

# **Addendum to the Northeast Ohio Workforce Development Regional Plan**

## **Area 19 Local Workforce Plan for the Period of July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2025**

### **I. Introduction.**

This is the Area 19 Workforce Development Board (“WDB”) Local Workforce Plan (“local plan”). The local plan shall be in effect from the period from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2025. It is submitted as an Addendum to the Northeast Ohio (“NOW”) Regional Plan (“regional plan”), as required by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (“ODJFS”).

The required contents of this local plan are as set forth within ODJFS’ WIOAPL 16-03, including Attachment D of the same. ODJFS established the contents of this local plan pursuant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (“WIOA”), and its applicable final rules, which are set forth within the Code of Federal Regulation.

ODJFS has duly recognized and certified Area 19, and its WDB as the authorized recipients of WIOA funding for Ashtabula, Geauga, and Portage Counties, pursuant to its Subgrant Agreement with the same. Attached and incorporated to this local plan by this reference are a number of Appendices, which help to explain the structure of the Area 19 WDB. They include:

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| • <b>Appendix One</b>   | <b>Intergovernmental Agreement (“IGA”)</b> |
| • <b>Appendix Two</b>   | <b>Bylaws of the NOC COG</b>               |
| • <b>Appendix Three</b> | <b>Roster of Employees of the NOC COG</b>  |
| • <b>Appendix Four</b>  | <b>Organizational Chart</b>                |
| • <b>Appendix Five</b>  | <b>Bylaws of the Area 19 WDB</b>           |
| • <b>Appendix Six</b>   | <b>Multi-Function Agreement</b>            |

### **II. Local Plan Descriptions Required by Attachment D of ODJFS’ WIOAPL 16-03.**

#### ***A. A description of the workforce development system in the local area.***

##### ***1. Identification of the programs that are included in the system.***

Attached and incorporated to this local plan addendum by this reference is an organizational chart. See **Appendix Four**. As referenced by the organizational chart, the Area WDB is on a horizontal plane with the Northeast Ohio Consortium Council of Governments (“NOC COG”).

The NOC COG is council of governments, a form of local government recognized pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code. The NOC COG is made up member representatives, one each from Ashtabula, Geauga, and Portage counties. The member representatives are duly elected county commissioners who are appointed to serve by their respective boards of county commissioners.

The NOC COG serves in multiple simultaneous capacities at once for workforce purposes. The NOC COG creates and appoints the WDB, as a standing committee. The NOC COG assigns to the WDB, all of the enumerated rights and responsibilities provided to a WDB by WIOA, its final rules, and all other binding federal and state laws, regulations, policies, etc. The NOC COG reserves to itself all of the enumerated rights and responsibilities assigned to local elected officials, including the Chief Elected Official (“CEO”). Where WIOA, its final rule, and all other binding federal and state laws, regulations, and policies enumerate rights and responsibilities to the CEO for the WDB, those are assigned to the NOC COG and CEO respectively of the same as set forth within the IGA and bylaws of the NOC COG. Where a right or responsibility assigned to the CEO is not assigned by the IGA and/or bylaws specifically to the NOC COG’s members collectively, they are assumed by the CEO for the NOC COG.

Within the IGA and bylaws for the NOC COG, the NOC COG is identified as the agent of the WDB. As the WDB’s agent, the NOC COG conducts the business required to be performed by the WDB. As the WDB’s agent, the NOC COG has the ability to contract with agents and/or to hire employees to perform the duties required of board staff, and a fiscal agent. See **Appendix One**. The NOC COG adopted a new set of bylaws on September 7, 2016, in which they assigned to employees that the NOC COG employs, the duties of board staff and fiscal agent. See **Appendix Two**. The identities and contact information for the employees of the NOC COG are set forth within **Appendix Three**.

The remainder of the WDB staff is managed and supervised by the Executive Director employed by the NOC COG. Up until mid-November of 2020, the NOC COG employed a Financial and Budget Officer, who served as the fiscal agent for the WDB. Following the fiscal agent’s resignation, the Area 19 WDB assigned the fiscal agent duties in part to the Executive Director and the Administrative Assistant, with the remaining being assigned to a third party contractor, the CPA Office of Salvatore Consiglio. How those fiscal agent duties have been divided for the near future is set forth within **Appendix Three**.

The functional responsibilities of the WDB staff are set forth within Article II. A., of the Multi-Function Agreement. See **Appendix Six**. The functional responsibilities of the WDB fiscal agent are set forth within Article II. B., of the Multi-Function Agreement, which has been temporarily modified as set forth within **Appendix Three**. See **Appendices Three and Six**. The WDB staff and share information and work together on all assigned responsibilities to complete all business required of the WDB and NOC COG. See **Appendices Three and Six**.

The WDB staff and fiscal agent report directly to the CEO and members of the NOC COG, which in turn takes direction from the Area 19 WDB. The bylaws of the Area 19 WDB are attached as **Appendix Five**.

This local plan was drafted pursuant to the direction and oversight provided by the NOC COG, and the Area 19 WDB. The local planning process included planning for how the Area would proceed with securing the provision of the following list of program services, including all of the terms and conditions associated with the same.

2. *Location of the OhioMeansJobs (“OMJ”) centers in the local workforce development area.*

The Area 19 WDB is committed to directing the operation of at least one OMJ center centrally located based upon the residential pattern of its population, within each of the Area’s three (3) counties.

The Area WDB is committed to competitively procuring the operation of each OMJ center at least every four (4) years as required by ODJFS state policy. In the spring of 2017, the OMJ center operators were procured, for the three OMJ Centers, the locations of which were dictated by the WDB and NOC COG. At the time of the drafting of this plan, the pertinent information regarding each of the Area’s three (3) OMJ centers is provided for below, including the Operators competitively selected in the spring of 2017. During the spring of 2021, the OMJ Center operators will be competitively procured once again. While the operators could change based upon the results of the procurement, the WDB and NOC COG have dictated that for the program year beginning July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, that the Location/Address listed below will be where the OMJ Center for each Area WDB county shall be located. The WDB and NOC COG have also dictated that for that same program year that Ashtabula will be the comprehensive OMJ Center, and Geauga and Portage will be the Affiliate Centers. The location and selection of the comprehensive vs. affiliate centers can change from year to year, or every two years depending upon the length of the term of the MOU that has been entered into.

<u>County/Type of OMJ</u>	<u>Operator/Manager</u>	<u>Location/Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Ashtabula Comprehensive	ACDJFS Hattie Grubke-Barnard	2247 Lake Avenue Ashtabula, OH 44004	(440) 994-1234
Gauga Affiliate	GCDJFS Margo Reda	12480 Ravenwood Dr. Chardon, OH 44024	(440) 285-9141
Portage Affiliate	PCDJFS Mandy Berardinelli	253 S. Chestnut St. Ravenna, OH 44266	(330) 296-2841

***B. An explanation of the OhioMeansJobs delivery system in the local area.***

1. *How the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and that such providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and jobseekers.*

The services of every provider will be measured against each of the following measures through a continuous review process by Area 19 board staff and the fiscal agent, and through annual monitoring.

- How each provider’s services stack up against the negotiated WIOA and/or TANF performance measures negotiated between ODJFS and the Area 19 WDB.

- How each provider's services stack up against any additional performance measures created by the Area 19 WDB and required contractually by the written contract between the NOC COG and the provider.
- How the OMJ center operator's services and facilities stack up against any of the criteria set forth within the OMJ operator certification and continuous improvement standards negotiated with and established by ODJFS.

