

Investing in Ohio's Workforce and Innovation

Workforce:

In recent years, Ohio's economy has undergone a transformational change. The challenge once was to create jobs for those who needed them, but now the challenge is to fill jobs that are in-demand and in growing industries.

Today, Ohio faces a skills mismatch where businesses are held back from growth because they cannot find enough qualified workers. There are still Ohioans who are left behind by the state's economic recovery and need their skills retooled so they can break into an in-demand field.

The Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, working with the Departments of Education, Higher Education, Job and Family Services, and the Development Services Agency, is working to close the gap between growing workforce needs and the goals of job seekers. By doing this, we can unleash Ohio's economy and give way to a higher level of prosperity for Ohio families.

Innovation:

Technology is changing everything about the way we live, the way we learn, and the way we work. If Ohio successfully adapts to that change, we can lay the foundation for a new generation of prosperity. The DeWine administration is committed to leading an aggressive, innovative path toward a better and stronger Ohio.

The mission of InnovateOhio is to establish Ohio as the most innovative and entrepreneurial state in the Midwest. InnovateOhio builds strategies to expand and support Ohio's tech climate for businesses and entrepreneurs and drives technology projects to transform the way government serves Ohioans.

Ohio's operating budget supports the goal of the DeWine administration to invest in Ohio's workforce and innovation by:

Supporting Ohio workers by investing in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs. Administered by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the programs make up a comprehensive, statewide system of workforce and employment services, hiring support, and offer tax credits for employers and workers. The \$142 million investment also supports the OhioMeansJobs program, which will see improvements to better serve Ohio job seekers.

Fast track Ohioans seeking new workforce skills by providing micro-degrees, primarily for those in the incumbent workforce. Micro-degrees are low-cost credentials that take a student less than a year to complete and quickly qualify Ohioans to work in growing industries. The budget invests \$15 million for each year of the biennium in the TechCred program. Recognized industry credentials will be provided at no cost to employers to provide training to incumbent or prospective employees to earn a microcredential or certificate.

Making higher education more accessible and affordable for all Ohio students is key to developing a competitive workforce. Ohio's operating budget will help college students by requiring public universities to offer guaranteed tuition so students will pay the same price for their sophomore, junior, and senior years as they did for their freshman year.

Supporting Ohio's college students by increasing the Ohio College Opportunity Grant, which provides financial assistance to Ohio residents who demonstrate the highest levels of financial need. Eligibility is determined using a student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and funds are available to those enrolled in Ohio's public and private colleges and universities. The budget increases funding for this grant by \$47 million over the biennium.

Focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, and Medicine (STEMM) Opportunities for Ohio College Students by expanding funding for the Choose Ohio First Scholarship by \$12 million each year, which will help serve additional students and improve scholarship benefits for those seeking a degree in the STEMM disciplines. Choose Ohio First works to strengthen students' competitiveness in STEMM by

awarding scholarship funding for those studying innovative fields such as aerospace, medicine, computer technology, and alternative energy. Choose Ohio First scholars complete their degree in four years at nearly twice the rate of other STEM students, and the program has contributed to a 61 percent increase in the number of graduates with STEM-related degrees.

Supporting our servicemembers by increasing the National Guard Scholarship by \$800,000. This increase will provide tuition assistance for full-time or part-time students pursuing a two-year or four-year degree at both public and private Ohio colleges and universities. The program is the most significant recruiting tool for the Ohio National Guard and will be fully funded with this additional investment.

Investing in the children of fallen service members by increasing the Ohio War Orphans and Severely Disabled Veterans' Children Scholarship by \$4.1 million over the biennium. The scholarship serves students between the ages of 16 and 24 who are the children of fallen or severely disabled Ohio veterans. The scholarship helps support tuition and fees while they pursue an associate or bachelor's degree at an eligible Ohio college or university.

Investing in the next generation of technology professionals by providing additional investment for the Diversity and Inclusion Technology Internship Program. The program is primarily geared toward female and minority students looking to gain experience with a startup business, mostly in the technology industry. The program has previously served only college students, but with the additional investment will be expanded to offer earlier opportunities for high schoolers.

Establishing Ohio as a leader in computer science and coding education by providing additional resources to train teachers to become certified computer science educators. This will help give more students the opportunity to have quality computer science education in their school. By investing \$1.5 million, Ohio will be able to train nearly 900 new computer science instructors. The budget also makes it easier for schools to find computer science educators by making it more efficient for teachers to receive a temporary license.

Expanding employment opportunities for people with disabilities by investing in the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. This initiative provides individualized services

through a vocational rehabilitation counselor to design vocational goals for each person. The services are designed to increase independence and self-sufficiency through employment, self-employment, and supported employment outcomes.

Establishing industry sector partnerships between local businesses, education providers, and community leaders by investing \$5 million over the biennium. These regional job-training partnerships will give people the skills they need to compete and win in the 21st century. Currently, there are more than 75 job training programs across 12 state agencies. The administration seeks to better coordinate these efforts so we can improve services and funding streams.

Investing in businesses in Ohio by supporting Opportunity Zones in economically-distressed communities. Ohio has the opportunity to bring billions of dollars in private investment to help revitalize communities that need it the most. By conforming Ohio tax law to include the Opportunity Zones established in the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, Ohio can provide a brighter future for thousands of Ohioans.

Creating a culture of innovation in state government by launching the new InnovateOhio, led by Lt. Governor Jon Husted. The mission of InnovateOhio is to establish our state as the most innovative and entrepreneurial state in the Midwest. InnovateOhio builds strategies to expand and support Ohio's tech climate for businesses and entrepreneurs and drives technology projects to transform the way government serves Ohioans.

