

# 2024

ANNUAL REPORT



Department of  
Public Safety



## Contents

<b>Letter from the Director</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Opening of Central Ohio Crime Gun Intelligence Center</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Online Commercial Driver License (CDL) Renewal .....	8
Class D Third Party Test Sites .....	8
Title Manual .....	8
BMV Express Kiosk .....	9
I Passed! #NewOhio Driver .....	9
Chat with Charlie – 1 Million Users! .....	9
<b>Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services</b> .....	<b>10</b>
New Law Enforcement Accreditation Program Announced.....	10
Nearly \$5 Million in Grants Announced to Enhance Support for Human Trafficking Survivors.....	11
Grant Announced to Reduce Housing Barriers for Human Trafficking Survivors .....	12
<b>Ohio Emergency Management Agency</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Ohio Total Solar Eclipse .....	13
Training and Exercise.....	14
Severe Weather Response .....	14
State of Ohio Hazard Mitigation Plan .....	15
COVID-19.....	15
Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Award .....	16
State of Ohio Security Grant for Nonprofits .....	16
Ohio EMA Watch Office .....	16
<b>Ohio Emergency Medical Services</b> .....	<b>17</b>
Recent Accomplishments.....	17
EMS and Fire Service Education.....	18
Certifications.....	18
Investigations.....	19
Grants .....	19
Research and Analysis .....	20
Emergency Medical Services for Children .....	20
Statewide Trauma System.....	20
Medical Transportation .....	20
<b>Ohio Homeland Security</b> .....	<b>21</b>
Cyber Security .....	21
Statewide Terrorism Analysis and Crime Center.....	22
Critical Infrastructure Team.....	23
Private Investigator and Security Guard Services.....	23
Drone Working Group .....	24
OHS Celebrates 20 Years of Service .....	24

<b>Ohio Narcotics Intelligence Center .....</b>	<b>25</b>
Forensics.....	26
Intelligence.....	27
Bridging Information Gaps.....	28
Operation BRIDGE .....	28
RecoveryOhio Monthly Drug Trends Call.....	29
Emerging Drug Scientific Working Group (EDSWG) .....	29
Capabilities.....	29
Public Safety Bulletins.....	30
Law Enforcement Drug Summit.....	30
<b>Ohio School Safety Center.....</b>	<b>31</b>
Expansion of Subject-Matter Expert Staff.....	31
Enriched Training Portfolio .....	32
Student Safety Advisory Council.....	33
Security and Vulnerability Assessments.....	34
Ohio School Safety Summit .....	34
The National Anonymous Reporting System Conference .....	34
New Safety Plans Portal.....	35
Safer Ohio School Tip Line .....	35
<b>Ohio State Highway Patrol .....</b>	<b>36</b>
Impact 24.....	36
Field Operations.....	38
Investigative Services .....	40
Collaboration .....	41
Educational Programs .....	42
Recruitment and Training .....	43
Intelligence Functions .....	44
Technology and Innovation.....	45
New Vehicles and Post.....	46
Mental Health and Wellness.....	47
Special Events .....	48
Statistical Recap.....	49
Ohio Investigative Unit .....	50
<b>Ohio Traffic Safety Office.....</b>	<b>56</b>
Federal Grants .....	56
Distracted Driving .....	56
Grants to Support Teen Driver Training.....	57
Advanced Driver Training Summer Series.....	57
Buckle Up with Brutus .....	58
Driver Training Education Initiatives .....	58
Motorcycle Ohio.....	59



## Letter from the Director

With support from Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, we at the Ohio Department of Public Safety (DPS) kicked off several public safety initiatives in Fiscal Year 2024 to fulfill our mission of preserving the safety and well-being of all citizens with the most cost-effective and service-oriented methods available.

We launched the Central Ohio Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC) in partnership with the Columbus Division of Police, Ohio State Highway Patrol, Ohio Narcotics Intelligence Center (ONIC), Ohio Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Investigation, and U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF). This centralized law enforcement hub focuses exclusively on investigating and preventing gun violence and combines the expertise of firearm evidence examiners, intelligence analysts, and investigators under one roof to rapidly collect, analyze, and share information about guns used in violent crimes.

We announced upgrades to the Ohio School Safety Center's Safer Ohio School Tip Line during School Safety Month in October. The new Safer Ohio School Tip Line smartphone app, available both on iOS and Android devices, and the online web form include pre-populated prompts to help users quickly upload information. We also staffed the tip line with crisis response professionals who are trained to help individuals contemplating self-harm. The Tip Line (844-SaferOH --844-723-3764) provides students with a free mechanism to report concerns for safety 24/7.

Construction and hiring are underway for the new Ohio Cyber Integration Center (OCIC) that will house 11 cyber analysts and provide a collaboration space for OCIC partners. A combined effort of Ohio Homeland Security and the Ohio Adjutant General, the center will be located at the National Guard's Beightler Armory in Columbus and will work closely with the Statewide Terrorism Analysis and Crime Center (STACC). The STACC facilitates the gathering, analysis and sharing of critical information in a timely and effective manner. This past year, after more than 16 months of investigative work and collaboration between STACC components, there have been arrests and charges of theft and misuse of \$20 million in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits in the Throop Farm Market case.

We codified the ONIC as a DPS division in July of 2023 with offices in Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Toledo. ONIC offices house criminal intelligence analysts and forensic computer specialists who assist law enforcement agencies and drug task forces by providing investigative and case support. Agencies from 65 Ohio counties submitted evidence for extraction and ONIC supported over 1,700 investigations, received nearly 4,000 devices, and conducted 4,853 device examinations.

Operation BRIDGE is a notable collaboration between RecoveryOhio, the ONIC, and DPS. Operation BRIDGE seeks to break down barriers between law enforcement and treatment providers and support the recovery of those suffering from substance use disorders. In Fiscal Year 2024, Ohio DPS supported five BRIDGE Operations in Scioto County, Franklin County, Lawrence County, Middletown, and Ross County. The results of these operations include 120 individuals connected to treatment; 277 pounds from pill takebacks, while guns, cocaine and fentanyl seized.

Led by the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board, the new Ohio Collaborative Law Enforcement Accreditation Program began testing its certification program with 10 local law enforcement agencies to implement a series of nearly three dozen state standards reflective of best practices in law enforcement. Although several other states have law enforcement accreditation



programs, Ohio's program is the only state-administered program in the nation that does not charge law enforcement agencies to participate.

We awarded over \$4.6 million in funding to help victim service agencies meet the needs of human trafficking survivors this fiscal year. Thirty nonprofit organizations in 14 counties received funding as part of the new Direct Services for Victims of Human Trafficking Grant Program. Launched by Governor DeWine in September 2023, the grant program aims to help serve the growing number of sex and labor trafficking victims in need of support.

The Ohio Traffic Safety Office participated in a multi-agency effort to inform and educate all drivers about the changes to the distracted driving law, which took effect on April 4, 2023. The law makes it illegal in most cases for drivers to use or hold a cell phone or electronic device. The violation is now considered a primary offense, meaning any officer can pull over a driver immediately if they witness a violation.

On April 8, 2024, Ohioans were fortunate to experience the beauty and wonder of a total solar eclipse. Ohio was a destination location for many visitors from across the United States seeking to view this rare event. This multi-year planning effort, led by the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, engaged local, state, and federal partners.

Ohio State Highway Patrol troopers arrested nearly 15,000 individuals for impaired driving, made over 4,800 arrests for drug violations, issued over 54,000 safety belt citations and enforced over 18,500 distracted driving violations. The OSHP has detailed analytical strategies to specifically address traffic crash patterns and dangerous driving behaviors that directly impact Ohio motorists. In FY24, provisional data shows there were 1,213 traffic fatalities on Ohio roadways. This marked a decrease of 75 fatalities compared with Fiscal Year 2023.

The Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles continues to offer innovative, convenient services for Ohioans. A little over a year since implementation, the virtual assistant "Chat with Charlie" has provided assistance and links to information for BMV customers 24/7. Of the one million uses, more than 300,000 have occurred outside of normal BMV business hours.

The Ohio Department of Public Safety touches millions of Ohioans with a core mission centered on the principles of safety, service, and protection. We did so this past year with a sense of purpose and a dedicated workforce determined to make Ohio a safer place to live, work and play.

Let's Go!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Wilson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andy Wilson, Director  
Ohio Department of Public Safety

## Opening of Central Ohio Crime Gun Intelligence Center

Governor DeWine joined state, local, and federal leaders in Columbus on Sept. 19, 2023, to unveil the new Central Ohio Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC).

Housed within the Ohio Department of Public Safety, the Central Ohio CGIC is operated in partnership between the Columbus Division of Police, Ohio State Highway Patrol, Ohio Narcotics Intelligence Center, Ohio Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Investigation, and U.S.

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF). This centralized law enforcement hub, which focuses exclusively on investigating and preventing gun violence, combines the expertise of firearm evidence examiners, intelligence analysts, and investigators under one roof to rapidly collect, analyze, and share information about guns used in violent crimes.

The centerpiece of the Central Ohio CGIC is the [National Integrated Ballistic Information Network \(NIBIN\)](#), which was developed by the ATF to help law enforcement connect gun crimes nationwide. The Ohio State Highway Patrol is dedicating two NIBIN machines to the CGIC that will create digital images of shell casings connected to criminal investigations and compare them to firearm evidence from other crimes. A match indicates that the same firearm may have been used in multiple shootings, and law enforcement can use this information as an investigative lead.

The Central Ohio CGIC began operations in July 2023 and immediately began assisting law enforcement agencies throughout the region free of charge. Since its initial launch, teams have connected numerous guns to crimes that were committed both recently and several years ago.

At the time of its launch, the Central Ohio CGIC was the second full-scale crime gun intelligence center in the state, joining the center operated by the Cincinnati Police Department. The two new NIBIN machines dedicated to the Central Ohio CGIC were funded as part of Governor DeWine's [Ohio Ballistics Testing Initiative](#), which was announced in March 2022. A total of \$10.5 million was awarded to the Ohio Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Investigation and the Ohio State Highway Patrol to increase the number of NIBIN units in Ohio from seven to 16.



*Governor DeWine joined state, local, and federal leaders in Columbus on Sept. 19, 2023, to unveil the new Central Ohio Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC).*

## Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles

*Charles L. Norman, Registrar*

The Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) is primarily responsible for providing a wide array of licensure, registration, and other services to keep Ohio's constituents and commerce moving.

In total, the BMV collects in excess of \$1.3 billion annually in taxes, fees, and other assessments on behalf of Ohio, its 88 counties, thousands of local taxing districts, as well as dozens of out-of-state jurisdictions. Having in excess of 10 million driver license and identification card holders and over 12 million registered vehicles to manage, the BMV processes nearly 50,000 transactions every day throughout the year either in-person, through the mail, or by electronic means.

BMV operations are overseen by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, and are divided into five separate sections, each focused on specific areas of responsibility:

**COMMERCIAL TRUCKING AND DRIVER TESTING** section manages Ohio's role in the International Registration Plan (IRP) and oversees all elements of driver testing throughout the state. The IRP is a registration reciprocity agreement among the states and Canadian provinces providing for payment of license fees by commercial motor carriers which ensures ease of movement for shipping. The Driver Testing unit oversees 800,000 knowledge (written) tests, and conducts over 400,000 skills tests each year. In addition, the section oversees the BMV third-party testing program with dozens of locations statewide which conduct over 130,000 skills tests annually.

**FIELD OPERATIONS** oversees all facets of over-the-counter license agency transactions, remote location kiosk operations, as well as business unit testing and development of core BMV systems. Ohio utilizes a network of Deputy Registrar (DR) license agencies throughout the state with at least one agency in every county. Each DR is either 1) an independently contracted small business owner, or 2) a local non-profit corporation serving its community, or 3) a local elected official, such as a county clerk of court or county auditor acting in their official capacity. Daily interaction and periodic agency evaluations by Field Operations personnel ensure Ohioans receive consistently reliable service. BMV continues to expand its kiosk program whereby Ohioans can renew vehicle registrations at convenient locations throughout their community at times well outside of standard business hours. In the few years of operation, over 400,000 transactions have been handled by BMV kiosks.

**INVESTIGATIONS** is responsible for administrative investigations of BMV-issued credentials and the documentation related thereto, along with vehicle title-related transactions. Ensuring the authenticity of qualifying documentation for issuance of an Ohio identity credential is paramount to making that credential reliable for all its many uses. BMV investigators also serve as subject matter experts to aid federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies whenever needed. Annually, the Investigations section opens and closes over 2,500 BMV-related cases.

**DRIVER SERVICES** oversees all elements of driver license-connected information. This section handles posting all court-imposed convictions and restrictions upon a driver's record, managing medical cases, processing reinstatement transactions, operating the BMV Contact Center, and fulfills all requests for BMV records. The work of this section keeps Ohioans' driver record up-to-date in near real time depending on how quickly Ohio's courts transmit data. The Contact Center within Driver Services handles over a million phone calls, emails, and chats annually. Driver Services also fulfills more than 11 million records requests per year from entities such as employers, insurance companies, towing companies, and lending institutions.

**VEHICLE SERVICES** manages mail-in registration operations, the BMV’s role in vehicle titling, special interest plate legislation implementation, new and used automobile dealer licensing, vehicle registrations, and personalized plate processing. The BMV processes 1.5 million pieces of mail annually, most of which related to vehicle registration renewals. While Ohio’s county clerks of court issue vehicle titles, the BMV maintains the statewide vehicle title database and provides guidance to county clerks of court on matters related to proper title issuance. Vehicle Services oversees the licensure components for nearly 7,000 new and used automobile dealers.

In addition to normal daily operations as generalized above, the BMV regularly pursues new and innovative ways to improve processes and expand the delivery of related services. Below are some highlighted initiatives and improvements taking place in FY24.

## Online Commercial Driver License (CDL) Renewal

Ohioans may now be eligible to renew their CDL online. The renewal process is easy and efficient and can be performed on a mobile device. Eligibility restrictions apply in regard to the federally required medical certification being up to date at time of renewal, hazmat endorsements must be valid, four-year renewal eligibility only, and no information changes from the last initial issuance or renewed CDL.

*On Oct. 10, 2023, Lt. Governor Jon Husted announced online license renewal for Ohio truck drivers.*



## Class D Third Party Test Sites

The Ohio BMV created a pilot program to contract with third-party partners to administer the driver’s license Class-D skills test, starting with eight privately run locations. This pilot program was considered a success and the BMV has continued to expand access to driver exam services with additional locations for a total of 23 location as of July 1, 2024. These locations augment the 46 state-run exam locations to provide improved service delivery.

## Title Manual

The BMV and Ohio Clerks of Courts Association partnered in 2017 to form a committee with the goal of creating a procedure manual, to provide a single reference point for auto title issuance, for use at all 88 County Clerk of Courts Title Offices. The Title Manual Committee published the first iteration of the Title Manual in December 2018. Over the next few years, the committee combed through and reviewed all previous documentation in order to secure all relevant and current title-related policies and procedures are accounted for and maintained in one resource.

In the first quarter of 2024, the committee agreed that the Title Manual contains all pertinent auto title information and is considered complete.



## BMV Express Kiosk

Since Jan. 1, 2024, BMV has installed 17 additional BMV Express Kiosks (total of 7,516 transactions). From Jan. 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024, a grand total of 117,084 transactions have been completed via a BMV Express Kiosk.

## I Passed! #NewOhio Driver



The BMV noticed that individuals who passed their driving test for the first time, took a picture of themselves with their actual credential and then post it online. We all remember the day we passed our driving test and got our driver license. It was a memorable time and people want to share.

We wanted to share the joy of the moment as well and help our customers keep their personal information safe off of social media. The BMV created a poster to commemorate the occasion and distributed the posters at all Driver Examination stations throughout the state. The poster has a cut-out where the New Ohio Driver can get a picture of themselves in what looks like a driver license.

The BMV Driver Examiners and New Ohio Drivers have embraced the concept and are having great fun with it. Customer service at its best and capturing a happy smile!

