed, and shared best practices around a variety of topics, including safety, the reopening of the OhioMeansJobs centers, virtual services, digital literacy, policy, and meeting employers' needs. The group also collaborated on the following projects:

- Statewide media campaigns to direct customers to the OhioMeansJobs centers in their time of need.
- A public-facing map that provided up-to-date operating statuses and availability of virtual services for all 88 OhioMeansJobs centers.
- The OhioMeansJobs Workforce Scheduler, which allows customers to schedule time at OhioMeansJobs center resource rooms, schedule one-on-one meetings with local workforce professionals, or register for career fairs and workshops.

The workgroup continued into PY 2021, to continue and build on the innovations sparked throughout 2020.

Employment Services during COVID-19

Throughout PY 2020, Ohio's employment services professionals worked in a remote-access environment, with staff teleworking and using technology to assist clients and conduct work. During a time of unprecedented need, many of Ohio's employment services professionals were assigned to support our unemployment office, which experienced a record volume of unemployment claims.

As the pandemic presented new challenges, innovative solutions were necessary. New trainings were developed, such as "Job Searching in the Digital Age," to help clients navigate searching for work remotely and closing the digital divide.

At the local level, a hybrid of in-person and remote strategies were used to continue serving customers throughout the pandemic. Those service strategies included:

- Using phone calls, email, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and various other virtual platforms for workshops and hiring events.
- Providing laptops and webcams to staff and customers for virtual services.
- Providing virtual orientation sessions.
- Upgrading Wi-Fi and paying subscriptions for customers who qualify.

Whether assisting customers in person or virtually, Ohio has continued to make service delivery a priority, to help displaced workers reskill and restart their careers and to assist both unemployed workers and employers impacted by COVID-19.

Statewide Workforce Development Initiatives

OhioMeansJobs Centers

Eighty-eight local OhioMeansJobs centers (also known as American Job Centers), one in each county, provide services to local businesses, as well as to individuals who are employed, underemployed, and unemployed. The OhioMeansJobs centers connect workforce partners – such as WIOA Title I programs, Wagner-Peyser Employment

Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Literacy programs, and other programs – to deliver a variety of employment and training services to meet the needs of their communities.

Ohio's Workforce Mission

Throughout PY 2020, the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation continued to work in collaboration with the Ohio Departments of Education, Higher Education, Job and Family Services (ODJFS), and the Development Services Agency to close the gap between growing workforce needs and the goals of job seekers. The mission of the Office of Workforce Transformation is to connect Ohio's business, training, and education communities to build a dynamically skilled, productive, and purposeful workforce.

Advancing the DeWine Administration's commitment to leading an aggressive, innovative path toward a better and stronger Ohio, InnovateOhio's mission is to use technology in government to improve services, reduce costs, and spur a culture of innovation. 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, the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, 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. Additional phases are ongoing, with the final phase expected to be delivered in early 2022.

The ARIES Project

In PY 2020, the ODJFS Office of Workforce Development continued to partner with Monster Government Solutions in the development of Ohio's new case management system: The Advancement through Resources, Information and Employment Services (ARIES) system. This system will replace the current 20-year-old Ohio Workforce Case Management System.

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

In-Demand Occupations

Ohio's efforts to reform its workforce development system are driven by a focus on meeting employers' current and projected needs. To identify those needs, the

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

Using the aforementioned methodology, Ohio identified 229 in-demand occupations with more than 20,000 related job titles. When job seekers take the Career Profile assessment on **OhioMeansJobs.com**, they are given a list of occupations they may be suitable for, with in-demand and critical occupations listed first to improve their chances of finding employment quickly.

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

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

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

In addition, under the direction of Governor DeWine and the leadership of Lt. Governor Jon Husted, Ohio extended its focus to prioritize both Ohio's economy and the health and well-being of Ohioans through Ohio's Top Jobs List. The Top Jobs List includes both in-demand jobs and critical jobs. The Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation and InnovateOhio created a Top Jobs interactive dashboard at topjobs.ohio.gov. 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 the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, the Ohio Department of Higher Education, and ODJFS, the program has been very successful. From the time it began in September 2019 through February 2021, a total of 1,310 employers were approved for funding for 23,723 credentials.

Additionally, ODJFS and the Office of Workforce Transformation 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.

