

# ANNUAL REPORT

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT



**2025**  
FISCAL YEAR



**Department of  
Development**



*The Ohio Department of Development is empowering communities to succeed.*



# Table of Contents

- A Message from Director Lydia Mihalik.....4
- Building Stronger Communities.....6
- Empowering Ohio’s Business Community .....14
- Helping Minority- and Women-Owned Businesses Thrive.....30
- Transforming Ohio’s Appalachian Region.....36
- Closing the Digital Divide.....50
- Showcasing Ohio’s Attractions .....58



## A Message From Director Lydia Mihalik



### Dear Friends and Partners,

At the Ohio Department of Development, everything we do is rooted in one belief: that every Ohioan deserves the opportunity to thrive. Whether we're supporting entrepreneurs, strengthening neighborhoods, attracting

new investment, or connecting people to essential services, our mission is to empower people, communities, and businesses across all 88 counties.

As we reflect on Fiscal Year 2025, one theme rises above the rest: we made meaningful progress on the promises we've made. With the leadership of Governor Mike DeWine, and in partnership with so many of you, we took bold steps to transform vision into reality. We made good on our commitments to expand opportunity, support growth, and invest in the future. And in doing so, we helped more Ohioans build the lives they want, in the communities they love.

Ohio's economy continued to accelerate, fueled by hundreds of millions in investments to grow and retain talent, strengthen industry, and spark innovation. Through initiatives like the Ohio Innovation Hubs, we are reshaping sectors, empowering regions, and ensuring that the benefits of economic growth reach every corner of the state. These aren't just investments in infrastructure—they're investments in possibility. And they are delivering results.

We promised to strengthen Ohio's communities, and in FY25, we delivered. Through Governor DeWine's OhioBUILDS initiative, we helped modernize water systems, remediate contaminated sites, increase access to affordable housing, and support

homeownership through the Welcome Home Ohio program. Each of these projects represents a commitment fulfilled—and a foundation laid for long-term community resilience.

That same commitment is transforming Ohio's Appalachian region. Through the Appalachian Community Grant Program, we're turning big ideas into real progress—revitalizing downtowns, expanding healthcare access, building public spaces, and creating new job pathways. These efforts are not just improving the quality of life—they're restoring hope and momentum to communities that have long deserved both.

We also promised to support Ohio's entrepreneurs—especially those historically left out of opportunity. In FY25, our Minority Business Assistance Centers and Small Business Development Centers served thousands of businesses, offering tools and resources to help them grow. We know that when every Ohioan has the chance to succeed, our economy is stronger.

We said we'd close the digital divide—and this year, we made significant progress. Through BroadbandOhio, we awarded millions in grants to connect tens of thousands of households with high-speed internet. That connectivity is unlocking opportunity—giving families access to education, healthcare, jobs, and each other.

And finally, we promised to tell Ohio's story—and what a story it is. In FY25, TourismOhio helped generate a record-breaking economic impact by showcasing the people, places, and experiences that make Ohio unforgettable. We worked hand in hand with our Convention and Visitors Bureau partners across the state to expand and promote thematic trails, revamp our trails website, and launch new seasonal event guides that bring communities to life.



*Director Mihalik joins Fairfield Local Schools student Kaylee Hurless-Miller at the groundbreaking ceremony for the district's new school-based health clinic.*

We provided shared messaging tools and promotional toolkits to ensure we're all speaking with one strong, unified voice—because when we tell Ohio's story together, it resonates louder and reaches farther. We even engaged some of Ohio's newest Ohioans—college freshmen—by placing travel guides directly in their hands, helping them explore their new home and sparking a connection that we hope lasts long after graduation. One visit can inspire a lifelong love of this place, and we're proud to help more people discover why Ohio truly is the Heart of it All.

From the shores of Lake Erie to the hills of Appalachia, from our biggest cities to our smallest towns, the progress we made in FY25 is a direct result of the partnerships we value. Together, we turned plans into action, and action into impact. And while we're proud of how far we've come, we know the work isn't done.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to the mission that brought us here: delivering on the promises we've made to invest in Ohio's future. With your continued partnership, we'll keep building a state where everyone has the tools—and the opportunity—to thrive.

Thank you for your trust, your collaboration, and your commitment to Ohio.

**Lydia L. Mihalik**  
Director

# BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

The Department of Development is committed to addressing the critical needs of Ohioans through our Community Services Division. By enhancing local infrastructure, revitalizing downtown areas, and fostering a supportive environment for entrepreneurship and job creation, the division is making a significant impact on communities across the state. Key initiatives such as the Home Energy Assistance Program, the Percentage of Income Payment Plan, and the Home Weatherization Assistance Program are integral to improving the quality of life for all Ohioans.

We know Ohioans care about their communities, including having vibrant neighborhoods, affordable housing, and safer streets. So, whether it's repairing waterlines, lowering energy bills, or improving housing conditions, we empower communities to rewrite their stories and make real, meaningful changes to the places we call home.

## METRICS *that matter*



**\$33.3M**

IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDS AWARDED TO ASSIST WITH PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE FOR LOW-AND-MODERATE INCOME OHIOANS



**\$127.5M**

AWARDED TO SUPPORT LEAD MITIGATION AND PREVENTION PROJECTS ACROSS 76 COUNTIES



**369**

PROJECTS AWARDED THROUGH OHIOBUILDS BROWNFIELD REMEDIATION PROGRAM, TOTALING NEARLY \$379M



**6,755**

CONTRACTORS TRAINED IN LEAD REMEDIATION THROUGH LEAD SAFE OHIO PROGRAM



**72**

PROJECTS COMPLETED THROUGH OHIOBUILDS WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM



**121,635**

HOUSEHOLDS SERVED THROUGH WINTER (76,777) AND SUMMER (44,878) CRISIS PROGRAMS



**6,800**

OHIOANS RECEIVED HOME WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE



**\$57.5M**

IN WELCOME HOME OHIO FUNDS AWARDED TO IMPROVE THE HOUSING STOCK IN 26 COUNTIES



**39,092**

PEOPLE PROVIDED EMERGENCY SHELTER ASSISTANCE THROUGH HOMELESS CRISIS RESPONSE GRANT PROGRAM



**\$8.5M**

IN GRANTS ALLOCATED TO BUSINESSES, NONPROFITS, SCHOOLS IN 8 COUNTIES TO SUPPORT ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROJECTS

# Welcome Home Ohio

## A Fresh Start in Mount Vernon



**FOR OHIOANS** like Brandon and Taylor Lang of Mount Vernon, the dream of owning their own home can often feel like just that — a dream. But thanks to the **Welcome Home Ohio program**, the young couple and their daughter, Ava, will soon have a place to call their own.

Their home is one of 12 being built through a partnership between the Knox County Land Bank and the Habitat for Humanity of Knox County—part of a larger initiative to expand housing opportunities for income-eligible Ohioans.

On Oct. 7, 2024, Director Mihalik joined local leaders, Habitat volunteers, and students from the Knox County Career Center’s Building Trades Program to celebrate the start of the project. The group stood proudly beside the framed structure of the Langs’ future home — a tangible symbol of what’s possible when communities come together.

