



Report to the  
**COMMUNITY**  
July 2024 - June 2025

STARK TUSCARAWAS  
**WORK  
FORCE**  
DEVELOPMENT BOARD



## About Stark Tuscarawas **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

The Stark Tuscarawas Workforce Development Board leads workforce planning, oversees OhioMeansJobs centers in Stark and Tuscarawas Counties, and forges partnerships to help area businesses and job seekers connect with education, training, and employment opportunities.

The board ensures services meet local economic needs, are inclusive and high quality, and uses feedback and data to drive continuous improvement under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), a federal law designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services, and to help employers find skilled workers.

### **MISSION**

To assist area businesses in meeting their workforce needs by coordinating the workforce development activities of the numerous employment, education, and economic development entities in the region.

### **VISION**

To play a significant role in supporting the economic prosperity of our communities and their citizens.

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# Message from our **LEADERSHIP**

Dear Friends and Stakeholders,

We are proud to present the Stark Tuscarawas Workforce Development Board's annual **"Report to the Community,"** a reflection of the impactful work carried out across Stark and Tuscarawas Counties through the local public workforce system.

This report features the stories, highlights, and outcomes that define our commitment to building a resilient, responsive, and inclusive workforce. From expanding service delivery access points to empowering youth through targeted programs, supporting apprenticeships, and advancing occupational skills training for in-demand career fields, our system continues to evolve to meet the needs of both job seekers and employers.

Guided by the principles of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), our locally governed system remains flexible, adaptable, and performance driven. We are proud to showcase the collaborative efforts behind such programs (and successes) as Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA), employer services, incumbent worker training, and Rapid Response initiatives. These efforts are not only federally aligned but also deeply rooted in the unique needs and strengths of our local communities.

This year's report also celebrates the power of partnerships—both **board-led** and **community-driven**—that fuel innovation and expand opportunity.

These stories and metrics reflect not only our commitment to service, but also the strength of our partnerships and the shared vision for a thriving regional economy.

We invite you to explore the stories and data within this report, and to join us in continuing to build a workforce system that is inclusive, innovative, and ready to meet the challenges of tomorrow.



**Scott Robinson,**  
Chair



**JoAnn Breedlove,**  
Executive Director

## Annual **FINANCIALS**

### ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT - PY24 (JULY 2024-JUNE 2025)

ACTUAL  
EXPENDITURES

<b>Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)</b>	<b>\$2,833,107.82</b>
Adult Formula Funds	\$1,305,681.53
Dislocated Worker Formula Funds	\$903,442.44
National Emergency Dislocated Worker, OPIOID Fresh Start Emergency Grant Funds	\$34,715.49
Special Project Funds, and OMJ Branding	\$589,268.36
<b>Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP)</b>	<b>\$5,093,537.77</b>
WIOA Youth Formula Funds	\$1,688,519.17
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)	\$3,405,018.60
<b>Reemployment Services &amp; Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Funds</b>	<b>\$413,524.27</b>
<b>OhioMeansJobs Local Memorandum of Understanding Funds</b>	<b>\$139,929.74</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,480,099.60</b>

# What Are Workforce Development Boards?

The first federal legislation supporting workforce development in the U.S. dates back to 1917. Since then, federal policy has continually evolved to address shifting economic demands and improve the coordination and effectiveness of workforce services. A key goal remains to ensure better coordination among education, training, and employment programs.

Local workforce development boards were established to cover every county in the country to bring together public and private partners to align services, reduce duplication, and better meet the needs of both job seekers and employers.