The Ohio legislature recognized the importance of this program and has provided funding for state fiscal years 2022 and 2023.

Industry Sector Partnership Grant

The Ohio Industry Sector Partnership Grant helps fund collaboration 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. The program aims to ensure that Ohioans can participate in the workforce pipeline while meeting the needs of job creators and the local economy.

Ohio offers state funding and support to local communities interested in starting or accelerating an industry sector partnership. Industry sector partnerships design and implement workforce strategies for specific sectors and individual regions. To be eligible to apply for funding, an industry sector partnership must:

- Include multiple private-sector employers focused on common workforce-related goals;
- Be led by the business community; and
- Have a regional and/or industry-specific focus.

In PY 2020, 12 partnerships were awarded a total of \$2.5 million.

Ohio to Work

[Ohio to Work](#), led by JobsOhio, launched in Cleveland in September 2020 as a pilot initiative designed to provide pathways to in-demand, long-term employment opportunities through personalized career coaching, accelerated training options, local employer connections, career tools, and more. The project is a partnership of the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, the Ohio Department of Development, ODJFS, OhioMeansJobs Cleveland-Cuyahoga County, the Urban League of Greater Cleveland, and Goodwill of Greater Cleveland and East Central Ohio. It focuses on three vital stakeholders:

- Employers;
- Existing service providers; and
- Displaced workers.

During PY 2020, 3,054 Ohio to Work participants received career coaching, and 340 became employed. Participants have pursued careers in computer numerical control machining, software coding, healthcare technology, nursing assistance, and many other occupations. At the end of the program year, plans were under way to expand Ohio to Work to other areas as well, including Franklin and Mahoning counties.

Individual Microcredential Assistance Program

In July 2020, the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, 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 low income and 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-suited training program at no cost to them. In PY 2020, 11 training providers received awards.

National Dislocated Worker Grants

Holistic Care Management SUPPORT Act Grant

Ohio received a \$5 million grant from U.S. Department of Labor to serve individuals impacted by the opioid epidemic and substance use disorders in 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 included dislocated workers, individuals with barriers to employment, new entrants to the workforce, and incumbent workers (employed or underemployed). Funding also allowed training to be provided for employers, first responders, and early childhood educators to help them better understand substance

use disorders and trauma-informed care.

The grant period began on Oct. 1, 2020, and will continue through Sept. 30, 2024. As of June 30, 2021, a total of 91 participants had been enrolled, and 173 services have been provided.

Opioid Emergency Disaster Recovery

Ohio received an \$11 million Opioid Emergency Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant from U.S. Department of Labor to serve eligible dislocated workers and long-term unemployed individuals across the state. Counties were grouped into nine “communities” with the same combination of one or more of the following four key impacts related to the opioid health emergency:

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

Ohio is identifying the humanitarian, health care, treatment and training needs specific to the key impacts and implementing the following strategies: providing temporary disaster relief employment up to 4,080 hours (jobs must alleviate issues caused by opioid crisis); building the skilled workforce in professions that could impact the causes and treatment of the opioid crisis; reintegrating into employment individuals who have a history of opioid use or who have a friend or family member with a history of opioid use; and engaging employers to adopt recovery-friendly policies and practices. The types of temporary disaster relief employment include case aides with children services, peer recovery supporters at hospitals and treatment providers, employment navigators in courts and probation departments, and education aides in schools.

This grant period began on April 1, 2019, and will continue through March 31, 2022, due to a one-year extension approved by U.S. Department of Labor. As of May 31, 2021, Ohio had enrolled 802 participants and provided 1,816 services.

To address the goal of engaging employers, the ODJFS Office of Workforce Development partnered with the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, RecoveryOhio, and Working Partners® to create three supplemental recovery-friendly training modules for employers and job seekers. The trainings focused on a science-based explanation of opioid and substance use disorders to reduce stigma and develop effective strategies for managing them in the work environment. These trainings guide employers in developing a business approach to preventing and responding to opioid and other substance misuse, including hiring and retaining employees in recovery. For employees, the trainings can help them navigate workplace policies, practices, and overall organizational culture to ensure that they have the tools necessary to maintain lifelong recovery and to retain employment. The new training modules can be found on the RecoveryOhio website, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce website, and the Office of Workforce Development [Opioid Grants webpage](#).