The \$2.46 million investment in Knox County will ensure that 12 newly built homes receive improvements, including garages, before being sold to families in need by early 2026.

Since its launch, Welcome Home Ohio has committed nearly \$60 million toward the creation of 440 single-family homes in 26 counties, providing hardworking Ohioans with affordable paths to homeownership. For the Langs, this investment means stability, opportunity, and a fresh start—all in a place they can truly call home.



“The homes born from this project represent more than just walls and roofs — they represent opportunity, stability, and community. They represent the chance for every Ohioan to build the future they’ve always dreamed of. The future they deserve.”

—Director Lydia Mihalik



Mount Vernon, Ohio



**\$60M**  
AWARDED



**440**  
HOMES



**26**  
COUNTIES

# Reclaiming Spaces, Rebuilding Communities



**ALL ACROSS OHIO**, once-forgotten spaces are being given new life. Through the **Brownfield Remediation** and **Demolition and Site Revitalization programs**—created by the DeWine Administration and General Assembly in 2021—we are empowering communities across all 88 counties to transform blighted, contaminated properties into new opportunities for growth.

Whether it's a vacant house, a crumbling warehouse, or an abandoned gas station, these programs are clearing the way for investment, innovation, and stronger neighborhoods.

In FY25, alone, we awarded nearly \$380 million through the **Brownfield Remediation Program**, supporting 369 projects in communities large and small. These transformative investments are breathing new life into places that had long been off-limits for development — turning the page on the past and writing new chapters for the future.

In Muskingum County, for example, a \$2.5 million grant awarded in June 2025 will support the redevelopment of a former industrial site into a new, \$79 million county jail. On top of that, \$3.3 million in state support will help leaders in Cuyahoga County

transform blighted buildings from the 1920s and 1940s into a community arts hub in Cleveland. And, in Hamilton County, a \$4.9 million grant will redevelop Cincinnati's historic First National Bank building complex into a mixed-use facility complete with a hotel, residential space, and parking facilities.

At the same time, the **Demolition and Site Revitalization Program** has continued to make powerful progress in our communities' war on blight. Throughout the fiscal year, nearly \$157 million was awarded to support the demolition of more than 3,000 structures — clearing space for safer streets, new housing, green spaces, and thriving small businesses.

In Butler County, for example, old restaurant sites, hotel foundations, and parking lots are being cleared to create room for new commercial development. And on the other side of the state, the long-blighted Reeves Building in downtown Warren is finally going to come down — marking the start of something new for the people of Trumbull County.

These investments aren't just changing skylines — they're changing lives, restoring pride, igniting local economies, and creating the kinds of places where people never want to leave.



# Lead Safe Ohio: Preserving History, Protecting Health in Mansfield

**WHEN JORDON AND TALON BAKER** purchased their dream home in 2019 — a historic Victorian located in the heart of downtown Mansfield — they saw it as more than just a house. It is a piece of Ohio's history, and a symbol of the bright future they were committed to building together in their hometown.

After years of renovations, the Bakers believed their work was done — until a routine pediatric checkup revealed elevated lead levels in their oldest child's blood. Despite their precautions during renovation, a lead inspection uncovered an unexpected hazard: lead-based varnish hiding in the original wood floors.

“Lying in bed with my daughter at night, I would be looking at her windows thinking, ‘We just don't know [what's safe],’” said Talon. “I would be stressed about them even opening their blinds because we didn't know if lead was on the shutters or anything like that.”

Thanks to a grant through our **Lead Safe Ohio program**, and with support from the Ohio Department of Health, the Bakers were able to remove the hazard, protect their children's health, and continue preserving the historic home they worked so hard to restore.

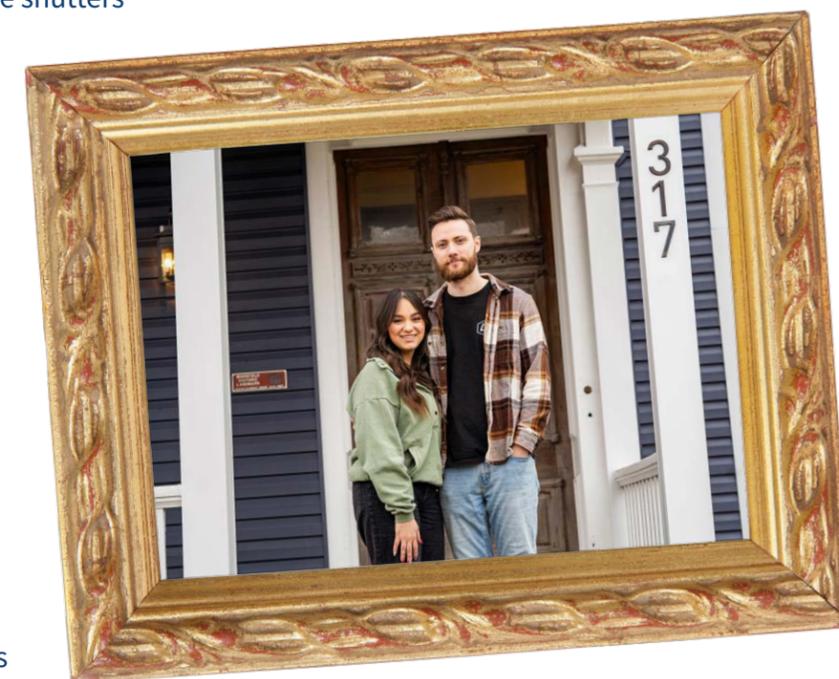
Today, the Bakers are living the life they've always dreamed of in a safe, healthy environment — proof that with the right support, families all across Ohio can have it all in the heart of it all.

“It felt good knowing there were people out there who have much more resources

and power than we do who actually cared about our house,” said Jordan. “We're trying to stay here, and raise our kids here, and be a part of seeing our community thrive.”

*“We are just so grateful — there is no way we could have done this ourselves,” said Talon. “And, the fact that so many people saw value, not only in our house but in us a family, was a really big deal to us.”*

Since Governor DeWine launched the Lead Safe Ohio program, approximately \$90 million has been allocated to make homes safer for individuals and families in 76 counties.



# Investments in Housing

At Development, we believe safe, stable, and affordable housing is the foundation of happy families, thriving communities, and a strong economy.



**THAT IS WHY** we've continued to build on Governor DeWine's promise to invest millions of dollars into transformative programs that do just that — supporting local change-makers, uplifting vulnerable Ohioans, and expanding access to affordable homeownership opportunities across all 88 counties.

Through targeted grant programs, we've helped prevent homelessness, expanded housing access for Ohioans in recovery from substance use disorder, and provided essential home repairs and down payment assistance for low- and moderate-income residents.

Our investments this fiscal year have helped thousands of Ohioans access safe, stable, and affordable housing—whether through emergency shelter, transitional recovery support, essential repairs, or the opportunity to purchase their first home.

This includes \$10.6 million in grants awarded in February through the **Supportive Housing Program** to help 32 nonprofit and local government agencies provide supportive services and housing to Ohioans experiencing homelessness. As a result of these awards, more than 6,400 Ohioans will receive transitional and permanent housing support when they need it most.

