



Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino and Ranking Member Skyes. Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony today.

My name is Chris Canova, and I am the Executive Director of Jobs for Ohio's Graduates. I am here today to ask the Senate to reinstate funding included in the House passed budget for Jobs for Ohio's Graduates (JOG).

For more than 35 years, Jobs for Ohio's Graduates, an affiliate of the nationwide Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG), has helped over 165,000 youth at risk of dropping out of high school, and those who have already done so, complete their education and successfully transition to employment or enter post-secondary job training. We help our students attain the skills needed for quality employment leading to a better quality of life.

JOG plays a pivotal role in the holistic development of Ohio's lowest performing youth and helps them enter the workforce. While JOG serves urban, rural and suburban communities, one thing is consistent - 83% of JOG youth are economically disadvantaged and 95% lack the marketable skills for today's job market prior to joining our programs. JOG participants are the young people who are often forgotten, overlooked, and counted out before given a chance to succeed. Schools identify students who are the lowest performing or at risk of dropping out and connect them with a JOG program affiliated with their school district.

What sets JOG apart – we provide one-on-one mentoring and education for students when a traditional school is unable to. We are experts at engaging young adults where they are, then building relationships so that we can establish meaningful goals in and out of the classroom. These relationships allow JOG to be transparent, while not being judgmental.

What else is the JOG difference? We measure success one kid at a time, but our collective success is unmatched in Ohio.

JOG's success is measured against JAG's 6 national standards regarding academic success and employment, and JOG has met or exceeded these standards for 28 consecutive years – the longest streak in the national network. During the 22-23 school year, JOG has 3,861 youth enrolled statewide through 91 programs and has achieved the following results:

- Graduation rate: 96.5%
- Connectivity rate: 96.13%
- Employment rate: 66.51%
- FT employment rate: 85.82%
- Positive outcome rate: 77.15%
- Further education rate: 52.97%

These are proven results that we get by building relationships with not only the students, but the surrounding businesses, schools, and communities.

We are seeking \$2,000,000 per fiscal year to maintain, expand and enhance our programs and services. With this support, JOG will accomplish the following:

- Program Maintenance: JOG will maintain programming for 200 participants that would otherwise face program cuts.



- Program Expansion: The organization will expand our impact by establishing additional chapters or satellite offices in various regions across Ohio and enroll 800 new participants.
- Enhanced Resources and Job Placement: JOG will enhance its training programs by investing in updated curriculum and technological resources. Additionally, JOG will grow partnerships with more employers and organizations, thereby expanding the pool of job placement and internship opportunities.
- Support Services: JOG will enhance its wrap-around support and help remove barriers that our students may face when seeking employment or pursuing higher education.

Thank you for allowing me to respectfully ask the Senate to include Jobs for Ohio's Graduates funding. This directly aligns with the Senate's goal of using innovative ways to improve workforce participation and connect education directly to careers. With the support of the State of Ohio, JOG will expand our reach and help more Ohio youth be successful, contributing members of our state.



### About JOG

For more than 35 years, Jobs for Ohio’s Graduates (JOG), an affiliate of the nationwide Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG), has helped at-risk youth from dropping out of high school, and those who have already done so, complete their education and successfully transition to employment at a livable wage or post-secondary job training. JOG utilizes the evidence-based JAG curriculum to provide academic intervention, counseling, employment readiness, leadership and career development, job, and post-secondary educational placement for underserved youth ages 14-24. Since inception, JOG has served more than **162,000 Ohio youth** with multiple barriers to success. **During the 21-22 school year, JOG had 2,895 youth enrolled statewide.**

*JOG provides wrap-around services for at-risk youth and helps them reach their success.*

JOG’s success is measured against JAG’s 5 national standards regarding academic success and employment. **JOG has met or exceeded these 5 national standards for the past 27 consecutive years.**

	JAG Standard	JOG Class of 2021	JOG 35-Year Average
<b>Graduation rate</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>91.6%</b>
<b>Job Placement</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>64.5%</b>
<b>Full-time Jobs</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>68.9%</b>
<b>Full-time Placement</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>84.2%</b>
<b>Positive Outcomes</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>82.5%</b>

**JOG Documents Extraordinary and Consistent Results – Annually!**

### Who does JOG Serve?

JOG has a **53-county footprint** and **243 locations across the state**. Most of the locations are in partnership with public school districts.