Flooding/Severe Storms – Disaster Grant



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

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

This grant period began on April 1, 2019, and was extended through June 30, 2021. As a result of this funding, Ohio employed and served 280 individuals.

Trade and Economic Transition

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

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

To train more individuals in professions that can address the opioid health emergency, the grant also helped fund the development of new curriculum for training peer recovery supporters and chemical dependency counselor aides. In addition, the grant funded the initial development of a comprehensive set of media outreach resources to make more individuals aware of the career, employment and training, and supportive services available to dislocated workers at OhioMeansJobs centers. It also funded the development of [“Strategies for Helping Individuals Impacted by Opioid Use Disorder: A Toolkit for Ohio’s Public Workforce Development System.”](#)

This grant was available through Sept. 30, 2020, and allowed 335 individuals to

receive services.

COVID-19 Economic Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant

Ohio received an \$8.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to provide services needed due to the COVID-19 health emergency to 18 local workforce development areas. The grant is funding recovery services to both employers and dislocated workers. Career services, training, and supportive services are being provided to dislocated workers, particularly those who have lost their job due to the pandemic. In addition, local workforce development areas have worked with businesses and economic development entities to identify and focus on industry sectors and talent needs of their local business communities. This grant period began on June 3, 2020, and will continue through June 30, 2022. As of June 30, 2021, a total of 366 participants had been enrolled, and 684 services had been provided.

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

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 four local workforce development areas to implement innovative stay-at-work/return-to-work services in coordination with health and employment services.

During Phase 1 of the project, which ended in June 2021, Ohio received \$3.5 million to develop a pilot model, begin serving participants, and implement tracking systems to measure and report outcomes. Ohio was then selected to receive an additional \$18.8 million to carry out Phase 2, enabling expansion of services to more regions of the state and implementation of the experimental design protocols.

Who is served? 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 have non-occupational illnesses or injuries that impact their ability to perform their job.

What services are provided? 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 could include a transitional work assignment or accommodations that enable to worker to perform the essential job functions. In some cases, the coordinator may refer the individual to OhioMeansJobs center partners for employment and training services. In addition, a nurse hotline, access to a social worker, and supportive services are available to the participants in care coordination.

When will the research study take place? Following a six-month administrative start-up, enrollment and service delivery will begin in October 2021. ODJFS and its partners will continue the intervention strategies for 30 months followed by 12 months for close-

out and final assessment activities.

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

The project's leadership team includes representatives from the Governor's Executive Workforce Board, Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation, Ohio Department of Health, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, Bon Secours Mercy Health and Workforce Development Boards in Areas 9, 12, 17, and 18. Additional key partners include the Ohio Department of Medicaid and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

Ohio Pathway Home Program

The Ohio Pathway Home program provides evidence-based employment services to justice-involved individuals before and after their reentry into the community. Using a \$4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, ODJFS is working in partnership with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and the Jefferson County Community Action Council to employ a team of reentry navigators to provide one-on-one job search assistance to individuals residing in and released from state correctional facilities. The business services teams in the participating workforce development areas also provide employer outreach, job development, and access to employer incentives to promote the hiring of justice-involved individuals.

Who will receive services? Up to 540 adults transitioning from state correctional facilities to six of Ohio's largest urban counties: Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Montgomery, Stark, and Summit. These counties are in Workforce Development Areas 2, 3, 6, 7, 11, and 13.

What services will be provided? Beginning up to six months prior to the participant's scheduled release and continuing afterward at the local OhioMeansJobs center, the reentry navigator works with the participant to assess skills and barriers, develop an individual employment plan, and enhance job readiness. Depending on their needs, participants may receive financial literacy training, workplace etiquette training, and interview coaching. Referrals also may be made to community-based organizations for such things as substance abuse treatment and assistance removing other barriers to employment. In addition, incentives may be offered to participants who achieve employment milestones.

When will the program be in effect? Following the administrative start-up period, services to participants will be delivered from July 1, 2021, through Dec. 31, 2023.

Integrated Workforce Programs

WIOA Youth Program and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

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

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

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

One recent example of the program's many successes occurred in Perry County. A young woman who grew up in an abusive family enrolled in CCMEP after being referred by a drug court. Her substance issues were the result of childhood traumas. She was homeless, pregnant, and did not complete high school. Through CCMEP services and support, she was able to secure housing, obtain her driver's license, and gain employment, as well as get a laptop to work on attaining her GED. She's currently employed and working towards a credential to become a nursing assistant.