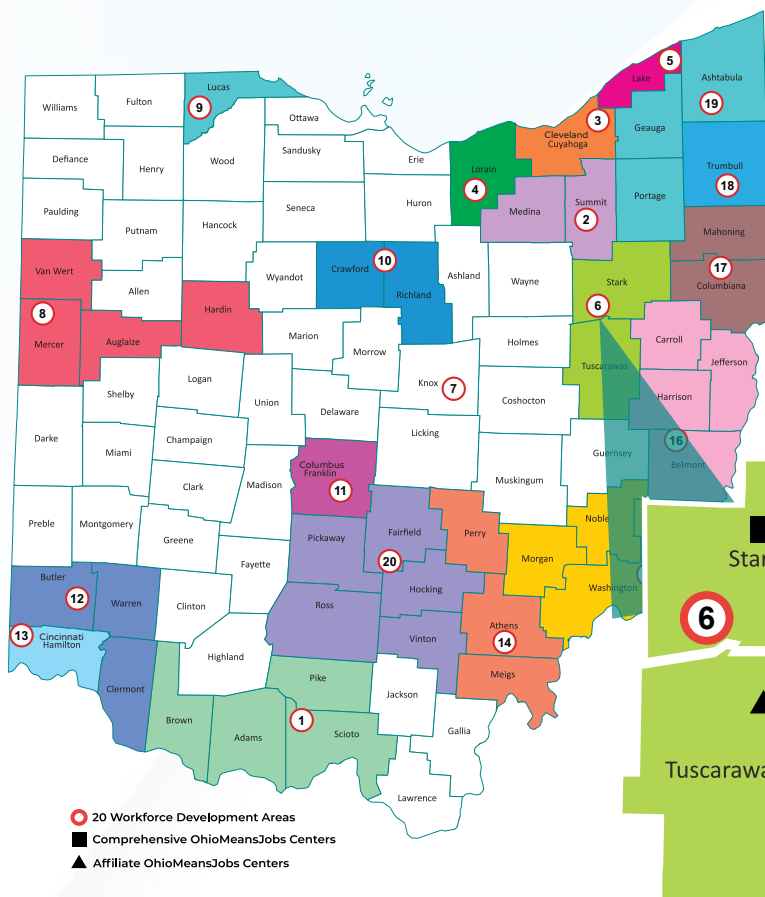
Local workforce boards accomplish this by:

- Connecting individuals to employment, education, and training opportunities
- Aligning services with the needs of local employers
- Coordinating the broader workforce ecosystem
- Supporting regional economic development



## NO TWO WORKFORCE BOARDS ARE ALIKE

Even though all local workforce development boards follow the same federal rules and performance standards, each board is uniquely structured to reflect the specific needs of its community and the local systems in place to support its mission. This flexibility allows boards to tailor strategies, partnerships, and service delivery models to best serve their regional economies.



## Introduction to Area 6

Ohio is made up of 20 local workforce development areas with Area 6 covering Stark and Tuscarawas Counties. Each area has its own board responsible for planning and overseeing workforce services. The Stark Tuscarawas Workforce Development Board (STWDB) leads this work in Area 6, aligning training programs, job placement services, and employer partnerships to support the local economy.

Area 6 also collaborates with other workforce boards across Ohio and the nation to improve services, share ideas, and support larger initiatives that benefit both businesses and job seekers. Through participation in statewide and national networks, areas stay informed on emerging trends, policy changes, and innovative service models. This collaboration strengthens each area's ability to respond to employer.

## LOCAL AREA, FEDERAL FUNDING

It is a common misconception that local workforce boards are funded by the state. In reality, funding is determined at the federal level using a national formula. The federal government allocates funds to each state's governor's office, and in Ohio, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) acts as a pass-through agency to distribute those funds to the local area. ODJFS is both a key partner to Area 6 and an intermediary responsible for funding, monitoring, and ensuring compliance with federal and state guidelines.





## Supply of Talent in Area 6

Area 6 is home to a resilient and evolving workforce, shaped by a mix of urban and rural communities and a strong presence of blue-collar employment. An aging population presents both challenges and opportunities for workforce development.

The region benefits from a robust network of higher education institutions, secondary-postsecondary transition programs, and training providers—especially notable given its geographic size. This creates a solid foundation for credential attainment, upskilling, and ongoing training for incumbent workers.

While overall employment rates align with state averages, workforce participation is lower among older adults and individuals with disabilities, signaling room for improvement. High jobless rates among individuals with disabilities, those without a high school diploma, and women with young children point to untapped labor pools that could help meet employer demand. Additionally, awareness and interest in many high-demand industries remain limited, particularly among youth and career changers.

Local leaders are working to expand access to jobs, improve job quality, and align training with business needs. With coordinated support across local, state, and federal levels, Area 6 can build a stronger, more inclusive workforce.