And in April, \$1.2 million in **Recovery Housing Program** dollars was awarded to help more than 1,000 Ohioans recovering from substance use disorder rebuild their lives and establish long-term stability through transitional housing. In Lake County, for example, \$53,584 in grants will enable 21 men and women to maintain a sober living environment and access outpatient services crucial in their recovery.

Also in April, \$6.8 million was awarded, this time through the **Housing Assistance Grant Program**, to improve housing conditions and provide down payment assistance for nearly 1,200 Ohioans. With these grants, 19 nonprofits can contract with local qualified construction companies to complete essential home repairs, as well as provide up to \$5,000 per home toward down payment assistance.

Together, these efforts reflect the DeWine-Tressel Administration's commitment to improving and expanding Ohio's housing options—supporting individuals and families at every stage, from crisis response and recovery to long-term stability and homeownership.

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**“The need for safe and affordable housing is a national challenge that requires proactive solutions, meaningful investments, and strong collaboration across all levels of government. This program represents an innovative and forward-thinking approach that addresses the barriers many Ohioans face when trying to buy a home.”**

—Governor Mike DeWine

## Changing Lives in Clinton County

**AFTER RELOCATING** from Pennsylvania to Ohio to be closer to her children, an elderly woman found herself facing unexpected challenges. With a limited income, and without the basic utilities needed for a safe and comfortable home, she came to the Clinton County Community Action office seeking help through Ohio's Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). The Clinton County Community Action team quickly mobilized to support her, and facilitated having her electricity deposit waived so she could obtain the service she needed to settle into her new home.

Recognizing her limited financial resources, she was also enrolled in the Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP), which significantly reduced her monthly energy costs and provided stability moving forward. In addition, she received a one-time HEAP credit to help cover heating expenses in the colder months.

She expressed deep gratitude for the care and support she received, sharing through tears that she had never experienced this level of assistance before because programs like HEAP and PIPP simply didn't exist where she had moved from.

Her story is a powerful reminder of how critical these services are and how impactful they can be for individuals who are navigating life changes on a fixed income. Through compassion, coordination, and access to resources, our partners at Clinton County Community Action helped ensure she could begin this new chapter with dignity, safety, and hope.

# EMPOWERING OHIO'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Rebuild the Arsenal

The Strategic Investments Division supports the development of Ohio's business community by assisting companies as they maneuver through the global economy. Whether it's supporting an established company looking to expand, an employee looking to gain new skills, or an aspiring entrepreneur, we are helping to create prosperity across the state through our many programs and projects.

## METRICS *that matter*

### TAX CREDITS



**\$4.4B**

PROJECT INVESTMENTS CATALYZED  
*by tax credit investments*

**29,022**

NEW JOBS CREATED\*  
*\*based on company commitments*

**12,143**

JOBS RETAINED\*

**\$3.8B**

CAPITAL INVESTMENT  
*through Job Creation  
Tax Credit*

**\$1B**

CAPITAL INVESTMENT  
*through Data Center  
Tax Exemption*

### BUSINESS ASSISTANCE



**\$2.1B**

TO APEX  
ACCELERATOR  
CLIENTS

**\$144M**

IN CAPITAL ACCESSED  
BY BUSINESS THROUGH  
SMALL BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

**12,079**

CLIENTS SERVED THROUGH SBDC

**47,579**

HOURS OF NO-COST  
BUSINESS ADVISING  
TO SMALL BUSINESSES

**\$129M+**

EXPANDED BUSINESS  
SALES

# Innovation Hubs:

## The Next Generation of ‘Made in Ohio’ Starts Here

**OHIO HAS ALWAYS** been a place that builds — from the first spark of invention to world-changing industries. Now, through the **Innovation Hubs** program, we’re building something even bigger: a new era of research, collaboration, and economic opportunity rooted in the strengths of our communities.

The \$125 million Innovation Hubs initiative supports regional partnerships between higher education,

industry, and workforce leaders. These hubs bring innovation beyond Ohio’s three major metros — giving regions with deep industrial legacies the tools to lead again in emerging technologies.

Like Ohio’s Innovation Districts in Columbus, Cincinnati, and Cleveland, the new hubs are united by a common goal: to spark high-value job creation, unlock new research breakthroughs, and retain the next generation of STEM talent.



“We are not only honoring the legacy of the many great innovators who built empires right here in Northwest Ohio; we’re making an investment in the **FUTURE** of those legacies.”

—Director Lydia Mihalik

## TOLEDO’S GLASS LEGACY, REIMAGINED FOR THE FUTURE

**IN PERRYSBURG**, the heart of Toledo’s glassmaking legacy is being reignited for the 21st century. The new Northwest Ohio Glass Innovation Hub connects this proud past with a forward-looking vision: powering the solar and advanced manufacturing sectors through research, talent development, and industry collaboration.

With \$31.3 million in state support and \$10.4 million in local investment, the Hub is led by the Northwest Ohio Innovation Consortium and headquartered at O-I Glass. Over the next seven years, it’s expected to generate \$284 million in economic impact, create 1,600 jobs, and prepare 230 new STEM graduates for careers in this high-demand field.



Director Mihalik joins Gov. DeWine and former Lt. Gov. Husted, along with local officials and representatives from the Northwest Ohio Innovation Consortium to celebrate announcement of the Northwest Ohio Glass Innovation Hub. The hub opened in April 2025.



## SUPPORTING NATIONAL DEFENSE THROUGH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN DAYTON

**DAYTON IS** positioning itself at the forefront of national defense and aviation innovation through the new onMain Innovation Hub — a collaborative center for digital transformation that unites public, private, and academic partners.

With \$35 million in state support, \$23 million in local investment, and up to \$37 million in private funding, the Hub will be anchored by the Digital Transformation Center. The initiative is expected to generate 2,000 jobs, bring in \$500 million in new research funding, and produce more than \$39 million in tax revenue — all while expanding access to STEM careers for non-traditional learners and increasing graduate retention by 25 percent.



*“The Miami Valley has always been a place where big ideas take flight,” said Governor DeWine. “This new collaboration will be transformative for this region, leading to more investments, more jobs, and more of the world’s most innovative thinkers calling Dayton home.”*

## HOW AKRON IS LEADING THE NEXT CHAPTER IN POLYMERS

**FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY**, Akron has been known around the world as the Rubber Capital—a city built on innovation in manufacturing and materials science. Today, that legacy is being reimaged through the Greater Akron Polymer Innovation Hub.

The Hub brings together more than 70 partners across industry, academia, and research to accelerate the next wave of breakthroughs in polymer science — powering advancements in health care, mobility, semiconductors, and sustainability. It’s a natural fit for a region with deep roots in materials innovation and a workforce shaped by generations of technical expertise.

Backed by \$31.25 million in state funding and more than \$10 million in local investment, the Hub will be anchored by a new Polymer Pilot Plant — a facility designed to bridge the gap between discovery and

commercialization. Over the next several years, the project is expected to create 2,400 new jobs, attract \$75 million in research investment, and support at least 500 new STEM credentials — keeping Akron at the center of the global conversation on materials innovation.



