

**NORTHEAST OHIO CONSORTIUM (“NOC”)
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, August 27, 2025
11:00 a.m.

Geauga County Offices, Meeting Room A334
12611 Ravenwood Drive
Chardon, Ohio 44024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioner Casey Kozlowski
 Commissioner Jim Dvorak
 Commissioner Sabrina Christian-Bennett

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Hattie Grubke-Barnard (OMJ-Ashtabula), Carly Spencer (OMJ-Portage), Rebecca Abbott (PCJFS), Karen Stephens (PCJFS), Lisa Fay (PCJFS), Alyssa Steinhoff (GCJFS), Brian Guarniere (GCJFS), Craig Sernik (Area 19 Director), Denise Gehring (Area 19).

Ms. Christian-Bennett called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m.

Approval of Past Business

Approval of the Minutes from June 25, 2025.

Mr. Dvorak moved to approve the minutes from June 25, 2025. Mr. Kozlowski seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

Administrative Report

Mr. Sernik reported the ODJFS secret shopper has been completed for the adult and dislocated worker program in which Geauga and Ashtabula were shopped but not Portage. The secret shopper results for Ashtabula and Geauga both had negative comments regarding their website functionality of what information could be found. For OMJ Ashtabula ODJFS did an in-person visit and phone contact of which both were outstanding. OMJ Geauga received a neutral review on both the phone call and in-person visit. Congress passed a short term Pell Grant which will open additional funding for individuals who wish to go to shorter term training. The Trump Administration put out its America’s Talent Strategy the key points are: 1) administration is behind passing ASWA (WIOA reauthorization); 2) realign and reduce overall funding by putting it into a community block grant which means how the money is spent will most likely rest with the state and not with local governments; 3) the adult worker program would be eliminated because their thought is it is repetitive and should be handled through FASFA and Pell; 4) they’re looking to develop a million apprentices in the Trades and we would be required to spend a

minimum of 10 percent of our funding on apprenticeship and more emphasis on training workers with a focus on new hires and IWT and apprenticeships and AI; and 5) decentralizing interactions with the public by moving some of the services away from the American Job Centers into libraries, community centers, and churches. The recertification of the OMJ Centers can begin now that the ODJFS secret shopper reports were received. Met several times with Auburn Career Center, who provides the three frontline staff for the Geauga OMJ Center, to discuss hiring 2 part time individuals to fill the two staff vacancies in the career center. Also, in negotiations to bring Mandy Vacik back, who is currently Auburn's Employer Representative to promote what they have to employers, in which she would spend half of her time helping train the new OMJ staff to ensure smooth transition. And Craig Swenson, GCJFS Director, is in the process of determining in short term whether to do this with all of Auburn staffing or look to bring someone in as a GCJFS employee. There was a TEGP from the Department of Labor that stated self-attestations are not allowed and workforce areas will need to gather the same data employers do for their I-9's. The Portage security buildout was completed and the approximate \$10,000 that was over budget was resolved with ODJFS saying local WIOA dollars could be used.

Fiscal Report

Review of the Over/Under Report and the PY2025 Administrative Budget. Mr. Sernik presented the Administrative Budget for PY2025. Discussion was held at the last meeting regarding the use of admin dollars to pay for a representative to be in the OhioExcels Fellowship program of which Greg Myers with Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County, did apply for the fellowship and is on a waiting list. The fellowship begins in September at a cost of \$1,500 and would like the ability to pick up some or all of the dollars for the fellowship if Greg is accepted into the same. Discussion commenced. Discussion concluded. The Board decided to amend the Administrative Budget line item Health Insurance. Premium to increase by \$2,000 and to increase line item Conference/Meeting from \$2,500 to that of \$3,500.

Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to adopt the Administrative Budget for PY 2025 with the amendments of increasing the Healthcare budget line to \$22,500 and the Conference/Meeting budget line to \$4,000. Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

NOC COG GAAP Conversion. Mr. Dvorak moved to approve a 1-year agreement with Salvatore Consiglio, CPA, Inc. to perform the GAAP Conversion for the year ended June 30, 2025 for the NOC COG Office. Ms. Christian-Bennett seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

RESEA PY25 Allocation. Mr. Dvorak moved to approve distribution of 10% administrative funds, and program funds based upon last 2 ½ years of the selection pool.

Area 19 Administrative			\$15,559.00
<u>Program</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>2 ½ Year Pool</u>	<u>Funding</u>
Ashtabula	29.6%	547	\$41,450.00
Gauga	16.8%	311	\$23,526.00
Portage	53.6%	990	\$75,059.00
	<i>Total:</i>	1848	\$155,594.00

Ms. Christian-Bennett seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

Redistribution of Funds.

Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to authorize the Area 19 Executive Director the authority to redistribute Adult, Dislocated Worker, and CCMEP WIOA funding between the three sub-areas pursuant to an agreed upon equitable exchange between the CDJFS and contingent on the approval of each CDJFS director, so that no funds are returned to ODFJS. Suggested redistribution:

- (1) **Geauga swaps PY23 CCMEP WIOA with Ashtabula for PY24 CCMEP WIOA \$31,100.45**
- (2) **Geauga swaps FY24 Adult in an amount up to \$86,314.55 with Portage for FY25 D.W.**
- (3) **Geauga swaps FY24 D.W. in an amount up to \$33,784.22 with Portage for Y25 Adult**

Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

Reports of County OMJ-Centers

OMJ Ashtabula County. Ms. Grubke reported the OMJ Center has moved into the new location within the ACJFS. As of July 2025, the OMJ had 12 employers with 16 job orders, attendance was 581, resource room assisted 99 individuals with 65 looking for UI, CCMEP mandated is 97, RESEA in July had 19 initials, and approved one training for occupational therapy assistant. Approved trainings for August so far are at 23 which is 19 LPNs, 1 CDL and 3 RN. As of August 11th there are 719 CCMEP youth with 262 in follow up, and 180 youth in Just Summer. GRIT will be doing two Boot Camps beginning September 14th one for welding and then four or five CNA two week Boot Camps and ending November 14th. The summer GRIT had 103 individuals registered with 95 completed in which 63 received at least one certificate.

OMJ Portage County. Ms. Spencer reported that WIOA adult and dislocated worker orientation opened with one staff person working adult and dislocated worker and dividing it by quarters once quarter runs out will likely hold off until following quarter to reopen orientations. CCMEP just reupped the contract with TransferVR with a new platform called TransferTrek. RESEA has approximately 45 participants each month, PRC back to school program received 1,169 applications, Business Services is receiving incumbent worker training applications and may explore On the Job Trainings in the future.

OMJ Geauga County. Ms. Steinhoff reported she has been in discussions with Craig Swenson and internal administrators regarding what they would like the new in-house OMJ manager position will look like.

Old Business

Discussion regarding Regional and Local Plan.

Mr. Dvorak moved to approve execution of the same by NOC COG Board, WDB, and Executive Direction, and to submit the same to ODJFS. Ms. Christian-Bennett seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

Discussion regarding Recovery Works Grant. ODJFS is resubmitting their application but for a lesser amount. They shared their projected amount that they're willing to give Area 19 will be approximately \$300,000. The plan will be to give to Ashtabula and Portage with the majority going to Portage County.

Discussion regarding PY24 Performance Report for WIOA and CCMEP. Mr. Sernik reported the initial year-end report shows the area is failing two measures those are the Adult Credential Attainment and the CCMEP Youth Measurable Skills Gains. The entire program CCMEP for the area Ashtabula is passing all measures, Geauga is failing Education/Training/or Employment 4th quarter after exit and Median Earnings, and Portage is failing Measurable Skills Gain.

Discussion regarding CCMEP procurement. Mr. Sernik stated the current contracts would be extended to either the end of November or at the latest the end of December with new contracts in place by either by December 1st or at the latest January 1st.

Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to authorize Area 19 Director to negotiate CCMEP extensions along with CCMEP Lead Agencies with current CCMEP providers to current contracts while CCMEP Procurement takes place. Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

New Business

WDB Resignations:

Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to accept the resignation of David Shea, Community Action Council of Portage County Inc., representing Community Organization for Portage County, from the Area 19 Workforce Board. Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

WDB Membership New Appointments:

Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to Appoint Andrea R. Gutka, WomenSafe, Inc. the Green House, to the Area 19 Workforce Board for a 2-year term, as a representative of Geauga County Community Based Organization. Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to Appoint Sean Shapiro, Geauga Growth Partnership, to the Area 19 Workforce Board for a 2-year term, as a representative of Geauga County Business. Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to Appoint Clint Hall, Olstrad Corporation, to the Area 19 Workforce Board for a 2-year term, as a representative of Portage County Business. Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to Appoint Janet Groborchik, Maag Group, to the Area 19 Workforce Board for a 2-year term, as a representative of Portage County Business. Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

WDB Membership Re-appointments:

Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to approve the Slate of Re-appointments to the Area 19 Workforce Board for a 2-year term:

- **Nicole Deligianis, Laborers' Local 248, representing Labor for Ashtabula County.**
- **Mark Frisone, Family & Community Services, Inc., representing Youth for Portage County.**
- **Brad Ehrhart, Portage Development Board, representing Economic Development for Portage County.**
- **Scott Wludyga, Ashtabula County Technical & Career Center (A-Tech), representing ASPIRE for Ashtabula County.**

Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

Executive Session

Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to enter into executive session to discuss personnel compensation. Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

Executive session commenced at 12:10 p.m.

Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to exit executive session. Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

Executive session concluded at 12:20 p.m.

Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to implement a 3 percent wage modification retroactive July 1, 2025 for the NOC COG staff. Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

The Board stated moving forward before approving items in July the board would like the executive session on the calendar to have a discussion of personnel compensation internally. June of every year it will be systematic to have a personnel compensation discussion. And the current board's thought process is for it to be part of the program budget to implement July 1st to June 30th time period. And for performance evaluations to be done in June.

Public Comment

None.

Adjourn the Meeting

Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:27 p.m.
Minutes prepared by Denise Gehring.