2. *How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the OhioMeansJobs delivery system through the use of technology and other means.*

In June 2012, ODJFS received twelve million dollars in the form of a Workforce Innovation Fund Grant specifically for the further development of the OhioMeansJobs.com ("OMJ.com website"). In addition to these special grants, ODJFS has made a continuing investment into the development and improvement of the OMJ website using both WIOA and Workforce Investment Act ("WIOA") grant funds. That continuing investment included recent overall of the OMJ.com website in the winter of 2020 and spring of 2021. The purpose of the development and recent redesign of the OMJ.com website is to allow employers, the workforce, and youth, to have self-help access to information about the labor market, education providers, the ability to find job postings and resumes of job seekers, and other miscellaneous workforce information from any location that has access to the internet.

The Area 19 WDB is committed to advancing the use of the OMJ.com website by all Area employers, the workforce, and Area 19 youth. The Area 19 WDB has and will continue to do this via the following methods:

- Educating and requiring all Area workforce entities, including but not limited to providers, to utilize the OMJ.com website as the primary, and in some cases the sole, website to use for the dissemination of information regarding workforce issues.
- Educating at the OMJ centers and within the community at large, all employers, those in the workforce, and youth on how to use the OMJ.com website so that they can access information and search for workforce and employment opportunities on-line.
- Promoting the use by all Area employers of the OMJ.com website, by offering the free service of posting for employers all of their job vacancies on the OMJ.com website.
- Assisting all those in the Area workforce to revise and post their resume and job seeker information onto the OMJ.com website.
- Assisting all of those Area youth, including those in area workforce youth programming, and those in the general population by teaching them how to research in-demand careers and industries, career pathways, and educational opportunities for in-demand careers on the OMJ.com website.

Due to the global Covid 19 pandemic in 2020, it was determined that there was a need for the WDB to procure and purchase a platform that would allow the Area OMJ Centers to conduct virtual job fairs and otherwise facilitate employers connecting with job seekers. After a search in December of 2020, the Area purchased a three (3) year, whole Area license of Premier Virtual

running from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2023. Premier Virtual software can be used to connect jobseekers and students with educators and employers. This technology is needed in order to allow jobseekers and students to connect virtually with employers and educators at a safe social distance during the pandemic. However, even following the pandemic, we see this technology as a way to facilitate these connections more quickly and efficiently, especially during non-traditional office hours.

In addition to promoting the use of the OMJ.com website, the Area WDB will review the provision of each OMJ Center's and each provider's technology offered to employers, those in the workforce, and youth periodically. Should the technology for OMJ centers be deemed to be inadequate, the OMJ center provider will be asked to upgrade the technology through future MOU operations budgets, with all partners paying their fair share to improve the same. Should the technology of the providers be deemed to be inadequate, they will be asked to include within their next contractual budget, a proposal for improving upon the same.

3. *How entities within the OhioMeansJobs delivery system, including OhioMeansJobs center operators and partners, will comply with section 188 of WIOA, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA") regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.*

ODJFS, as part of its OMJ center certification and continuous improvement policies requires that each OMJ comprehensive center be situated within a location that is deemed by ODJFS Bureau of Civil Rights (BCR), to be compliant with the public accommodation provisions required within the ADA.

In July of 2016, ODJFS Bureau of Civil Rights (BCR), certified that the Area 19 comprehensive OMJ center, located within Ashtabula County, had an ADA physical and programmatic accessibility plan in place that was acceptable to it. Furthermore, at least one staff member of the Ashtabula County comprehensive OMJ center participated in ODJFS' required Windmills training that provides education on the provision of physical and programmatic accessibility for those with disabilities. That training was attended by the Ashtabula OMJ Center manager in 2016.

The Area 19 WDB has continued to adhere to all of ODJFS' requirements regarding OMJ center certification and continuous improvement standards as they apply to all comprehensive and affiliate OMJ centers in relation to section 188 of WIOA, and the ADA, since 2016. All of the OMJ centers within the Area 19 WDB have remained at the same locations since then.

In addition, as the Area 19 OMJ Centers have made purchases and improvements to their OMJ Centers since 2016, they have consulted with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, their mandated partner who provides employment services to those with disabilities, for suggestions on ways to improve equipment and facilities that would assist disabled job seekers.

4. *How the local board will coordinate with the regional JobsOhio agent.*

The Area 19 WDB has a signed agreement with JobsOhio in place for the last 3 years. The agreement is a partnership that allows the Area 19 OMJ Centers to partner with JobsOhio and its regional JobsOhio agent Team NEO to provide talent acquisition services to employers receiving JobsOhio funding.

Team NEO, along with the pre-eminent economic development agencies within each of the Area 19 counties, have been and will continue to be partners with the Area WDB and the Area 19's OMJ Centers. Three of these agencies are also business service agents of Team NEO, the JobsOhio agent for Northeast Ohio. Those agencies are as follows:

<b><u>Economic Development Agency</u></b>	<b><u>Relationship to WDB</u></b>
Portage County Development Board, Inc. (Serves as Team NEO agent).	Director serves on WDB, and agency has a formal contract to provide business services for OMJ Portage.
Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County (Serves as a Team NEO agent).	Director serves on WDB, agency does collaborate with OMJ Ashtabula to provide services without a formal agreement.
Geauga County's Economic Development Office (Not a Team NEO agent, but collaborates).	Director serves on WDB, agency does collaborate with OMJ Geauga to provide services without a formal agreement.
Growth Partnership for Geauga County (Serves as a Team NEO agent).	Asst. Director serves on WDB as business representative. Agency may bid to provide business services in the near future.

##### *5. The roles and resource contributions of the OhioMeansJobs center partners.*

The roles and resource contributions of each OMJ center partner operating within the Area 19 WDB are established by the following:

- The terms and conditions of the WIOA statute and regulations governing each OMJ center partner's program and grant appropriations.
- Ohio's combined state plan which governs and dictates each mandated OMJ center partner's role in workforce development.
- The terms and conditions of each OMJ center partner as negotiated and reduced to writing as part of the Area 19 WDB Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU").

A determination of how those partners is adhering to those roles and responsibilities shall be the joint responsibility of Department of Labor, the State of Ohio as the drafting agent of the combined state plan, ODJFS as the grant issuing authority, the board staff of the Area 19 WDB, and the competitively procured OMJ Center operator. Should issues be determined to exist, they may be addressed by any of the entities listed above.

Should action be required locally by the Area 19 WDB to enforce the roles and/or contributions of partners, it shall do so either on its own right, and/or through its OMJ center operator(s). All actions taken by the Area 19 WDB or its OMJ operators will first seek to mutually resolve any and all disputes through either OMJ center partner meetings, and/or through the mechanisms provided for within the MOU.

***C. A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.***

Within Area 19, providers will be selected as a result of Sub-grant Agreement negotiations with CDJFS agencies, competitive procurement, and/or through a combination of the same. The list of services that the Area makes available are as follows.

***1. Basic Career Services (Non-Triggering)***

- a) Determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive WIOA services.
- b) Outreach, intake (which may include worker profiling), and orientation to the information and other services available through the workforce development delivery system.
- c) Initial assessment of skill levels, including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs.
- d) Labor exchange services, including job search and placement assistance, and when needed by an individual, career counseling, including:
  - Provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and
  - Provision of information on nontraditional employment.
- e) Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistical information, which may be found on OhioMeansJobs.com. This service includes the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including:
  - Job vacancy listings in such labor market areas;
  - Information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs; and
  - Information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for such occupations.
- f) Provision of performance information and program cost information on the eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers.
- g) Provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs and services within the OhioMeansJobs delivery system and, in appropriate cases, other workforce development programs.