## Chat with Charlie – 1 Million Users!

BMV's Chat with Charlie is "Celebrating One Million Customers!" A little over a year since implementation, Chat with Charlie has provided assistance and links to information for BMV customers 24/7. This automated online virtual assistant uses keyword and phrase recognition to aid customers in finding answers to their questions at the BMV's detailed website.



Of the million uses of Chat with Charlie, more than 300,000 have occurred outside of normal BMV business hours. Additionally, Chat with Charlie has positively impacted BMV Telecommunications operations in several different areas:

- Reduction in Live Chats – down 42% which equates to approximately 600 fewer chats per day.
- Reassignment of agents from Live Chat to answering Incoming Telephone Calls – increase of 188 hours per week of calls served.
- Reduction in call wait times by nearly one minute since implementation, to an average wait time of seven minutes – which is among the lowest of motor vehicle agencies across the country.

Through research, technology, grants, administration, and programmatic initiatives, the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) serves a wide variety of agencies committed to reducing and preventing crime across Ohio. The office also serves as the state criminal justice planning agency and performs criminal justice planning for Ohio. Additionally, OCJS currently administers more than \$200 million in state and federal criminal justice funding, develops justice system public policy, collects and analyzes crime data, evaluates programs and develops technology, and provides training and products for criminal justice professionals and their communities.

### New Law Enforcement Accreditation Program Announced

On March 21, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine signed an executive order establishing a statewide program to recognize law enforcement agencies that voluntarily meet or exceed Ohio's new standards for professional excellence.

Led by the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board, the new Ohio Collaborative Law Enforcement Accreditation Program will certify law enforcement agencies that implement a series of nearly three dozen state standards reflective of best practices in law enforcement. Although several other states have law enforcement accreditation programs, Ohio's program is the only state-administered program in the nation that does not charge law enforcement agencies to participate.



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 Use of Force  | 16 Agency Property & Equipment                     |
| 2 Use of Deadly Force   | 17 Written System of Agency Policies or Directives |
| 3 Employee Recruitment  | 18 Written Goals and Objectives                    |
| 4 Employee Hiring   | 19 Professional Conduct                            |
| 5 Community Engagement  | 20 Harassment                                      |
| 6 Evidentiary Audio & Video Data                                      | 21 Career Development                              |
| 7 Telecommunicator Training   | 22 Performance Evaluation                          |
| 8 Bias-Free Policing  | 23 Early Intervention System                       |
| 9 Investigation of Employee Misconduct                                | 24 Records Policy                                  |
| 10 Vehicular Pursuit  | 25 Collecting & Reporting of Data                  |
| 11 Response to Mass Protests & Demonstrations                         | 26 Patrol  |
| 12 Agency Wellness  | 27 Knock and Announce & No-Knock Entries           |
| 13 Crisis Intervention  | 28 Strip & Body Cavity Search                      |
| 14 Developmentally Appropriate Policing & Positive Youth Interactions | 29 Arrest With & Without Warrant                   |
| 15 Property & Evidence  | 30 Missing Persons                                 |
|   | 31 Investigative Task Forces or Specialized Units  |

Law enforcement agencies that participate in the Ohio Collaborative Law Enforcement Accreditation Program must meet 31 policing standards that address various core responsibilities in law enforcement such as professional conduct, bias-free policing, crisis intervention, and community engagement. Standards also address policies surrounding criminal arrests, use of force, vehicular pursuits, appropriate policing of youth, patrol practices, record and evidence management, agency wellness, and career development.

The rollout of the program will take place in two phases. The first phase will operationalize the program by focusing on 10 agencies of various sizes located throughout the state, including Dayton Police Department, Dublin Police Department, Fairborn Police Department, Ohio State Highway Patrol, Mahoning County Sheriff’s Office, Sidney Police Department, Springfield Police Department, Stark County Sheriff’s Office, University of Toledo Police Department, and Van Wert County Sheriff’s Office. After the first phase of accreditation, the program will open to all law enforcement agencies across Ohio.

## Nearly \$5 Million in Grants Announced to Enhance Support for Human Trafficking Survivors

On Feb. 16, Governor DeWine announced more than \$4.6 million in funding to help victim service agencies meet the needs of human trafficking survivors.

Thirty nonprofit organizations in 14 counties received funding as part of the new Direct Services for Victims of Human Trafficking Grant Program. Launched by Governor DeWine in September 2023, the grant program aims to help serve the growing number of sex and labor trafficking victims in need of support.

Services funded through the program include but are not limited to mental health services, substance use disorder treatment, education and employment support, and residential placement.

The grant program was developed in partnership with the Ohio General Assembly with funding from Ohio’s operating budget. Initially funded at \$4 million, an additional \$600,000 was added to the program in response to the significant number of quality grant applications.

**2024 Direct Services for Victims of Human Trafficking FUNDING AWARDS**

IMPLEMENTING AGENCY	COUNTY	AWARD AMOUNT
Homesafe, Inc.	Ashtabula	\$63,605.81
Health Recovery Services, Inc	Athens	\$84,000.00
Tri-County Help Center	Belmont	\$95,607.15
Project Woman of Ohio	Clark	\$199,167.70
Canopy Child Advocacy Center	Cuyahoga	\$184,373.00
Cuyahoga Co. Board of DD	Cuyahoga	\$26,450.00
MetroHealth Systems	Cuyahoga	\$199,744.74
Collaborative to End Human Trafficking	Cuyahoga	\$177,810.39
The Research Institute at Nationwide Children’s Hospital	Franklin	\$199,999.81
Freedom a la Cart	Franklin	\$200,000.00
Gracehaven, Inc.	Franklin	\$194,883.39
Sanctuary Collective	Franklin	\$199,989.95
The Salvation Army	Franklin	\$199,852.25
Alvis, Inc.	Franklin	\$199,352.75
The Ohio State University	Franklin	\$199,999.64
Southeast, Inc.	Franklin	\$199,695.91
The SOAP Project	Franklin	\$12,950.00
Cincinnati Union Bethel	Hamilton	\$182,040.51
Center for Addiction Treatment	Hamilton	\$198,037.81
Ohio Justice & Policy Center	Hamilton	\$200,000.00
The Salvation Army	Hamilton	\$100,000.00
BLOC Ministries, Inc.	Hamilton	\$73,050.00
Hope’s Place, Inc.	Lawrence	\$140,000.00
COMPASS Family and Community Services	Mahoning	\$199,149.18
The Recovery Council	Pike	\$122,386.28

Ohio Department of Public Safety

## Grant Announced to Reduce Housing Barriers for Human Trafficking Survivors

On Oct. 17, 2023, Governor DeWine announced that a new initiative in Ohio will work to reduce housing barriers for survivors of human trafficking.

With the support of \$1.8 million in grant funding from the Ohio Department of Public Safety, the Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) will expand the number of domestic violence programs in Ohio that can provide comprehensive services to human trafficking survivors. The announcement came during Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

The funding will provide grants to member programs that are interested in expanding, enhancing, or beginning services for human trafficking survivors. In addition, ODVN will use the funding to hire a full-time human trafficking program support manager to provide support to member programs participating in the project and develop training content on the intersections of domestic violence and human trafficking.

### Funds will be used to:

- Standardize the services human trafficking survivors receive through Ohio's domestic violence programs.
- Educate domestic violence shelter employees on the intersections of human trafficking and domestic violence (such as trauma, violence, power and control, mental health, and substance use).
- Ensure that domestic violence programs have training and resources to assist these survivors.



## Ohio Total Solar Eclipse



On April 8, 2024, Ohioans were fortunate to experience the beauty and wonder of a total solar eclipse. Ohio was a destination location for many visitors from across the United States seeking to view this rare event.

The Ohio EMA began planning for this event in 2021. This multi-year planning effort engaged local, state, and federal partners. The Ohio planning section coordinated and tracked more than 200 outreach events and planning presentations for the Agency. The Ohio training and exercise section created and implemented three tabletop exercises with more than 50 participating partner agencies, divisions, and observers.

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine signed Executive Order 2024-04D to assure Ohioans the state is well-prepared for the total solar eclipse; dedicated funding of \$1 million was allocated toward eclipse security in the 2024-25 state budget.

The Ohio Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and Joint Information Center (JIC) were activated the weekend of the eclipse and deactivated the day after. The EOC staff-maintained positions at the emergency support function desks assigned to

their agency and monitored activities across the state. This included traffic cameras, weather, and regional staff reports and the JIC team focused on social media monitoring, coordinating media interviews, and escorting media to and from the Emergency Operations Center.

As communications are critically important to any large event, specific eclipse safety messaging was created in collaboration with our traffic partners at the Ohio State Highway Patrol, Ohio Department of Transportation, and the Ohio Turnpike. The messages were designed to share safety and preparedness tips for Ohioans and visitors coming to the state. The campaign included message sharing in a cadence starting at 50 days prior to the event.

The event went smoothly and without major incident. Ohio could not have asked for better weather for the day and while there were plenty of motorists on the roads, traffic congestion was minimal.

The aforementioned eclipse funding was coordinated and managed by the EMA Disaster Recovery Branch. Those funds will be dispersed in the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 25.

## Training and Exercise

In January 2024, the Ohio EMA Training and Exercise Section released a new exercise assistance tool geared toward helping exercise developers with creating scenarios. This tool provides a library of potential scenarios to prompt exercise participants to react with regards to certain hazards. The tool has been well received with positive feedback from county emergency managers as well as compliments from other states. Since its release this tool has been downloaded 394 times in 40 states and four countries (United States, Canada, Australia, and Thailand). This tool continues to improve and grow as the exercise staff continues to include additional scenario information and details.

The Training and Exercise staff has supported over 30 exercises across the state and offers training throughout the state of Ohio. The staff has coordinated 145 training classes with a total of 2,602 students participating. The team continues to offer courses through the DPS Training Campus.

## Severe Weather Response

On the evening of March 14, 2024, a severe weather system swept through Ohio, leaving behind significant damage and impacting local communities and structures. The National Weather Service reported 12 tornado touchdowns with five EF-1 tornadoes, five EF-2 tornadoes, and two EF-3 tornadoes. The EF-3 tornado in Logan County wreaked the most devastation with over 1,500 structures impacted and of those, roughly 400 incurred severe damage or were completely destroyed. The county suffered three fatalities and 27 injuries were reported.



*Following the severe weather system that swept through Ohio on March 14, 2024, the State EOC coordinated 23 missions in an array of response areas, including search and rescue, debris clean-up and law enforcement.*

The Ohio EMA response was swift and steady as the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and Joint Information Center (JIC) were partially activated that same evening while the storms were still in progress and remained activated for 15 days. The State EOC coordinated 23 missions in an array of response areas, including search and rescue, debris clean-up and law enforcement. The Public Affairs Office supported the communications efforts at the Logan County Emergency Operations Center.

The Ohio EMA Watch Office coordinated missions related to the Logan County tornado response, ensuring a rapid and efficient deployment of resources and support to the affected areas. Efforts included organizing state resources for the deployment to be used locally, managing emergency shelter setups, and facilitating communication between local and state agencies to streamline relief efforts. This included the Ohio EMA logistics team responding to a critical need for a generator to be delivered and set up in Logan County.

The Regional Operations Branch of Ohio EMA was heavily engaged during and following the severe weather through information sharing and operational support of local emergency managers. Of particular note, all five regions had at least some level of engagement, with central and southwest having the greatest impacts. Of these five regions, four would ultimately send personnel to Logan County to support the county’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and related functionalities alongside county emergency managers from not only Logan County, but from all over the State of Ohio.

The storm qualified for the FEMA Individual Assistance (IA) program for 11 affected counties which Ohio EMA jointly coordinated with FEMA. The Disaster Recovery Branch supported the recovery efforts in Logan County and other counties impacted the tornadoes. Staff attended meetings with Ohio EMA Executive Director Merick and Ohio DPS Director Wilson to support local recovery efforts around housing, the economy, and debris operations. Staff continues to support the local long term recovery committee in Logan County and the development of committees in other impacted counties.

To date, Ohio has broken the record for most tornadoes in a single year which was set in 1992 with 62 tornadoes. This year as of July 12 Ohio’s county stands at 64 tornadoes. This was not a record we wanted to break.

## COVID-19

The Ohio EMA Disaster Recovery Branch (DRB) continues to support local governments and hospitals with COVID-19 cost reimbursement requests for eligible emergency protective measures by acting as a conduit to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This assistance is provided to local governments and certain private non-profit organizations under FEMA’s Public Assistance Program. Last year, the DRB issued payments to 47 applicants totaling \$125,755,136.

## State of Ohio Hazard Mitigation Plan

### *Ohio is one of 12 states with enhanced plans*

The Ohio EMA Mitigation Branch maintains the State of Ohio Hazard Mitigation Plan (SOHMP). A state mitigation plan demonstrates commitment to reduce risks from natural hazards and serves as a guide for decision makers for reducing the effects of natural hazards as resources are committed. The SOHMP must be updated and approved by FEMA every five years in order for the state to maintain eligibility for Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation Assistance funds after a disaster event. FEMA has established criteria for two levels of state mitigation plans, a “standard” state mitigation plan and an “enhanced” state mitigation plan.

There are only 12 states that currently have enhanced mitigation plans and the State of Ohio Hazard Mitigation Plan update was approved by FEMA as enhanced in May 2024. The enhanced plan status is a recognition of the quality of the state mitigation plan and Ohio EMA’s management of hazard mitigation grant funding. The enhanced plan status also qualifies the state for additional Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds after a major disaster declaration.

## Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Award

### *Mahoning Valley Sanitary District (MVSD)*

Ohio EMA assisted the Mahoning Valley Sanitary District (MVSD) to successfully compete for the state's first nationally competitive Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) award.

The more than \$38 million Building and Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant has been awarded to the Mahoning Valley Sanitary District (MVSD) to strengthen and improve the Mineral Ridge Dam. This is the largest BRIC grant to be awarded by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 5. The Federal Emergency Management Agency consists of 10 regions in the continental United States and territories. States included in the FEMA 5 region are Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

MVSD will use \$38,367,334.90 in federal BRIC

grant funds and \$16,367,334.90 in local funds to rehabilitate the Mineral Ridge Dam, which provides drinking water to Youngstown, Niles, and the surrounding areas. The project will bring the dam into compliance with current safety standards.

This investment reduces risks of downstream flooding and protects the drinking water for over 220,000 people in and around Youngstown, Ohio. It's part of the plan to make communities stronger and more resilient.

## State of Ohio Security Grant for Nonprofits

The Preparedness Grants Branch continues to administer a variety of grants to include the SFY2024 Ohio Security Grant (OSG). This grant awarded total of \$8,287,500 in grant funding to 92 Ohio nonprofit organizations to address their security needs. House Bill 33 authorized funding for the program for both state fiscal year 2024 and 2025.

## Ohio EMA Watch Office

Throughout the fiscal year, the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (EMA) Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and Watch Office staff played intricate roles in all-hazards incident awareness and the Logan County tornado response.

The Ohio Sentry dashboard continues to prove itself as a premier hazard awareness tool for public safety partners with over 300,000 views in this fiscal period. This innovative tool utilizes geographic information system (GIS) technology and was showcased at the annual ESRI GIS conference as a top-of-the-line product for its effectiveness and innovation in emergency management.

The Watch Office staff is committed to continuously enhancing and updating the platform with the latest information to better serve the whole community.

