



JOHN R. KASICH
GOVERNOR
STATE OF OHIO

BUILDING OHIO'S FUTURE WORKFORCE

Helping Ohioans Prepare for the Jobs of Today and Tomorrow

Transforming Ohio's workforce system has been a key priority for Governor John R. Kasich and an essential component of his efforts to create an economic environment that promotes job creation and opportunity for all Ohioans. This commitment included working with job creators to determine what skills and workers their companies need – today and well into the future – to ensure that training programs to meet those needs are available across the full spectrum of Ohio's education and workforce training system.

- **Creating a Demand-Driven Workforce Development Model:** In 2010 Ohio had approximately 80 workforce development programs scattered across more than a dozen different agencies, many of which were operating independently from one another and not training workers for in-demand jobs. To fix that, Gov. Kasich created the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, guided by the Governor's Executive Workforce Board, to implement significant reforms to ensure workforce development programs were working in concert with one another and better aligning training efforts with the hiring needs of job creators, helping Ohio workers to more easily get meaningful employment.
- **Identifying and Prioritizing Ohio's Most In-Demand Jobs:** A new forecast tool was deployed to top employers in Ohio's growth industries, helping policy makers, educators, parents, students and job seekers to better understand the state's most urgent workforce needs. This information, combined with existing data, allows the state and its partners to prioritize and focus on critical workforce shortages. Using the in-demand jobs data, Ohio and its training providers are working directly with business to address gaps in the system that are creating workforce supply shortages. In addition, training providers ensure that at least 85 percent of low-income and unemployed enrollees are being trained for an in-demand occupation.
- **Creating an Online Career Center:** Ohio launched an updated and expanded OhioMeansJobs.com website that provides a central front door for individuals and businesses interested in employment training programs. The website is a full-fledged online career center, providing a menu of career services for all Ohioans, including: high school and college students, out-of-work Ohioans, veterans, and employers.
- **Preparing Students for the Workforce through Work Experiences:** Recognizing the role of relevant work experience in education, Gov. Kasich required school districts to review and update their policies to ensure that all students can receive credit for appropriate work experience. Further, Ohio developed a new effort to ensure that students in all K-12 schools were provided career awareness and development opportunities. The state is also working with its public and private colleges and universities and the business community to embed work experiences into the curriculum of degree programs. This will include co-ops and internships for in-demand jobs, such as computer science.

- **Strengthening Ohio’s School Counselor System:** To help more students get the college and career advice they need to succeed in the workplace and to compete for Ohio’s in-demand jobs, Ohio developed the first-ever standards for school counselors. In addition, Ohio’s colleges and universities were encouraged to improve career counseling programs and meet minimum levels of service. As a result, all students now have access to career counselors either online or in person.
- **Keeping Ohio’s International Students in Ohio after Graduation:** The number of international students attending Ohio’s colleges and universities is at an all-time high, and the state’s future workforce needs will rely on their contribution to a well-trained workforce. To ensure that Ohio job creators can meet their workforce needs, Ohio created a globalization initiative to increase recruitment and enrollment of international students and to encourage them to remain in the state after graduation. These priorities are also fundamental to goals set by Gov. Kasich when in 2018 he created the Office of Opportunities for New Americans to help legal immigrants more successfully become part of Ohio and find job opportunities in the state.
- **Better Preparing Students with Expanded STEM Programs and New STEAM Education:** Ohio has grown educational opportunities focused on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) for students in kindergarten through 12th grade, and created a new STEAM designation available for schools, with the “A” representing Arts.
- **Addressing the Skills Gap and Listening to Business Needs:** Ohio businesses and institutions of higher education value applicants who possess professional or “soft” skills. To recognize high school students who have developed these important skills, Ohio high schools now offer the *OhioMeansJobs Readiness-Seal* for students who are ready for the next step in their career, whether in the workforce or postsecondary classroom.
- **Awarding Degrees and Certificates Based on Competency Instead of Just Classroom Time:** Ohio recognized Western Governors University, a multi-state, nonprofit online institution that awards college credit and degrees based on a student’s demonstrated competencies instead of just the amount of time spent in the classroom. Promoting competency-based education programs like those at Western Governors University allows flexible education and training options for working adults with some or no college and additional training for incumbent employees that are aligned with Ohio’s in-demand jobs.
- **Leveraging the Strength of Ohio’s Public Library System:** Ohio’s public libraries have been positioned as “continuous learning centers” and partnered with libraries to help adult learners access thousands of free online programs to gain additional skills.
- **Strengthening Education and Workforce Opportunities for Ohioans:** Gov. Kasich has consistently focused on reforms that help connect Ohioans of all ages to educational and employment opportunities. Thanks to new reforms, more Ohioans will have the opportunity to earn high school equivalency certification. Previously, Ohio provided only one testing company’s computer-based platform for adults looking to receive their equivalency certificate. This posed a challenge for those seeking an alternative format, such as a written exam. To help more adults get the certificate they need to increase job opportunities, Ohio made additional testing options available and lowered costs, including offering a voucher for first-time test takers to further reduce costs. In addition, to provide employers a greater level of confidence in the value of high school equivalency exams, Ohio awards a standard state-recognized high school equivalency certificate issued by the Ohio Department of Education to those who pass the test.