- h) Provision of information regarding how the local is performing on the local performance accountability measures and any additional performance information with respect to the OhioMeansJobs delivery system in the local area.
- i) Provision of information relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including:
  - Childcare;
  - Child support;
  - Medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program;
  - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
  - Assistance through the earned income tax credit;
  - Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF);
  - Other supportive services and transportation available in the local area.
- j) Provision of permitted information and assistance, and referral to ODJFS staff and/or unemployment contact information to individuals seeking assistance on claims for unemployment compensation. .
- k) Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not funded through WIOA.
- l) Group workshops (e.g., interviewing, job search, and resume writing).

**2. Individualized, Triggering Career Services.**

- a) Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include:
  - Diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and
  - In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals.
- b) IEPs are one of the most effective ways to serve individuals with barriers to employment and to coordinate the various services, including training services they may need to overcome these barriers. Therefore, all participants who receive an individualized career service or a training service pursuant to WIOAPL No. 15-09, Training Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers, must receive an IEP. Development of an individual employment plan (IEP) to identify all of the following:
  - Employment goals;
  - Appropriate achievement objectives;
  - Appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals, including providing information on eligible training providers and career pathways to attain career objectives.



- c) Group counseling.
- d) Individual counseling.
- e) Career planning.
- f) Short-term prevocational services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training, which include:
  - Development of learning skills;
  - Communication skills;
  - Interviewing skills;
  - Punctuality;
  - Personal maintenance skills; and
  - Professional conduct.
- g) Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers.
- h) Workforce preparation activities.
- i) Financial literacy services.
- j) Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance/
- k) English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.
- l) Provision of job club activities.

### **3. Training Services.**

Area 19, in working with its employers and educational providers may consider, but do not have to provide for, all of the following types of WIOA Workforce training services. The training services offered will be controlled by the terms and conditions of the Area 19 policies, and/or any Area 19 Agreements or MOU with providers. Where the precise types of training are not dictated or restricted by policy or by agreement, the provider may exercise its discretion the provision of the following types of training, at the provider's established terms and conditions.

- Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment;
- On-the-job training;
- Incumbent worker training;
- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs;
- Training programs operated by the private sector;
- Skill upgrading and retraining;
- Entrepreneurial training;
- Transitional jobs;
- Job readiness training;
- Adult education and literacy activities; and
- Customized training.

***D. A reference to the Comprehensive Case Management Program (CCMEP) plan for each county within the local area. (This requirement is fulfilled if each county***

*within the local workforce development area submitted the CCMEP county plan as required in rule 5101:14-1-03 of the Administrative Code.)*

In 2016 each of the following was completed within Area 19, as part of its actions to develop a CCMEP plan within each county that would combine WIOA and TANF Youth services.

- In February of 2016, each County Board of Commissioners designated their County Department of Job and Family Services as the lead agency for CCMEP.
- In June of 2016, each CDJFS as lead agency for CCMEP drafted and submitted to ODJFS a local plan addressing how it would address certain terms and conditions of the CCMEP.
- In June of 2016, the NOC COG and WDB submitted correspondence and negotiated with ODJFS the terms and conditions of the Area's decision to initially opt into the CCMEP.
- In September of 2016, and with the execution of every Subgrant Agreement since the NOC COG and WDB passed resolutions and submitted correspondence in which they indicated that they were opting into the CCMEP.
- From October of 2016 to January of 2017, the NOC COG, WDB, and/or lead agencies competitively procured and negotiated contracts relating to the provision of pre-enrollment services, framework design and case management services, and program services. In the Summer of 2021, the competitive procurement process will be repeated.

Having completed all of the above listed actions, this portion of the local plan is satisfied.

***E. How the local board, in coordination with the OhioMeansJobs center operator, maximizes coordination, improves service delivery, and avoids duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services provided through the OhioMeansJobs delivery system.***

The Area 19 WDB shall address the provision of excellent OMJ center operations in each of the following described ways.

- The issuance of a well thought out competitive procurement solicitation for the operation of each OMJ center.
- The negotiation by the WDB and its OMJ center operators of a well thought out Memorandum of Understanding that addresses these issues.
- Enforcing requirement that each OMJ center operator must actively and regularly engage its partners during partner meetings, and in other forums to address these issues.
- The regular monitoring and review of each OMJ center pursuant to Area monitoring policies, along with the OMJ certification and continuous improvement policies established by ODJFS, and Area policies.
- By working with ODJFS and other partners to secure regular secret shopping done by partner and/or other individuals, and addressing any deficiencies discovered as a result of the same.

***F. The executed cooperative agreements which define how service providers will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local OhioMeansJobs system.***

The Area 19 WDB, through its agent the NOC COG, enters into all of the following agreements which set forth the terms and conditions requiring integration of and access to the entire set of services available in each county's OMJ system.

1. All business services work.
2. OMJ center operation.
3. The provision of basic and individualized career services for each county's workforce.
4. The eligibility and case management of all training services for each county's workforce.
5. The provision of pre-enrollment, framework design/case management, and program services for all Youth programming.

***G. An identification of the fiscal agent.***

Within the IGA and bylaws for the NOC COG, the NOC COG is identified as the agent of the WDB. As the WDB's agent, the NOC COG conducts the business required to be performed by the WDB. As the WDB's agent, the NOC COG has the ability to contract with agents and/or to hire employees to perform the duties required of board staff, and as fiscal agent. See **Appendix One**. The NOC COG adopted a new set of bylaws on September 7, 2016, in which they assigned to employees that the NOC COG employs, the duties of board staff and fiscal agent. See **Appendix Two**. Since the fall of 2020, the fiscal agent work for Area 19, has been performed in part by NOC COG employed staff and the CPA office of Salvatore Consiglio. See **Appendices Three, Four, and Six**.

***H. The competitive process that will be used to award the subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.***

The board staff will work with the Area 19 WDB, in order to design competitive procurement solicitations that seek requests for proposals ("RFP"), and/or requests for quotes ("RFQ") that are compliant with WIOA, and all applicable provisions of the Code of Federal Regulations. All competitive procurements will involve each of the following elements as set forth within the Area's procurement policy:

1. A pre-competitive solicitation design and planning process that takes into consideration how the services sought should be designed.
2. A pre-competitive solicitation cost analysis that sets forth an estimated range of the expected bids for the provision of goods and/or services.
3. When required by Area 19 policy, the publication within one or more Area media outlets, as well as publication on the Area 19's website of the opportunity to submit proposals, quotes, and/or bids etc.
4. The outreach to those on the Area 19 bidder's list, and/or to those known within the Area to be in the market to offer applicable goods and services.

5. A published RFP, RFQ, or other document that sets forth all of the terms and conditions relating to the information that must be submitted by an interested entity desiring to provide goods or services, including the basis for which the NOC COG and/or WDB will make the decision to award a contract.
6. A decision making process that includes a review of all proposals submitted, including an analysis, and where required, a scoring of the proposals submitted. This will be performed by some or all of the following individuals:
  - Area 19 board staff;
  - The fiscal agent;
  - NOC COG members;
  - WDB members;
  - WDB committee members;
  - Those named by the NOC COG and/or WDB who have an interest or expertise in the matters being decided, that does not involve an ethical conflict.
7. A timely notification of the decision of which entities were and were not selected based upon the submission of information, including a period and procedure for those entities to appeal any decisions made.
8. A negotiation of the final terms and conditions regarding the provision of goods and/or services, with the same reduced to a written agreement where required, that will govern the performance of the parties to the agreement.

All of the following program services will be competitively procured sometime between January 1, 2021, and October 1, 2021:

1. All County Account Executive work associated with the Business Resource Network.
2. OMJ center operation.
3. Possibly some or all of the provision of basic and individualized career services for each county's workforce.
4. The provision of pre-enrollment, framework design/case management, and program services for all Youth programming.