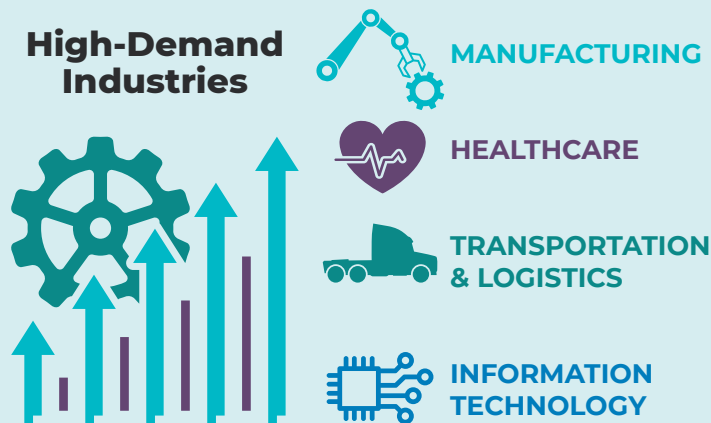
**There are 12 public and private post-secondary institutions in Stark & Tuscarawas counties and a long list of other training providers!**

## Employer Demand in Area 6

Stark and Tuscarawas Counties are driven by high-growth industries including Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Transportation & Logistics, IT, Construction, and Business Services. Manufacturing is especially dominant—21 of the top 25 most concentrated industries fall within this sector, with employment levels reaching up to 5,000% above the national average. Metalworking occupations alone are nearly 10 times more common than the national norm.

Despite strong demand, employers face ongoing challenges finding workers with both technical skills and essential soft skills, especially in sectors undergoing digital transformation. The Business Resource Network (BRN) and OhioMeansJobs centers play a key role in supporting talent needs, but demand continues to outpace supply in several critical occupations.

### High-Demand Industries



## Alignment and Gaps in Workforce Development

Workforce development in Area 6 is increasingly aligned with regional economic priorities. Training programs, job placement services, and employer partnerships focus on high-demand industries like manufacturing, healthcare, transportation & logistics, and IT. Local education and training providers support these sectors, creating a strong foundation for workforce supply.

Still, gaps remain. Some industries require new skill sets that the current and emerging workforce is not fully prepared to meet. Employers report difficulty finding candidates with both technical and soft skills, especially in roles affected by automation and digital change.

Awareness and interest in many high-demand fields also remain low, particularly among youth and career changers. Untapped labor pools—such as individuals with disabilities, those without a high school diploma, and women with young children—need targeted outreach, training, and support.

To close these gaps, Area 6 is focused on expanding access to training and employment, increasing work-based learning, improving job quality, and using employer feedback to shape programs. Continued coordination with local, regional, and national partners, along with investment in outreach and wraparound services, will be key to closing these gaps and meeting evolving workforce needs.



Source data: East Ohio Region's Regional Plan

# Navigating our LOCAL WORKFORCE SYSTEM



The **workforce development board** plays a vital role in shaping a responsive and effective public workforce system. While its responsibilities include regulatory oversight and system monitoring, its true value ensures impactful services are being delivered to both employers and job seekers and aligning workforce services with the evolving needs of our community.

Through collaborations, the board helps drive innovation, economic opportunity, and inclusive growth. Though its work is multifaceted and sometimes challenging to explain, the board remains focused on delivering results that benefit the region—making it a strategic partner in building a stronger, more resilient local economy.

## Main responsibilities:

- Setting workforce system policy, strategy, and oversight of the OhioMeansJobs Stark and Tuscarawas County centers
- Developing and submitting a local workforce plan
- Overseeing federally funded Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs
- Procuring workforce service providers, and the OhioMeansJobs center operator
- Leading efforts to engage employers
- Convening workforce development system stakeholders

## Fun FACT

4 staff support  
the work of the  
STWDB



LEARN  
MORE  
—  
STWDB.ORG

## Two approaches to **OUR WORK**

### 1 HIGH LEVEL OHIOMEANSJOBS CENTER OVERSIGHT



**OhioMeansJobs.**  
Stark & Tuscarawas Counties  
A proud partner of the  
American Job Center network

OhioMeansJobs Stark and Tuscarawas Counties employment and training centers are community hubs that connect people to jobs, training, and career support—all in one place. They help job seekers find employment and assist employers in hiring skilled workers.

These centers are **powered by a network of partners** working together to serve the community. Some partners are required by law, and some are not, and include such programs as:

- Workforce development programs (for adults, youth, and dislocated workers)
- Employment services
- Adult education and literacy programs
- Vocational rehabilitation
- Unemployment assistance
- Services for veterans, seniors, and people with disabilities
- Local library systems



VIEW PARTNER  
NETWORK  
—  
OMJWORK.COM

Together, these partners create a coordinated system that makes it easier for individuals to access services and for employers to find talent—supporting both economic growth and individual success.