Another recent example occurred in Meigs County. Angela Mayes was a single 21-year-old mother without a high school diploma when she was referred to CCMEP in 2019 through the Ohio Works First program. Her son had been born three months premature and was in intensive care at a children's hospital. Angela had applied for cash assistance to help with expenses and her travel back and forth from the hospital. Her son remained in the hospital until January 2021 and continued to have medical issues after he was released. She did not have a driver's license and was living with her father.



With the help of CCMEP, Angela was able to get driving lessons and obtain her driver's license. She was then enrolled with Aspire, an educational program that serves adults with diverse needs. Early on in the pandemic, she worked on her GED at home. Once COVID restrictions were lifted, Angela began attending GED classes twice a week. This helped her transition her son to daycare slowly. Angela obtained her GED in June 2021. With the assistance of her career coach, Angela applied for subsidized housing and was able to move into an apartment. The CCMEP program paid her first month's rent and deposit. She eventually was able to buy herself a car, and the program paid for her first three months of insurance. Angela is now working and also would like to

pursue a career in nursing, specifically in the neonatal intensive care where she and her son spent the first three months of his life. Her son attends daycare full time, and both he and Angela are thriving.

Rapid Response

Beginning in March 2020 and continuing into October 2020, Ohio received an influx of notifications for both permanent and temporary layoffs affecting thousands of Ohioans. Traditionally, Ohio only processes permanent layoffs and closures. However, given the extenuating circumstances of the pandemic, Ohio made an adjustment for PY 2020 to include temporary layoffs. Beginning Jan. 1, 2021, Ohio decided to no longer post temporary Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notifications (WARNs) to the public-facing WARN page. In April 2021, Ohio began to see signs of economic recovery as the number of WARNs and impacted workers decreased.

By the end of PY 2020, the Rapid Response team had received 116 WARNs impacting 12,624 workers across the state. Between July and December 2020, 100 WARNs were filed in Ohio. Of those, 31 were considered temporary and COVID-19-related, impacting 5,714 workers.

For PY 2020, Ohio had 295 non-WARN events, 199 of which occurred from July to December 2020. For the entire program year, 5,285 employees were affected by non-WARN events; from July to December, 2,779 employees were affected by non-WARN events.

During federal fiscal year 2021 (October 2020 – September 2021), Ohio's local workforce areas made one request totaling \$336,000 for Rapid Response Emergency Assistance and Layoff Aversion funding. The application was approved. As of June 30, 2021, incremental awards totaling \$168,00 had been allocated. The remaining \$168,000 has been recommended for approval and is awaiting disbursement to the local areas.

Throughout the pandemic, state merit staff delivered Rapid Response Reemployment Sessions virtually and will continue to do so until in-person, on-site service delivery becomes an option. The state Rapid Response team continues to build stronger partnerships with our local areas. Despite some challenges, Ohio's Rapid Response team persevered and continued its commitment to collaboratively serving Ohio's employers and dislocated workers.

Also, in PY 2020, the Rapid Response Team began working alongside the Trade Unit and a vendor to upgrade and improve the Rapid Response Reemployment Session presentation and overall message. A recorded presentation provides both Trade and Rapid Response information. Face-to-face presentations also will be provided.

Trade and WIOA

Ohio continues to improve services for workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of increased imports. The new federal Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) regulations require Trade participants receiving TAA to be co-enrolled in the WIOA Dislocated Worker program. Currently, Ohio is working on three projects:

Video for a Hybrid Benefit Rights Information and Rapid Response Presentation –

A workgroup was created to review the existing online Benefit Rights Information presentation and develop a script/process to align with the new law changes for the 2021 revision. Eight shorter videos will be created for ease of comprehension and presentation. The new presentation will be accessible and available for customers to view and complete online. New videos will replace the existing online presentation.

TAA-WIOA Co-Enrollment – A TAA-WIOA Co-Enrollment Workgroup was created with 10 local areas and the ODJFS Office of Workforce Development. This team was tasked to review WIOA and Trade laws and policies to identify opportunities for co-enrollment while maximizing service opportunities without duplication. Upon completion, pilot areas will begin utilizing the model to ensure objectives are successfully reached for statewide implementation.