*Former Ohio Lt. Governor and now U.S. Senator, Jon Husted, joined Governor DeWine and Director Mihalik for the announcement in September 2024.*

## ADVANCING AEROSPACE AND DEFENSE THROUGH ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING IN YOUNGSTOWN



**YOUNGSTOWN HELPED BUILD** America’s industrial might — a city once defined by steel, now shaping the future of advanced manufacturing. Today, that transformation continues through the Youngstown Innovation Hub for Aerospace and Defense, a cutting-edge initiative that positions the region at the forefront of additive manufacturing.

Led by America Makes — the nation’s flagship institute for 3D printing and advanced manufacturing — the Hub is focused on developing new technologies for defense, aerospace, and other high-tech industries. It’s the next evolution for a community that has long supplied the materials and talent to power the nation.

With \$26 million in state funding and \$36 million in local, federal, and private investment, the Hub is expected to generate \$161.6 million in economic impact and 450 new jobs by 2029, including 100 construction jobs. It will also support 185 new STEM credentials and create hands-on internship opportunities to help train the next generation of innovators — right where America’s industrial future was first forged.

## Athens & Piketon Receive Planning Grants for Future Hubs

**THE OHIO INNOVATION HUBS** program also provided \$450,000 grants for efforts in Athens and Piketon.

In Athens, Ohio University is leading the development of the Collaborative Appalachian Revitalization and Building of New Industries (CARBON) Hub. The region’s rich carbon-based natural resources and manufacturing history provide significant local advantages for investment as the region maintains abundant resources and expertise in carbon-based material sciences and manufacturing.

In Piketon, the Appalachian Nuclear & Advanced Energy Hub (ANAEH), led by the Southern Ohio Diversification Initiative, is laying the groundwork for a next-generation energy economy. The initiative hopes to address regional economic challenges while positioning Ohio as a leader in the thriving advanced nuclear economy, laying the groundwork for critical workforce training programs and a hub-based research center.

“

**“Partners in this region have been laying the foundation for the Youngstown Innovation Hub for years, and it’s incredibly moving to see their hard work pay off.”**

—Lt. Gov. Jim Tressel

# Laying the Groundwork for Major Investments

Across Ohio, communities are stepping forward with bold ideas and big ambitions—setting them up to welcome new businesses, create jobs, and shape the future. The All Ohio Future Fund (AOFF) is helping make those visions a reality.

GOVERNOR DEWINE first proposed the AOFF during his 2023 State of the State Address, emphasizing the need to ensure every region shares in Ohio’s economic momentum. With hundreds of millions of dollars dedicated to identifying large-site opportunities and building critical infrastructure, the Fund gives local leaders the tools—and the momentum—to compete for transformational projects. From road upgrades and waterline extensions to full site development, communities are using these resources to unlock long-term growth and attract major investments from outside companies.



The Dayton International Airport received nearly \$80 million to expand its capacity for more airport traffic and future economic development opportunities.

## DEFIANCE

In fall 2024, Development announced its first All Ohio Future Fund investment—supporting the development of a 1,000-acre site in Defiance County. Just a few months later, First Quality Tissue committed to building a \$984 million manufacturing facility on the site, marking the largest single investment in the county’s history. The 2.6-million-square-foot plant will produce towel and tissue products and is expected to create more than 400 jobs, with projected annual payroll reaching \$22.5 million by 2032.



- Dayton Defense and Aerospace Campus
- Conesville Industrial Park
- Defiance Mega Site
- Dan Evans Industrial Park II
- Park 762 and Project Thor
- Lorain County Mega Site
- Muskingum County Development Site and National Road Business Park
- D.O. Hall Business Center
- Warren BDM Site

## WARREN BDM

In the heart of the Mahoning Valley, a new chapter is taking shape on the grounds of a former steel mill. In April 2025, the Western Reserve Port Authority received more than \$17.2 million to prepare over 1,000 acres in the Warren BDM Redevelopment Area for new development—funding new infrastructure and transportation routes. Just one month later, Kimberly-Clark announced plans to build a new 1.2 million square-foot facility on the site—a nearly \$500 million investment that will bring 491 new jobs to the region.



“There’s nowhere better than Ohio, whether you’re looking for a place to start or grow your business or your family. Through the All Ohio Future Fund and programs like it, we are bringing jobs to Ohio and supporting communities with the legwork to get them here.”

—Director Lydia Mihalik

# Rebuild the Arsenal

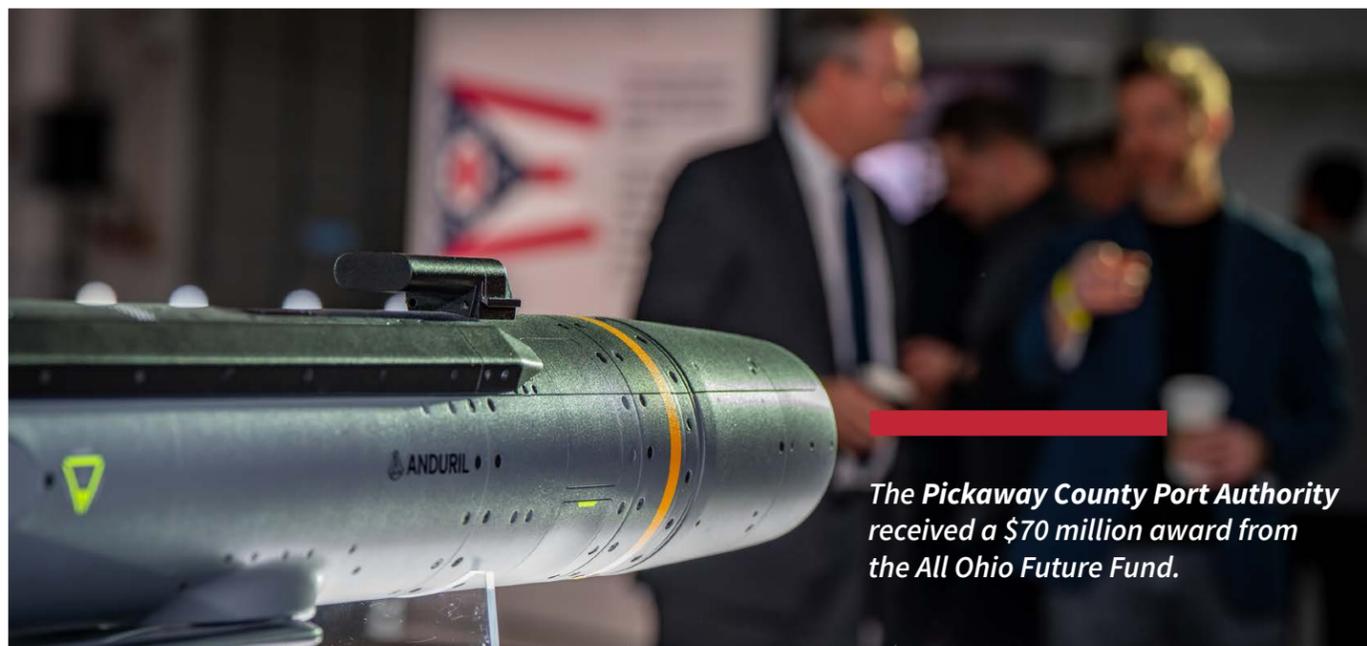
## The Future of American Defense is Being Forged in Pickaway County

**OHIO'S COMPETITIVE EDGE** continues to grow, and in 2025, the DeWine Administration secured the largest single job creation and new payroll project in state history. In January, Anduril Industries announced plans to build Arsenal-1, a five-million-square-foot advanced manufacturing facility in Pickaway County. The project will play a key role in modernizing the production of critical defense technologies and reinforces Ohio's growing role in aerospace and defense.