Since July 1, 2023, Ohio EMA's Watch Office has engaged in 1,227 distinct actions, effectively addressing all eight community lifelines:

- Communications – 120
- Energy – 73
- Food/Water/Shelter – 172
- Hazardous Materials – 86
- Health and Medical – 16
- Safety and Security – 547
- Transportation – 116
- Water Systems – 14
- Miscellaneous – 83



## Ohio Emergency Medical Services

*Rob Wagoner, Executive Director*

The Division of Emergency Medical Services (EMS), in conjunction with the State Board of Emergency Medical, Fire, and Transportation Services (EMFTS) and the Firefighter and Fire Safety Inspector Training Committee, is responsible for:

- Establishing training and certification standards for fire and EMS personnel;
- Accreditation of EMS and chartering of fire training programs;
- Coordination of Trauma Committee activities and Ohio's trauma data collection system;
- EMS grant program administration, providing funding for training, equipment, and research;
- EMS for Children (EMSC) committee support;
- Licensing of Ohio's medical transportation services;
- Coordination of the Regional Physician Advisory Boards;
- Coordination, collection, and analysis of data submitted to the EMS Incidence Reporting System and the Ohio Trauma Registry;
- Conducting administrative investigations involving possible violations of Ohio Revised Code Chapters 4765 and 4766; and
- Providing EMS support in the State of Ohio Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) during declared emergencies or natural disasters.

A physician active in the practice of emergency medicine and selected by the EMFTS Board serves as the state medical director. The medical director advises the division and the EMFTS Board on matters regarding adult and pediatric emergency care and other EMS issues.

## Recent Accomplishments

### During FY 23-24:

- The division funding transitioned from the transportation budget to the General Revenue Fund, resulting in increased staffing as well as the backfilling of several open positions. We remained active with the State EOC, Essential Emergency Support Function (ESF)-8, and the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) as the planning tempo in preparation for the total solar eclipse in April 2024 increased. We also assisted with staffing the ESF-8 desk during the event.
- Under Senate Bill 131, which focused on reducing barriers to certification and licensure through reciprocity, the division revised how EMS and Fire reciprocity applications are processed resulting in a significant reduction in processing times.
- Our online training program for proctors who administer State of Ohio fire and EMS certification examinations was updated and required for all examination proctors on the Public Safety Training Campus.
- A number of manual and paper-based processes key to issuing certificates to practice were migrated to electronic and more automated platforms, helping to improve our responsiveness to customer needs. Most notably was the launch of our Candidate Orientation Script that is required to be read and acknowledged by each candidate, prior to completing all State of Ohio fire and EMS examinations for certification by each candidate taking the examination.

## EMS and Fire Service Education

The primary focus of the Ohio Division of EMS is to ensure a workforce of well-trained and certified EMS and fire service providers to serve Ohio citizens.

### EMS Education

The division regulates 91 accredited institutions that offer EMS training for initial certification and more than 580 approved organizations that provide EMS continuing education offerings. The division conducts both initial and renewal application site visits for accredited institutions and approved continuing education programs. The division conducted 20 in-person site visits of accredited EMS training institutions and 258 virtual site visits of approved continuing education programs in FY 23-24.

### Fire Service Education

The division approves the delivery of firefighter, fire safety inspector, and instructor training required for certification through the training institution chartering process. There are 62 chartered institutions offering fire service training for certification to practice in Ohio.

The division conducts fire charter reviews, which include site visits for both initial and renewal charter requests. Charter reviews are conducted

to ensure course offerings and facilities meet the educational standards established through the Ohio Revised and Administrative Codes. Sixteen site visits were conducted in FY 23-24.

### Continuing Education

To ensure that Ohio has qualified and well-trained EMS and fire service providers, certificate holders are required to complete continuing education in order to renew their certifications every three years. The EMFTS Board recently added an additional avenue to meet the continuing education requirement for renewal of certification by means of completing a number of core competencies for paramedics in conjunction with their medical director and department approval.

### Testing

The division administers state certification examinations for firefighters, fire safety inspectors, and instructors. The cognitive portion of the certification examination process is conducted using a web-based testing system operated by the division. Examinations are administered by chartered fire training programs and accredited EMS training programs with approval by the division. In FY 23-24, the division scheduled 1,773 examination sessions, administering 5,619 individual examinations.

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## Certifications

The division oversees the administration of 105,324 EMS and fire certificates to practice and to teach held by 52,769 certified personnel through the initial, renewal, reinstatement, and reciprocity application process. The division processed 39,363 applications, including 648 initial applications processed for current or veteran military personnel or their spouses.

An online application system permits qualified students seeking initial EMS and Fire service provider certifications to submit electronic applications and become certified within 24 hours of submission, allowing them to enter the workforce quickly utilizing their recently acquired knowledge and skills. Additionally, all certificate holders may quickly renew their certifications online, as required every three years. Initial applications for EMS and fire instructors are paper applications and are processed individually, as are reinstatement and reciprocity applications.

## Investigations

The division is responsible for conducting all investigations involving possible violations of Ohio Revised Code Chapter 4765, and the rules promulgated thereunder, pertaining to EMS providers, firefighters, fire safety inspectors, EMS and fire instructors, EMS accredited and approved training institutions, and chartered fire training institutions. Additionally, the division is responsible for investigating potential violations of Ohio Revised Code Chapter 4766, and the rules promulgated thereunder, pertaining to the licensing of medical transportation organizations, ambulettes, ambulances, mobile intensive care units, and air medical service organizations. The division also coordinates all administrative 119 hearings for divisional matters and enforces compliance with discipline issued by the Ohio EMFTS Board and the Chief Executive Officer of the EMFTS Board. Lastly, the division conducts all criminal conviction reviews for prospective and renewing fire and EMS providers pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 9.78.

### Case Investigations

Investigation Cases	FY 2023	FY 2024
EMS	435	461
Fire	101	131
Dual Fire & EMS	142	150
Total Cases Opened	678	742
Medical Transportation Investigations*	151	125

\*Medical Transportation Investigations are included in the EMS Investigations total for statistical purposes.

## Grants

The State Board of Emergency Medical, Fire, and Transportation Services Grant Program’s purpose is to improve and enhance EMS and trauma patient care in the state by providing grant funds to eligible applicants. The EMS grant award year consists of a two-year award funding cycle beginning July 1 and concluding June 30 the following year. The amount awarded for each category is determined by the Ohio EMFTS Board and the funds available from safety belt fines collected during the award year. There was a significant reduction in the collection of safety belt fines during the pandemic resulting in a reduction of funding levels for the FY 22-23 EMS grants program.

### EMS Grants

The grants program has been in existence for more than 25 years. In the last 10 years, the division has awarded more than \$29 million in training and equipment funds.

FY 22-23 Awards	Grants Awarded	Amount Awarded
Priority 1 - Training And Equipment	669	\$1,055,250
Supplemental Funding	15	\$416,419

The division oversees data submitted to the EMS Incidence Reporting System (EMSIRS) and the Ohio Trauma Registry. In the past year, the division collected data on more than 2 million EMS runs made by 867 EMS agencies and medical record data for more than 80,000 trauma patients admitted to 193 reporting hospitals and Freestanding Emergency Departments (FSEDs). Over 14 million trauma and EMS incident records are at the disposal of the EMFTS Board for system oversight and research.

Work continues on a project to update the EMSIRS system to accommodate the new National Emergency Medical Services Information System (NEMSIS) version 3.5 data standard. Launched in FY 21-22, this project will include integrations for reporting to the national Cardiac Arrest Registry to Enhance Survival (CARES) repository. In FY 23-24, the EMFTS Board renewed the financial support for all statewide EMS agencies to report all cardiac arrest data to CARES program to improve surveillance and help communities increase cardiac arrest survival rates. Nationally, a total of 34 state registries, over 2,600 EMS agencies, and over 2,500 hospitals representing a catchment area of more than 179 million people have resulted in more than 1 million patient entries into the registry.

## **Emergency Medical Services for Children**

The Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) program is a federally funded initiative designed to ensure children receive the very best emergency care the EMS system can provide. EMSC is a broad network of services including injury prevention, accessing EMS, ambulance services, emergency room services, hospital services, and rehabilitative services.

During FY 22-23 the EMSC grant project was transferred to Nationwide Children's Hospital. However, the EMSC committee continues to function under the direction of the EMFTS Board and remains supported by the division.

## **Statewide Trauma System**

Ohio has a legislated trauma system that ensures seriously injured people are transported to the right hospital, in the right manner, and in the right amount of time. Based on data submitted to the Ohio Trauma Registry, an annual report is published that informs our stakeholders of trends and care delivered to Ohio's trauma patients to benchmark care and help identify ways to improve patient outcomes.

## **Medical Transportation**

The division is charged with licensing private, non-emergency medical transportation service organizations (ambulette), emergency medical service organizations (ambulance and mobile intensive care units (MoICU), and air medical service organizations regulated by Chapter 4766 of the Ohio Revised Code. This is accomplished through yearly inspection, certification, and licensure of all services, vehicles, and satellite stations. The Medical Transportation section, with the assistance of 13 part-time contractors, performs about 4,500 inspections per year of service headquarters, vehicles, satellite locations, and unannounced inspections.



Ohio Homeland Security (OHS) strives to analyze and share information, awareness, and vulnerabilities, and to develop strategies to prevent, prepare for, and protect against terrorism and other threats to public safety.

## Cyber Security

The goal of the OHS Cyber Program is to widely develop and promote cybersecurity programs and services that improve the cybersecurity posture for the state of Ohio and protect state and local government, and critical infrastructure, from cyber threats and attacks.

To further that goal, construction and hiring are underway for the new Ohio Cyber Integration Center (OCIC) that will house 11 cyber analysts and provide a collaboration space for OCIC partners. A combined effort of OHS and the Ohio Adjutant General, the center will be located at the National Guard's Beightler Armory in Columbus and will work closely with the Statewide Terrorism Analysis and Crime Center (STACC).

In July 2023 OHS participated in the five-day Ohio Cyber Guardian Exercise, an annual training event organized by the Ohio Cyber Range Institute (OCRI) in collaboration with Ohio Cyber Reserve (OhCR). The exercise validated Ohio's Cyber Reserve team response capabilities, fostered collaboration among cyber professionals, and prepared Ohio's networks against potential cyber threats. In April 2024, OHS also participated in a tabletop exercise to test the Ohio Cyber Incident Response Plan. In a local, state and federal collaborative effort, 62 people attended in person (and another 50 virtually) representing nearly 40 entities, including schools, hospitals, utilities, local government, local, state and federal law enforcement, 911 call centers, and elections centers. Scenario tactics included phishing campaigns, ransomware attacks, website defacement, disinformation/synthetic media, and DDOS attacks.

In response to real world events, OHS cyber analysts supported incident response during cyber attacks against a local school district and a city government site in Ohio in 2024.

## Analyze Threats

- Cybersecurity analysts assist law enforcement with computer crime investigations and forensic support.
- OHS catalogs Ohio's critical infrastructure and provides security and vulnerability assessments.
- The Statewide Terrorism Analysis and Crime Center (STACC) provides 24/7 resources, expertise, and information to public safety and homeland security partners.

## Share Information & Resources

- The Communication and Information Management System (CIMS) is utilized to share alerts, bulletins, trainings, and notifications.
- The Ohio Intelligence Liaison Officer (ILO) program increases collaboration by building relationships with local representatives for the purpose of analysis, sharing, and dissemination of intelligence.
- Through the Ohio Public Private Partnership (OP3), member organizations share resources and services to help Ohioans quickly recover from disasters.
- The STACC coordinates specialized assistance to local law enforcement such as special response teams, aviation support, forensic video analysis, and more.

## Reduce Vulnerabilities

- By registering Ohio's scrap metal dealers and providing support to local law enforcement, Ohio's Scrap Metal Program helps thwart metal theft and protect Ohio's critical infrastructure.
- Through the Private Investigator Security Guard Services (PISGS), OHS licenses and regulates security or investigative service providers and their employees as required by Ohio law to ensure providers are insured and meet state requirements.

## Statewide Terrorism Analysis and Crime Center



As Ohio's primary fusion center, the State Terrorism Analysis and Crime Center (STACC) facilitates the gathering, analysis and sharing of critical information in a timely and effective manner. It operates 24/7, providing first responders, private sector managers and other partners with quick, accurate, actionable intelligence and information.

Here is a recent example from this past year of the type of work conducted by the STACC and its partners. After more than 16 months of investigative work, a collaboration between STACC components - the Ohio State Highway Patrol Criminal Intel Unit (OSP Intel), the Terrorism Analysis Unit (TAU), the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and local and state law enforcement – resulted in the first arrests in the Throop Farm Market case.

The case began as an OSP Intel fraud team case, where they provided routine analytical support to USDA-OIG. A senior OSP Intel analyst, serving as a subject matter expert in fraud, led financial analysis and multi-state collaboration. Within five months of joining OSP Intel, a new analyst began running proactive queries to detect bodegas potentially conspiring with Throop and assessed potential losses to Ohio recipients. Another analyst put his training to use analyzing bank records and illustrating the KASSIM family's involvement in this scheme.

The STACC DHS representative assisted with queries on the bodegas and related suspects, revealing new information to research. The TAU contributed by running continuous dark web searches, where initial dark web findings shared in 2023 gave the team an idea of how these nefarious actors obtain stolen benefits. All of this work undoubtedly contributed to the arrests and charges of theft and misuse of \$20 million in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits. This case is still ongoing, but this is an example of the collaborative effort within the STACC and among its partners.

## Critical Infrastructure Team

The OHS Critical Infrastructure Unit (CIU) works to identify and protect Ohio’s critical infrastructure identified as community lifelines (Safety and Security; Health and Medical; Communications; Hazardous Materials; Food, Water, Shelter; Energy; and Transportation) by increasing situational awareness and sharing actionable intelligence to prevent, detect, and protect Ohio’s critical infrastructure from all hazards and threats.

CIU has implemented a new regional plan and has dramatically increased the number of contacts with critical infrastructure partners. Additionally, 59 security and vulnerability assessments of critical infrastructure were conducted in this state fiscal year. Additionally, nearly 100 SkyWatch tower deployments were conducted, helping local law enforcement keep visitors safe at various events throughout the state. One local agency reported that due to the presence of the SkyWatch towers at their major outdoor event this past spring, calls for suspicious activity and theft went to zero compared to previous years, and no crime occurred in the area under watch by OHS personnel staffing the towers.

To help combat increased catalytic converter and other scrap metal thefts, the CIU Scrap Metal program maintains a “Do Not Buy From” list. OHS staff work with more than 350 scrap dealers across the state to ensure they follow standardized rules that minimize competitive advantage, and help reduce the outlets for metal theft transactions.

## Private Investigator and Security Guard Services



*A PISGS investigator verifies the credentials of a security partner working at Ohio Stadium.*

Private Investigator Security Guard Services (PISGS), a component of Ohio Homeland Security, licenses and regulates the private investigation and security guard services industry throughout Ohio, including over 800 providers with over 26,000 registered employees.

Ohio law requires people or companies offering security or investigation services to obtain a license. Licensed companies also must register employees. Providing investigation or security services without a license is a crime.

PISGS frequently partners with the Ohio Investigative Unit (OIU) and local law enforcement on various investigations, as well as developing relationships with nuisance abatement groups.

PISGS educates event organizers, venues, and businesses regarding the importance of hiring properly licensed contract security through targeted mailings and trade organizations. PISGS also checked security guard licenses at several major events to include: Ohio State football games, Buckeye Country Superfest, Bash on the Bay, and other professional sporting events,



county fairs, festivals, and concerts to ensure companies and individuals providing security are licensed by the state.

This year, a new designated auditor position to the Enforcement Unit has allowed the other four investigators more time to devote to field work including compliance checks. Over 110 new licenses have been issued, along with 814 license renewals bringing the total to more than 26,085 registrants in Ohio.

## Drone Working Group

In response to an ever-changing Unmanned Aerial Vehicle /Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAV/UAS) threat environment, OHS formed the Ohio UAV/UAS Working Group in October of 2023. The working group provides presentations on topics such as current law, UAS threats, technology, detection and counter tactics, and provide training opportunities and local UAS program support. Currently the working group members include over 49 participants representing 21 local, state, and federal entities, mostly in central Ohio. OHS is coordinating with OSP Aviation to expand the working group to other areas of the state in the upcoming months and support additional regional meetings and trainings.

## OHS Celebrates 20 Years of Service

In a September 2023 ceremony in the Atrium of the Shipley Building in Columbus, OHS celebrated its 20th anniversary, with speakers, a timeline video, and recognition of significant partners. A video welcome from Governor Mike DeWine was shown and a letter commemorating the occasion from former President George W. Bush, who was president when the U.S. Department of Homeland Security was formed, was read.