- **Expanding Access to Career Technical Education:** Recognizing the importance of early career exposure, Ohio allowed public schools to provide students the opportunity to take Career Technical Education courses beginning in 7th grade.
- **Improving Awareness about Ohio's In-Demand Jobs:** To inspire students and job seekers to learn more about local in-demand jobs, Ohio designated the first week in May each year as "In-Demand Jobs Week." In-Demand Jobs Week helps Ohioans discover, get connected with, and learn more about the in-demand careers available in their communities.
- **Improving the Quality of Early Childhood Education:** To give parents more insight into the quality of early childhood education programs, Ohio developed a new quality rating system for early childhood education that incentivizes providers to improve their rating. Ratings are posted online to better inform parents as they choose the best program for their child.
- **Offering Credit Options for High School Students:** To offer students a way to take charge of their own learning, Ohio offers a student-driven approach where high schoolers can earn simultaneous credit by taking courses that integrate content from multiple subject areas.
- **Empowering Adults with Options to Earn a High School Diploma:** Adult Ohioans 22 years and older now have the option to earn a high school diploma from their local high school or the state through a personalized or competency-based model. Adults who participate in the competency-based model can also earn an industry-recognized credential aligned with one of Ohio's in-demand jobs. By mid-year 2018 more than 2,600 adults have taken advantage of one of these options.
- **Prioritizing Pre-Apprenticeship Options:** To create greater value for students pursuing pre-apprenticeship programs, Gov. Kasich offered new options to help students advance in this career path. Ohio aligned state-recognized pre-apprenticeship programs with College Credit Plus, which allows students to earn credit toward high school graduation, a pre-apprenticeship program, and college all at once. Further, pre-apprenticeship is now a recognized pathway to graduation and has been integrated into Ohio's school accountability system.
- **Inspiring Young Minds through Mentorship:** To better connect Ohio's communities with schools, Gov. Kasich launched Community Connectors to bring together families, community organizations, faith- or values-based organizations, businesses and others to support schools and mentor students. Since its inception, Community Connectors projects have provided mentoring opportunities to more than 116,000 students across Ohio.
- **Improving Collaboration Between Business and Education:** Gov. Kasich worked to strengthen primary and secondary education's Ohio's Business Advisory Councils, which provide input to schools and districts on in-demand jobs and skills, by updating the operating standards and requiring more accountability. The state also created a Regional Workforce Collaboration Model to guide regions in engaging business, education, and community leaders to develop partnerships and implement workforce best practices.

- **Investing in Relevant Equipment and Training:** Ohio’s public colleges and universities must have access to relevant and up-to-date equipment to adequately prepare students for careers. Through Ohio’s RAPIDS program, higher education institutions can purchase state-of-the-art equipment for use in learning laboratories specific to regional workforce needs. In addition, Ohio now offers a revolving loan fund which allows higher education institutions to provide financial assistance to students pursuing approved training and credentials for which local industries have demonstrated a demand.
- **Leveraging Data for Workforce Development:** To help businesses find graduates with relevant skills, Ohio created a workforce supply tool which maps graduates by in-demand occupation and graduating institution. In addition, as a measure of accountability and effectiveness, Ohio now has a data dashboard which shows the outcomes of the state’s top workforce programs.
- **Responding to Industry Needs:** Ohio worked with key business sectors, including insurance, to develop partnerships between employers, education and training providers, workforce boards, and community organizations to address skill needs. In addition, Gov. Kasich created a cross-sector task force to forecast industry needs and attract more students to study and pursue careers in advanced technology and cybersecurity. In the most recent budget, the state established a program under which community colleges may apply to offer applied bachelor’s degrees to meet local business needs.
- **Reducing Employment Barriers for all Ohioans:** Gov. Kasich has prioritized programs to reduce or eliminate barriers specific populations face when transitioning into employment. Veterans in Ohio can now translate military skills to earn academic and licensure credit or obtain free college credit based on military experience and training. Ohioans with disabilities now have access to workforce programs through enhanced accessibility options. Restored citizens can work with a judge to prove their qualification for employment and provide employers with legal protections.
- **Improving Access to Childcare:** The lack of access to affordable, quality childcare can be one of the biggest employment barriers for low-income parents. The loss of subsidized childcare once a family’s income grows above 200 percent of the federal poverty level (approximately \$3,460 a month for a family of three) was one of the most detrimental benefit “cliffs” working poor encounter as their economic situations improve. Ohio allocated additional funds over the next year to soften the impact of these types of “cliffs” and to remove copays for families with incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level. Families now have their child care subsidies phased out gradually until their income reaches 300 percent of the federal poverty level, or approximately \$5,190 a month for a family of three.