**Northeast** 83 locations

**West** 20 locations

**East** 7 locations

**Central** 41 locations

**Southeast** 53 locations

**Southwest** 33 locations

Across Ohio, 83% of JOG youth are economically disadvantaged and 95% lack the marketable skills for today’s job market prior to joining our programs. We help our students attain the skills needed for quality employment leading to a better quality of life.

### Ohio’s investment in JOG

We are seeking **\$2 million per fiscal year** to better serve and increase the number of youths in our programs by **800 participants**. With this investment, we will be able to grow the number of students enrolled at our existing locations, expand to every urban center and build a presence in under-served rural and Appalachian parts of the state. Specially, we are targeting new locations where local resources for this type of programming are low.

We seek to make the State of Ohio a partner in helping youth with multiple barriers to success complete their education and successfully transition to employment at a livable wage.

*What programs does JOG offer?*

JOG's curriculum aims to set our participants apart from all other youth in today's emerging workforce through participant-centered programs that help young people achieve their fullest potential.

***In-School Programming/Dropout Prevention Services*** These services target high school-age youth who are at-risk of dropping out and/or making a successful transition to work. This program includes life skills, workforce development training, planned summer activities and youth work experience opportunities throughout the program year. It also features an intensive 12-month follow-up for all participants, including monthly contacts and career placement.

***Out of School Programming*** This program is for non-graduate youth, currently not enrolled in formal education, and graduated youth lacking occupational or basic skills. These participants strive to achieve a high school diploma, or its equivalent, and marketable skills to attain a livable wage. Additionally, we provide one-on-one and group tutoring, life skills, soft skills, leadership and workforce development training, as well as an intensive 12-month follow-up.

***Summer and Year-Round Work Experience Programming*** We specialize in providing summer and year-long work programming for individuals 14-24 through our extensive experience with employer recruitment and placement. We also work with TANF recipients on job readiness skills and removal of barriers to employment.

*How are you able to fill the need for current in-demand jobs across the state?*

We are well positioned to fill in-demand jobs based on our 35 years of proven success. **Last year our full-time job placement rate was 83%**. Across the state, large and small employers alike have supported and hired our young adults. We've developed direct pipelines with employers like AT&T, ADM, OLD Navy, Synchrony, Swagelok and hospital systems. We also place young adults with Ohio's small and family-owned businesses. Our services aim to boost Ohio's workforce.

*How will state funding help JOG better carry out its mission and increase participation?*

**Our capacity to serve more young adults is directly related to the resources available at each JOG location.** JOG currently delivers programming in the Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland and Dayton. In addition to other urban districts throughout Ohio, there is a growing need of our services in rural and specifically Appalachian regions throughout the state where employers are having trouble filling jobs. State funding would allow JOG to operate statewide in the areas of greatest need.

*Has JOG received state funding in past operating budgets and how has it helped?*

We did not received funding in the last operating budget. In fiscal years 2018 - 2021, we received \$100,000 per year from the state. Prior to that we received \$1 million per biennium from fiscal years 2014 - 2017. With a decreased invested amount from 2017 to 2021, we saw a 22% loss of students served. It is important to note, the money received between 2014 and 2021 went directly to student supportive services, not job placement programming.

*Why is the Department of Education the best agency to host this program?*

Our top priority of **helping students in and out of the classroom to achieve educational and occupational success**, directly aligns with the Ohio Department of Education's purpose. Our career pathway development transitions students from education to full-time employment or enrollment in post-secondary training options. Also, schools offer JOG for credit during the school day.

***To learn more about Jobs for Ohio Graduates  
go to [jogworks.org](http://jogworks.org)***