All competitive procurements will be handled by the Area 19 board staff and fiscal agent, as these individuals are truly independent administrative staff, that answer to the NOC COG membership and the Area 19 WDB, as required by ODJFS WIOA policy.

#### **I. The actions the local board will take toward becoming or remaining a high performing board.**

When WIOA went into effect and the NOC COG Board was required to reconstruct the Area 19 WDB into one that was compliant under the terms and conditions of the act and its final rules, the NOC COG Board thoughtfully and diligently redesigned its workforce board into one that had the potential of being a high performing board. This was done by seeking out both workforce administrators and private employer representatives under the following criteria:

1. All employers who are represented were deemed to either be in-demand industries or were employed within in-demand occupations.
2. All employers who are represented were chosen because the representation of their industry and provided for a unique perspective.
3. All employer representatives are managerial level, and in most cases are the most senior of their organization's management.
4. The top two officer positions (chairperson and vice-chairperson) are reserved for employer representatives in order to make sure that the WDB is led by those with a perspective for serving the needs of in-demand employers.
5. The WDB was designed to include a representative of a community based/interest organization from each County to ensure that we were providing for the needs of our impoverished and most needy citizens (Community Action Council of Ashtabula County; Community Action Council of Portage County; United Way of Geauga County).
6. The WDB was designed to include the director of the leading economic development agency within each county, that was also a partner of Ohio Job's regional agent Team NEO (Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County; Portage Development Board; Geauga County Economic Development Office, and/or the Growth Partnership for Geauga County). The reason for this is that each of these organizations are widely respected to be the authorities on the challenges and opportunities that each county faces with respect to the development of their economies, and the current and emerging needs of each county's employers with respect to workforce.
7. The WDB was designed to include a representative of public transportation as this is one of the Area's greatest workforce challenges.
8. All other workforce agencies represented, including those who are guaranteed spots on the WDB, were selected based upon past outstanding representation on the board, and/or because they are recognized leaders within their respective fields.

At the time of the drafting of this plan, there were zero (0) vacancies out of thirty-three (33) on the WDB exist (the economic developer for Ashtabula County, and one business representative for Geauga County).

***J. How OhioMeansJobs centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA.***

The ODJFS, as the grant issuing authority of WIOA, provides access and require the use of a redeveloped intake and case management information system ("OWCMS") that is fully integrated with the fiscal management CFIS system. Those systems were fully operational by or before the beginning of Program Year 2017 (July 1, 2017). ODJFS is currently working with the Area 19 WDB, to convert and switch over to a new and improved intake and case management information system known as ARIES, with said transition to take place in early 2022.

The Area 19 WDB is fully committed to the use of these systems by its office, and by those contracted to provide program services to employers, the workforce, and youth. The Area 19 WDB will promote and encourage its staff, and those staff contracted to perform program services, to engage in all appropriate training opportunities in order to learn these systems. The NOC COG and Area 19 WDB will require and ensure that all program providers utilize these systems.

The Area WDB will work to identify from all staff who utilize the same, any issues relating to the use of these systems. WDB staff shall work through the Ohio Workforce Association, and with ODJFS and its system creator/administrator to seek a redress of any and all issues experience with the usage of these systems.

### III. Area 19 WDB Workforce Challenges and Issues.

The following table summarizes important workforce demographic information for the Area 19 WDB.

Statistic	Ashtabula	Geauga	Portage
Population	99,175 ↓0.6%	94,020 ↑0.16%	161,796 ↓0.16%
Med. House Income	\$41,158 ↑1.51%	\$74,165 ↑2.4%	\$52,427 ↓0.24%
Poverty Rate	19.6%	6.9%	15.0%
Unemp. 2021	CLF 6.5%	CLF 3.5%	CLF 4.5%
Unemp. 2018	CLF 44,200 4.8%	CLF* 49,000 3.7%	CLF 88,100 4.1%
# of Worker Residents	40,294 ↓0.32%	46,497 ↓0.09%	82,009 ↑0.57%
% Local - % Export	54% - 46%	26% - 74%	31% - 69%
# of Jobs In County	29,232	32,001	53,918
% of Local - % Import	70% - 30%	36% - 64%	41% - 59%

There are two primary workforce challenges facing Northeast Ohio, including Area 19. Those issues are the labor market gap and the skills gap.

### **A. The Labor Market Gap**

The labor market gap is the numeric gap that exists between the number of workers demanded by regional/local employers and those that are able, willing, and actually are working. The challenge with the labor market gap is that there are not enough able, willing, working individuals to meet the current and projected demand of regional and local employers.

The following are significant statistics acknowledged in the first regional plan for the NOW Region, that continue to impact this plan.

- TEAM NEO Region, 2001 to 2017. Population dropped by 152,000 to 4.274 Million, labor force dropped 128,000, births dropped 6,700 annually. Population shrinks about 1% every 10 year census.
- 2016 NOW Working Population. 8 County Area. (16-69) was 2,031,044.
- 2016 NOW Labor Participation Rate was only 63%, meaning 1,280,000 were working or looking for work.
- 2016 NOW Filled Regional Jobs was 1,502,269 (higher than labor participation number, as some individuals work multiple jobs).

The sub-issues that have caused or contribute to the labor market gap are as follows:

- Stagnant to shrinking population levels.
- Our current stable and skilled workforce is aged and moving towards retirement.
- Exporting our young workforce. A significant portion of our young workforce, regardless of where they are educated after high school do not end up working locally. There is a brain drain to stronger regional economies, Columbus, and Pittsburgh (2 hours or less away), plus a brain drain to stronger national economies, including the east coast, west coast, and pockets of the south including Texas.
- Failure to attract/retain a young workforce. Northeast Ohio has a tremendous post-secondary educational system that educates both our young potential workforce, and the workforce of the rest of Ohio, the nation, and the world. They come and get educated, but do they stay?
- Low worker participation rates. A significant number of those who are able to work, do not necessarily want to work, and/or are not regularly employed in stable, opportunity laden positions of employment.
- Barriers and sobriety issues. A significant number of our workforce have non-vocational skill barriers to working regularly, and or retaining a job in a stable position of employment that allows the individual to be self-sufficient.

At this time, the Area relies on JobsOhio and other State initiatives to grow the State's population.

## **B. The Skills Gap.**

The skills gap is the numeric gap that exists between the soft and vocational skills needed/demanded by regional/local employers and those that are possessed by the available workforce, seeking employment. The issue is that there is a misalignment between the skills desired by employers and those possessed by the workforce. Skills gap challenges are both quantitative and qualitative in nature. All of the sub-challenges assigned within this category have to do with both the number of those with degrees and certificates, along with the quality of their degrees, certificates, training, work experience, and soft employment skills.

The skills gap includes both vocational and soft skills.

1. The vocational skills gap. Vocational skills refer to those skills that are needed to do the job from education and experience.
2. The soft skills gap. Soft skills are those skills that are universally desired and expected by employers from their employees. These abilities include:

reliable transportation	limited absences	punctuality
dressed appropriately	attentive/mentally present	sober
willing to work overtime	appropriate interaction with others	

The skills gap issue has a number of contributing sub-issues. Most of the skills gap issues originate during the elementary and secondary education of our Area's youth and continue into their post-secondary education and beyond.

1. Area 19 WDB's goal is to engage high school students along with H.S. guidance in planning for post-secondary school success prior to their graduation.