The commemorative event was one of several organized by the OHS Education and Outreach Unit (EOU), which partnered with the FBI and Franklin County Emergency Management & Homeland Security to host the Ohio Counterterrorism Conference in January 2024. OHS received a letter of recognition for this event from FBI Director Christopher Wray.

The EOU held regional Intelligence Liaison Officer (ILO) meetings across the state, the Ohio Public Private Partnership (OP3) Fall conference; facilitated an active aggressor tabletop exercise with the Cleveland Browns; sponsored Operation Lifesaver Rail Safety & Security trainings, and attended dozens of collaboration and coordination meetings with partners around the state.



*OHS celebrated its 20th anniversary during a September ceremony in the Atrium of the Shipley Building in Columbus.*

Our Mission: The ONIC provides expert digital forensic examinations, criminal intelligence analysis, and case support for Ohio law enforcement to identify and disrupt the illicit drug market. ONIC facilitates information sharing and collaboration with law enforcement, addiction services and recovery organizations, and the public to reduce drug overdoses.

The Ohio Narcotics Intelligence Center (ONIC) was established in 2019 by Governor Mike DeWine in Executive Order 2019-20D and formally codified as a division of the Ohio Department of Public Safety (DPS) in July of 2023. Pursuant to section 5502.69 of the Ohio Revised Code, the ONIC is directed to:

1. Coordinate law enforcement response to illegal drug activities for state agencies and act as a liaison between state agencies and local entities for the purposes of communicating counter-drug policy initiatives.
2. Collect, analyze, maintain, and disseminate information to support local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, other government agencies, and private organizations in detecting, deterring, preventing, preparing for, prosecuting, and responding to illegal drug activities.
3. Develop and coordinate policies, protocols, and strategies that may be used by local, state, and private organizations to detect, deter, prevent, prepare for, prosecute, and respond to illegal drug activities.
4. Develop, update, and coordinate the implementation of an Ohio drug control strategy to guide state and local governments and public agencies.

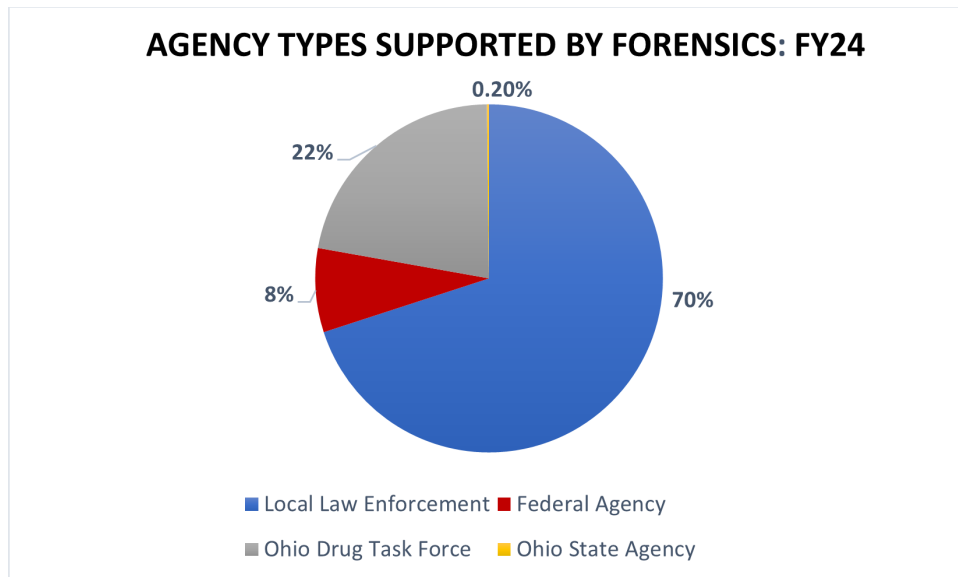
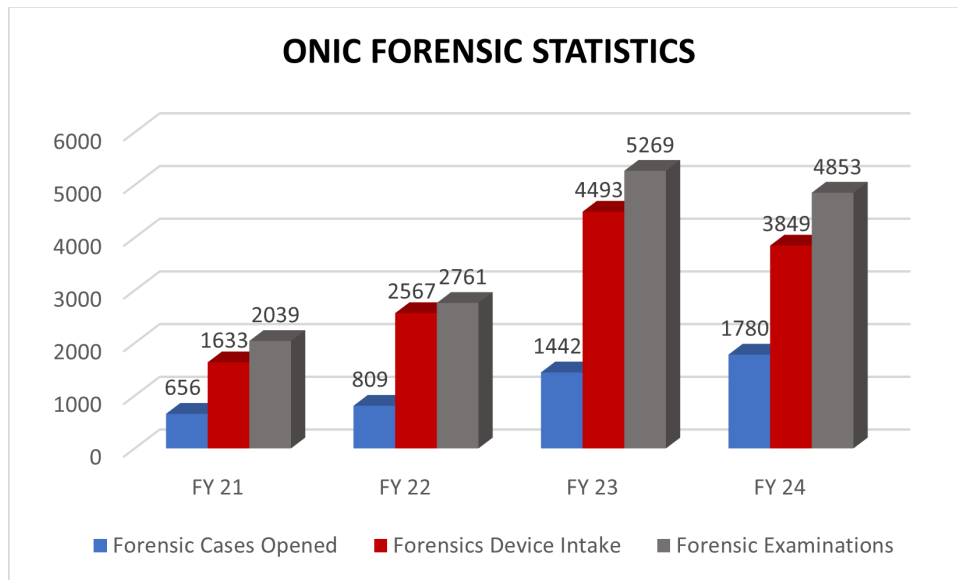
The ONIC now operates as a division of the Ohio DPS with offices in Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Toledo. ONIC offices are comprised of criminal intelligence analysts and forensic computer specialists who assist law enforcement agencies and drug task forces by providing investigative and case support. The ONIC acts as a clearinghouse by receiving information from different sources, conducting analysis, and then disseminating it quickly to relevant stakeholders.

- **The ONIC Forensics Unit** supports law enforcement, drug task forces, and local, state, and federal agencies through the extraction and analysis of cell phones, computers, digital video recorder (DVR) systems, security systems, and other electronic devices. All four ONIC locations feature state-of-the-art digital forensic tools to help law enforcement access crucial digital evidence in their cases.
- **The ONIC Intelligence Unit** provides tactical and operational criminal case support, strategic intelligence support, trend analysis, cryptocurrency tracing, forensic accounting, Spanish translation, and dark web investigations. ONIC intelligence analysts utilize complex analytical tools to locate connections within and beyond jurisdictions, determine links between cases, and dismantle criminal networks.



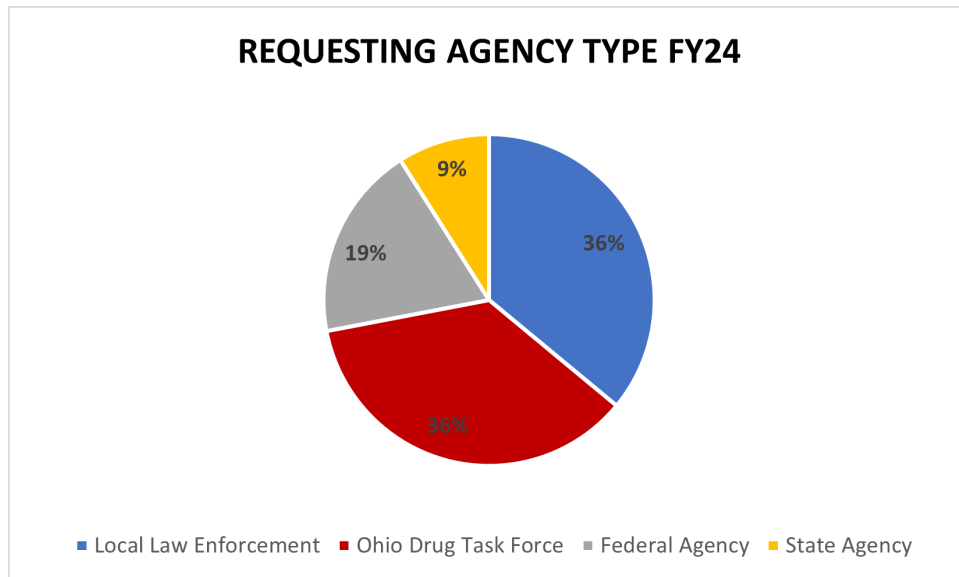
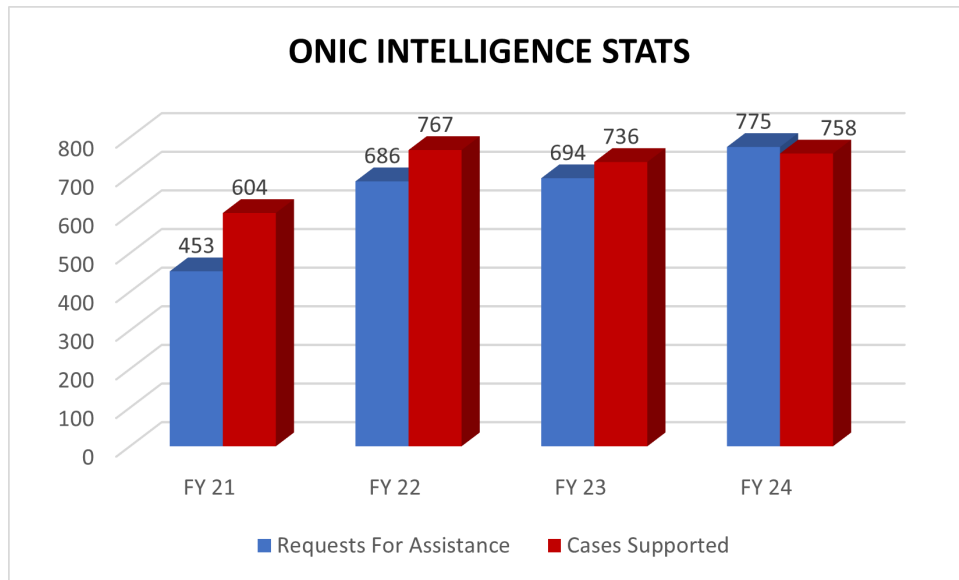
## Forensics

- Agencies from 65 Ohio counties submitted evidence for extraction.
- Forensics supported over 1,700 investigations, received nearly 4,000 devices, and conducted 4,853 device examinations. Examinations include extractions of digital devices for the purposes of criminal investigations.



## Intelligence

- ONIC Intelligence supported 775 requests for assistance from local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.
- ONIC Intelligence worked with 91 local law enforcement agencies throughout Ohio and 34 of the 42 Ohio drug task forces.



## Bridging Information Gaps

Throughout FY24, the ONIC continued to act as a clearinghouse for information, receiving, analyzing, and disseminating timely and relevant deliverables to stakeholders across a myriad of sectors. The ONIC continued to expand its attendee list to its regular calls, including the Monthly Drug Trends and the National Drug Trends calls. Additionally, the ONIC published bulletins for a variety of different stakeholders, including five at the public level that were translated into eight different languages. The ONIC also assisted with the development of videos designed for dissemination on social media platforms that reach broader audiences and provide Ohioans important information regarding the drug landscape.

## Operation BRIDGE



*Major components of Operation BRIDGE include traffic enforcement/drug interdiction and outreach. When law enforcement personnel encounter individuals suffering from substance use disorder, they connect the individuals to treatment resources.*

### ***Bridging Recovery and Interdiction Data Gathering Enforcement***

Operation BRIDGE is a notable collaboration between RecoveryOhio, the ONIC, and the Ohio DPS. Operation BRIDGE seeks to break down barriers between law enforcement and treatment providers and support the recovery of those suffering from substance use disorders. ONIC Forensics and Intelligence supported four BRIDGE operations in FY24 with on-scene digital forensics and analytical capabilities.

In Fiscal Year 2024, Ohio DPS supported five BRIDGE Operations in Scioto County, Franklin County, Lawrence County, Middletown, and Ross County. The results of these operations include:

- 120 individuals connected to treatment
- 475 referrals to treatment
- 277 pounds from pill takebacks
- 10 guns seized
- 1,044.37 grams of cocaine seized
- 626.32 grams of fentanyl seized

## RecoveryOhio Monthly Drug Trends Call

The ONIC continued to bring in stakeholders to its Monthly Drug Trends Call to share information and data across Ohio in partnership with RecoveryOhio. The ONIC has over 680 individuals receiving deliverables for the meeting and averages nearly 200 attendees for each call. The call synthesizes data from across sectors such as law enforcement, drug chemistry and toxicology laboratories, mental and addiction health, and recovery specialists. Stakeholder groups benefit from the monthly call to collaborate, share information, and analyze in real-time the changing Ohio illicit drug landscape. Featured speakers include individuals who are innovators and subject matter experts in fields such as dark web drug trafficking, adverse childhood experiences and their connection to illicit drug use, and specialists who work alongside law enforcement in quick response teams (QRTs).

## Emerging Drug Scientific Working Group (EDSWG)

By establishing EDSWG, ONIC adopted the Monthly Drug Trends call format and tailored it specifically to provide a quarterly forum for discussion on emerging drugs and drug trends between forensic drug chemists and toxicologists across Ohio. The chemists and toxicologists are provided important policy updates such as federal and state scheduling actions for new drugs. EDSWG allows ONIC strategic analysts to engage these specialists in productive discussions on emerging trends that they can then tailor and disseminate as necessary to law enforcement partners and other

## Capabilities

In FY24, the ONIC added initiatives and staff with specialized capabilities. ONIC Forensics created the position of forensic evidence collection specialist who travel anywhere in the state to pick up or drop off evidence to law enforcement. The majority of law enforcement agencies in Ohio employ less than 25 full-time personnel and ONIC's evidence collection specialists allow these small agencies to take advantage of the ONIC's services while ensuring their officers remain present within their community. ONIC Intelligence also added additional personnel to existing teams including a financial analyst, a Spanish translator, a training and outreach administrator, and a budget specialist. These individuals bring unique skills to the ONIC that will help law enforcement with complex financial investigations, expand partnerships, and ensure the ONIC is using its resources effectively.

The newly formed drug related violent crime (DRVC) team is dedicated to supporting and strengthening local response to violence reduction efforts by using a holistic, data-driven intelligence approach. Analysts will support criminal investigations for local, state, and federal law enforcement while also collaborating with community-based programs to develop anti-violence strategies and campaigns. In FY24 the ONIC approved to hire an additional 10 DRVC analysts who will be strategically placed throughout the ONIC's four regional offices. Members of the DRVC team will also participate in violence reduction efforts by offering dedicated support to regional Crime Gun Intelligence Centers (CGICs).

The ONIC's dark web and cryptocurrency team was established in FY24. It is a specialty intelligence team within the ONIC that supports law enforcement by focusing on detecting criminal activity in the cyber sphere with state-of-the-art software and forensic tools. The unit provides support to investigations involving the dark web and cryptocurrency, can identify suspected dark web vendors, provide investigative recommendations for the legal process, and research emerging drug trends.



stakeholders throughout the state. Additionally, the call facilitates early detection of harmful emerging substances in the Ohio drug supply. The ONIC, in partnership with the State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy, assisted in the scheduling of xylazine as a schedule III Controlled Substance in Ohio in March 2023, in part, based on information shared during the EDSWG quarterly calls.

## Public Safety Bulletins

Intelligence bulletins continue to be an essential method through which the ONIC communicated intelligence and public safety information in FY24. The ONIC published 10 bulletins in FY24 for a diverse range of audiences. The ONIC published bulletins for law enforcement and public health professionals on trends such as drug traffickers use of digital media, emerging drugs like new synthetic opioids and medetomidine, and different forms of fentanyl encountered in Ohio. Additionally, the ONIC published five public bulletins in 2023 that provided information to Ohioans on the unpredictable Ohio drug supply, the use of emojis and slang by drug traffickers, and cryptocurrency scams targeting older adults. Public bulletins with immediate impact to health and safety are translated into eight languages to help extend the ONIC's messaging into more communities.