Anduril's decision reflects a growing trend: advanced manufacturers are choosing to grow in the heart of the country. With world-class infrastructure, a skilled and diverse workforce, a supportive business climate, and a legacy of military and federal support, Ohio offered the ideal foundation for Anduril's next chapter.

*Arsenal-1 will sit on a 500-acre site near Rickenbacker International Airport and is expected to create more than 4,000 direct jobs and 4,500 additional indirect jobs, and generate more than \$2 billion in economic output by 2035.*

To support the project, the Pickaway County Port Authority received a \$70 million award from the All Ohio Future Fund. These funds are helping complete critical site improvements, including road upgrades, new utility infrastructure, and the construction of a new taxiway at Rickenbacker. Together, these improvements not only support Anduril's long-term success—they also unlock future development potential across the surrounding area.



*The Pickaway County Port Authority received a \$70 million award from the All Ohio Future Fund.*



**“Ohio’s history of advancing aviation, aerospace, and national defense runs deep, but what sets this state apart is our readiness to embrace the future. At this critical moment in time, our country needs rapid technological innovation, which Anduril will deliver using Ohio’s skilled, hardworking labor force. The future of American air power will be made in Ohio!”**

**—Governor Mike DeWine**

## MORE WINS FOR OHIO:

In Dover, **SCHAEFFLER** is constructing a 130,000-square-foot manufacturing facility focused on producing automotive electric mobility solutions to support the hybrid/EV industry. The German-based company found Ohio the ideal place to expand its operations in the U.S.: a strong manufacturing legacy, a workforce built for advanced production, and a strategic location in the North American market.

The project is expected to create 650 new jobs and \$54 million in payroll across the new Dover facility and Schaeffler's existing plant in Wooster. The investment will drive economic growth in the region while strengthening the state's position in the EV supply chain. With continued support from state and local partners, Schaeffler's expansion not only marks a milestone for the company—it signals new opportunities for innovation, workforce development, and long-term success in Ohio's advanced manufacturing sector.

Leading technological innovation, **AMAZON WEB SERVICES** is expanding its data center infrastructure across Ohio. The \$10 billion award builds on to previously announced funding, bringing the total planned investment to more than \$23 billion by the end of 2030—representing the second-largest planned investment by a single private sector company in the state's history.

This brings cutting-edge technology and lasting impact through hundreds of new high-paying jobs of skilled technicians, engineers, and construction professionals. As the demand for cloud computing and data storages continues to grow, AWS's presence in Ohio will power everything from small business innovation to global-scale applications, right here in the heart of it all.

# Transformational



## Mixed-Use Development Program (TMUD)

**ACROSS OHIO**, communities hold untapped potential for redevelopment and revitalization. The Transformational Mixed-Use Development Program supports projects that breathe new life into underutilized areas and serve as catalysts for future investment. By supporting large-scale developments that combine residential, commercial, and recreational uses, the program is invigorating urban cores, industrial sites, and historic properties across the state.

*With \$100 million awarded annually from fiscal years 2022 to 2025, the program is helping local leaders unlock billions in private investment.*

As of 2025, TMUD-supported developments are expected to generate more than \$6 billion in total investment statewide—bringing new jobs, new life, and new opportunities to communities across the state.

## CINCINNATI CONVENTION CENTER

*Director Mihalik toured ongoing renovations at the Cincinnati Convention Center in 2025, providing a first look at the transformative impact of last fiscal year's \$40 million TMUD tax credit.*

**THE PROJECT**, anchored by a new 650-room headquarters hotel, is already driving job creation, community revitalization, and positioning Cincinnati as a premier Midwest destination for national conferences and other major events.



## CUYAHOGA RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

*The Cuyahoga Riverfront Development is transforming a long-overlooked stretch of Cleveland's eastern riverfront into a vibrant, community-centered destination.*

**SUPPORTED BY** a \$9.1 million TMUD tax credit, Phase 1 of the project will transform nearly 12 acres into a mixed-use district. Plans include a 17-story building with restaurants, retail, a hotel, and a 6,100-seat live entertainment venue—all connected by public plazas, green space, and a riverwalk that will offer scenic places to gather, walk, and explore. The development will also feature a state-of-the-art athletic performance and medical facility—bringing expanded health, wellness, and community resources right to the heart of the city.



## Historic Preservation

The Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program provides a tax credit for the private redevelopment of historic buildings.

**THIS COMPETITIVE PROGRAM** receives applications bi-annually and provides a state tax credit up to 25 percent of qualified rehabilitation expenditures incurred during a project, up to \$5 million.

As Ohio moves towards the future, we're bringing our past with us through the Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program. Across the state, we're revitalizing hundreds of unique, historic buildings and fulfilling new community needs in the process.

In Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine neighborhood alone, dozens of buildings have been rehabilitated, resulting in a lively, walkable district in the heart of downtown. And in Cleveland, you can't walk

through downtown without passing a space that's benefited from the program.

In FY25, Development awarded more than \$120 million in tax credits to 73 projects, which will result in the rehabilitation of 85 buildings.

Buildings like the Norwalk Theater, which has been closed for more than a decade, will get a second act through the program. And in Zanesville, the Baker Brothers Wholesale Grocery building—just the second tax credit to be awarded there—will be redeveloped into housing, office, and commercial space, continuing the historic renaissance forming in the city.

# Ohio's Small Business Development Centers

**FROM NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPS** to next-generation startups, small businesses are driving Ohio's economy forward—creating jobs, fueling innovation, and strengthening communities. The Ohio Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) are helping them do it. With a statewide network and deep roots in local communities, SBDCs offer no-cost, confidential advising and hands-on tools to help entrepreneurs start strong, navigate challenges, and grow with confidence. Whether it's developing a business plan, securing financing, or scaling for growth, Ohio's SBDCs are a trusted partner for entrepreneurs and business owners.



- Businesses were supported in all 88 counties.
- Collectively, SBDC clients employ over 53,800 Ohioans, and earn more than \$7.1 billion in annual sales.
- SBDC received a 97.7% satisfaction rate, with 83.1 percent of clients giving the program the highest rating of extremely satisfied.

## Flava Catering CLEVELAND (CUYAHOGA COUNTY)



**RONDA STUBBS** turned her culinary passion into a thriving business with deep roots in Cleveland's community. With support from the SBDC at the Urban League of Greater Cleveland, she completed the "Becoming Bankable" financial literacy program—equipping her with the tools to grow smarter and dream bigger. That momentum led to a \$10,000 grant through the PepsiCo Restaurant Accelerator, which helped Ronda expand both her brand and her vision.

Today, Flava Catering has a new home in Garfield Heights that's now offering catering services, a jazz supper club venue, and a space for her signature seasoning line.