Database (Obligations) – A new TAA Obligations database was created to improve grant management of TAA expenditures. At the end of the program year, testing was underway.

ApprenticeOhio and WIOA



In PY 2020, the ODJFS Office of Workforce Development and ApprenticeOhio developed 16 new Registered Apprenticeship sponsors. Half of those sponsors were either an Ohio university, community college, or career center, all focused on non-traditional occupations.

ApprenticeOhio received a 2020 State Apprenticeship Expansion grant in July 2020 to expand and further integrate Registered Apprenticeship into Ohio's workforce system. As a result, many local workforce development boards were implementing pre-apprenticeship programs that enhance participant technical and soft skills, as a pathway to employment through at least one affiliated Registered Apprenticeship Program. Local workforce development boards are serving as pre-apprenticeship "hubs." They will select at least one community provider as a partner to deliver services and activities directly to participants.

Additionally, as a result of the 2020 State Apprenticeship Expansion grant, ODJFS and the Ohio Department of Education are working together to develop pre-apprenticeship programs for schools and share participant data.

Enhancements made to **OhioMeansJobs.com** during PY 2019 enabled job seekers to indicate their interest in apprenticeship. ApprenticeOhio worked with Wagner-Peyser staff to conduct outreach to job seekers that expressed interest in Registered Apprenticeship opportunities.

The Ohio Workforce Case Management System was enhanced to include Registered Apprenticeship. Now participants are recorded as receiving special grant services and

can be reported on the Participant Individual Record Layout. Registered Apprenticeship will be set up as a full program in Ohio's new case management system, ARIES.

The U.S. Department of Labor revised the Code of Federal Regulations part 29.30, Equal Employment Opportunity in Apprenticeship. Ohio has made edits to the Ohio Administrative Code, implemented changes and submitted updates to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship.

RESEA and WIOA

During Ohio's Stay at Home order, shortly after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program and other reemployment activities were temporarily suspended for unemployment claimants. During this time, the ODJFS Office of Workforce Development used this opportunity to transition delivery of the RESEA program to WIOA area staff, in accordance with the Department of Labor's Training and Employment Notice 13-19, Wagner-Peyser Act Staffing Flexibility Final Rule initiative (see "Reemployment Services," below). All 20 of Ohio's WIOA-designated workforce development areas agreed to deliver the RESEA program. Training was completed and program restarted on March 1, 2021.

The transition is allowing Ohio to serve nearly three times as many claimants per year. RESEA PY 2020 funding was distributed to local WIOA areas with an expectation that claimants served must first be counted for PY 2020, until Ohio's performance goals are met. Remaining claimants served during the calendar year will then be counted toward PY 2021 performance goals.

Veterans' Employment Services



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

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

The Veterans Program sent 70 workforce team members to the 2020 National Association of State Workforce Agencies Veterans Conference, where they participated in a variety of educational workshops and panels. The program continues to conduct Transition Assistance Program briefings at Wright-Patterson Air Force base and attends 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 assist with their transition to civilian life. Wagner-Peyser also identifies veterans on registration reports, providing reemployment services and partner program referrals.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted veteran services significantly. Veterans Program staff began working remotely. They also worked temporarily part-time in the unemployment insurance call center, to assist with the large influx of COVID-impacted claims. Leveraging the latest technology, staff began providing virtual services to veterans. New processes were developed to better streamline services – for example, electronic signature capabilities for customers and staff.

The Veterans Program promoted its annual Hire A Veteran Month November calendar with partners. Online trainings were shared with WIOA partners to promote consistency in veteran intake process and to increase their awareness of community resources for veterans.

The Veterans Program worked collaboratively with system developer staff for the OhioMeansJobs.com redesign project. The OhioMeansJobs Military Service and Employer Hire a Veteran landing pages were redesigned to help both employers and military job seekers more readily locate helpful information. Additionally, the Veterans Program launched a new Veteran Transition Plan (VTP) tool to OhioMeansVeteranJobs.com to assist transitioning service members, military spouses, and other eligible veterans with planning their transition to civilian life. Action steps are listed for various times in their transition period, with links to articles, tools, and information to help them succeed.