Depending upon the economic and resource challenges faced by the school district and the resources available, the Area 19 public school districts vary greatly on the post H.S. diploma career pathway planning that is provided. Consider the following statistics:

1. Local H.S. guidance counselors report that they have most of their time absorbed with class scheduling and life issue counseling, as opposed to post-success planning with students.
2. According to the ACCESS post high school success program director in Ashtabula County, only between 30% and 50% of each graduating class has a firm post-secondary career pathway plan in place 6 weeks from graduation. We refer to this as knowing your "E". "E" representing the development of a post H.S. employment, educational enrollment, enlistment, and/or entrepreneurship plan. The "E" goals are identified below:

<b><u>"E" Goal</u></b>	<b><u>Measure</u></b>
Enrollment in Education.	Accepted with financial aid package.
Employment.	Conditionally hired and working part-time.
Enlistment.	Enlisted with a report for basic training date.
Entrepreneurship.	Business plan or assigned to an apprenticeship.



3. According to TEAM NEO's 2019 Aligning Opportunities Report:

- a. A region of 4.3 million should produce 37,600 BA+ graduates per year.
- b. Team NEO region produces 31,300 BA+ per year.
- c. Supply needs to grow 20% per year to meet expectations.
- d. Ohio continues to struggle on FAFSA completion and capturing of financial assistance for post-secondary education. In 2019 Ohio had \$87 million in unused federal financial aid due to students not completing the FAFSA. Approximately 45% of student are eligible for Pell Grants each year, which means that 21,600 high school seniors had the potential to receive a grant and did not.
- e. Ohio's Complete to Compete Initiative, has concluded that to support Ohio's economy we need to move the percentage of those in the workforce with a post-secondary education of any kind from 47% (where it currently is) to 65% of the working population.

As a result of these issues and the statistics that bear out the same, the Area 19 WDB has concluded that its goal should be to reach out and to offer resources to H.S. to help them help their students before graduation form a definite plan with goals to achieve one of the four "Es" of post-high school success.

Assisting H.S. guidance departments is not done just to better the Area 19 Workforce, it also increases the community profile and recognition of the Area's OMJ Centers. Once H.S. students graduate, they become absorbed within the general population and are difficult to reach as opposed to when they are enrolled within the public education system and they are reachable through the school district. The federal and state educational departments track post-secondary education enrollment and completion, but that is it. The Area OMJ staff struggle with how to interact and help this group after graduation.

How do we get students to plan for a successful post high school career, both prior to and after graduation? The Area Workforce has concluded that the best strategy is to get high school students familiar with their local OMJ Center and staff, and to actively assist high school guidance on helping students to plan for their post-high school success. Some of those strategies are provided for later in Section IV. of this local plan which summarizes programs offered by each of the Area's three (3) OMJ centers.

4. Engaging students to make post high school plans alone is not enough.

Even those high school students that have the grades, aptitude test scores, and have developed post-secondary career pathway plans, do not all necessarily succeed. Many of those that make a pre-graduation plan lose their path along the way or take way longer to complete their education. The sub-issues related to this are as follows:

- Sub-Issue #1. Post-secondary preparation.
- Sub-Issue #2. Post-secondary completion.
- Sub-Issue #3. Post-secondary retention.
- Sub-Issue #4. The High Cost of Education.

Sub-Issue #5. Misalignment Between Supply and Demand.

a. Sub-Issue #1. Post-secondary preparation.

Ohio is very successful at getting its H.S. students into post-secondary education. However, one of the more concerning things is the remedial education that is needed by many of those matriculating to the same. The statistics published by Ohio's public post-secondary Baccalaureate and Sub-Baccalaureate educational institutions are as follows.

Sub-Bac. Remediation. 58.5% need educational remediation. Of those:

- 48.1% complete their remediation.
- 24.6% complete remediation and courses on time.
- 6.4% graduate within 3 years for 2 year pathway.

Bac. Remediation. 25% need educational remediation. Of those:

- 56.9% complete their remediation.
- 38.4% complete remediation and courses on time.
- 33.6% graduate within 6 years for 4 year pathway.

While these statistics do not include those admitted into out-of-state schools, private not-for-profit, and/or private for-profit educational institutions, the numbers are a good indicator that post-secondary educational preparation needs to improve.

b. Sub-Issue #2. Post-secondary Education completion.

In addition to these statistics, also concerning is the amount of time it takes for Ohio post-secondary students at our public schools to complete their education. The break-out of every 100 Ohio residents that pursue a 2 or 4-year post-secondary degree at an Ohio public school are as follows:

- About 50% pursue 2-year or less, and 50% pursue 4-year degrees. Only 40% ultimately complete their education, with most needing to go into overtime to complete the same. That means that 60% do not finish at all, and many more need more time to finish.
- Of those pursuing 2-year degrees full-time, only about 16% will complete, with half of those that do complete needing 4-years to complete. Only 7% of those that pursue a 2-year degree, part-time will complete.
- Of those pursuing 4-year degrees, about 64% will complete, with more than half of those that do complete needing 6 to 8-years to complete the same.

c. Sub-Issue #3. Post-secondary retention.

The Team NEO region produces 31,300 BA+ graduates per year. The region, based upon its size, should produce 37,600 BA+ graduates per year. The TEAM NEO 16 county region retains 46.7% or 14,608 BA+ graduates annually. The rest move to another region following graduation. If Team NEO could move the retention rate to 57% annually, the region could retain:

- 3,130 more BA+ grads
- 445 more health care BA+ grads
- 162 more IT BA+ grads
- 263 more Architecture and Engineering BA+ grads per year.

d. Sub-Issue #4. The High Cost of Post-Secondary Education.

Consider the following statistics that all reflect the high cost of post-secondary education and the impact it has on today's workforce.

- Approximately 44.7 million Americans (13.6% of pop.) maintain some type of student loan debt.
- Student loan debt nationwide tops \$1.5 Trillion Dollars. Auto loan debt is around \$1.2 Trillion and Credit Card Debt \$0.8 Trillion Dollars.
- Approximately 56% of millennials with student loans have delayed a major life event—including getting married or having kids—because of their debt. Source: Bankrate Money Pulse survey, July 2015, adults ages 18-29.
- That same percentage of millennials, 56% have student loans.
- Consider how the pace of wages has failed to keep pace with the rising costs of a public education. The hours of minimum wage work needed to pay for four years of public college for two distinct generations separated by thirty (30) years, is as follows:
  - Boomer 306\*
  - Millennial 4,459\*

\*Source: National center for educational statistics. Calculations based on tuition for 4-year public colleges in late 70s and mid-00s, using average debt of a graduating senior.

e. Sub-Issue #4. Misalignment Between Demand and Supply for High Income Jobs in the Region.

For the past four (4) years Team NEO has produced an outstanding report that examines the misalignment between the supply of workforce being produced by post-secondary educational institutions and the region's demand in high paying occupations, broken out by occupations.

Regional occupations fall into an organized division of 96-46-19. There are 96 occupational groups to which you can categorize all workers and professionals in the regional economy. Of those 96 occupational groups there are 46 core demand index occupations that are tied to growing wealth clusters in the regional economy. Of those 46 core occupations, there are 19 that are the most promising based upon factors considering those that show substantial demand, offer family

sustaining wages, and hold promise for future employment and income. Of those 19 most promising core occupations, these can be consolidated into 4 categories, Health Care, White Collar Office, Professional/Trades, and Manufacturing. They are listed as follows:

**Health Care**

Health Diagnosing and Treating Practitioners  
Health Technologists and Technicians  
Health Therapist Aides and Support Workers  
Nursing and Home Health Aides

**White Collar Office**

Computer and IT Workers  
Financial Clerks & Financial Specialists  
Information and record clerks  
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants  
Managers, Professional and Health

**Professions/Trades**

Architects and Engineering Technicians  
Education  
Engineers  
Life science workers

**Construction and Trade Workers**

Manufacturing  
Installation, maintenance, and repair workers  
Manufacturing  
Metal and Plastics Workers  
Skilled Production Workers  
Supervisors of Skilled Workers

Unfortunately, many of those emerging from post-secondary education have been prepared for occupations that do not align well with these 19 most promising core occupations. The Team NEO reports for the past four years provide exacting detail of which occupations are over supplied by post-secondary graduates, which occupations have a balanced supply and demand, and which occupations are under supplied compared to demand, and by how much.

