

Chairman Edwards, Ranking Member Upchurch, Vice Chair Powell, and members of the House Committee on Economic and Workforce Development, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on Ohio's economic development strategy and how the Ohio Development Services Agency supports job creation in Ohio. My name is Lydia Mihalik, and I am the Director of the Ohio Development Services Agency.

Ohio's economic development strategy leverages Ohio's assets: a strong business climate, low cost of living, and access to a skilled workforce. Partnership and collaboration are the foundation of successful economic development projects. At the Development Services Agency, we work closely with local officials, community and economic development professionals, and JobsOhio to help Ohio's communities grow the state's economy.

With more than 70 federal- and state-funded programs, Development identifies the funding assistance or incentives that will best support a given project. There are times when our role at Development is to bring all the parties to the table and facilitate the discussion. Leveraging each partner's strength is essential.

We have three main divisions: Business Services, Community Services, and Minority Business Development. The Business Services Division works closely with JobsOhio to identify the appropriate state resource for a job creation or retention project and supports our small businesses, manufacturing community and technology-based businesses. Centers across the state provide training and financial counseling, access to capital, and expand into new markets.

The Community Services Division works to ensure Ohio communities have the infrastructure needed to support business growth and to provide a good quality of life for their residents. Investments improve Main Streets, water and sewer services, and redevelopment projects. This division also administers programs that provide funding to address homelessness, affordable housing, energy efficiency, and resources for Ohioans who need assistance with their utility bills.

The Minority Business Development Division supports the growth of minority and disadvantaged businesses in Ohio. It provides technical and professional assistance, access to capital and bonding, and connections for business opportunities through state certification. The goal is to increase the number of minority and disadvantaged businesses throughout Ohio and position them for growth and job creation.

The Governor's Office of Appalachia is also housed within Development. A dedicated team works with local partners across the 32-county region to identify projects that increase opportunities and improve the quality of life in the region. Ohio is the only state in the 13-state Appalachian Regional Commission to have a state office and funding dedicated to coordinate economic and community development projects. Grants through the Governor's Office of Appalachia are provided to local governments, community organizations, and nonprofits to improve infrastructure, support job creation, and provide workforce training.

Over the past two years, our agency has worked closely with the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation. Together we develop and administer programs that will maintain and grow a skilled workforce, a key component to attracting and retaining jobs in Ohio.

Development is also focused on training tomorrow's workforce through various internship programs. While each program has a specific focus, the goal is the same – to support small

businesses and provide our college students with real-world experiences. Cool jobs are not just on the coasts; they are here in Ohio.

We are seeing an increase in entrepreneurs using Ohio business development centers, and working with JobsOhio and the regional partners, we have a strong pipeline of projects. We are positioned to build on our success and leverage new opportunities as they emerge as a result of the pandemic.

Last week, Site Selection, a leading corporate real estate economic development magazine, announced that Ohio ranked number one in its Governor's Cup 2020 state economic and business attraction rankings for bringing more new corporate facility projects per capita than any other state in the nation. Ohio also ranked second in the nation for total projects overall. Ohio had six communities on the top 20 list of project-producing micropolitan areas – cities with between 10,000 and 50,000 residents. Those cities are Findlay, Tiffin, Fremont, Wooster, Greenville, and Sidney.

These projects would not have happened without the dedication and hard work of community leaders and economic development teams across Ohio. Collaboration is the key to our success.

At Development, our team is focused on the work we do and making strategic investments in our people, places, and businesses. We want Ohio to remain the best place to live, learn, work, and visit!

Thank you for your time today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.