### 2 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

STWDB's strategic activities go beyond daily operations and focuses upon expanding workforce resources for the community, coordinating efforts among local workforce partners, and special initiatives that support employers, job seekers, and the Stark and Tuscarawas County community.

#### Some examples of this work include:

"InvadingTusc" Video Series  
Future of Work Report  
Workforce Trends Dashboard  
Business Resource Network  
YouScience Student Aptitude & Career Discovery  
EDA Recompete Consortium Grant



## DID YOU KNOW

- OhioMeansJobs serves as the **official brand** for Ohio's workforce system
- OhioMeansJobs Stark and Tuscarawas workforce centers are not an entity or organization, but rather a **coordinated network of partner organizations** and staff delivering workforce resources and services

## WHO WE SERVE





# Access Point LOCATIONS

## MEETING THE COMMUNITY WHERE THEY ARE

OhioMeansJobs Stark and Tuscarawas Counties understands the importance of reaching customers in the most accessible ways possible.



**OhioMeansJobs.**

Stark & Tuscarawas Counties

A proud partner of the  
American Job Center network

## STARK



### ★1 OhioMeansJobs Center Stark County

822 30th St NW, Canton

GOODWILL

### 2 Ken Weber Community Campus

408 Ninth St. SW, Canton

STARK LIBRARY

### 3 DeHoff Memorial Branch

216 Hartford Ave SE, Canton

STARK LIBRARY

### 4 Main Library

715 Market Ave. N, Canton

### 5 Canal Fulton Public Library

154 Market St. W, Canal Fulton

STARK LIBRARY

### 6 Madge Youtz Branch

2921 Mahoning Rd NE, Canton

### 7 The Alliance Commons

405 S. Linden Ave., Alliance

### 8 Massillon Public Library

208 Lincoln Way E., Massillon

## TUSC



### ★1 OhioMeansJobs Tuscarawas County

1260 Monroe Street, Suite 35, New Philadelphia

### 2 Dover Public Library

525 N Walnut St., Dover

### 3 Claymont Public Library

215 E. 3rd St., Uhrichsville

TUSCARAWAS PUBLIC LIBRARY

### 4 Bolivar Branch

455 Water St SW, Bolivar

### 5 Goodwill's Walk-in Days

260 Bluebell Dr. NW, New Philadelphia

TUSCARAWAS PUBLIC LIBRARY

### 6 Main Library

121 Fair Ave NW, New Philadelphia

TUSCARAWAS PUBLIC LIBRARY

### 7 Sugarcreek Branch

120 S Broadway St, Sugarcreek

### 8 Newcomerstown Public Library

123 E Main St, Newcomerstown



### Virtual Services

Virtual services  
available at [omjwork.com](https://omjwork.com)







# Individual & Job Seeker SERVICES



**805**

INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED  
**JOB MATCHING  
SERVICES**



**1,072**

INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED  
**RÉSUMÉ  
ASSISTANCE**



**2,662**

INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED  
**JOB & CAREER  
EXPLORATION  
ASSISTANCE**



**824**

INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED  
**RAPID RESPONSE  
ASSISTANCE FOR  
WORKERS AFFECTED  
BY LAYOFFS AND  
CLOSURES**

## Linda's Story

After 25 years working at an animal hospital, Linda suddenly found herself without a job—and without direction. Heartbroken and overwhelmed, she walked through the OhioMeansJobs center doors in search of support. At first, the change felt impossible; she often came in discouraged and in tears. But with each visit, she built confidence and gained hope.

Through interview preparation, résumé tips, and continued daily encouragement, Linda rediscovered her strengths. She embraced affirmations, practiced her interview skills, and leaned into the support she hadn't needed since the 90s—navigating a job market that had completely transformed.

**Linda landed a job that she was truly proud of. She returned, smiling, just to thank the team for being her cheerleaders every step of the way. "You made a big impact on my life," she stated.**



### BASIC CAREER SERVICES

Basic Career Services are designed to offer initial and general employment assistance to any job seeker, such as résumé or job search assistance. Did you know that **4,067 visitors like Linda were served** through the OhioMeansJobs centers, access points and virtually in Stark and Tuscarawas Counties?