**IV. Area 19 WDB Customized and Special Programming.**

The workforce challenges and issues explored within Section III. of this local plan, have been fully analyzed and explored by the Area 19 WDB, and its three (3) OMJ Centers. That analysis gave rise to many of the custom designed programs that follow, which are meant to address many of the skills gap issues existing within Northeast Ohio.

**A. Customized and Special Programming Shared by All Three County OMJ Centers.**

As you will notice from a summary of each OMJ Center's County Specific Programming Summary, that follows, in 2018, the Area has decided to make a concentrated focus on addressing the labor market gap and the skills gap, by focusing on the Area's H.S. youth. The rationale behind this is that the Area does not have enough workers, and it can be difficult to attract outside workers to the Area.

However, the Area does do a good job of attracting post-secondary students from outside of N.E. Ohio and remains an attractive place to live and work for those that have grown up and have family here. Therefore, the focus of workforce for the Area 19 WDB has to be on retaining our home-grown talent, and those that come to N.E. Ohio that are from outside of the region, for the post-secondary education. Improving the educational/career paths of the region's Youth, especially when it comes to helping them select education that will place them in one of the 19 core, well-paying occupations within the region, and connecting those that came here for post-secondary education to local employers, is believed to offer Area 19 and the NOW regional workforce the best opportunity to make meaningful gains against the labor market and skills gaps.

While the programming summarized below is excellent, the Area 19 WDB is looking to add to these programs in the coming four years. In addition to the efforts of improving H.S. student's post-graduation education and career plans, the Area wants to focus on connecting those enrolled within both secondary and post-secondary educational programs with employers for work experience, internship, and apprenticeship placements prior to graduation. The goal of course being to retain as much of our locally educated workforce within the region as possible.

With all of this in mind, the following are the defined goals of the Area 19 WDB:

- To continually identify the challenges opposing workforce and economic development that are slowing the growth of Northeast Ohio's economy.
- To strategically develop, implement, and administer workforce development programming with our secondary and post-secondary educational partners, and economic developers, that is demand driven by the region's employers.
- To build workforce programming that is dynamic and robust enough to command the participation of the region's in-demand employers in developing, investing, and benefiting from the same.
- To ultimately expand and more importantly focus the number, education, and skills of the region's workforce in such a way to make it an attractive and superior asset that will grow and expand the region's economy.

## **B. OhioMeansJobs Portage County ("OMJPC") Specific Programming.**

### **1. Entry Level Manufacturing Training and Internship Program**

Manufacturing is one of the most in-demand industries in Portage County and OMJPC wanted to assist in the development of a talent pipeline. What started as a focus group with local manufacturing employers and several training providers developed into a customized training program that offered curriculum based on the employer's specific requests and real-world work experience for program participants. Operating on a 3/2 schedule, participants would spend

three days out of the week in the classroom with Kent State University instructors learning manufacturing principles while the other 2 days they were able to apply what they were learning through paid hands-on work experience with a participating employer. In addition to the paid work experience, participants earned incentives for classroom time and received the support of a job counselor and assistance with employment needs such as transportation to and from work and vouchers for work shoes and uniforms. The program has been so successful that a number of manufacturers have been added to the program and multiple cohorts have been processed through the same. The program has since its inception been recognized as an industry-recognized certificate/credential, meaning that it now qualifies as an occupational skills training that may be provided for through an Individual Training Account.

## **2. Workforce Opportunities & Readiness Knowledge for Students (W.O.R.K.S.)**

WORKS began as a pilot program many years ago with one local high school. This program was designed to be a proactive approach to serving our youngest jobseekers and helping to prepare them for higher education and the workforce after graduation. Now, the program offers a menu of workshops that bring job counselors into the classroom and educating students and/or educators on a wide range of subjects from soft skills review and resume writing to mock interviewing and dressing for success. Additionally, schools can request overviews of the OhioMeansJobs online site for students or the data reporting tool for administrators.

## **3. Career Connections Expo**

OMJPC has used the Career Connections Expo as an opportunity for students in 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade to explore and connect with future career opportunities. Local employers, representing the 16 national career clusters, are represented, and encouraged to provide hands-on activities that gives students the opportunity to gain an understanding of what careers in that industry look like. In addition to the employers, we also provide a variety of higher education providers—from colleges and universities to trade schools and credential programs. The idea is that students can explore careers and then make immediate connections with the education needed to reach their employment goals. Also, for the students slated to graduate and enter the workforce directly or for those students looking for summer work, employers on hand are willing to accept applications and make connections with students interested in the positions they have to offer. Also, representatives from the armed forces are on hand to talk with students interested in pursuing military options.

## **4. Job Fair—All Jobseekers Welcome, but Honored Veterans**

Each year, OMJPC hosts a job fair with the goal of connecting our jobseekers with local employers in need of workforce. The last job fair before Covid in November of 2019 was held at the IC Hall in Ravenna. While this event was open to all jobseekers, we honored local veterans who attended. Any veteran who pre-registered for the event was afforded VIP access that allowed them into the event an hour early to meet with employers. Additionally, they were offered light refreshments, free haircuts by SalonNext and a free clothing voucher for interview attire from the Goodwill. This year we had nearly 50 employers on site ready to hire. Over a hundred jobseekers stopped looking to expand their employment opportunities.

## **5. STNA Pilot with Stark State**

OMJPC wanted to continue creating pipelines to industries that are in-demand within the area. This means entry level positions in the healthcare industry or State Tested Nursing Assistants (STNA). To achieve this a cohort of 8 jobseekers started the STNA Program through Stark State using ITA dollars. What is unique about this initiative is that half of the cohort consisted of traditional high school students, currently enrolled in CCMEP, that are using the credential as their pathway to graduation. The month-long program consisted of 10 training sessions, 16 hours of clinicals, skills labs that offered countless hours of hands-on experience, a final test that offered each their Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) credential and the state test (STNA). We currently have 6 different employers who are willing to interview all individuals who graduate from the program.

## **6. Educator to Business Bus Tour**

OhioMeansJobs Portage County has hosted one Educator to Business Bus Tour with plans for more. The bus tour allowed a group of educators, guidance counselors, principals, and higher education students advisors to gain an insider's account of in-demand job opportunities available within Portage County and the skills needed to be successful in those positions. The day began with Team NEO, an economic development group for Northeast Ohio that helps attract business to the region, speaking to the group about their recently released report titled *Aligning Opportunities*. The report addresses the supply and demand imbalance in the area with regard to the credentials needed for in-demand employment sectors and what degrees and certifications students are actually receiving after they graduate. The report also identified three job sectors considered to be in-demand in our area: manufacturing, information technologies (IT), and healthcare. The group then toured local employers from these three sectors: University Hospitals, Schneller and ACE Products and Consulting. The tour offered a first-hand perspective of the jobs available in our county. It also allowed educators the chance to start thinking about the students they work with that could fit into those kinds of positions.

## **7. Guidance Counselor Breakfast**

In 2018, OMJPC hosted its first Guidance Counselor Breakfast, and has followed it up with several more. Each breakfast is attended by over 20 guidance counselors and administrators almost all of the 11 public school districts. The goal of the breakfast was to educate our local schools on the programs and services available through OhioMeansJobs Portage County that can serve our youngest job seekers-high school students.