### OHIO SBDC IMPACT

**12,079**  
UNIQUE SMALL BUSINESSES  
AND ENTREPRENEURS  
SUPPORTED

**47,579**  
ADVISING HOURS PROVIDED

**488**  
NEW BUSINESS STARTS

**5,872**  
JOBS CREATED OR RETAINED

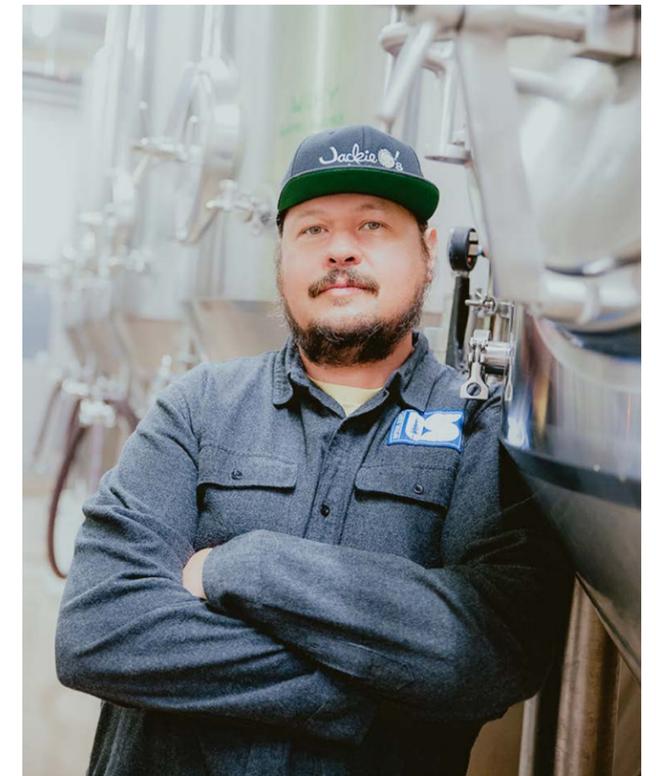
**\$144M**  
CAPITAL ACCESSED

**\$129M**  
INCREASED SALES

## Jackie O's Brewpub ATHENS (ATHENS COUNTY)

**AFTER NEARLY TWO DECADES** of brewing success in Athens, Jackie O's owner Art Oestrike had a bold vision: grow the brand beyond southeast Ohio while staying rooted in community. With guidance from the Ohio SBDC at Ohio University, Jackie O's accessed the capital support needed to expand to Columbus—launching its fourth location and taking the Athens-born brewery to new heights. The expansion created 22 new jobs and helped retain 120 others.

"It's been great working with the SBDC through this process because the tools they have at their disposal were really helpful," said Oestrike. "Between working with the SBDC and Hocking Valley Bank, it's been a great process to allow for this expansion to happen in Fourth Street Columbus."



## Lace & Grace Boutique WEST UNION (ADAMS COUNTY)



**WHAT BEGAN AS** a small-town dream between mother and daughter has become a growing hub for fashion and empowerment in Adams County.

Founded in 2017, Lace & Grace Boutique offers women's clothing, accessories, and more—all with a mission to uplift and inspire. With help from the local SBDC, the duo secured financing to move into a larger storefront, grow their inventory, and host community-centered events.



**"Since opening our new store front, we've experienced steady business growth and been able to add two additional employees, partner with other small businesses on events, and add a new division to our company,"** said Lace & Grace Boutique co-owner Maranda Young. **"We are so grateful for the assistance we received from our local SBDC as we continue to strive to be a positive impact for our community."**

# Ohio Export Internship Program

## Fosters Mutual Growth and Success for Both Students and Businesses



*Brigid Wagner, participant in Ohio Export Internship Program*

**FOR MORE THAN A DECADE**, Development has created a path for businesses to grow their customer base by competing in international markets they may not otherwise reach, while providing college students with invaluable work-based learning in global trade and commerce.

Through the **Ohio Export Internship Program**, Development connects college students from six Ohio universities with businesses looking to either export for the first time or improve global sales, by helping businesses streamline current export processes and procedures. Companies benefit from

fresh ideas and mentoring provided by the SBDC Export Assistance Network and this continued pipeline of skilled talent within the state.

“I gained valuable insights into how a family-owned company remains resilient within the competitive construction industry,” said Hannah Siy, a Cleveland State University student who interned at Keystone Threaded Products as part of the 2024 internship class. “I believe that the export course prepared me with the necessary knowledge and resources needed to conduct comprehensive international market research.”

These internships have a track record of success. In the 13 years since the program’s inception, 524 student-company matches were created, resulting in 174 internship extensions and 95 new jobs. In total, Ohio-based companies have expanded into 450 new international markets, with expected sales of more than \$124 million.

During the summer of 2025, Development matched 58 students with host companies across a range of industries—including premium pet food manufacturing, ignition control technology, and fire training system production.

## Third Frontier

**BY WORKING WITH** entrepreneurs and startup companies and helping new businesses advance innovative ideas, the **Ohio Third Frontier** has helped Ohio become a destination for technology entrepreneurs.

Through the Technology Validation and Start-up Fund (TVSF), Ohio is supporting research institutions and startups by providing grants that help determine commercial viability and license-proven technologies.

Ohio Third Frontier granted \$11.5 million through the TVSF program to companies like Airtrek Robotics, Inc., which is located in the city of Cincinnati and is commercializing an intelligent robot that clears debris from airport runways. This robot can detect, remove, and analyze debris due to its sensors and cloud-based analytics and is anticipated to create new high-tech jobs in Ohio.

Through the Entrepreneurial Services Provider (ESP) program, the Ohio Third Frontier provides financial support to five regional partners to help Ohio’s technology startup and early-stage companies get their ideas to the marketplace and achieve significant growth.

Over the past five years, the Entrepreneurial Service Providers have delivered more than 250,000 hours of service to an annual average of

more than 780 client companies per year. Those start-up companies collectively employed 3,500 full-time employees in Ohio and generated more than \$3.2 billion in product sales. Additionally, Ohio vendors received over \$600 million from those client companies.

JumpStart Inc., a Cleveland-based organization serving the Northeast and Northwest regions, is among the partners which provide a variety of resources — including mentorship by seasoned entrepreneurs and industry professionals, access to investors and capital, assistance in marketing and sales strategies, and more.

“Ohio is stepping up to support the problem-solvers and inventors creating the technologies of tomorrow,” said Director Mihalik. “Ohio Third Frontier helps to transform bold ideas into real-world breakthroughs—improving lives, creating high-quality jobs, and fueling long-term economic growth.”

The Ohio Third Frontier also supports technology companies, or companies with a technological need, by paying a portion of the intern’s salary through the College Technology Internship Program. In 2024, the Ohio Third Frontier supported 291 College Technology Internships — nearly double the number it supported a year ago.

# HELPING MINORITY- AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES THRIVE

Through the Minority Business Development Division, we empower minority-, women-, and veteran-led ventures, as well as other under-resourced businesses, by providing the support they need to succeed. The 11 Minority Business Assistance Centers, located all across the state, provide technical assistance and professional consultation, and offer capital programs and incentives that remove barriers by offering equitable access to vital financial resources. These resources help businesses expand while also boosting the economy.