# Mikail's Story

Despite facing juvenile probation, having recently dropped out of school, and dealing with personal challenges, Mikail was motivated by his siblings' achievements to pursue enrollment. With guidance from staff who coordinated with his school, court system, and family, he gained the support he needed to stay on track.

Mikail earned his high school diploma and a welding certification through Buckeye Career Center's Adult Diploma Program, overcame transportation challenges by planning ahead and eventually buying himself a bike to get to work, and developed professional skills through work experience programs. His first real interview at Bell Stores resulted in an on-the-spot job offer, and he later secured independent housing.

**Now employed and saving for a car, Mikail is focused on building a career in welding—demonstrating how CCMEP's supportive services help young adults overcome barriers and take control of their futures.**



## COMPREHENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (CCMEP)

Helps low-income young adults (ages 14–24) build career paths, find employment, and achieve self-sufficiency. The program delivers these services through partnerships with local organizations, who are contracted to provide support and resources to youth across the community. In Stark and Tuscarawas Counties, the program combines federal TANF and WIOA funding to provide a seamless, coordinated system of services through a partnership between the Workforce

Development Board and the Workforce Initiative Association.

Did you know **473 young adults like Mikail were served** through CCMEP?

## CCMEP PROVIDERS



OWEN PICTURED  
ON LEFT

## Owen's Story

Owen Anstine was eager to launch his career through the Canton Electrical Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (JATC) but needed help getting started. With support from OhioMeansJobs Stark & Tuscarawas Counties, he received funding for the essential tools and supplies required to begin his training as an Inside Wireman apprentice.

Through the program, Owen gains real-world experience in the electrical field and is building the foundation for a lifelong career.

**"This apprenticeship was about more than just learning the trade—it was about building a future," he shared. "Once I complete the program and become a Journey Worker Electrician, I'll have the skills, strong wages, and opportunities to grow into specialized or leadership roles."**



### APPRENTICESHIP SUPPORT

Apprenticeships like Owen's show how **paid, hands-on learning leads to strong careers**—and having the right tools to start can make all the difference.

**STWDB  
FUNDING SUPPORT  
(2020-24)**

**\$19,305**  
12 FIRST-YEAR  
APPRENTICES

Funded tools, boots & supplies

**CANTON  
ELECTRICAL  
JATC**

### APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

- Inside Wireman
- Telecom Technician
- Residential Electrician

**JOURNEY  
WORKER  
OUTCOME**

**\$52,800 TO  
89,840**  
IN WAGES

Average of \$66,850 annually



### REEMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) is a program designed to help unemployment insurance claimants return to work quickly and improve their employment outcomes by providing them with extra support.

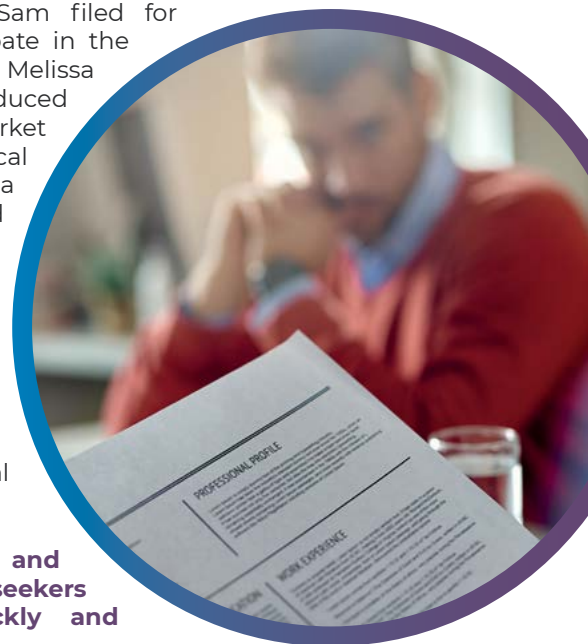
Did you know **581 individuals like Sam** were served by RESEA?

## Sam's Story

After losing his job in December 2024, Sam filed for unemployment and was selected to participate in the RESEA program. In January 2025, he met with Melissa for his initial appointment and was introduced to a variety of services, including labor market information, résumé guidance, and practical tips for interviewing and job searching. Melissa carefully reviewed his résumé and provided tailored suggestions to strengthen his applications.