## **8. WORKS Newsletter**

High School students are the youngest jobseekers we serve at OMJPC. We recognize these youth represent our future workforce and we share a common goal with our educators of ensuring they are skilled, educated and prepared for employment upon graduation. Because of these shared communalities, the OMJ WORKS Newsletter was developed. The newsletter is published 3 to 4 times per school year and was designed to connect educators to the workforce information they needed to prepare their students for higher education and careers following high school. Additionally, the newsletters boast Labor Market Information, In-Demand Jobs in the County, Programs and services available to students, etc.

## **9. Job Coaching Pilot**

OMJPC has taken an innovative glance at helping to prepare high school students for the workforce by implementing a job coaching pilot program. Each OMJ center has a resource room open to universal jobseekers that can offer free job searching, resume development, job readiness workshops as well as connections to community agencies, programs and services. Through this pilot, we make our resource rooms mobile and take them into five local school districts. For up to four hours per week a job coach monitors the mobile resource room and can assist students that are need of guidance pertaining to their educational and employment goals.

## **10. Re-Entry Program**

In early 2018, OMJPC developed a formal Re-Entry Program. This program offers a three-pronged approach to serving those re-entering the workforce following incarceration. On the first Tuesday of each month, we participate in the Video In-Reach Program. This is a monthly webinar that allows the OMJ team to pro-actively prepare individuals slated for release from prison with resource information before prior to their exit. In addition to OMJPC engagement in this monthly event, we ask other community partners to engage as well. Additionally, the OMJPC Re-Entry team members participate regularly in Job Fairs at our local prisons. By attending these events, they are building relationships with individuals who they may later work with at either citizen circle or as a mandated participant for Public Assistance benefits. Citizen Circle is the third program that the OMJPC team regularly attends each month. Citizen Circle allows community agencies, clergy, and other necessary resource providers to meet with individuals just released from prison or who are out on parole. The group acts as a support system and can educate this population on employment options following release and other community resources they are interested in (housing, food assistance, etc.) with hopes of giving them the best chance of being successful after they are released.

## **11. Supportive Employment Program**

OMJPC works with a variety of jobseekers. Some jobseekers come to us willingly and others are mandated as part of their work requirement for public assistance program. Through working with these populations, we found that many of them were job ready with the exception of having reliable transportation that could get them to and from work. In an effort to work through this barrier, OMJPC developed the Supportive Employment Program (SEP). This program provides loop transportation services for program participants to and from participating employers throughout the county. In addition, the transportation would also make stops for childcare arrangements if necessary. Transportation for the program is provided for up to 6 months. If within that time program participants save \$1,200 dollars, take a financial literacy course and review an informational session on the importance of obtaining car insurance, the agency adds additional funds for the individual to purchase their own car.

### **C. OhioMeansJobs Ashtabula County (“OMJAC”) Specific Programming.**

#### **1. Annual Job and Career Fair for High School Juniors and Seniors.**



OMJAC has held multiple annual Job and Career Fair at Kent State Ashtabula. This fair gives high school juniors and seniors the chance to see what careers are available in Ashtabula County, along with providing part-time and/or summer employment opportunities. The goal is to show Ashtabula County youth that a career is waiting for them close to home. The students attend the Career Fair portion in the morning and then we transition to the Job Fair portion of the event in the afternoon. The afternoon session is much more your traditional Job Fair. The Job and Career Fair is a project supported by OhioMeansJobs Ashtabula County, Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County, ACCESS Ashtabula County and Kent State University Ashtabula.

## **2. Employer Seminars**

Employer Seminars are offered at OhioMeansJobs Ashtabula County to bring employers to the sight, make them aware of Employer Services and to educate them on pertinent topics. February's Employer Seminar is focused on learning how to assist your employees in accessing Free Community Resources in order to increase job retention, employee development, and to be an ongoing asset to the company. This can also be an opportunity for new and/or growing workforce.

## **3. Open Recruitments at OhioMeansJobs Ashtabula County**

OMJAC often hosts employers looking for new employees. OMJAC provides highly accessible space, advertising, front desk support and the use of laptops if necessary. We have one agency that has scheduled days and times they are at the OMJ Center.

## **4. Partner Highlight – Community Counseling Center and it's Supported Employment Program**

Community Counseling Center has space at OMJAC to serve clients through their Supported Employment Program. Supported Employment is an evidence-based practice that helps adults who are recovering from mental illness to explore and succeed at work as part of their mental health recovery. This population of adults may also be at risk of inpatient hospitalization, be involved with the criminal justice system or have a criminal history, possess a co-existing mental health and drug/alcohol diagnosis, or be a young adult transitioning from the juvenile to the adult system and requires support to successfully enter into the world of work. Evidence shows that people with mental illness are more likely to find jobs sooner and keeps jobs longer, as well as work more hours and make more money, if helped by a supported employment program. Referrals are easily made from other Center Partners to CCC for this program.

## **5. Career Services Provided within the Public School Districts**

The Workforce Development staff at the OhioMeansJobs Ashtabula County Center has embraced every chance they get to go out into the community and teach our youth and adults alike about In-Demand Careers, Job Opportunities, OhioMeansJobs.com, Rapid Response efforts, Resume Writing, Career Exploration and much, much more. One middle school student wrote a thank you note to one of the OMJAC representatives that taught his class about career options and OhioMeansJobs.com that said, "Thank you for taking your time and coming to inform us about OhioMeansJobs. I never knew how many options there were for jobs."

## **6. Evolution of the youth OPPORTUNITIES! (Yo! Program)**

The Yo! Program is an Ashtabula County Technical & Career Center (A-Tech) program provided under a contract with the Ashtabula County Department of Job & Family Services and the Northeast Ohio Consortium Council of Governments Area 19 Workforce Development Board. The yO! Program is a holistic, youth-driven program that serves Ashtabula County youth ages 14-24. yO! provides objective and educational skill assessments, career exploration activities, work experiences, after-school tutoring, secondary vocational training, postsecondary education support, alternative education and dropout recovery, clothing, tools and fees for training, job searches and employment, peer mentoring, leadership training, career counseling, support in maintaining employment, access to drug, alcohol and mental health counseling, assistance with short and long-term goal setting, reality checks, transportation services, postsecondary application and financial aid assistance, assistance with finding temporary and permanent housing including referrals to domestic violence and homeless shelters, assistance transitioning from foster care, home or domestic violence situations and assistance in dealing with the court system (pre-entry) as well as an ex-offender.

### **Demographics of Yo! Program.**

- Twenty (20) percent of our youth are homeless (couch-surfing, homeless shelter, hotels, cars, tents, etc.)
- Over forty (40) percent of our youth are parenting.
- Over seventy (70) percent report transportation concerns (in the largest county in the state.)
- In January of 2018 we incorporated the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Questionnaire into the comprehensive assessment. Results show that over sixty (60) percent have experienced some significant trauma that will have long term effect on his/her life.
- Forty-nine (49) percent are ex-offenders.
- Forty-eight (48) percent are individuals with disabilities.
- One percent of the County's entire population have been enrolled in this program since 2016.

## **7. Current Youth Successes.**

### **a. Youth Training Center**

- Youth friendly, youth designed site that is open extended hours.
- This year yO! was able to expand the Youth Training Center to a new site. It is in an area of highest need and is centrally located for many youths.
- Is completely youth-friendly and available for staff and training at any time.
- Open Monday-Thursday from 9:30am-6:00pm and Friday from 9:30am-4:30pm

- Is utilized for mental health and drug prevention counseling and classes after OhioMeansJobs Center hours and on weekends.
- Has nine (9) laptops available and seven (7) desktop computers for job/college applications, studying, research, etc.as well as a stove and refrigerator.
- Food, clothing, hygiene products are available for the youth.