## Law Enforcement Drug Summit

The ONIC hosted its annual law enforcement drug summit in late May 2024 and drew 447 attendees. The attendees represented law enforcement agencies, drug chemistry and toxicology laboratories, prosecutor's offices, corrections, and probation and parole officers from across Ohio. There was a diverse agenda of speakers who presented on topics including investigative case studies, drug addiction and recovery, digital forensic evidence collection, drug chemistry, and social media investigations. Attendees also were able to network and discuss best practices with other specialists in their respective fields.

*The ONIC's annual Law Enforcement Drug Summit is a free event for criminal justice professionals with interests in investigations, intelligence, digital forensics, and laboratory science. It features experts addressing trends impacting the drug landscape in Ohio and drug reduction strategies.*



## Ohio School Safety Center

*Emily Torok, Executive Director*

Created nearly five years ago by Governor Mike DeWine, the Ohio School Safety (OSSC) is responsible for assisting local schools and first responders with preventing, preparing for, and responding to threats and acts of violence, including self-harm, through a holistic, solutions-based approach to improving school safety.

Governor DeWine wanted a group of people that would wake up every day thinking about school safety and continued his commitment to Ohio's youth as he has strengthened the team in the OSSC through budget funding, support for initiatives, and a continued drive to improve programs.

Originally a team of six, the OSSC's team of nearly 50 supports schools both K-12 and higher education and first responders with a unique local-based approach. Not only does the division of the Ohio Department of Public Safety (DPS) have staff based in central Ohio, but also regionally across the state in the Department of Education and Workforce's 16 state support team regions

### Expansion of Subject-Matter Expert Staff

The OSSC tripled the size of its original staff in 2023 and added a diverse group of subject matter experts to the team from both physical and emotional safety backgrounds.

School transportation, teachers, and intervention specialist, police officer, school counselor, social worker, crisis negotiator, Special Weapons and Tactical (SWAT) team, coach, paramedic, firearms trainer, special education, emergency management, public health, school resource officer, student success coordinator, firefighter, addiction and mental health coordination, juvenile probation, veteran, and more.

These diverse experts enable the OSSC to better prepare and respond to requests for assistance from schools since they can approach issues from different disciplines. This also allows the OSSC to provide comprehensive supports to schools and get embedded into the school community.



#### Among the OSSC staff located across the state:

-  **64** degrees awarded ranging from Associates to Doctorate
-  **34** worked in schools (K-12 and higher ed)
-  **24** former law enforcement personnel
-  **14** with military experience



## Enriched Training Portfolio

The OSSC had an amazing year offering educational opportunities all around the state. These trainings were offered both virtually and in-person. The OSSC conducted 1,942 training sessions for 3,522 students.

Expanded course offerings included Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guideline (CSTAG) training, National Threat Evaluation Reporting (NTER) training, digital threat assessment training, active shooter incident preparation and response training, after-school preparedness training, school-based response to active threat incidents, and School Resource Officer virtual training.

Other topics included: positive preventative interventions: alternatives to discipline; question, persuade, refer gatekeeper trainer certification course; understanding today's threats against schools and students; and lessons learned from a threat assessment that failed.

The OSSC found itself in need of a program to house historical course data. After successfully piloting the Knowledge District technology with internal staff, the program was introduced to the public on Oct. 1, 2023. Since, the Knowledge District has been the hub for OSSC on-demand courses, data, and records.



*OSSC hosted 10 Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines courses in 2023 and trained 250 individuals.*

## Armed School Staff Essential Training (ASSET)

Legislated under the 134th General Assembly, House Bill 99 permits a school board or governing body to elect to arm specific staff members as well as the mandated training requirements for those individuals (O.R.C. 2923.122, 5502.703).

The same legislation created mobile training officer positions within the OSSC. Those serving in these positions must create and provide required initial and annual requalification training for armed school staff. The OSSC's model curriculum is called Armed School Staff Essential Training (ASSET). The ASSET program is comprised of two core training programs, the initial 24-hour certification program and the annual eight-hour requalification program.



*OSSC offers initial and requalification trainings for school boards that elect to arm staff members.*

Beginning in June, the OSSC began running both initial and requalification trainings throughout the state and offered eight, 24-hour initial trainings attended by 62 individuals, and eight, eight-hour trainings attended by 52 individuals.

However, the OSSC wanted to provide additional trainings to schools and first responders that would like to do more than what is required by H.B. 99. The OSSC purchased a situational awareness simulator that can be requested by schools. The training is free and provides quality, realistic scenarios. An MTO will bring the simulator to a school and run personnel through scenarios that include communication, de-escalation, use-of-force, and tactics and weapon handling.

After each scenario the instructor gives feedback and discusses what went well along with what could be done differently. Simulator training improves long- term retention of information and allows individuals to practice under reality-based conditions.

The foundation of good simulator training is decision-making. This training tests an individual's decision- making under stress but in a safe environment.

In 2023, the OSSC offered 12 simulator trainings attended by 107 individuals.

## Student Safety Advisory Council



*Members of the Ohio Student Safety Advisory Council at the 2023 Ohio School Safety Summit.*

The Ohio Student Safety Advisory Council had a busy year with various projects, campaigns, and initiatives. In 2023, the OSSC opened the Council to both juniors and seniors. This allowed the Council to reach career centers and even gave the first-ever Council students the opportunity to reapply and serve a second term. This created a huge advantage and extended our reach, allowing alumni students to help acclimate the new students.

With this, the 2023-2024 Council holds 29 members – 13 alumni and 16 new. The Council was the main focus of day one at the annual Ohio School Safety Summit. They hosted a roundtable, where they reflected on important school safety topics with an audience of various professionals. In addition, the students highlighted the finalists of their art contest which held the theme: What does school safety mean to you?

Finally, students were able to showcase the hard work they put into their capstone projects. The completion of a capstone project is a requirement to those who serve on the Council. Students were asked to produce a project on something they're passionate about. Some examples of the topics include School Bell Chats Podcast, CPR/First Aid Guide, Access and Functional Needs Populations in School Emergencies, Mental Health Packets, Professional Development Platform, Kindland – 21 Acts of Kindness, Spread Kindness like Wildflowers, Community Meetings, Mental Health and Homework, Self Defense Guide, and the art exhibit.



## Security and Vulnerability Assessments

A Security and Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) is an assessment of the school's policies, procedures, and physical security of the building to identify vulnerabilities. During 2023, the OSSC conducted 69 security and vulnerability building assessments in 16 counties across the state. SVAs were conducted for both public and private preschools, K-12 school buildings, higher education institutions, and houses of worship.

Schools can request an SVA through their local law enforcement partners or the OSSC at no cost. The SVA process includes an interview and an on-site assessment during school hours followed by a written report with considerations and recommendations. The SVA report is considered a protected security record and is not subject to public information requests.

To request a free SVA through the OSSC, please visit [Request a Security and Vulnerability Assessment](#).



*In 2023, the OSSC conducted 69 security and vulnerability building assessments.*

## Ohio School Safety Summit

Governor Mike DeWine kicked off the 2023 Ohio School Safety Summit by saying that he was, “proud to be making progress on school safety, in large part due to the involvement of students.” That message was emphasized as the 2023 Summit recognized three students from across the state as Stand Out Students. These students were acknowledged for making significant contributions in keeping their schools safe.

The two-day summit was attended by over 1,500 people from various disciplines including education professionals, law enforcement, mental health counselors, and others. Keynote speakers for the event included Dr. Dewey Cornell, Dr. Amanda Nickerson, Sgt. William Chapman, and Dr. Scott Poland.

## The National Anonymous Reporting System Conference

The OSSC partners frequently with other state school safety agencies and tip lines for collaboration and sharing information. The National Anonymous Reporting System Conference is an annual opportunity for state agencies to meet face-to-face and learn from one another. In 2023, the OSSC hosted this conference for an estimated 136 attendees from 17 different states.

The conference was held on Oct. 17-18 in Columbus and featured keynote sessions from Dr. Peter Langman, the School Safety Task Force from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency, and Safer Schools Together. The second day of the conference involved a technical assistance workshop ran by WestEd for state agencies and school safety centers to work through the considerations of developing, implementing, or refining a statewide tip line.

## New Safety Plans Portal

The OSSC released a new version of the safety plans portal, in July 2023. Upgraded features included programs that share a physical building now appear as one entry. The OSSC encourages these administrators to work together to complete one set of safety plan documents, one annual plan certification, and one emergency management test.

Ohio's schools are required to submit [emergency management plans](#) and conduct annual emergency management tests for the 5,600 K-12 school buildings. Through whole community-based planning, schools are better able to prevent, prepare for, and respond to a variety of hazards. Hazards range from tornadoes and winter storms to active shooters and chemical spills.

In 2023, the OSSC reviewed and approved 1,615 emergency management plans.

Schools submit their plans every three years to maintain compliance. The Ohio Revised Code that governs school emergency management plans is 5502.262.

## Safer Ohio School Tip Line

The Safer Ohio School Tip Line – a statewide, 24/7 anonymous reporting system -- underwent a major upgrade this past year. In addition to texting, calling, or emailing the tip line, tipsters can now submit tips through the Safer Ohio School Tip Line app or at [app.saferohioschooltipline.com](http://app.saferohioschooltipline.com). Tips are taken by crisis response professionals with the capability to receive communication in 10 of the top languages spoken in Ohio. Upgrades include improvements for tip notification, dissemination, and management.

Tips can be managed through a dashboard with multiple school officials able to view and update tips. These officials receive immediate notification through text or email for each tip. For tips requiring law enforcement intervention, county 9-1-1 centers are contacted immediately and school officials are called. Schools can easily audit and manage their tips.

Schools that use the Safer Ohio School Tip Line can request free promotional materials be sent to them.

**1,615**  
emergency management plans  
reviewed and approved in 2023.

## Ohio State Highway Patrol

*Colonel Charles A. Jones, Superintendent*

In Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24), the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) and the Ohio Investigative Unit (OIU) achieved numerous operational successes.

On a daily basis, Ohio state troopers, along with professional staff, focused operational efforts to address the dangers that Ohioans are most concerned about – impaired driving, distracted driving, drug interdiction and other highway crimes. All this is done to ensure the safety of motorists on Ohio’s roadways.

Troopers make contact with approximately one million motorists every year. Of those one million interactions, more than half are non-enforcement stops.

That is not to say troopers don’t emphasize enforcement. In FY24, troopers arrested nearly 15,000 individuals for impaired driving, made over 4,800 arrests for drug violations, issued over 54,000 safety belt citations and enforced over 18,500 distracted driving violations.



*Troopers focus operational efforts to address the dangers that Ohioans are most concerned about – impaired driving, distracted driving, drug interdiction and other highway crimes.*

The OSHP has detailed analytical strategies to specifically address traffic crash patterns and dangerous driving behaviors that directly impact Ohio motorists. In FY24, provisional data shows there were 1,213 traffic fatalities on Ohio roadways. This marked a decrease of 75 fatalities compared with Fiscal Year 2023. That decrease is a direct result of statewide crash data, enforcement and other traffic safety metrics being collected and analyzed to develop and implement a strategic, data-driven approach to promote traffic safety.

### Impact 24

The OSHP’s operational focus is largely within the framework of Impact 24, pulling from the groundwork of Impact 23. The Division’s partnerships, be they internal or external, stand as one of the most telling benchmarks of the OSHP’s success as an organization. Over the last several years, the OSHP has focused on, and broadened, these relationships exponentially.

In many ways during FY24, the Division continued to focus on the traffic stop as a means to interact with the public, affect driving behavior, intercept illegal drugs and impaired drivers, and positively influence crime throughout Ohio.

### Service Initiatives

In addition to Impact 24 being a critical operational roadmap for the OSHP, Districts conducted at least one Service Initiative in a tailored effort to meet the needs within their designated area. In FY24, Service Initiatives were carried out in 12 cities, with one Service Initiative covering four counties.

In eight of the OSHP's nine Districts, a total of 15 events occurred, with two additional operations scheduled for the second half of 2024. These data-driven details are intended to target traffic safety awareness, violent crime reduction, addiction outreach and impaired driving enforcement.

### **Referral Project**

The referral program continued to be a success throughout FY24, with 31 counties taking part in this collaborative effort to provide outreach services. Post commanders worked with their local behavioral health officials to provide the names and address of individuals arrested for impaired driving and drug offenses. In response, those arrested were contacted by their local behavioral health advocate, which followed-up with the individual to discuss and offer services. In addition to the partnerships forged through the common goal of providing outreach to those in need, impactful stories from these interactions showcase the positive impact this project is having throughout Ohio communities.

### **Violent Crime Reduction Efforts**

The Cleveland District collaborated with the OIU and local agencies to focus efforts on reducing

violent crime within the City of Cleveland. As part of this initiative, the OSHP increased traffic enforcement in targeted areas, provided aviation support and assisted with evidence collection and suspect interviews. The major focus of these efforts was to make communities safer by removing illegal weapons, drugs and recovering stolen vehicles. During FY24, the OSHP and OIU made 281 felony arrests, 168 illegal weapon seizures and recovered 65 stolen vehicles.

### **Criminal Patrol**

The Criminal Patrol Section continued to focus on proactive initiatives in high-crime areas throughout the state. Criminal Patrol units partnered with local, state and federal agencies in numerous cities around Ohio and during proactive saturation patrols during large scale events. These initiatives focused on the reduction of violent crimes and drug interdiction. Weapons, stolen cars and wanted felons were targeted by using data driven operational plans generated by Ohio Statistics and Analytics for Traffic Safety (OSTATS) reports.

In all, 46 separate initiatives were performed. Some of the areas worked included: Toledo, Cleveland, Youngstown, Ashtabula, East Liverpool, Elyria, Springfield, Batavia, Hamilton, Franklin

### **Distracted Driving Corridors**

To reduce the number of distracted driving crashes across the state, the OSHP continued to utilize Distract Driving Corridors. The OSHP worked with the Ohio Department of Transportation to place signage in designated areas on major roadways to identify each corridor. The corridors aim to raise awareness about the dangers of distracted driving, reduce crashes and ultimately save lives. Throughout FY24, the OSHP operated in 19 Distracted Driving Corridors, resulting in 566 distracted driving citations.





County, Madison County, Ross County, Gallia County, Scioto County, and others. Referrals for addiction and mental health were made available at every initiative with the support of local outreach agencies.

Along with enforcement efforts, the Criminal Patrol Section taught 10 regional interdiction schools throughout the state and seven hidden compartment search classes at the OSHP's Marysville Canine Facility. In the first half of 2024, Criminal Patrol units spoke about the new marijuana laws and their impact on the Division at all civil disturbance training sessions.

## Field Operations

### Aviation

The Aviation Section continued to focus efforts on proactive OSHP missions within high-crime areas throughout the state. With an average of more than 10 proactive details a month, the section provided support in seven of the OSHP's nine districts in the first half of 2024, including details in Toledo, Mansfield, Cleveland, Elyria, Youngstown, East Liverpool, Dayton, Springfield, Columbus, Delaware and Butler County.

Flight crews provided vital aerial support for search and rescue, traffic enforcement and criminal apprehension daily. In FY24, Aviation conducted 478 criminal search missions, 163 missing persons searches, 138 ISR flight missions and 122 proactive OSHP missions. In the first six months of 2024, the section has assisted in over 300 missions for outside agencies. In addition to these missions and searches, 158 illegal firearms were seized and 94 stolen vehicles recovered.



*In FY24, Aviation conducted 478 criminal search missions, 163 missing persons searches, 138 ISR flight missions and 122 proactive OSHP missions.*

The OSHP secured capital funding to purchase a new multi-passenger helicopter. This helicopter will have the ability to operate in less-than-ideal weather conditions, making it ideal for the unpredictable climate often observed in Ohio.