## METRICS *that matter*



**\$6.6M**

IN LOANS APPROVED FOR MORE THAN 220 MINORITY- AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES

- Micro Loans: 49 totaling \$1,918,100
- MDL Loans: 2 totaling \$607,599
- WBE Loans: 19 totaling \$4,108,612



**\$22.9M Impact**

IN INDIRECT LOANS

- CDFI LPP: 116 totaling \$2,216,963 in program funding and \$6,670,001 in private financing
- OCAP: 26 totaling \$692,209 in program funding and \$4,675,542 in private financing
- CEP 2.0: 6 totaling \$1,284,700 in program funding and \$7,365,000 in private financing



**13,122**

BUSINESS CLIENTS



**17,651**

COUNSELING HOURS



**4,425**

BUSINESS CERTIFICATIONS

**1,611**

Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)

**1,263**

Encouraging Diversity, Growth & Equity (EDGE)

**1,274**

Women Business Enterprise (WBE)

**277**

Veteran-Friendly Business Enterprise (VFBE)

# Kennedy's Kakes

## Columbus (Franklin County)



Adrian Jones, Kennedy's Kakes

**AFTER MORE THAN** two decades in the aesthetics industry, Adrian Jones took a leap of faith to pursue her true passion: baking. In 2009, she founded Kennedy's Kakes, a boutique cake business built on family recipes, creative flair, and a deep commitment to community.

In the early years, Adrian navigated the challenges of small business ownership largely on her own. That changed when she connected with her local Minority Business Assistance Center (MBAC), where she received expert guidance on licensing, certification, and business development. Training sessions and networking opportunities through the Urban League and the National Association of Women Business Owners helped her strengthen her foundation and build meaningful connections.

Today, Kennedy's Kakes has two state business certifications and a vibrant storefront in downtown Columbus. Adrian's shop offers custom cakes, breakfast items, and a rotating menu of decadent desserts—all served in a welcoming space with seating for guests. She also teaches cake decorating classes and rents out her space for events, creating opportunities for celebration and connection with every slice.

"When I first started, I wasn't aware of the opportunities for a small business owner. I was well into it for three to four years before I knew certain things to get for my business," said Adrian. "I think if you surround yourself with your local community and business organizations, you'll start meeting like-minded people that will help you along the way."

# Ascension

## CONSTRUCTION SOLUTIONS

### Columbus (Franklin County)



**A SIMPLE QUESTION** from a high school drafting teacher sparked Jeanna Hondel's journey into civil engineering. That moment of mentorship set her on a path through licensure, an MBA, and years of industry experience—eventually leading her to launch

her own firm where innovation, excellence, and inclusivity could thrive.

Founded in 2017, Ascension Construction Solutions is a woman-owned, certified minority business enterprise providing management, inspections, and project oversight for construction projects across Central Ohio. What began as Hondel's vision has grown into a fast-scaling company known for precision and professionalism.

Since launching her company, Hondel has experienced record success. She was named the U.S. Small Business Association's Small Business Person of the Year in 2023, and that same year, she received \$1 million in capital — representing the largest single transaction approved under this administration — from Development's Minority Business Direct Loan Program.

The access to capital was instrumental in the purchase and renovation of an office building that opened in 2024, supporting the firm's growth to nearly 40 employees that serve the Columbus area community.

*"The Ohio Department of Development is not just an agency but a true partner in business. As one of the companies that received the largest loan amounts in five years, Ascension now has an office in the Hilltop area where we continue to grow and thrive," said Hondel.*

## New Vision Media, Inc.

**JERRUD SMITH**, president, and CEO of New Vision Media Inc. New Vision Media is an award-winning, full-service video production and marketing firm in Central Ohio, providing a suite of production capabilities. New Vision Media is leveraging their MBE certification for both local and national ad and media campaigns.



## Flairsoft, LTD

**DHEERAJ KULSHRESTHA**, owner and CEO of Flairsoft, LTD was approved for Development's \$532,500 Minority Direct loan. Founded in 2001, the technology solutions provider specializes in innovative software and expertise consulting services in eGovernment, enterprise architecture, business process management, and IT. The funds will be used to purchase new office space in Columbus, supporting the creation of three new full-time jobs and the retention of three jobs.



# Molly Reams Thompson

## Toledo (Lucas County)

**WHEN THE CHANCE CAME** to help light up the largest mural in Lucas County, Molly Reams Thompson and her team at Perrysburg Energy Solutions were all in.

With help from Development's Women-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE) certification program and a \$700,000 loan from the Community Services Division's Ad, the company was selected to supply sustainable, solar-powered LED lighting for Toledo's iconic Glass City River Wall. The mural, which

spans 170,000 square feet, will become the largest illuminated mural in the world once complete.

"We are grateful to the Ohio Department of Development for their support of this project and their commitment to women-led businesses," said Thompson. "It's thrilling to develop an innovative and collaborative project that shines a bright light on Ohio's rich cultural history while simultaneously embracing our future."

## Flavor 91 Bistro

**WHEN FREWEINI ALEMAYOH** launched her food truck in 2016, she brought with her a commitment to health, heritage, and hospitality.

Flavor 91 Bistro Restaurant has become a Whitehall staple, offering fresh, locally sourced, and uniquely flavored dishes with an infused flair from East Africa, as a nod to Alemayoh's Northern Ethiopian culture. Customers also enjoy live music nights, and fun, monthly food observances that contribute to the establishment's friendly, family oriented atmosphere.

With help from Development, Flavor 91 is growing.

"We've benefited from MBE certification, technical support for our business expansion, and have also explored access to grant opportunities and supplier programs," said Alemayoh. "These resources have helped position us to grow our team, train new team members, and prepare for larger catering and food service contracts."



Alemayoh is also extending her reach beyond the restaurant. With support from Development's CDFI Loan Participation Program, she secured financing through Moses Realty LLC—partnering with Freedom Equity and Adelphi Bank—to purchase the historic Neighborhood House in Columbus's King Lincoln Bronzeville district. The space will be transformed into a business and community hub, offering a vibrant center for collaboration, entrepreneurship, and neighborhood connection.



# TRANSFORMING OHIO'S APPALACHIAN REGION

The Governor's Office of Appalachia focuses on the development of Ohio's 32-county Appalachian region. Stretching along Ohio's eastern and southern borders, the region covers more than 39 percent of the state. Funded by both federal dollars from the Appalachian Regional Commission, as well as state resources, the goal of the Governor's Office of Appalachia is to transform the area through initiatives that enhance communities, increase prosperity, and respond to the region's biggest challenges.

## METRICS *that matter*

### APPALACHIAN COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM (ACGP):

<b>111</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>102</b>
PROJECTS FUNDED	PROJECTS COMPLETED	PROJECTS IN PROGRESS



**\$34M**

IN ADDITIONAL INVESTMENTS



**86**

NON-ACGP PROJECTS FUNDED



**51**

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE  
PROJECTS FUNDED



**4**

DISTRESSED  
COUNTIES

# ACGP Projects Underway

The Appalachian Community Grant Program is fueling transformational change across Ohio’s 32 Appalachian counties—strengthening local economies, improving quality of life, and creating new opportunities for the future.