Through the efforts of Ohio's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program specialists, the Jobs for Veterans State Grants program served 1,316 veterans in PY 2020. More than 63% (63.2%) of participants were employed in the second quarter after they left the program; more than 60% (60.1%) 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 \$7,728. All performance measures exceeded standards negotiated with the U.S. Department of Labor.

In addition, veteran participants also were served by the Wagner-Peyser Veterans program. This program served 1,857 veterans in PY 2020. More than 63% (63.2%) of participants were employed in the second quarter after they left the program; more than 60% (61.1%) were employed during the fourth quarter after they left the program. The median earnings of these participants in the second quarter after their program exit was \$7,685. All Wagner-Peyser Veterans performance measures also exceeded standards negotiated with the U.S. Department of Labor.

Labor Market Information

During PY 2020, Ohio made a concerted effort to integrate labor market information into local workforce development decisions and to seek feedback from businesses to identify skill gaps in local labor forces.

The Data Intelligence Workgroup, which includes staff from the ODJFS Office of Workforce Development (including the Bureau of Labor Market Information) and staff from several workforce development areas, continued to meet throughout the program year. In addition to expanding data elements included in various reports jointly agreed upon by the workgroup members, the workgroup is in the process of developing a survey to distribute to the local areas regarding labor market information

data needs. The Bureau of Labor Market Information presented information to local workforce development boards and staff to explain labor market information, how to locate needed data, and how the data can be used.

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

- Updated regional data spreadsheets and graphics to assist local areas with updating the **Regional Strategic Plans**
- Updated the **Monthly Statewide Employment News Situation** release to include more graphics and improved the layout.

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. As Ohio worked through the COVID-19 pandemic, meaningful assistance efforts were enhanced and adjusted for the increased demand of labor exchange services through coordinated efforts, streamlined participant data, and information sharing. Cutting-edge technology was used to provide services virtually and offer flexibility to meet the current accessibility needs. Outreach efforts to the newly unemployed and those nearing completion of unemployment insurance benefits were conducted to promote job search and career guidance resources available on OhioMeansJobs.com.

Ohio took advantage of the Department of Labor's Training and Employment Notice 13-19, Wagner-Peyser Act Staffing Flexibility Final Rule initiative to reevaluate and restructure the RESEA program's delivery method. Ohio tailored the staffing approach to allow local OhioMeansJobs center staff to administer the RESEA program in all 20 local workforce development areas. The modified structure allows Ohio to continue to provide reemployment services to transitioning veterans receiving unemployment benefits, provide Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service Members, and serve claimants likely to exhaust their unemployment benefits with a local flare, statewide. Additionally, Ohio has prioritized educating claimants regarding services available through the WIOA program.

COVID-19 forced Ohio to take unconventional approaches to reemployment services for migrant and seasonal farm workers. Agriculture is Ohio's leading industry. Ohio farmers grow more than 30 commercial crops and rely on migrant labor to plant, cultivate, harvest, process, and package the produce. Migrant and seasonal farm workers are the main source of labor to conduct these activities. Because they travel from other states and live on job sites, many had concerns and questions about COVID-19 restrictions at the onset of the pandemic.

To provide direction and resources, a collaboration was formed. The ODJFS Office of Workforce Development partnered with the Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Department of Agriculture, Ohio Farm Bureau, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Ohio Latino Affairs Commission, and the Governor's office to address many issues.

The health and safety of both the workers and the farmers were at the forefront of

decisions. Ohio has more than 4,000 migrant workers during peak season throughout 166 locations. In addition, migrant workers occupy almost 900 housing units. Personal protective equipment (PPE) became essential to providing a safe working and living environment. Working together, this group of agencies obtained and delivered resources such as thermometers, hand sanitizers, and masks to the growers. Roughly 12,000 masks, 100 thermometers, and 300 gallons of hand sanitizer were distributed among the farming community.

The distribution of PPE allowed the group to connect with the agricultural employers by providing them with information and resources. A website was created so they could easily access newly created educational and resource material, including information and guidelines about COVID-19 prevention at work, in vehicles, in housing, and while shopping. Information was provided in both Spanish and English.

Waiver Usage

Ohio requested and received approval in June 2020 for three U.S. Department of Labor waivers to support workforce development activities and provide flexibility for individuals using WIOA programs. In PY 2020, Ohio requested and received approval of an additional waiver pertaining to allowing local workforce areas to retain WIOA Title I funds for the third year. These waivers were consistent with key guiding principles that outcomes are improved through cross-program alignment, increased streamlined services, increased accountability and accessibility, state and local flexibility, and fewer administrative burdens.