The OSHP coordinated with the Office of Criminal Justice Services to secure grant funding from the State of Ohio State Violent Crime Grant and the Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to upgrade the Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) equipment in two helicopters. The grant funding also allowed for the installation of fixed data relay towers to enable statewide live video transmission from the aircraft to ground officers and command staff investigating active public safety incidents.

### Crash Reconstruction

The OSHP's Crash Reconstruction staff continued to play a vital role in providing technical crash assistance and expert testimony in civil and criminal cases. In FY24, the Crash Reconstruction section initiated 421 reconstruction cases, 134 of which were in the assistance of another agency's investigations. Additionally, there were 228 prosecution cases, with 97 of those being felony cases.

The section also taught a basic and intermediate crash training, and assisted the Department of Public Safety Law Enforcement Liaison with teaching three one-day crash investigation courses.

In January 2024, the Crash Reconstruction section hosted a grant-funded crash reconstruction course. The class was full, with 30 officers from around the state in attendance, including eight Ohio state troopers and officers from 15 outside agencies.

The section also received a drone (UAV) in September 2023, which was flown over 70 times in accordance with their operational needs.

### **Drug Recognition Experts**

The Ohio Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) program provides a multitude of practical training and classroom instruction from basic to expert-level officers in OVI enforcement. These courses are imperative as they target the goal of reducing serious injury and fatal crashes. In FY24, there were 1,280 officers trained in impaired driving courses with a total of 74 courses administered.

In addition, 22 DREs were certified. With the additional certifications, it brought the total number of DREs to 168 with a DRE representative appointed in each district to assist with increasing their involvement. The DRE program was involved in numerous felony cases providing guidance and expert testimony.

Advanced Cannabis Impairment Training courses are highly sought-after with two completed and three more scheduled for the second half of 2024. Additionally, the DRE program has been involved with many felony cases providing guidance and expert testimony.

### **Licensing and Commercial Standards (LCS)**



*The Motor Vehicle Inspection Unit inspects more than 23,000 Ohio school buses at least twice a year. LCS staff were subject matter experts on Governor DeWine's School Bus Safety Working Group.*

In FY24, LCS have inspected over 59,000 commercial motor vehicles. In the first six months of 2024, LCS conducted over 33,000 commercial motor vehicle inspections which represented a 32% increase over the same time period in 2023. In addition, LCS has inspected over 36,500 school buses.

Vehicle identity inspections increased 9% from the previous year, with over 26,000 inspections conducted. Mega Salvage Day on May 14 at the Ohio State Fairgrounds, was a statewide effort resulting in 318 vehicle identity inspections conducted in a single day at one site.

LCS staff were subject matter experts on Governor DeWine's School Bus Safety Working Group.

Multiple enforcement details included partnering with other agencies within Ohio like the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio and Cleveland Division of Police, as well as working on multi-state events with out of state partners in Michigan, Illinois and Indiana.

Three Scale Trucks with portable Weigh-in-Motion technology were deployed throughout the state.

## Special Response Team

In FY24, the Special Response Team (SRT) had a total of 489 missions, which included 57 missions assisting other agencies. These missions resulted in the seizure of 168 illegal guns, 73 illegal long guns and 95 illegal handguns. There were 23 search warrants, four manhunts and six barricades.

In addition, SRT responded to several high-risk incidents, applying their specialized training to resolve complex situations with precision. On June 11, 2024, the Tactical Rook, a state-of-the-art piece of equipment (Tactical Skid-Steer) arrived, significantly enhancing operational capabilities.



*OSHP's full-time tactical unit is frequently requested by other agencies in Ohio for assistance. SRT members are deputized by the US Marshals Service and work with the task forces in all major cities in Ohio.*

## Mobile Field Force

In the first half of FY24, Mobile Field Force had 13 deployments, including the 2023 Ohio State Fair and a deployment to Texas. Mobile Field Force deployments increased significantly in the second half of FY24, in part due to the college campus protests in the spring. From January through June, the Mobile Field Force deployed 34 times, which was a 61% increase when compared to the same timeframe in 2023.

Furthermore, the Mobile Field Force conducted training for various agencies around the state as well as the Wood County, West Virginia Sheriff's Office. There are additional trainings scheduled with various agencies throughout the remainder of the summer and fall of 2024.

## Investigative Services

The Office of Investigative Services (OIS) responded to a national trend of surging auto theft and fraud cases. According to the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB), vehicle thefts increased in 2023, representing the fifth straight year the number of thefts has increased nationally. Ohio ranks 8th in the nation in vehicle thefts and, due to its location and robust roadway infrastructure, is a gateway for criminals to travel through with stolen vehicles. To combat this trend, OIS and VTFU personnel committed to a change in operations and section approach to ensure immediate effectiveness while protecting future viability.

Investigations involving human trafficking and crimes against children continued to grab the spotlight. OIS offices around the state field calls to assist field personnel. Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) warrants were served in several counties. Investigations into possession and distribution of CSAM occurred in Putnam, Wood, Stark, Muskingum, Franklin and Ashtabula counties. These investigations tend to be lengthy and tied to a multi-agency effort. Many times, the investigation leads to admission of hands-on sexual offenses against children.



## Collaboration

### Intel Mega-Loads



On March 6, 2024, the OSHP assisted with the transport of the first Intel mega-load in Ohio. This \$28 billion project will create more jobs for Ohioans by expanding chipmaking capabilities in New Mexico, Oregon, Arizona and Ohio. The partnership and vigilant planning with the Ohio Department of Transportation has helped to facilitate the safe transportation of numerous mega-loads.

### Total Solar Eclipse

For nearly two years, the OSHP prepared for the total solar eclipse on April 8, 2024, to ensure the safety and security of residents and travelers across Ohio. A key component to the eclipse preparation involved collaboration with state, county and local law enforcement agencies. With partners at the Ohio Emergency Management Agency and the Ohio Department of Transportation, OSHP developed and executed a comprehensive strategy to manage increased traffic.

Posts and specialty units adjusted staffing levels and mobilized resources, including the Aviation Section, to ensure an optimum state of readiness. Before, during and after the eclipse, troopers were highly visible across the state – ready to assist motorists with any and all emergencies during the once-in-a-lifetime event.

The OSHP's Public Affairs Unit used social media to communicate important safety and security information to the public. This proactive approach, which included traffic advisories, safety tips and reminders to motorists to plan their travel routes in advance and refrain from stopping on roadways to view the eclipse, was vital in maintaining safety as a top priority throughout the event.

### Operation Cone Zone

On June 5, 2024, the OSHP partnered with the Ohio Department of Transportation to announce the launch of the 2024 Work Zone Initiative and Move Over, Slow Down campaign. The occasion highlighted the importance of ensuring safe roadways for both motorists and workers that started with the “100 Deadliest Days of Summer” – between Memorial Day and Labor Day when there is an increase in traffic, leading to more fatal crashes.

Operation Cone Zone is the OSHP's work zone safety program that is using enhanced enforcement of safety measures, including the utilization of proper signage and warning devices leading up to, and throughout each work zone. Additionally, the Aviation Section and motorcycle unit is actively involved in targeted work zone enforcement.

During June, troopers worked in 109 work zones across the state. Overall, troopers initiated 2,613 traffic stops, of which 1,862 included enforcement action. There were 407 reported crashes in these work zones, including three fatal crashes and 10 serious-injury crashes.

As part of the work zone focus, on June 22, a trooper from the Steubenville Post stopped a vehicle for speeding in a work zone in Jefferson County. In addition to speeding, the driver was found to have a suspended license. A probable cause search resulted in 45 grams of suspected methamphetamine. This is an excellent example of troopers continuing to prioritize work zone safety while enforcing criminal laws and removing drugs from our roadways.

ODOT also included OSHP in a \$250,000 media buy for the Move Over, Slow Down campaign regarding work zone safety that is running throughout the summer of 2024. In paid advertising, they prominently included the OSHP in television commercials and across social media platforms. These videos included multiple classifications of first responders, showing their personal and professional lives - giving the audience a lens through which to view first responders as both public servants and members of the community.

## Operation Cone Zone

June 2024

**109** work zones

**2,613** traffic stops

**1,862** enforcement actions

### 6-State Trooper Project

The 6-State Trooper Project, a collaborative enforcement effort with the Kentucky State Police, Michigan State Police, Pennsylvania State Police, West Virginia State Police and Indiana State Police, targeted both safety belt and distracted driving violations throughout FY24. The collaboration continued to drive success by encouraging intelligence sharing among law enforcement agencies while focusing on keeping communities safer. In April 2024, the combined efforts of these agencies resulted in 1,895 distracted driving violations. Most notably – OSHP contributed 1,255 of those citations. In addition, the agencies combined for 8,159 safety belt citations, with the OSHP contributing 3,459 of those citations.

### Educational Programs

#### Saved by the Belt Events

The “Saved by the Belt” Club is a joint effort by the Ohio Department of Public Safety and the OSHP. This club is designed to recognize people who have benefited from their decision to wear safety belts. During FY24, “Saved by the Belt” and emphasis was placed on conducting large scale events to highlight groups of recipients at the same time. These larger-scale events have enhanced the Saved by the Belt program, creating a broader impact in Ohio communities. In 2024, the OSHP conducted Saved by the Belt events at the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, at Kings Island near Cincinnati, and at baseball games for the Toledo Mud Hens and Mahoning Valley Scappers.

#### DRIVE to Live

The OSHP’s DRIVE to Live Program, was created to emphasize safety messages to our youth on a variety of topics through structured group settings and a conversational format. DRIVE is an acronym for Decisions, Responsibility, Invest, Value and Educate. In the 2023-2024 School Year, the OSHP conducted 99 events that positively impacted 13,360 youth, a 39.4% increase from the previous year. Since the program began in 2021, it has reached 38,422 students across 347 events.





*The OSHP received 2,479 applications in 2023, and 1,220 applicants through the first half of 2024, with two record-breaking months – March (191 applicants) and June (205 applicants).*

## Recruitment and Training

### New Recruitment Tactics

The Public Affairs Unit began producing a groundbreaking social media recruitment campaign in November 2023, The Next 100. The campaign, which runs across all OSHP social media platforms, is more than just a call to service – It is an invitation to potential recruits to explore the multifaceted roles that define a modern trooper. A series of videos on the OSHP’s YouTube channel shows the responsibilities and opportunities within the Division. It shows that the OSHP not just as a traffic enforcement organization, but as a multidimensional agency with roles ranging from aviation to tactical operations.

In December 2023 and April 2024, the Recruitment & Diversity Unit partnered with the Office of Personnel and the Public Affairs Unit to host two one-day women’s academy readiness seminars. The seminars were open to all females currently in the process of being hired by the OSHP or interested in starting the process. The seminar consisted of an introduction into the life of a cadet, a successful Training Academy discussion and a mentorship panel made up of current female officers from the rank of trooper to major.

In addition to the seminars, the OSHP introduced a number of other recruitment enhancement techniques, including increasing the use of all social media platforms to distribute recruitment

information. To accompany the increase in social media usage, the ride-along program became a central point of emphasis.

The OSHP also reassessed how its recruiters interacted with the public at events Recruitment became more proactive and personal with candidates. Now, a recruiter is assigned to each applicant to maintain engagement throughout the process.

Recruiters also regularly attended college sporting events as an emphasis was placed on the recruitment of collegiate athletes.

### Cadet Classes & Basic Classes

On December 5, 2023, the OSHP started its biggest cadet class since 2016 with the beginning of the 173rd Class, including 9 women. Those women represented the OSHP’s commitment toward achieving the 30 by 30 goal, signed by Colonel Charles A. Jones, OSHP superintendent, on March 8, 2023, of having women represent 30 percent of the Division’s sworn workforce by 2030.

Two cadet classes graduated during FY24, including 39 members of the 172nd cadet class on November 17, 2023 and 52 members of the 173rd class on June 21, 2024.

Also, Basic 149 graduated 46 law enforcement officers from agencies across Ohio on January 12, 2024.

## Intelligence Functions

### Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC)

The OSHP's Intelligence Unit assisted with the planning, development, implementation and continued engagement of the Central Ohio Regional Crime Gun Intelligence Center (COCGIC). Since its creation, the CGIC team has connected multiple shootings that occurred in Columbus to other crimes committed several years ago, including crimes that took place in other parts of the state. With both a supervisor and analyst assigned to the CGIC, they have assisted in over 400 requests involving the investigation, capture, and/or the prosecution of offenders associated with gun violence and crimes.

### Intelligence Unit

The OSHP's Intelligence Unit incorporated intelligence support to the Vehicle Theft Unit (VTU) for two separate initiatives involving vehicle theft across the state. One analyst is supporting Columbus VTU with multiple large-scale vehicle theft cases, which includes the identification of suspects and dealerships, title fraud, money laundering, and connections to other investigations generating from the local agencies. Additionally, a second analyst has been assigned to handle a large scale multi-jurisdictional vehicle theft initiative out of the Montgomery County area.

The Intelligence Unit assisted with the planning, development, and implementation of the Prison Drug Unit (PDU). The initiative started with two state troopers and one intelligence analyst developing and working cases involving large conveyance-related activity into Ohio's prisons. Since the initial stages, the PDU has expanded to include two additional troopers (investigators) to provide expansive statewide support. The analyst continues to support all the troopers assigned to the PDU and continues to coordinate with local, state and federal partners for the development of their investigations.

In the past year, the Human Trafficking Team and task force Initiatives have significantly increased cases involving child sexual abuse material and Sextortion investigations. Additionally, the team has implemented specialized collaboration with partners in the Office of Criminal Justice Services to further law enforcement response to illicit massage businesses, labor trafficking and associated transnational organized crime. The Human Trafficking Team has increased training, developed procedures and policies, and increased support in these investigations. The unit has assisted with multiple suspect identifications, assisted with operational details, and provided leads and techniques to help guide investigators through the complexity of these investigations.

The Intelligence Unit routinely receives requests for cell phone mapping and/or extraction analysis for devices spanning various criminal dimensions. These requests vary in nature in support from active, real-time support for fugitive apprehension, to advanced analysis and product creation for use during criminal proceedings. Cases range from simple investigations (like theft or breaking and entering cases) to violent offenses such as fatal hit and run investigations, and homicide incidents. The Intelligence Unit receives these requests from local, state and federal agencies. Requests of these types have increased 10% in comparison to previous years, with an increase of 18% the first six months of 2024, in comparison to previous years of the same six-month period. Additionally, there has been a significant increase in subpoena-related activity and testimony for these cases, including testimony provided in a Daubert challenge, which was not only instrumental in a defendant's change of plea to guilty, but also further upheld and solidified the use of cell phone technology in court proceedings throughout Ohio.

Additionally, the Intel Fraud Team collaborated with components of the Statewide Terrorism Analysis and Crime Center (STACC), including U.S Department of Homeland Security and Ohio Homeland Security Cyber. The collaboration revealed additional suspects, businesses and dark web marketplaces selling compromised welfare benefits.

## Technology and Innovation

The established a new information sharing initiative with external law enforcement agencies using the SOLVE and OHLEG RMS systems. Through this, OSHP crash, citation and case records can be searched by external agencies, and matches are returned with contact information for follow-up.

### LEADS

LEADS achieved a LEADS message switch uptime of 100%. The message switch consists of the core servers, storage, applications and databases that serve criminal justice information to agencies accessing LEADS. The message switching system experienced zero downtime during FY24.

