

## Investing in Ohio's Workforce and Innovation

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

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

It will be the goal of the DeWine Administration, through work led by the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, working with the Departments of Education, Higher Education, Jobs and Family Services and the Developmental Services Agency, to close the gap between growing workforce needs and the goals of job seekers. By doing this, we can unleash Ohio's economy and give way to a higher level of prosperity for Ohio families.

The 2020-2021 executive budget supports these new strategies by investing more than \$200 million new dollars in workforce initiatives over the biennium.

### **Creating a Culture of Innovation:**

Technology is changing everything about the way we live, the way we learn, and the way we work. If we successfully adapt to that change, we can lay the foundation for a new generation of prosperity – the states who ignore these changes will fall behind. The DeWine Administration is committed to leading an aggressive, innovative path towards a better and stronger Ohio.

Through the newly-launched InnovateOhio, the administration seeks to change the culture of state government by looking at all services from the viewpoint of the customer – Ohio citizens and job creators – and create a leaner and more efficient government through the use of innovation and technology.

## **Workforce and Innovation Initiatives Include:**

**Supporting Ohio workers** by investing in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs. Administered by the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, the programs make up a comprehensive, statewide system of workforce and employment services, hiring support, and offers tax credits for employers and workers. The \$146 million investment also supports the OhioMeansJobs program, which will see improvements to better serve Ohio job seekers.

**Fast track Ohioans seeking new workforce skills** by providing micro-degrees, primarily for those in the incumbent workforce. Micro-degrees are low-cost credentials that take a student less than a year to complete and quickly qualify Ohioans to work in growing industries. At a cost of \$15 million for each year of the biennium, recognized industry credentials will be provided at no cost to a minimum of 10,000 Ohioans a year, so long as they remain in Ohio after completion.

**Making higher education more accessible and affordable** for all Ohio students is key to success. Through the executive budget, Ohio will help college students by requiring public universities to offer guaranteed tuition so students will pay the same price for their sophomore, junior, and senior years as they did for their freshman year.

**Investing in our students by increasing the Ohio College Opportunity Grant**, which provides financial assistance to Ohio residents who demonstrate the highest levels of financial need. Eligibility is determined by using a student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and is available to those enrolled with Ohio's public colleges or universities, Ohio private, non-profits colleges or universities, and Ohio private, for-profit institutions. This budget proposal would increase funding for this grant by \$47 million over the biennium, including \$6 million for qualifying students to purchase textbooks and instructional materials.

**Focusing on STEMM Opportunities for Ohio College Students** by expanding funding for the Choose Ohio First Scholarship by \$12 million each year, which will help serve additional students and improve scholarship benefits for those seeking a degree in the STEMM disciplines. Choose Ohio First works to strengthen students competitiveness in STEMM by awarding scholarship funding for those studying innovative fields such as aerospace, medicine, computer technology, and alternative

energy. Choose Ohio First scholars complete their degree in four years at nearly twice the rate of other STEMM students and the program has contributed to a 61 percent increase in number of graduates with STEMM-related degrees.

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

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

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

**Establishing Ohio as a leader in computer science and coding** by providing additional resources to train teachers to become certified computer science educators. This will help give more students the opportunity to have quality computer science education in their school. By investing \$1.5 million, Ohio will be able to train nearly 900 new computer science instructors.

**Expanding employment opportunities for people with disabilities** by investing in the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. This initiative provides individualized services through a vocational rehabilitation counselor to design vocational goals for each person. The services are designed to increase independence and self-sufficiency through employment, self-employment, and supported employment outcomes.

**Establish regional job training partnerships** with local businesses, education providers, and community leaders by investing \$5 million in Industry Sector

Partnerships over the biennium. These partnerships will give people the skills they need to compete and win in the 21st century. Currently, there are more than 75 job training programs across 12 state agencies. The administration seeks to better coordinate these efforts so we can improve services and funding streams.

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

**Creating a culture of innovation in state government** by launching the new InnovateOhio, led by Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted. This initiative seeks to look at all state services through the eyes of the customer – Ohio's citizens and job creators. InnovateOhio will take a leading role in promoting a more effective and efficient state by using technology to improve customer service and save tax dollars. The initiative will also support efforts across Ohio to improve the use of data collection and analytics to improve services and support problem-solving with the state's most pressing issues.

**Protecting state resources from cyber threats** by enhancing the Adjutant General's cyber security program, which works cooperatively with other state agencies to protect state resources from cyber attacks.

**Investing in workforce safety** by establishing the Safety and Health Center of Excellence program within the Bureau of Workers Compensation. The \$2 million investment will expand the work already being done on occupational safety and health infrastructure at the bureau to test and deploy scientific and technological advances to prevent accidents, injuries, and illnesses on the job.