Just a few weeks later, in February 2025, Sam returned for his follow-up appointment. This time, he brought excellent news—he had started a new position the day before. Thanks to his preparation and persistence, Sam had secured a Project Manager role with a local employer, earning \$105,000 a year.

**His story highlights how RESEA services and personalized career support can help job seekers transition into new opportunities quickly and successfully.**







## OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING

Occupational Skills Training (OST) supports short-term, job-focused training for income-eligible individuals who lack marketable skills. The program provides funding for in-demand industry training, along with case management and wraparound support before, during, and after program completion, with the goal of helping individuals secure and sustain skilled employment. Did you know that **85 people like Ramon received training services**, earning an average salary of \$47,800 after completing training.



## Ramon's Story


After 31 years of incarceration, Ramon was determined to rebuild his life and pursue a meaningful career. With support from OhioMeansJobs Stark & Tuscarawas Counties and funding through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), he found his path in the HVAC industry—a field with strong career potential and opportunities for stability.

Guided through career exploration and one-on-one support, Ramon enrolled in HVAC technician training at Stark State College. Before even completing the program, he was hired by The K Company. Soon after, he earned his certification along with two additional credentials and advanced into a full-time role earning \$24 an hour.

Today, his employer is encouraging him to continue growing his skills and education.

Reflecting on his progress, Ramon shared, “I have a 401K now! This job is going to change my life.”

Occupational Skills Training  
**ENROLLMENTS**

  
**55**  
HEALTHCARE  
ENROLLEES

  
**22**  
TRANSPORTATION  
& LOGISTICS  
ENROLLEES

  
**8**  
TRADE  
ENROLLEES



# Employer SERVICES



445

UNIQUE JOB POSTINGS



3,555

CANDIDATE SCREENING  
AND REFERRAL  
SERVICES



158

EMPLOYERS SERVED  
AT 24 HIRING EVENTS



21

RAPID RESPONSE  
SERVICES

## NASCO-OP's Story

In March 2025, Employer Services reconnected with long-time partner NASCO-OP, rebuilding the strong relationship they shared prior to the president's retirement. Through OhioMeansJobs Stark & Tuscarawas Counties Employer Services, employer services staff supported their hiring needs by posting an opening for an Outside Product Manager—a role offering a \$60,000 annual salary.

In addition to sharing the opportunity on social media, staff also made referrals to help connect qualified candidates. **Thanks to this collaborative effort, NASCO-OP was able to quickly fill the position and keep their business moving forward with the right talent in place**



### BASIC EMPLOYER SERVICES

Employer Services are designed to help businesses find, hire, and retain the right talent. These services include job postings, candidate recruitment, résumé screening, and access to labor market information. Basic employer services **assisted 80 employers and yielded 253 hires** at an average salary of \$38,584—a total gained **annual income of \$9,761,752!**



## Kraton's Story

When news of the Kraton plant closure reached the community, Ohio's Rapid Response team immediately stepped in to help affected workers and families navigate the uncertain transition.

Ohio's Rapid Response Program helps communities stay strong when people lose jobs. It connects workers to new job and training opportunities as soon as possible—often before they stop getting paid.

**Through the OhioMeansJobs centers, a job fair was organized to link skilled employees with new opportunities before jobs were lost. Sixteen employers participated, and 46 impacted workers attended. Within weeks, at least 10 employees were hired as a direct result of these efforts.**



### RAPID RESPONSE SERVICES

Ohio's Rapid Response Program supports both workers and employers during layoffs or business closures by offering help like writing résumés, finding resources, and understanding unemployment benefits and job training options. This quick support helps keep skilled workers in the community and shows that the area is ready to handle change. **A total of 21 employers like Kraton—and 824 workers—were served by Rapid Response.**



## Hilscher-Clarke's Story

For over 100 years, Hilscher-Clarke has partnered with IBEW 540 and Canton Electrical JATC to ensure the trade remains strong by investing in the next generation of electricians at Hilscher-Clarke. That tradition lives on today through apprentices like Owen, a third-step electrical apprentice who is working hard to become a well-rounded electrician.



Under the leadership of journeyman Mitch Neisel, Owen is gaining hands-on experience at a crypto mining facility in Massillon. His current work includes installing conduit and wiring across multiple voltages, from 24v control systems to 138,000v substation feeders, while learning the ins and outs of EMT, Rigid, and PVC conduit installation.