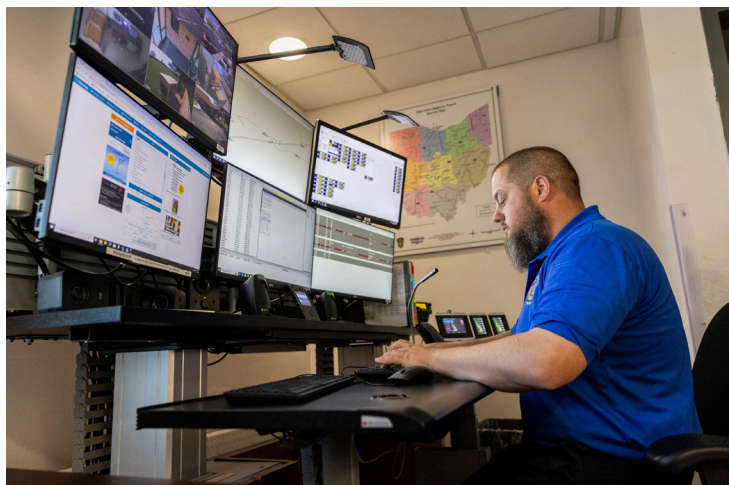
LEADS processed a total of 1,547,175,318 queries and responses. Criminal justice agencies search persons, vehicles, boats, guns and articles through LEADS. Based on the type of search, numerous state and national data sources are checked and matches are returned in seconds.

eWarrants go-live was achieved in four counties and at nine OSHP Dispatch Centers. LEADS staff assists courts and law enforcement agencies with the reconciliation of warrants between court case management and law enforcement records management systems. All records are matched and fields are synchronized between systems to ensure there is no duplicate, stale, or incorrect data entered.

A total of 231 criminal justice agencies using LEADS were audited for policy compliance and data quality assurance. The FBI National Crime Information Center requires triennial audits of criminal justice agencies that directly access or enter records in the system. LEADS conducts audits to determine if agencies are complying with all state/federal laws and policies.

### Statewide Dispatching

Dispatch Centers now have access to the ODOT Milestone Camera system, which involves security cameras at state rest areas, in addition to roadways across the state. These cameras in the rest areas are located both inside the rest area buildings and the exterior of the building and parking areas. The goal of having access to these cameras is to help with reports of medical emergencies, crashes, criminal activity and long-term commercial vehicle parking. The OSHP has access to 1,301 cameras owned by ODOT, 183 of which are located in rest areas.



*Dispatch Centers now have access to the ODOT Milestone Camera system.*



Statewide Dispatch Management created an Entered Recovered Gun (ERG) follow-up that is used during a warrant risk assessment. This program allows for an electronic record of all recovered guns entered into LEADS. The ERG mirrors the follow-up systems we have in place for Warrants and Towed Vehicles. It also provides the ability to pull reports regarding recovered guns for auditing purposes.

Statewide, OSHP dispatchers successfully entered all “dead file warrants” into LEADS as part of the Governor’s initiative to improve the safety of citizens, victims and law enforcement in Ohio and other states. “Dead file warrants” were generally warrants issued for Failure to Appear for a minor infraction, such as a safety belt ticket, or failure to pay fines. Previously, local level courts made decisions to not enter these into LEADS when they were originally issued.

The OSHP began the rollout of eWarrants to dispatch centers, even without court involvement, in August 2023. Dispatch centers in Canton, Wooster, Cambridge, Bowling Green, Jackson, Bucyrus, Portsmouth, Athens and Ravenna went live using the full eWarrants program between August 22, 2023, and June 4, 2024. The Statewide Dispatch Program is responsible for the continued training, implementation and maintenance of this program through collaboration with vendors, law enforcement agencies and courts.

## LPR

The OSHP acquired Flock Safety License Plate Reader (LPR) user access for sworn officers. This access was acquired in June 2024 and allows troopers to receive alerts in their OSHP cars when a vehicle matching an entry on the NCIC list passes by a Flock Safety LPR camera near the trooper. These notifications can be for things like stolen vehicles, missing persons, AMBER alerts, etc. Additionally, the Division continues to work through the deployment of LPR cameras at various locations around Ohio.

## Oral Fluid Project

In the fall of 2023 and into 2024, Crime Laboratory staff finalized the new and innovative oral fluid project. This new methodology, in conjunction with field operations, Drug Recognition Experts and prosecutors from around the state, is set to begin a pilot testing project starting in August 2024. This project will allow for testing of individual’s oral fluid to better indicate drug impaired drivers. After a 6- to 12-month period, the hope is to move out of the pilot and into implementation phase.

## New Vehicles and Post

Additionally, the OSHP is transitioning to the Dodge Durango as the primary enforcement vehicle. The Durango offers extra storage, allowing space for a custom storage box. The extra space greatly enhances the ability of troopers to quickly, and safely, gain access to equipment needed while working on the roadside. The Durango also has a new light package, siren system, cage and prisoner seat.

*OSHP is transitioning to the Dodge Durango as the primary enforcement vehicle.*



For the first time in OSHP history, every Motorcycle Unit trooper has a functional tablet and printer installed on their fully-equipped BMW – their primary assigned OSHP vehicle. In March 2024, the fleet of BMW R1200RTP motorcycles were retrofitted with additional rear lighting to provide substantially more emergency lighting when blue lights are activated at a traffic stop. These additional lights corrected an issue with the less-effective factory issued lighting when a top box lid is raised during a traffic stop to access the tablet. The factory rear lighting would be redirected and become less effective.

The OSHP partnered with the American Honda Motor Company on a specialized version of the Honda Odyssey for commercial vehicle enforcement supervisors in each district. The fully marked Odyssey is equipped with lights for commercial vehicle enforcement, radios, computer access and has a connected printer to print out inspection reports roadside. The OSHP is also benefiting from the Odyssey’s advanced features, improving efficiency in motor carrier enforcement, and bus and vehicle inspections. The Honda Odyssey model was designed and tested at Honda’s Auto Development Center.

Throughout 2023 and 2024, the Office of Finance and Logistics managed the construction of a new OSHP post in Fremont. The new post, constructed on the grounds of the existing post, is a state-of-the-art 5,700 square foot facility equipped with storm shelter, a flexibly designed community room/training room which can be used for community engagement events as well as public safety operations, and an upgraded evidence storage system.

## Mental Health and Wellness

### New Therapy Dog Program

As part of the commitment to continue putting resources into the mental health and wellness program, the Division added a new therapy dog program in 2024. The therapy dog is a purebred English Labrador named Hope. She is meant to support OSHP personnel with traumatic incidents, assist in debriefings after a critical incident, visit different OSHP facilities to reduce daily stress experienced throughout the work day, participate in community functions across the state to support community members and safety partners and participate in Ohio ASSIST Post Critical Incident Seminars. Trooper Paul E. Appleman was selected to be Hope’s handler. He is a current Member Assistance Team (MAT) member with the knowledge, skills and abilities to communicate with individuals who have experienced a traumatic incident. He is also experienced in critical incident response, understands the signs and symptoms of a stress reaction and has a good working knowledge of mental health resources.

On June 28, 2024, Hope and Trooper Appleman graduated from the Franklin County Sheriff Therapy K9 Training Program. She and Trooper Appleman are working towards their national certification which should be completed by the end of 2024.



*Trooper Paul Appleman and Hope graduated from the Franklin County Sheriff Therapy K9 Training Program.*



When not in training, Hope and Trooper Appleman attended numerous events, including the Hilltop Summer Safety Bash, Post visits, Safety City at Linden Stem and Stewart Elementary schools and the Special Olympics and the Ohio State Fair. They also attended a meeting about last November's Tusky Valley bus crash and offered support to those impacted.

### **Member Assistance Team (MAT) / Veteran Member Assistance Team (VMAT)**

In FY24, Member Assistance Team and Veteran Member Assistance Team volunteers assisted in 175 incidents and positively impacted a total of 719 individuals. Over 41% of incidents MAT/VMAT assisted in this past year stemmed from personal mental health concerns. The second most common cause for MAT/VMAT interaction was traffic crashes, which sat at nearly 18% over the last fiscal year.

### **Ohio ASSIST – Post Critical Incident Seminar**

The OSHP partnered with Ohio ASSIST to facilitate four post-critical incident seminars. The seminars saw 110 attendees from 37 different counties, including 51 from law enforcement, 31 first responder supporters, 15 emergency telecommunications/dispatchers, 10 fire/EMS personnel and three corrections officers. Each participant was given a pre-seminar self-assessment of their own wellness. Since 2017, 24 seminars have been conducted, serving 634 participants.

## **Special Events**

### **OSHP Celebrates 90 Years of Service with a Purpose**

Calendar year 2023 marked the 90th anniversary of the OSHP. On November 1, 2023, the OSHP, with assistance from the Ohio National Guard and the Ohio History Connection, unveiled a historical marker recognizing the Division's 90th anniversary.

The ceremony took place on the grounds of Camp Perry Military Reservation near Port Clinton. The historical marker is in the northeast corner of Niagara and Trippe roads at Camp Perry, which is the exact location is where the Division's first 60 Patrolmen graduated on November 15, 1933.



*A historical marker recognizing the Division's 90th anniversary was erected on the grounds of Camp Perry Military Reservation near Port Clinton.*

The project took a considerable amount of work and research to fully materialize. A team consisting of the OSHP's Public Affairs Unit and the Ohio National Guard worked tirelessly using photographs, GPS mapping technology and existing structures to determine the exact location where that first graduation took place.

## Master Trooper Ceremonies



The new Master Trooper designation, which debuted in 2024, honors troopers who have achieved seven years of service and demonstrated exceptional leadership, dedication and commitment to the OSHP's Core Values. All Master Troopers have consistently served with a purpose and embody the highest standards of service and protection. The status is intended to be an example of a trooper's experience and dedication to the Division and commitment to the safety and security of Ohio. The Master Trooper status includes uniform insignia and a certificate.

At a ceremony held at the Piqua District Headquarters on June 26, 2024, the OSHP recognized the exemplary service of the first of more than 300 recipients who will receive the Master Trooper designation in 2024.

## Statistical Recap

According to provisional data Ohio lost 1,213 people in FY24 because of choices such as not wearing a safety belt, distracted driving, illegal drugs and driving impaired. Unfortunately, over the last five years, Ohio has averaged over three traffic fatalities and 12 overdose deaths per day.

Additionally, troopers removed a large number of drugs from Ohio roads in FY24. This included significant increases in the seizure of cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamine and opiate pills.

### **Activity Recap (FY 2023):**

- OSHP conducted more than one million contacts with motorists.
- Investigated 52,444 traffic crashes;
- Arrested 14,892 impaired drivers;
- Issued 54,336 safety belt citations;
- Enforced 18,618 distracted driving violations; and
- Provided assistance to 128,271 motorists.

### **Criminal OSHP (FY 2024) Troopers seized:**

- 191 pounds of methamphetamines;
- 8 pounds of heroin;
- 414 pounds of cocaine;
- 15,920 opiate pills;
- 57 pounds of fentanyl; and
- 7,280 pounds of marijuana.

Troopers also made 4,820 arrests for drug violations, 4,361 felony arrests, seized 1,402 illegal firearms and recovered 1,096 stolen vehicles.

## Ohio Investigative Unit

The Ohio Investigative Unit (OIU) enforces Ohio’s alcohol, tobacco, and food stamp fraud laws. OIU agents are responsible for investigating violations relating to the liquor control act as well as criminal activity in or around liquor permit locations (bars, restaurants, carryouts, etc.) and illegal establishments.

### Case Info

In FY24, OIU generated 3,452 cases, made 2,441 total arrests for 4,504 offenses, made 1,230 liquor control law arrests, 449 felony arrests, 186 drug arrests and issued 863 administrative citations to liquor permit holders for various liquor rule violations.

*OIU has an expanded core mission that includes illegal weapons violations, drug trafficking, manufacturing false identification, gambling, human trafficking, money laundering, conspiracy and prostitution.*

OIU agents executed 158 search warrants, and assisted other agencies on 51 search warrants in 2023. In the first six months of 2024, agents executed 32 search warrants and assisted other agencies on 46 search warrants.

The unit has an expanded core mission beyond liquor control law, tobacco, and SNAP (food stamp) violations that includes illegal weapons violations, drug trafficking, manufacturing false identification, gambling, human trafficking, money laundering, conspiracy and prostitution.

### OIU Celebrates 90 Years



*On December 18, 2023, ODPS Director Andy Wilson spoke at an event at the Shipley building to commemorate the 90th Anniversary of the Ohio Investigative Unit.*

On November 15, 2023, Governor Mike DeWine presented Ohio Investigative Unit Senior Enforcement Commander Erik Lockhart with a Governor’s Proclamation in honor of the agency’s 90 years of service. Before making the presentation, Governor DeWine expressed his gratitude for OIU and its agents. He explained that OIU has come a long way since the repeal of prohibition in 1933 and its sole purpose of regulating the manufacture, sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages. “As time has gone by, many name changes have occurred, but the Ohio Investigative Unit has continued to evolve into an agency that handles so many things,”

said Governor DeWine. “Not only alcohol-related crime, but also crime related to illegal firearms, drugs, gambling, tobacco, violent crime, human trafficking and on and on.”

While the name has changed and duties have expanded, OIU celebrated 90 years of service on December 23, 2023, and will continue to evolve and meet the demands of keeping Ohio safe.

## Violent Crime Efforts

OIU continues emphasize violent crime reduction details and ensuring Ohio alcohol outlets are safe for employees, patrons, and the public. OIU began a program with the intent to reduce violent crimes occurring in and around alcohol sales locations by carrying out violent crime reduction (VCR) details. Because of these efforts, gun seizures have increased for OIU every year since 2019 when 24 guns were seized.

OIU Agents have recovered 766 firearms since January 1, 2022; 276 guns in 2022, 327 in 2023, and 163 in the first six months of 2024.

Many of these guns have been taken from violent criminals, drug dealers and gang members. There is no doubt many future crimes and harm to others were stopped due to these seizures. While there is no way to know for sure about the future crimes that may be committed with a particular firearm, there is a way to link these guns to past crimes. In 1997 the ATF established the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) to provide local, state, tribal and federal law enforcement partners with an automated ballistic imaging network. This technology is vital to any violent crime reduction strategy because it enables OIU to match ballistics evidence taken from recovered guns with other cases across the nation. Trained NIBIN technicians then conduct a correlation review of these results, identifying NIBIN leads or potential links or associations from the same firearm.

OIU has made an effort to test fire every recovered gun and submit the results through NIBIN. As a direct result of recovering 371 guns in FY24, 64 of those guns were used in other crimes involving 153 victims, 10 murders, 45 felonious assault shootings and 55 drive by/habitation shootings. Four of these crime guns were fully automatic, three were taken from juveniles, and multiple were weapons with switches converting them to full auto pistols. From January through June 2024, OIU linked 25 of the 113 guns recovered as crime guns. Those guns have been linked to 68 crimes involving 64 victims, four murders, 18 felonious assault shootings, and 14 drive by/habitation shootings.

## Snapshot of OIU Violent Crime Reduction Details

Agents arrested a juvenile and an 18-year-old offender with a firearm and high-capacity magazines in Cleveland. The juvenile offender used the crime gun to commit two robberies, felonious assault shootings, and was a fugitive wanted for numerous motor vehicle armed robberies. The juvenile offender was bound over to adult court and eventually sentenced to 15 years in state prison on Cleveland Division of Police (CDP) and OIU cases. The 18-year-old offender was a fugitive wanted for four counts of aggravated murder and has been held on bond pending OIU/CDP cases. The crime gun the offender possessed was used in a felonious assault shooting days prior and is still under investigation.

Agents arrested an 18-year-old offender with a firearm in Cleveland. The day prior the offender used the crime gun to shoot two children walking from a playground. Because of OIU's arrest of the offender, the CDP was also able to connect the offender to the shooting. The offender posted on social media admitting to the shooting and has been indicted on two counts of Aggravated Robbery/Felonious Assault/Discharge of firearm on prohibited premises and held on bond.

Follow up on these investigations was coordinated and conducted with the Cleveland ATF Crime Gun Intelligence Center Task force and CDP Homicide and Violent Crime Reduction Units.



## OIU Recognized Nationally

OIU was selected as the National Liquor Law Enforcement Associations Agency of the Year. This award is presented to the top liquor law enforcement agency in the country.



## SNAP Fraud

In July 2021, Agents with OIU along with USDA-OIG Agent received a referral from the States of Washington and Oregon for a SNAP/Identity Theft Investigation. They believed the suspect was using SNAP recipient's identities from other states to apply for benefits in their states.

