Members Brief

An informational brief prepared by the LSC staff for members and staff of the Ohio General Assembly

Workforce Development: Frequently Asked Questions

Members of the General Assembly and their constituents periodically have questions about workforce development in Ohio. While there is not a single definition of what constitutes "workforce development" in the U.S., generally these efforts focus on individuals, rather than businesses. Federal law provides funding and establishes the framework for Ohio's workforce development system, which the state implements in coordination with local governments.

This information brief answers some of the most frequently asked questions regarding workforce development in Ohio.

Contents

What is workforce development?

There is not a nationally consistent definition of what constitutes "workforce development." Instead, the term generally encompasses policies and activities that prepare individuals for employment, help workers advance in their careers, and ensure that a skilled workforce is available. Workforce development includes a variety of education and training activities to assist individuals with skills acquisition so that they are prepared to fill available jobs.

It also analyzes the employment needs of organizations to ensure that education and training opportunities evolve as organizations' needs change.[1]

In Ohio, workforce development efforts focus on preparing individuals to enter or advance in the workforce through training and education. The goal of the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation (OWT) is to "connect Ohio's business, training, and education communities to build a dynamically skilled, productive, and purposeful workforce" comprised of individuals with the skills required to fill the evolving needs of Ohio's businesses. To achieve this goal, OWT coordinates partnerships between state agencies and private stakeholders to prepare individuals for current and future jobs. The state's workforce development efforts seek to continuously train and retrain Ohio's workforce to meet these changing demands.[2]

What is the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act?

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014[3] (WIOA) is a federal law that establishes the framework for a comprehensive, accessible, and high-quality workforce development system in the U.S. WIOA's purpose is to provide workforce investment activities, through statewide and local workforce development systems, that increase participants' employment, earnings, and attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials to succeed in the labor market. WIOA also serves to improve the structure and delivery of workforce development services to better address workers', jobseekers', and employers' needs.[4]

WIOA emphasizes locally based service delivery and requires strategic coordination among various levels of government to provide workforce development services. Each state's governor must establish a state workforce development board – representing businesses, the workforce, and government – to oversee the state's workforce development system. Subareas within the state designated by the governor ("local areas") are governed by a local board that is appointed by the local area's chief elected officials (CEOs) and similar in composition to the state board. The state must additionally identify planning regions consisting of one or more local areas to engage in a regional planning process.[5]

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[1] Ronald L. Jacobs and Joshua D. Hawley, *Emergence of Workforce Development: Definition, Conceptual Boundaries, and Implications*, available here and Urban Institute, *Workforce Development Systems*, available here.
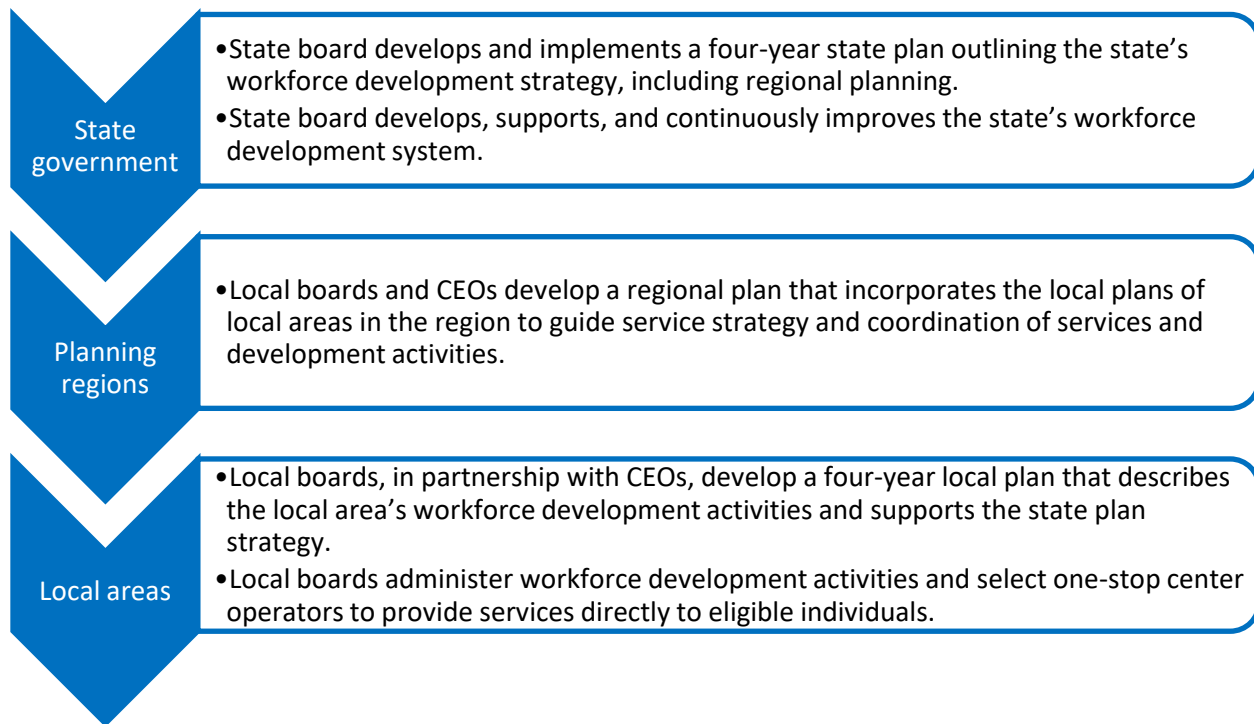
[2] Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, *Workforce 2.0: Ohio's Workforce Transformation Strategy for 2018 and Beyond*, available here.

