



House Bill 96
House Development Committee
Mark Trew, COO of Goodwill of Greater Cleveland on behalf of
Ohio Association of Goodwill Industries
March 5, 2025

Chairman Hoops, Vice Chairman Lorenz, Ranking Member Abdullahi, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today on behalf of the Ohio Association of Goodwill Industries (OAGI). My name is Mark Trew, and I am the Chief Operating Officer of Goodwill of Greater Cleveland and East Central Ohio. My organization is headquartered in Canton and serves eight counties in Northeast Ohio including Stark, Cuyahoga, Lake, Geauga, Carroll, Tuscarawas, Harrison and Jefferson counties.

OAGI is comprised of 14 autonomous Goodwill organizations that empower people with disabilities and other disadvantages, which can include those with mental illness, criminal history, homelessness, or veterans, to achieve financial independence and a better quality of life that a job can provide.

In 2024, Ohio Goodwills placed nearly 4,500 people into competitive employment through partnerships with local employers. Goodwills assisted another 96,000 Ohioans through a comprehensive array of employment programs, including assistance writing a resume, training in digital literacy and certifications for in-demand jobs, assessing job skills, and job placements.

Goodwills already support the needs of thousands of individuals in our communities, but there is much more we could do with additional resources. I ask for your support of a budget amendment to create a new program through the Department of Development by which nonprofit organizations that sell donated goods could apply for a grant to create or expand job training and job placement programs for individuals with barriers to employment. Based on legislation that has passed in Kentucky and Louisiana, I'd like to thank Representatives Santucci and Rogers for their support of this proposal.

At Goodwill Industries of Greater Cleveland and East Central Ohio, we offer 30 programs that served more than 22,000 individuals last year. In recent years we have heard from employers who would like assistance supporting their incumbent workforce by providing financial literacy, skill-building, and supportive services to increase workforce retention. We have launched a pilot with Aultman Hospital in Canton and would utilize grant funds to expand this program and partner with other employers in the communities we serve.

Other examples of ways communities could utilize grant funds include:

- Expanding work with returning citizens. Last year, Goodwill of Northwest Ohio served 882 individuals with direct assistance, removing barriers to employment. This included assistance with getting their driver's license, obtaining a birth certificate, purchasing



clothes/boots, and assisting with reinstatement fees. They placed 180 returning citizens into jobs and continued working with these individuals after they found employment to help eliminate any additional barriers that may arise.

- Expanding recovery employment programs. Goodwill Easter Seals Miami Valley partners with the Montgomery County ADAMHS Board to provide job readiness training, industry-recognized credentials, and certified peer recovery support to individuals in various stages of recovery. Last year they served over 850 people and placed over 380 into employment. The retention rate of employment for those served through this program showed consistency and many individuals are reaching 1 year+ in their current jobs.

At Goodwill, we know that when people learn skills to earn their own paychecks, they have the power to transform lives and communities. Please support this amendment, which will allow us to connect more individuals with the power of work. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.