Agents located the suspect in Columbus and began to conduct months of physical, digital and GPS surveillance. Agents physically observed the suspect at the Columbus library completing SNAP applications and faxing them to the state of Oregon which was verified through Oregon State JFS.

Agents verified he was using other people's identities and submitting SNAP applications on-line to the state of Washington from his home.

On April 12, 2022, Agents, with assistance from various federal agencies, executed multiple search warrants. Agents arrested the suspect and located multiple SNAP cards from multiple states, approximately 200 identities, computers, and cell phones, to include copies of Driver Licenses along with Social Security Numbers and Dates of Birth.

At the conclusion of the investigation, agents found that multiple individuals were involved in the conspiracy throughout the country and that the individual had been doing this activity since 2010 in multiple states. A total of five individuals were indicted in Dayton Federal Court.

On October 31, 2023, the individual was sentenced for various offenses to include SNAP fraud, Aggravated Identity Theft, Felon in Possession of a Firearm, Wire Fraud, and Conspiracy. He was ordered to the Federal Bureau of Prisons for 10 years, five years supervised probation, pay \$700,000 in restitution and forfeit his vehicle.

A total of 215 victims were identified. In one case, a victim had his federal income tax return withheld due to him owing money to the state of Washington from the suspect stealing his Identity. Agents were able to rectify the situation and have the money returned to the victim.

In January 2024, OIU and the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Office of Inspector General closed out a long-term food stamp and gambling investigation by executing seven search warrants at several retail stores in Butler and Hamilton counties. The investigation originated from several complaints that locations were taking advantage of patrons by catering to gambling habits, which resulted in patrons losing all of their money. Additionally, most of the locations were trafficking in SNAP benefits by exchanging benefits for ineligible items, to include tobacco, weapons (knives), and U.S. currency.

As a result of the search warrants, 30 gambling machines and \$45,722.77 in U.S. currency were seized as evidence. A total of 13 Violation Notices were issued to permit premises detailing 31 separate violations of SNAP fraud and gambling-related offenses. Criminal charges are pending in Butler and Hamilton counties.

During FY24, OIU initiated over 100 SNAP investigations. OIU continued to work with the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services (ODJFS), U.S. Department of Agriculture, county Job & Family Services, local law enforcement agencies, and the OSHP's Intelligence Unit to investigate reports of over 7,000 Ohio victims who have had over \$4 million in stolen SNAP benefits. OIU is also working with these agencies to jointly investigate over 35 incidents where skimming devices have been found on point-of-sale devices in Ohio SNAP retail locations.

### **Compliance and Traceback Investigations**

Related activities also include compliance checks to ensure locations are not selling alcohol or tobacco products to underage individuals. OIU has agreements, and works closely with, the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

During FY24, agents conducted 647 compliance checks on locations that sell alcohol and another 2,575 compliance checks on tobacco retailers.

OIU also conducts trace-back investigations to determine whether alcohol was illegally sold or provided to an underage or already-intoxicated person involved in an alcohol-related crash or incident. This program is aimed to improve traffic safety and responsible alcohol sales by holding those accountable that may have served or obtained alcohol illegally, resulting in traffic crashes or fatalities on Ohio's roadways. OIU conducted 120 traceback investigations in FY24.

### **Large Enforcement Details**

August 24-25, 2023 – Pursuant to the Governor's initiative to combat violent crime in Cleveland, agents worked a two-day violent crime reduction detail in cooperation with the Cleveland Division of Police, OSHP, Adult Parole Authority, ATF, and FBI. Agents worked across Cleveland's 3rd and 5th Districts. During the detail, agents made 23 felony arrests, seized 15 illegal firearms, and recovered one stolen vehicle.

### **Human Trafficking**

OIU agents are members of the Northeast Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force, Mahoning Valley Human Trafficking Task Force, and the Toledo Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force.

The Ohio Attorney General's Organized Crime Investigations Commission conducted the annual human trafficking statewide initiative, named Buyer's Remorse, with all of their human trafficking task forces conducting operations from September 24-30, 2023.

The Northeast Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force details included: September 26 - the task force worked with Willoughby Police Department; September 28 - with the Westlake Police Department; and September 30 - with the East Cleveland Police Department. During the operations, ads were posted on a popular website advertising sex in exchange for money. In addition, males and females arrived at a hotel believing they would be having sex for money. In East Cleveland, undercover females

walked Euclid Avenue selling sex. During all operations, ads were also answered for those in the immediate and neighboring areas selling sex and dates. In total, 29 females were identified for selling sex, 21 males were identified for purchasing sex. Additionally, drugs and three firearms were seized. Prosecutors will be consulted for the following charges; promoting prostitution, engaging in prostitution, soliciting, possessing criminal tools, possession of drug paraphernalia, drug possession, warrants and weapons violations.

September 29, 2023 – The Mahoning Valley Human Trafficking Task Force (MVHTTF), with assistance from the Austintown Township Police Department, arrested six males who responded to ads posted by Task Force Agents and requested various acts of sexual conduct, agreeing to pay for the acts. The males arrived at the pre-determined meeting locations in the township with the agreed upon amount of money and were detained by task force agents and assisting officers. A total of five of the six arrested consented to a search of their cellphones and were subsequently issued summonses for engaging in prostitution and possession of criminal tools by the Austintown Township Police Department. It is to be noted that one of the males was previously charged in Salem for the same offenses in a 2022 MVHTTF sting operation.

March 11, 2024 – OIU assisted Northeast Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force on a case involving a Cleveland man that was indicted on charges of sex trafficking eight women after physically and sexually abusing the women, forcing them into prostitution and receiving the proceeds of that exploitation for roughly two years. He is facing a total of 17 felony charges, including trafficking in persons, compelling prostitution, promoting prostitution, money laundering and possessing criminal tools.

## **Assisting other agencies**

**December 6, 2023 – Cleveland Agents assisted the FBI and the Cleveland Division of Police with conducting search and arrest warrants as a result of a long-term gang investigation.**

Agents assigned to the FBI Safe Streets Gang Task Force and the Cleveland Police Bureau of Special Services assisted throughout the investigation by conducting targeted investigations at the state agency liquor store bordering the housing complex, which was the base of operations for the criminal enterprise. During the search warrants, seven firearms and bulk amounts of narcotics were seized, and a ranking member and the leader of the Fully Blooded Felon gang were arrested. This gang was involved in countless violent acts that included the shooting of a Cleveland Division of Police detective.

**December 30, 2023 – Agents were requested by the Hocking County Sheriff's Office to assist deputies responding to a large house party where a fight broke out that involved firearms.**

Responding deputies observed approximately 60 people at the party upon their arrival. Agents conducted over 30 suspect interviews, and assisted in the recovery of a firearm from a suspect fighting with a deputy. Agents identified 20 individuals, including five juveniles, who were under 21 years of age and found to be under the influence of alcohol. Deputies booked an additional five individuals into the Southeastern Ohio regional jail for offenses including weapons under disability, CCW, resisting arrest and disorderly conduct.

## Education – Alcohol Server Knowledge

The Alcohol Server Knowledge (ASK) program is an educational program developed for people involved in the sale and handling of alcohol on the rules and regulations that govern liquor permits in Ohio, with emphasis on knowledge, responsibilities and risks involved. This includes some of the most frequently asked questions regarding Ohio’s laws, rules and enforcement initiatives.



ASK is completed online and upon passing the free training the user receives a certificate of completion.

Since becoming available online in December 2021, 6,431 participants completed the online training.



### Federal Grants

The Federal Highway Safety Act of 1966 directed the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation to jointly administer various highway safety projects. This federal grant program provides federal funds administered through the Ohio Department of Public Safety's Ohio Traffic Safety Office (OTSO) to eligible entities to be used in part for, but not limited to, traffic safety education, enforcement, and engineering projects. In Federal Fiscal Year 2024, OTSO awarded over \$23 million to 135 Ohio agencies for statewide programming to improve traffic safety and reduce traffic-related fatalities.

# \$23 million

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### Distracted Driving



One year after the law took effect, telematics data showed Ohio has seen a consistent month-over-month decline in distracted driving, culminating in a notable 8.6% decrease. Cambridge Mobile Telematics (CMT) estimates that this reduction has helped prevent 3,600 crashes, 2,000 injuries, and 17 fatalities.

The Ohio Traffic Safety Office is part of a multi-agency effort to inform and educate all drivers about the changes to the distracted driving law, which took effect on April 4, 2023. The law makes it illegal in most cases for drivers to use or hold a cell phone or electronic device. The violation is now considered a primary offense, meaning any officer can pull over a driver immediately if they witness a violation.

One year after the law took effect, telematics data showed Ohio has seen a consistent month-over-month decline in distracted driving, culminating in a notable 8.6% decrease. Cambridge Mobile Telematics (CMT) estimates that this reduction has helped prevent 3,600 crashes, 2,000 injuries, and 17 fatalities.

## Grants to Support Teen Driver Training

In an effort to help teen drivers in Ohio access affordable, quality, driver education programs, OTSO announced the first ever Creating Opportunities for Driver Education (CODE) grant awards. Thirty-four grants totaling over \$4.5 million were awarded to current and prospective driver training enterprises, educational service centers, school districts and career technical schools to establish or expand driver training at nearly 100 locations throughout Ohio. The CODE grant program is not intended to replace current driver training schools, but instead increase capacity in an overburdened system and fill training gaps across the state. OTSO received overwhelming interest in the CODE grant program, with 53 grant applications submitted by agencies across the state.

OTSO also announced another round of funding for “Drive to Succeed” grants, which funds scholarships to students who otherwise wouldn’t have had the means to complete the necessary classroom and behind-the-wheel training. Thirty-five local school districts and governmental agencies were awarded grants totaling nearly \$2.5 million. The funding is expected to support approximately 5,500 Ohio students living in 43 counties.

Locations	County	Award Amount
Black River Local Schools	Ashland	\$153,696.67
Schwartz Driving School (Madison-Champaign)	Champaign	\$265,026.67
Champion City Drivers Ed	Clark	\$317,980.00
Springfield-Clark Career Technology Center	Clark	\$165,550.17
Muskingum Valley ESC – (Buckeye Central Local School District)	Crawford	\$63,694.00
EHOVE Career Center	Erie	\$79,246.67
Fairfield County ESC	Fairfield	\$100,958.33
Muskingum Valley ESC (Fayette Local School District)	Fulton	\$63,694.00
Gallia-Jackson-Vinton Vocational Schools	Gallia	\$106,183.33
Muskingum Valley ESC – (Ada Exempted Village Schools)	Hardin	\$63,694.00
Muskingum Valley ESC – (Upper Scioto Valley Local School District)	Hardin	\$63,694.00
Jefferson County ESC	Jefferson	\$261,030.67
Licking Valley Driving School	Licking	\$254,123.33
Muskingum Valley ESC (Indian Lake Local Schools)	Logan	\$63,694.00
Schwartz Driving School (Logan County)	Logan	\$203,133.33
2nd Nature Driving Academy	Mahoning	\$229,160.00
Choffin Career and Technical Center	Mahoning	\$65,330.00
Muskingum Valley ESC (Elgin Local School District)	Marion	\$63,694.00
Muskingum Valley ESC – (Ridgedale Local School District)	Marion	\$63,694.00
Montgomery County Educational Service Center	Montgomery	\$304,120.00
Driving Schools of Ohio (Morrow)	Morrow	\$175,043.33

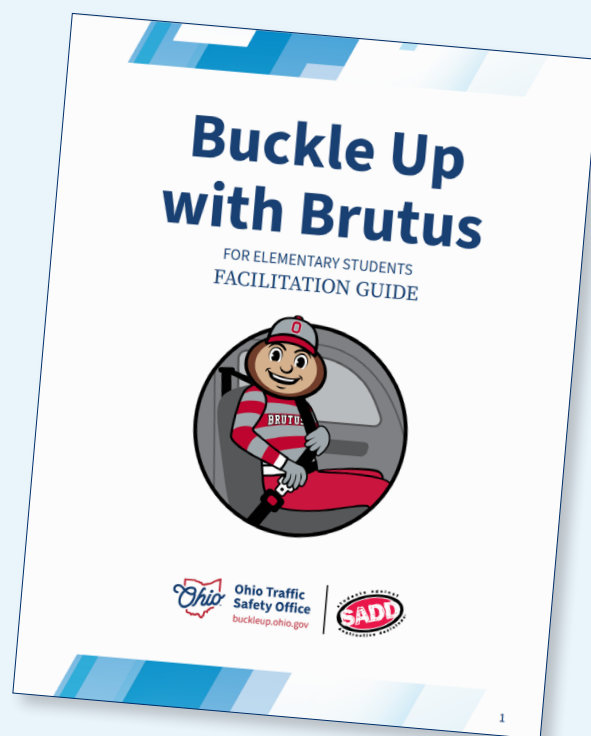
## Advanced Driver Training Summer Series

The Ohio Traffic Safety Office produced a new video and launched a web page dedicated to Advanced Driver Training to better inform parents about these specially designed classes that address the leading causes of teen crashes. Advanced Driver Training programs allow students to practice skid recovery, anti-lock braking system exercises and other skills with a licensed instructor on a closed course.

Over the summer, OTSO partnered with three Advanced Driver Training programs to increase access to these courses at eight free events across the state. Ohio-based providers DriveTeam and Professional Driving Systems conducted six of the events. OTSO partnered with the Ford Philanthropy’s award-winning Ford Driving Skills for Life for the other two events.

## Buckle Up with Brutus

OTSO is implementing a new program to educate students and families about the importance of wearing a seat belt and using a booster seat called “Buckle Up with Brutus”. The curriculum, which is intended to reach second and third grade students, was designed by OTSO, Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), and The Ohio State University. The Ohio School Resource Officers Association (OSROA) also supported the program by identifying schools and law enforcement agencies that were interested in presenting “Buckle Up with Brutus” in schools. OTSO provided all materials including talking points, parent resources, activities, worksheets, and a music video of Brutus’ Seat Belt Boogie. The program is one of the recommendations from the Safety Belt Task Force, which released a full report on seat belt use in Ohio in May 2024.



## Driver Training Education Initiatives

New education initiatives from the Ohio Traffic Safety Office aim to support new drivers in Ohio and make the roadways safer for all. OTSO is now providing resources for diverse communities to help English Language Learners (ELL) become licensed drivers. The ELL curriculum and train-the-trainer program is intended to help non-English speakers learn safe driving practices and prepare for the written and driving test at the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV). It includes information on the requirements for obtaining a driver license in Ohio, the meanings of traffic signs and signals, and other basic traffic safety laws. Trainings are conducted in English, and participants translate the material to share in their communities.



AAA’s nationally recognized driver training curriculum, How to Drive, is now being provided free of charge to current and prospective driver training schools. This new resource will benefit schools, instructors, and students by providing turn-key, high quality educational content. This initiative by OTSO aims to strengthen education in Ohio by supporting driver training schools to meet the demand of current and newer students.

## Motorcycle Ohio



*Crash data shows that the training that happens in Motorcycle Ohio courses saves lives – about 78% of motorcycle fatalities in 2023 involved riders who were not trained.*

The Ohio Department of Public Safety – through the Ohio Revised Code – is charged with establishing a motorcycle safety and education program. This year, the department’s Motorcycle Ohio program is celebrating 36 years of providing Ohio’s riders the opportunity to improve their skills and make the roadways safer for all motorists.

Funded by motorcycle plate fees and class registrations, the mission of Motorcycle Ohio is to provide affordable, effective training courses, and to reduce fatalities and injuries through rider education, public information campaigns, and licensing improvement.

Each year, about 12,000 riders complete a course at a training site in 33 counties across Ohio. Crash data shows that the training that happens in Motorcycle Ohio courses saves lives – about 78% of motorcycle fatalities in 2023 involved riders who were not trained.

This year, Motorcycle Ohio opened a new training site in Muskingum County at Zane State College. This location previously served as part of the mobile training program in 2014 and 2015, and Zane State leadership requested training to return to campus as one of Motorcycle Ohio’s regular training sites.