**As Mitch notes, "The process of learning on the job and in the classroom is what sets a program like this apart from other career choices. I have no doubt that in a few short years, Owen will be one of those outstanding journeymen who pass along their knowledge of the trade to the next generation of apprentices."**

## Dover Chemical's Story



In 2024, Dover Chemical in Tuscarawas County utilized the Incumbent Worker Training Program to provide leadership and workplace skills training for 15 employees. By completing the ten-session program, participants gained key skills, earned \$96,000 in combined raises, and accessed new promotional opportunities.

**Patrice Yacko, HR Director, noted that investing in employee development strengthens current leaders and prepares the next generation to fill critical roles, supporting a stronger, more sustainable workforce.**



### INCUMBENT WORKING TRAINING

Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) is a work-based program that provides employees with the skills they need to stay competitive in their current jobs or grow into higher roles. It also helps employers strengthen their workforce by offering training tailored to their specific business needs. Six employers like Dover Chemical—and 138 individuals—benefited from IWT. A total of **\$52,010.63 in training costs was reimbursed** to companies like Dover Chemical.



## Board-Led INITIATIVES

Supporting workforce development in our region is a top priority for the Stark Tuscarawas Workforce Development Board. By strategically aligning resources, expertise, and services with our partners, we help individuals secure meaningful employment and empower local businesses to meet their evolving talent needs.

## YouScience Aptitude & Career Discovery

The YouScience Aptitude & Career Discovery Report, led by the Stark & Tuscarawas Workforce Development Board (STWDB), underscored the importance of connecting student aptitudes and interests with in-demand local industries. Using insights from this report, the Board developed Career Guides to help students explore career pathways aligned with their strengths.

At Choices High School, these Career Guides are now a regular part of the classroom environment—displayed on bulletin boards and used as a hands-on resource for students as they consider future education and career options. Teachers integrate the guides into discussions about career planning and professional growth, encouraging students to make connections between what they're learning and real-world opportunities.

**By incorporating the Board's Career Guides alongside local business engagement and classroom learning, Choices High School is helping students better understand their aptitudes, explore in-demand career paths, and take meaningful steps toward their futures.**

## GSCUL Employment Navigator Program

### Role of the Navigator:

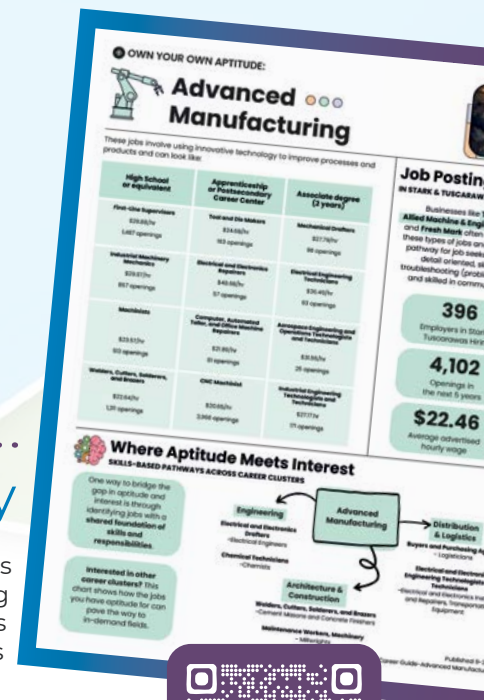
Navigators play a crucial role in helping participants overcome barriers to employment, such as lack of transportation, childcare, or healthcare access and also addresses broader systemic issues that contribute to poverty and unemployment in Stark County. Stark Tuscarawas Workforce Development Board serves as the fiscal and programmatic contract monitoring entity for this program. Responsibilities include:

- **Recruitment, Intake and Assessment:** Offering continuous support to participants through educational interventions, workforce development training, and job placement.
- **Person-Centered Planning:** Drafting and revising plans to guide participants towards economic self-sufficiency, with the help of community resources and training partners.
- **Collaboration:** Working with multiple local agencies and service providers to ensure participants receive the necessary wraparound services to succeed.

### A STORY OF TRANSFORMATION:

#### ERICA'S JOURNEY

Ericha joined the Greater Stark County Urban League's Navigator Program unsure of her next steps. With support from her Navigator, Meryleen, she built confidence, developed soft skills, strengthened her résumé, and prepared for interviews. This guidance led her to secure a position with Direction Home Area Agency on Aging. One year later, Ericha is still thriving in her role, earning a living wage, and continuing to grow professionally. Her journey highlights how the Navigator model helps individuals overcome barriers and achieve lasting career success.



