

Testimony Before the Ohio Senate Higher Education Committee
May 6, 2025
Presented by Duane Caudill
Upper Valley Career Center Adult Education

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Timken, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Higher Education Committee — thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding HB96, the State Operating Budget. My name is Duane Caudill, and I serve as Director of Adult Education at Upper Valley Career Center.

Thank you for inviting me to testify on behalf of the Ohio Technical Centers (OTCs) across the state. I would like to begin by stating my appreciation for the OTC+ program. OTC+ is a valuable program for students who may not have otherwise been able to access career technical education whether that be due to waitlists, scheduling constraints or overall availability of the pathway. OTC+ provides high school students an additional pathway to earn industry recognized credentials and gain workforce skills outside of our traditional secondary programs. This innovative initiative creates flexibility in their scheduling, allowing many of these students to continue pursuit of other programs of choice such as AP or CCP classes, fine arts and extra curricular activities, which produces well-rounded, workforce-ready adults.

Below I am sharing a comparison of our OTC+ program enrollment. I want to share – we have not marketed the program yet – these students came through word of mouth and overflow from the local career centers. We believe there are many opportunities to grow the program and serve more students. We are receiving phone calls already for high school students wanting to reserve seats in OTC+ classes starting in the fall.

Fiscal Year 2024

HVAC - 1
Welding - 4
Robotics - 1
STNA/CNA - 24

Total - 30

Fiscal Year 25

HVAC - 1
Welding - 6
Robotics - 1
STNA/CNA - 8 so far, 23 scheduled for this summer
CNC Machining - 1
Welding at a satellite location - 13

Total - 53

I would also like to mention the customized training programs that we run through the CTX program. Customized training allows the OTC to offer workforce development and training for local businesses and manufacturers. We are able to offer training seats in our existing classes, both as full-time programs or on a pick and choose basis. We can also design classes specifically tailored to a company's needs. We offer full-registered apprenticeship through the CTX model as well.

Finally, I would like to thank you for several programs including the Work Ready Grant, the Talent Ready Grant, the Adult Diploma program, and the TechCred program. These programs provide funding vehicles for students and companies and help fund shortfalls in the program costs, allowing students to gain technical skills needed in today's workforce. We believe that OTCs play an important role in workforce development in the state of Ohio and these programs are important to support the training needs.

I am happy to serve as a resource for you in the future should any questions arrive after today. At this time, Dee and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.