#### **b. Totals of Youth Served through 2018**

- youthOPPORTUNITES! served over seven hundred (700) youth in Ashtabula County
- Over two-hundred fifty (250) youth have gained some form of unsubsidized employment.
- Over thirty (30) graduated this past June from high school. All of them had post-secondary plans and they received over \$30,000 in scholarships.
- Twenty-five (25) have completed STNA training, two (2) have completed CDL training, three (3) have completed dental hygiene school, one (1) medical assistant school, two (2) medical transcriptionists along with welding, electricity, etc...

#### **D. OhioMeansJobs Geauga County (“OMJAC”) Specific Programming.**

##### **1. Fast Track Training Program - CDL drivers**

OhioMeansJobs Geauga and Great Lakes Truck Driving School (GLTDS) partnered for a specialized Commercial Drivers License (CDL) training for more than 25 low income, laid off seasonal, laid-off, unemployed, under-employed workers and displaced homemakers Geauga County residents. There were two cohort trainings created which included: tuition for a Monday through Friday 6-week training class, weekly transportation to and from GLTDS, overnight accommodations and all meals, testing fees, work boots, job placement assistance, job fair and an interactive soft skills class.

A Reverse Job Fair was held for each of the CDL classes at Kent State University-Gauga Campus. We also extended invitations to other Geauga residents who wanted to participate in the job fair. Employers had the opportunity to circulate among the students and introduce themselves to see if the student’s talents met the employer’s needs. This unique model provides a forum for marketing the students to employers while also creating an atmosphere that allows the employers to interview them without financial cost and logistical burdens. Many of our students were hired by our local Geauga employers!

##### **2. United Way Services Income Collaborative - Fast Track Training Program – STNA**

OMJ Geauga is an active member of the United Way Services Income Collaborative and “Bridges” program. In the past, through the Income Collaborative partners, Kent State University Geauga developed an STNA training tailored to be convenient for those with families, children,

and work schedules. The class was available for a maximum of 8 students. Students learned basic nursing skills including infection control, personal care skills, mental health and social service needs, safety and emergency needs, basic restorative services and resident's rights. This class gave students the ability to sit for the STNA test.

### **3. Summer Manufacturing Institute (SMI) Camps**

Alliance for Working Together (AWT) Foundation, Auburn Career Center and OhioMeansJobs Geauga County are again hosting not two but three weeks of the Summer Manufacturing Institute (SMI) camps where Autumn 2019 Lake & Geauga County 5th & 6th graders will be introduced to the basics of manufacturing, engineering, and what it takes to create and build things.

The focus of the three camps include: \*Robotics and Automation (Girls Only) \* Bio-Medical Engineering & Manufacturing (Co-Ed) AND a brand-new Science of Manufacturing Food Week (Co-Ed).

SMI partners have been approached by a number of local foundations committing an investment close to \$55,000, which will expand the camp to three weeks and add a school-based outreach programming based on the SMI content.

### **4. Geauga County School Districts & Workforce Solutions**

Workforce is charged with assisting our local schools and the students choosing a pathway using one of the 4 E's (Education, Employment, Enlistment, Entrepreneur) OMJ Geauga has a presence at all of the Geauga County High Schools typically through the schools "Business Advisory Councils".

### **5. Chardon Career Fair**

The first collaboration is a Career Fair at Chardon H.S. on Friday March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 where there will be about 50 businesses providing career guidance and job opportunities in different business sectors to Middle and High School students. Partners include AWT (Alliance for Working Together, Kent State Geauga, Middlefield Means Business, Chardon Chamber of Commerce, Middlefield Chamber of Commerce, Auburn Career Center, Kent State Geauga Campus.

### **6. All County High School Job Fair.**

Auburn Career Center, Berkshire, Cardinal, Chardon, Kenston, Newbury, West Geauga High Schools, Home-Schooled, Amish, Kent State Geauga have all been invited to attend the All County High School Job Fair being hosted at Berkshire High School on Thursday April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Partners include AWT (Alliance for Working Together), Kent State Geauga, Middlefield Means Business, Chardon Chamber of Commerce, Middlefield Chamber of Commerce and Auburn Career Center. About 50 employers, representing multiple business sectors, have the opportunity to meet mostly high-school aged seeking employment opportunities, ranging from full-time, part-time positions to seasonal work and internships.

## **7. Auburn Career Center Reverse Job Fair**

Students set up tables; employers walked around to meet graduating seniors and some juniors. Programs represented included: Manufacturing, Health Care, IT, HVAC, Welding, Electrical, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Business, Landscape Horticulture, Automotive, Construction and Architecture, Maintenance, and Teaching Professions. Students have resumes plus project samples and are ready to talk with employers. Employers had two hours to meet and talk to as many students as possible. Employers gathered students' resumes and provided students with employment applications.

About 200 businesspeople representing 125 companies attended the Reverse Job Fair. OMJ Geauga provided additional outreach to attract businesses interested in Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, and Information Technology (IT) students.

## **8. Rapid Response & Reverse Job Fair**

Rapid Response (RR) resources are dedicated to averting layoffs and reemployment after layoffs. We serve two customers: employers and their workforce. We achieve our goals by offering layoff aversion and early intervention services to employers who are facing downsizing or layoff, as well as reemployment solutions to employers and their workforce who have been impacted by permanent layoff or closure. Some of our services may include customized workshops, training, up-skilling, retooling, certifications, or skill matching.

## **9. Formal MOUs' (Memorandum of Understanding): Geauga & Burton Libraries & Kent State Geauga**

A strategic partnership has been formalized with the **Gauga Public Library System, the Burton Library System** and OhioMeansJobs Geauga County. This partnership has joined together in our shared belief that the communication and coordination of the libraries and OMJ Geauga services can enhance the quality and quantity of employment and training resources and services provided to the workforce within our shared communities. The Geauga Library System hosted an event for our partners to learn more about our local libraries and the resources available to Geauga County Residents. OMJ Geauga is also broadcasting job opportunities to the Libraries.

## **10. An MOU with Kent State University Geauga**

This Agreement was entered in January 2019. Kent is already working with us for marketing of our All County High School Job Fair!

## **11. Re-Entry Program**

OMJ Geauga through the United Way Services Income Collaborative is in development with Geauga County Sheriff's Office for a Re-Entry Program. This program will offer multiple resources to assist the incarcerated population with re-entry service upon re-entering the workforce. The objective is to act as a support system and can educate this population on employment options following release and other community resources they are interested in (housing, food assistance, etc.) with hopes of giving them the best chance of being successful

after they are released. Our current mission is to provide three bi-weekly classes at the Geauga County Jail. The initial components for the classes will consist of occupational development, resume creation and interviewing skills.

## **V. Signatures**

By signing my name below, I hereby attest each of the following for the Northeast Regional Plan, and the Area 19 Local Plan Addendum, effective from July 1, 2021, through January 31, 2025.

- All of the assurances provided for within page \_\_\_\_\_ of this Northeast Ohio Workforce Regional Plan have been met and that this plan represents the Northeast Region and Local Area WDB's efforts to maximize resources available under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and to coordinate these resources with other state and local programs within the planning region.
- The Northeast Ohio Workforce Region and Area 19 WDB will operate the WIOA program in accordance with the regional plan and applicable federal and state laws, regulations, policies, and rules.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard L. Jackson, Chairperson  
Local Area 19 Workforce Development Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Craig F. Sernik, Executive Director  
Local Area 19 Workforce Development Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sabrina Christian-Bennett Portage County Commissioner  
Chief Elected Official  
Northeast Ohio Consortium Council of Governments

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date