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

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

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

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

Using this waiver, the out-of-school youth expenditure statewide rate for the PY 2019 funds was 81.7% and for the PY 2020 funds was 85.1%. The number of WIOA participants co-funded with TANF dollars was 5,207, which was a slight decrease from the previous program year (5,239 participants). However, the overall percentage of co-

funded participants increased in PY 2020 due to an overall reduction in the number of participants during the program year. In review of the demographics of the WIOA youth participants during PY 2020, the top barriers to employment and training included being low-income, basic skills deficient, pregnant or parenting, and disabled. The percentage of WIOA youth who obtained employment or enrolled in training and were able to maintain employment or training was 72%, which was a decrease from PY 2019 (74.6%).

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

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

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

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

During PY 2020, ITAs were provided to 552 in-school youth. That was an increase from the last program year, which was 491.

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

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

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

During PY 2020, Ohio partnered with the Ohio Department of Higher Education (which oversees the state-funded post-secondary education institutions) and developed mechanisms to collect data from their institutions so that their data is accurately reported on all students for programs on the ETPL. In addition, ODJFS has worked with individual training providers on ways to report appropriate data. ODJFS is on track to have the ability to report performance information for all individuals participating in training programs listed in Ohio's ETPL in PY 2021 annual report and when the waiver expires.

Waiver: Waive the requirement that local areas expend all local funds in a two-year period.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ODJFS sought a statewide waiver of the requirement for local areas to return to the state any WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth funds for PY 2018 / FY 2019 that were not expended in the required two-year period. By keeping third-year funds, the local areas had the funding needed to serve additional participants.

Throughout PY 2020, ODJFS tracked and monitored the PY 2018/FY 2019 funds to ensure they were spent in their entirety. ODJFS sent monthly spending reports to the local workforce directors and fiscal agents. State fiscal monitors conducted an annual review of each area's WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth funds, to assess compliance with federal and state laws and regulations. All third-year funding was expended by June 30, 2021.

Effectiveness in Serving Employers

In accordance with WIOA sec. 116(b)(2)(A)(i) (VI), the U.S. Department of Labor 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 employer performance measures were still in pilot throughout PY 2020. As described in the Joint WIOA Final Rule and the Joint WIOA Performance ICR (OMB Control No. 1205-0526), the departments have developed three approaches for measuring effectiveness in serving employers, while only two approaches are required. Ohio has selected two: Retention (retention with the same employer) and Repeat Business Customers (percentage of repeat employers using services within the previous three years). Ohio will await further guidance throughout PY 2021 from the U.S. Department of Labor.

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 accounted for, and 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. The model's overall application proved influential in establishing state levels and serving as the benchmark for local area negotiated rates for PY 20 and 21.

Data Validation

Data validation is essential for an accurate reflection of state and grantees' experiences. As a result, for PY 2020, the ODJFS Office of Fiscal and Monitoring Services' Bureau of Monitoring and Consulting Services (BMCS) will undertake a collaborative validation process.

This review will be conducted in two stages: Phase 1 and Phase 2. In Phase 1, the review will be combined with the PY 2020 Comprehensive Programmatic Monitoring Review.

The WIOA samples will include 900 PY 2020 participants from all 20 local areas. It also will include a sample of counties within those areas. Participants will be randomly selected from a list of open and closed participant cases located in the Ohio Workforce Case Management System.

WIOA Training and Education Guidance Letter (TEGL) 23-19 was released June 18, 2020. Plans to implement the guidance ensued. As a result, elements targeted for validation will consist of those noted in TEGL 23-19 and will be reported through the Programmatic Monitoring Report issued by BMCS. Areas of significant concern will require the local areas to respond with continuous improvement plans.

In Phase 2, BMCS will select an additional 300 files from a list of PY 2020 exited participant files housed within the Ohio Workforce Case Management System. Again, the elements targeted for validation will include those noted in TEGL WIOA No. 23-19.

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

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

They will also provide any training and/or technical assistance deemed appropriate.