VIEW REPORT

STWDB.ORG

## Outcomes June 2024- July 2025:

- **Individuals Engaged:** 381
- **Intakes:** 248
- **Placements:** 141
- **Placement Rate:** 57%
- **Combined Annual Income:** \$3,948,057
- **Completed Training:** 60
- **Top 3 industries:** Top Industries for placement were in Manufacturing (30%), Customer Service (26%) and Healthcare (18%).



Greater Stark County  
Urban League





The Stark Tuscarawas Workforce Development Board recognizes the importance of lifting up all workforce efforts happening throughout our community. By highlighting initiatives beyond our own, we foster a culture of collaboration, celebrate shared successes, and strengthen the overall impact of workforce development in our region.

## Community-Led INITIATIVES

### Career Connect Initiative

#### JOB SEEKER ENGAGEMENT



755

Job seekers have been engaged by Career Connect partners

#### JOB PLACEMENT



348

Job seekers were placed in employment

#### JOB RETENTION



95%

of new hires have reached (271) or remain on track to reach (63) 90-days of employment

#### AVERAGE WAGE



\$16.61

Average hourly wage of new hires

Career Connect, an effort led by **Strengthening Stark**, is a unified workforce development model designed to meet job seekers where they are and help them progress with support from trusted partners. Through training, coaching, and resources, the program equips individuals with the tools to enter or reenter the workforce successfully. Central to the initiative are Navigators—dedicated staff from partner organizations who guide job seekers by addressing career and personal barriers, connecting them to opportunities, and creating pathways to local employers. This ensures not only job placement but also ongoing support for success.



Visit [strengtheningstark.com](https://strengtheningstark.com) to learn more or get involved, or email [kristin@strengtheningstark.com](mailto:kristin@strengtheningstark.com).

### Walsh University's Skilled Technical Workforce Training Program

Walsh University's Skilled Technical Workforce Training Program has earned national recognition for five consecutive years for its leadership in workforce development. The initiative delivers advanced, customized technology training that upskills employees, supports employers, and opens pathways for unemployed individuals and high school students not pursuing traditional degrees. Program highlights include:



- Nearly 3,000 credentials earned
- Named among Ohio's top Tech Cred providers
- Expanded through a federal grant to reach unemployed individuals and high school students
- Achieved a 50% completion rate for unemployed participants (vs. 15% national average)
- Helped create 50+ new jobs and generated \$1.5M in annual local revenue
- Recently recognized as an IMAP Education Provider to broaden access and talent pipelines

For more information, contact Dr. Dan Passerini at [dpasserini@walsh.edu](mailto:dpasserini@walsh.edu).

### CivicLab - Solve For One Project

The Tuscarawas Valley Industry Sector Partnership was chosen by CivicLab in 2024 to join a three-year national incubator reimagining rural communities. Supported by Ascendium and the ECMC Foundation, the initiative connects ten rural regions to drive innovation in education and workforce development.

Over the next two years, the partnership will strengthen systems that fuel local manufacturing and prepare youth for in-demand careers. By aligning education with employer needs, we're building a stronger talent pipeline to sustain regional growth.

Focus areas include community engagement, asset mapping, system alignment, and expanding career pathways—grounded in data on local and emerging employment trends.

#### Early Outcomes include:

- 32 participants have completed the Solve for One process, turning targeted solutions into a model that benefits the entire community.
- The Solve for One → Exceed to Many approach is already proving effective for rural success.

For more information, contact Marla Akridge at [makridge@tuscedc.com](mailto:makridge@tuscedc.com).

L to R: Matthew Kimberley, Battle Motors, Michael Lauber, TuscoMFG, Frank Polen, Buckeye Career Center, Paul Dykshoorn Kent State University at Tuscarawas, Marla Akridge, Tuscarawas County Economic Development Corp., Kenneth Poland, Ohio Manufacturing Association



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Richard Regula  
Bill Smith

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Mitch Pace  
Greg Ress  
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822 30th Street NW • Canton, Ohio 44709 • (330) 491-2624 • [board@omjwork.com](mailto:board@omjwork.com)

[stwdb.org](http://stwdb.org)