[3] 29 United States Code (U.S.C.) 3101 *et seq.*

[4] 29 U.S.C. 3101.

[5] 29 U.S.C. 3111 to 3113 and 3121 to 3123.

Figure 1: Coordination of workforce development services

State government
- State board develops and implements a four-year state plan outlining the state's workforce development strategy, including regional planning.
- State board develops, supports, and continuously improves the state's workforce development system.

Planning regions
- Local boards and CEOs develop a regional plan that incorporates the local plans of local areas in the region to guide service strategy and coordination of services and development activities.

Local areas
- Local boards, in partnership with CEOs, develop a four-year local plan that describes the local area's workforce development activities and supports the state plan strategy.
- Local boards administer workforce development activities and select one-stop center operators to provide services directly to eligible individuals.

How are workforce development activities funded through WIOA?

WIOA establishes three funding streams to fund services for youths, dislocated workers, and adults.[6]

➢ Youth funding applies to "out-of-school" youth ages 16-24 and "in-school" youth ages 14-21 who meet other requirements specified in WIOA.[7]

➢ Dislocated worker funds are used to provide activities for individuals who are displaced from their employment.[8]

➢ The adult funding stream applies to any other individual ages 22-72.[9]

The amount of funds allocated to each state and local area within the state is determined according to formulas in WIOA. A local area may transfer up to 100% of the funds allocated to it between adult and dislocated worker activities.[10]
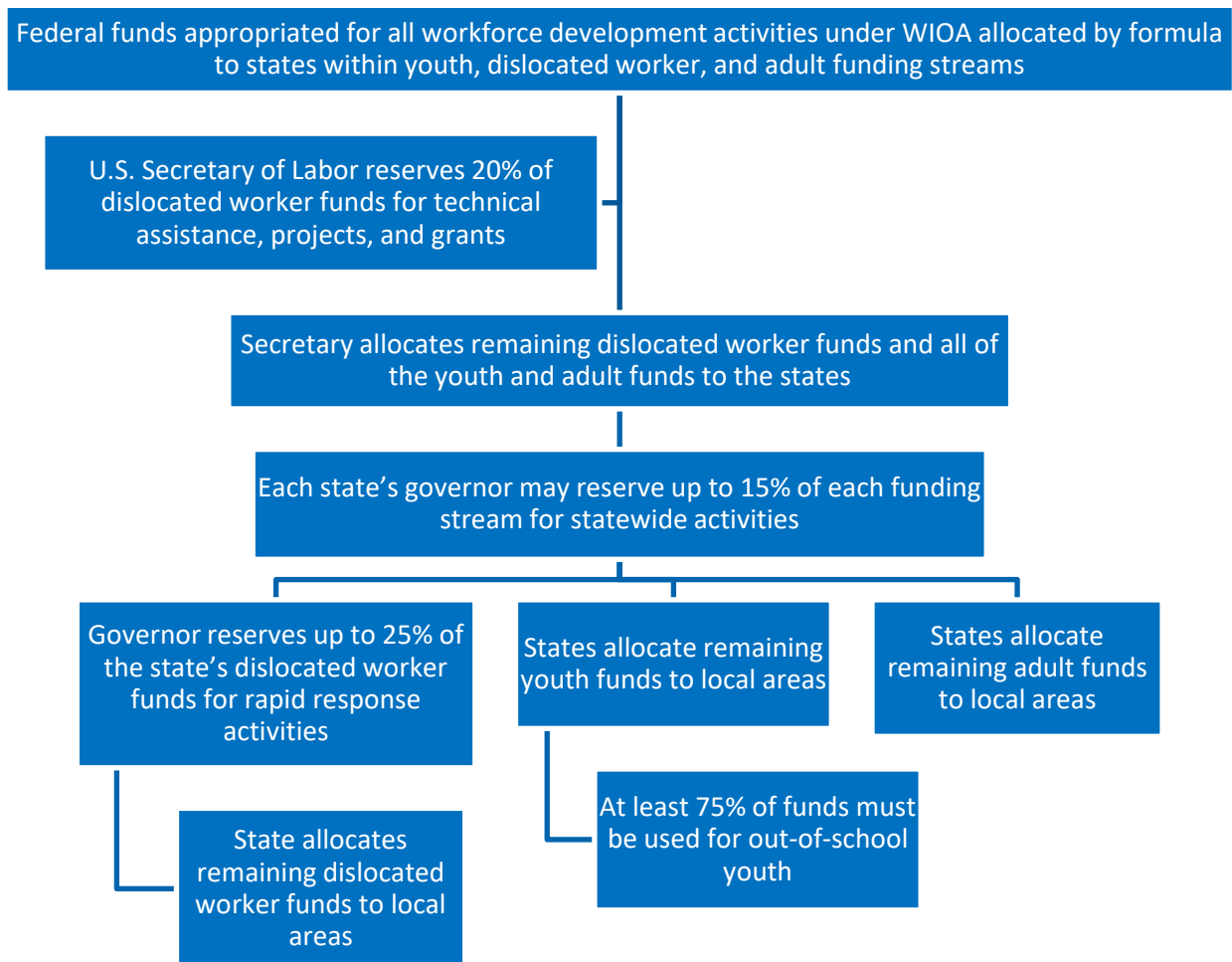
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[6] 29 U.S.C. 3161, 3171, and 3181.

[7] 29 U.S.C. 3164(a).

[8] 29 U.S.C. 3102(15).

[9] 29 U.S.C. 3172(b)(1).

[10] 29 U.S.C. 3162, 3163, 3172, and 3173.

Figure 2: How WIOA funding is allocated

Federal funds appropriated for all workforce development activities under WIOA allocated by formula to states within youth, dislocated worker, and adult funding streams

U.S. Secretary of Labor reserves 20% of dislocated worker funds for technical assistance, projects, and grants

Secretary allocates remaining dislocated worker funds and all of the youth and adult funds to the states

Each state's governor may reserve up to 15% of each funding stream for statewide activities

Governor reserves up to 25% of the state's dislocated worker funds for rapid response activities

States allocate remaining youth funds to local areas

States allocate remaining adult funds to local areas

State allocates remaining dislocated worker funds to local areas

At least 75% of funds must be used for out-of-school youth
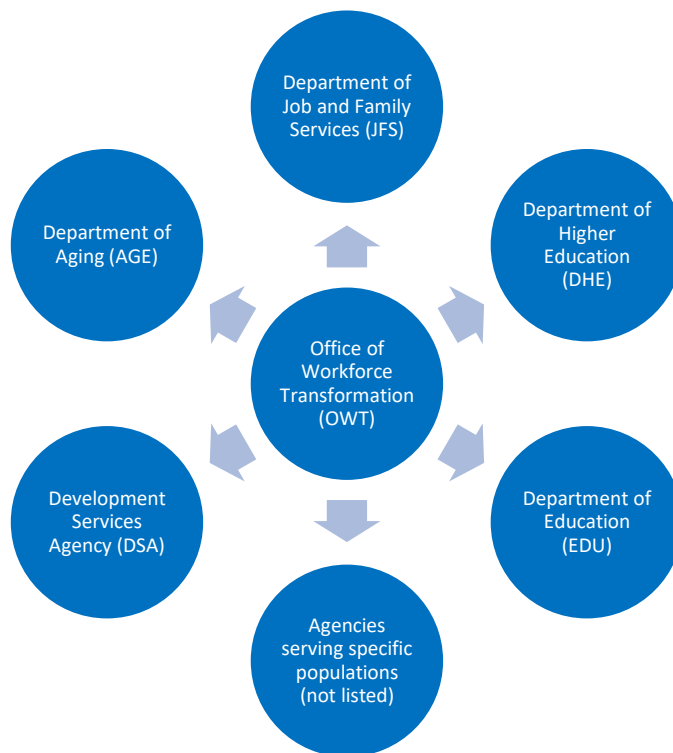
What state agencies implement workforce development in Ohio?