Evaluative Studies

Comprehensive Case Management Employment Program (CCMEP)

The Ohio State University (OSU) Ohio Education Research Center (OERC) was enlisted to evaluate the CCMEP program between 2016 and 2019, with funding from the Laura and John Arnold Foundation. This evaluation assessed the employment, education, and human services impacts of participating in services that included comprehensive case management. The evaluation was comprised of the three studies below, allowing for a comprehensive research design. As of June 2021, all three studies had been completed, and the OERC was finalizing the reports, which were delayed due to the pandemic.

Implementation Study: The Implementation Study investigated the cross-organization implementation practices of CCMEP during years 1 and 2. This study included a statewide survey in years 1 and 2, followed by focus groups in 11 counties and 6 counties, respectively, and included data through the end of 2019.

Outcomes Study: The Outcomes Study used existing administrative data to understand the education and employment outcomes of early CCMEP participants in years 1 and 2 in comparison to non-participants. This data was being updated through December 2020.

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

In addition to the OERC evaluation, The American Institute of Research was working with Cuyahoga County’s workforce area and ODJFS to develop a texting behavioral intervention to encourage CCMEP participants to maintain engagement the program and pursue career pathway after enrollment. Additional workforce areas will be invited to participate once the initial intervention design is complete. This intervention will be evaluated for its effectiveness after implementation.

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program

Abt Associates, the Urban Institute, Capital Research Corporation, and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) contracted with the U.S. Department of Labor to conduct a study to provide Congress and U.S. Department of Labor with an in-depth assessment of RESEA state programs.

An important goal of this study is to assess current RESEA program operations and how states plan to meet the requirements of the Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA) of 2018 (Public Law 115-123). This U.S. Department of Labor funded study, which began in October 2018 and was scheduled to be completed in 2021, was being conducted for the Chief Evaluation Office in close collaboration with the Office of Unemployment Insurance. As part of this study, the Abt team was conducting site visits to 10 states and two local workforce areas in each of these states to better understand current RESEA program components and plans for future RESEA program modification and development.

Study Participants: In Ohio, in-person and virtual interviews were conducted with the RESEA program administrator, direct delivery staff, and supervisors, as well as staff from the Office of Unemployment Insurance Operations, Bureau of Labor Market Information, and workforce development board directors.

The Abt team held interviews privately to ensure participants spoke candidly about the implementation and delivery of Ohio's RESEA program.

Customer Service Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction for both employers and job seekers remains a vital pillar in the strategies deployed to effectively serve the workforce needs of Ohioans. In PY 2020, multiple methodologies were used to gather information about customer satisfaction . These included the following:

- A SurveyMonkey link integrated into signature blocks of our Disabled Veteran Outreach Program specialists, employment professionals, RESEA employment professionals, and workforce specialists on all electronic correspondence, to give customers the opportunity to provide feedback.
- On-site customer satisfaction surveys available in the OhioMeansJobs centers that customers can complete at any time.
- Surveys given to employers participating in virtual job fairs or hiring events, to gauge their satisfaction with the event or services being provided.

Throughout the year, over 500 job seekers and employers provided feedback from questions regarding initial or recurring visits, location of services, satisfaction of services, types of services received, probability of return visits, and benefit(s) of service(s). The average satisfaction score throughout the year was 4.45 out of 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. The results validated many of the internal processes and procedures already in place and gave state merit staff constructive feedback for their ongoing continuous improvement efforts.

Effective and timely feedback, both positive and negative, is critical to improving both the

customer experience and customers' employability. Based on the feedback received from the surveys, actions can be taken to improve service delivery.

OhioMeansJobs Certification

Local workforce development boards are responsible for certifying the OhioMeansJobs centers in their areas and ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of their local workforce systems. The boards must evaluate the centers to ensure that they are quality-focused, employer-driven, customer-centered, and tailored to meet the needs of the area and planning region's economies. WIOA requires the boards to certify OhioMeansJobs centers every three years. At the end of PY 2020, Ohio was in the ongoing Continuous Improvement phase of certification. In this phase, progress for obtaining quality assurance and continuous improvement is reviewed with the same benchmarks established in earlier phases. Resources such as mystery shopping, partner assessment surveys, and website reviews will continue to inform best practices and help identify innovative improvement opportunities. In PY 2020, three centers moved locations and were required to complete the initial phase of certification. That phase includes the standards tied to Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, such as Civil Rights postings in centers, specialized trainings, and customer service targeted toward individuals with disabilities.