OWT sets and oversees Ohio's workforce development strategy and coordinates with state agencies and outside partners to implement that strategy.[11] Some state agencies provide workforce development programs for specialized populations, such as the Department of Developmental Disabilities and Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. Other state agencies, including those listed below, are responsible for providing workforce development activities for a broader array of individuals throughout Ohio.

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[11] Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, *Annual Report 2020*, available here.

Figure 3: Organization of workforce development in Ohio

OWT oversees the implementation of nearly 200 workforce development programs administered by 17 state agencies and numerous outside partners.[12] The following table includes examples of general workforce development programs in Ohio.

Agency	Program	Description
JFS	Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP)[13]	Connects low-income individuals ages 14 to 24 with training and services to assist those individuals with finding employment
	Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs[14]	Provides trade-affected workers with reemployment services and income support to find suitable employment

[12] Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, *Annual Report 2020*, available here.

[13] Department of Job and Family Services, *Fact Sheet: Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP)*, available here.

[14] Department of Job and Family Services, *Frequently Asked Questions About the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act*, available here.

Agency	Program	Description
DSA	TechCred Program[15]	Provides reimbursements to employers for employees to earn an approved technology-focused credential
	Individual Microcredential Assistance Program (IMAP)[16]	Provides reimbursements to training providers for costs for individuals to earn a microcredential
DHE	Choose Ohio First Scholarship[17]	Supports students in technology-related fields through programs focusing on business collaboration to strengthen the workforce in competitive global markets
EDU	Innovative Workforce Incentive Program[18]	Reimburses school districts and community or STEM schools for every industry-recognized credential a student earns
AGE	Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)[19]	Provides job training and employment placements for income-eligible individuals who are age 55 and older

What is an apprenticeship program?

An apprenticeship program combines paid on-the-job training and related classroom instruction to prepare an individual for a high-skilled occupation. On completing an apprenticeship program, an individual is awarded a portable and nationally recognized credential that signifies the individual's occupational proficiency. Because the apprenticeship model is designed to be flexible, an employer is able to customize an apprenticeship program to meet the employer's particular workforce needs.[20]

There are two types of apprenticeship programs – registered apprenticeship programs and industry-recognized apprenticeship programs (IRAP). A registered apprenticeship program is

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[15] Development Services Agency, *TechCred Program Guidelines: April 2021 Application Period*, available here.

[16] Development Services Agency, *Individual Microcredential Assistance Program (IMAP) Program Guidelines*, available here.

[17] Department of Higher Education, *Choose Ohio First*, available here.

[18] Department of Education, *Innovative Workforce Incentive Program – Frequently Asked Questions*, available here.

[19] Department of Aging, *Senior Community Services Employment Program*, available here.

[20] U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship, *Explore Apprenticeship*, available here, and *How Can We Help You?* available here.

recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor or a state apprenticeship agency for meeting national quality standards. In Ohio, the Department of Job and Family Services registers apprenticeship programs.[21] An IRAP is similar to a registered apprenticeship program, except that a standards recognition entity (SRE) registers the program. An SRE is a third-party entity, such as a trade association, approved by the U.S. Department of Labor as being qualified to recognize apprenticeship programs.[22]

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[21] U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship, *What Is a Registered Apprenticeship Program?* available here and Ohio Administrative Code 5101:11-1-01(YY).

[22] U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship, *Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Program Frequently Asked Questions*, available here.