**HOUSE BILL 377**, signed by Governor DeWine in 2022, directed \$500 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds to Ohio’s Appalachian region—putting local priorities at the center of revitalization efforts.

The Governor’s Office of Appalachia is working alongside local leaders to turn big ideas into visible progress. Across the region, momentum is building

as communities break ground on transformational projects—from new school-based health clinics and multi-county trail systems to the revitalization of historic downtowns. Governor DeWine, Director Mihalik, and Governor’s Office of Appalachia Director John Carey have joined residents and local leaders to celebrate at groundbreaking and ribbon-cutting events.



Tappan Lake in Harrison County

## ACGP ROUND 1

# \$50M FUNDING

**4** PROJECTS

**10** COUNTIES IMPACTED

## FIRST ROUND PROJECTS

**THE FIRST ROUND** of the Appalachian Community Grant Program awarded \$50 million to launch four major development projects across more than a dozen counties in Appalachian Ohio. These shovel-ready efforts included new workforce training hubs, mental health and recovery services, downtown revitalization, and expanded outdoor recreation and tourism. Most of these projects are now completed or nearing completion, with communities already seeing the impact—new job training opportunities, expanded support for families, and reinvestment in historic buildings and public spaces. The first round laid the groundwork for what’s now becoming a wave of progress across the region.

## Utica Shale Academy

**IN AUGUST 2024**, the Utica Shale Academy’s Williams Collaboration Center in Salineville became the first completed project of the Appalachian Community Grant Program.

Funded through a \$2.3 million award in Round 1, the center is helping students earn workforce credentials and gain access to high-demand career pathways in Columbiana, Carroll, Jefferson, and Mahoning counties. With a focus on welding, robotics, broadband, and more, the facility also houses classroom space, health services, and junior high programming in partnership with Youngstown State University.

The project represents a milestone in the state’s broader effort to prepare Appalachia’s workforce for the jobs of today and tomorrow.



# “

**“Utica Shale is extra special because as we move forward, it will be the benchmark for changing how we educate the youth.”**

**—U.S. Rep. Michael Rulli**

# Coshocton Collaborative



Director Carey joins representatives from the Coshocton Collaborative for its grand opening

**THE COSHOCTON COLLABORATIVE**, part of the first-round “At Work in Appalachia” project, has been revitalized as a dynamic hub for small businesses and workforce development in downtown Coshocton. Supported by a portion of the project’s \$17 million in funding through the ACGP, the renovated 25,000-square-foot facility includes coworking space, private offices, and conference rooms, along with a fully equipped maker space offering tools for woodworking, 3D printing, and other trades. This investment is helping more residents start and grow businesses, access new career pathways, and contribute to the revitalization of their local economy. By creating a dedicated space

for innovation and collaboration, the Coshocton Collaborative is strengthening the foundation for long-term success—making it easier for people to live, work, and stay in Coshocton County.

*“This is a historic part of downtown Coshocton. It’s being reborn as a place where ideas can take root, businesses can launch and grow, and our residents can find the support that they need to thrive,” said GOA Director John Carey.*



**28** PROJECTS  
**20** COUNTIES IMPACTED

## SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CLINICS

**BUILDING ON** the March 2024 announcement of a \$64 million investment in the Appalachian Children’s Health Initiative, work in FY25 was focused on bringing these critical health projects to life. Across the region, school-based and community clinics are beginning to open their doors, healthcare workforce programs are launching, and families are gaining new access to essential services.

The initiative supports 28 projects that will impact more than 61,000 students and 375,000 residents across 20 Appalachian counties. Partners include 34 school districts, a career technical school, an educational service center, and 16 healthcare providers. Expanded services range from primary care and dental care to vision and mental health support, ensuring children and families across Appalachia have the care they need to thrive close to home.



Governor DeWine and Director Mihalik join Maysville school leaders and students to cut the ribbon on the first ACGP-funded school clinic



**In FY25, more than 5,200 patients were served at six operational school-based healthcare clinics across Appalachia. Several more clinics are expected to open in FY26.**

# Opening Doors to Health and Opportunity

## MAYSVILLE LAUNCHES FIRST SCHOOL-BASED CLINIC THROUGH ACGP

**IN AUGUST 2024**, Governor DeWine cut the ribbon on the first completed school-based health clinic funded through the Appalachian Community Grant Program—marking a major milestone in Ohio’s efforts to expand access to care in Appalachia.

Inside Maysville High School in Muskingum County, an unused classroom was transformed into a fully equipped health center. Backed by a \$283,000 investment, the clinic is operated by Muskingum Valley Health Centers and staffed during the school year by a licensed practical nurse and an advanced practice registered nurse. It offers primary care and mental health services to students and staff, with summer care provided via a mobile health unit to ensure year-round access.

In a district where 94 percent of students are economically disadvantaged, the impact is profound. The clinic removes barriers like transportation, financial limitations, and missed class time—making healthcare more accessible and helping reduce chronic absenteeism.

Parents are already seeing the difference as they are now able to ensure their children are getting the proper healthcare.

“It’s so convenient having the healthcare here. There’s transportation for my children. The staff are always personable. It means a lot getting that instant help when I know my children aren’t feeling well. I know my children are in good hands,” said Maysville parent Mallory Taylor.



“

“By working together, we are seeing a school-based clinic that will really improve the health of students and staff for many, many years.”

—Governor Mike DeWine

# Gallia Groundbreaking



Director Mihalik helps to kick off construction of a health clinic for Gallia County Local Schools

**IN DECEMBER 2024**, Gallia County Local Schools, Holzer Health System, and Gallia Family Dental broke ground on a new 2,300-square-foot school-based health center at South Gallia Middle-High School.

Backed by a \$2.8 million grant from the Appalachian Children’s Health Initiative, the new facility will offer primary care, dental, vision, and behavioral health services to students, staff, and residents of the surrounding area.

The project addresses a significant need in this rural part of Ohio’s southern Appalachian region, where families often travel long distances to access basic care.

“We need to ensure that every child has the chance to learn valuable skills, to graduate, to find a good-paying job — and to build their best life right here in Ohio,” said Director Mihalik during the ceremony. “It starts with ensuring that our children have access to the high-quality healthcare they deserve.”

Students say the new clinic will be a major benefit to the district and larger South Gallia community.

“This is quite literally groundbreaking. It’s very exciting for something this important to happen to our small community,” said South Gallia High School Student Kennedy Shamblin.

# DOWNTOWNS AND DESTINATIONS



## THE APPALACHIAN DOWNTOWNS AND DESTINATIONS

Initiative is moving from planning to execution, with projects underway across the region to revitalize historic downtowns, expand recreation opportunities, and enhance the visitor experience at cultural and historical sites.

Backed by a \$154 million investment across 12 Appalachian counties, the initiative is transforming parks, trails, and museums; supporting the restoration of historical landmarks; and breathing new life into main streets and public spaces. Many projects are also creating new hubs for education, economic development, healthcare, and community gathering. Communities like Morristown, Greenfield, and Wellston are already seeing progress, as construction begins, partnerships grow, and renewed energy takes hold in the heart of Appalachia.

### DOWNTOWNS & DESTINATIONS

# \$154M IN GRANTS

30 PROJECTS

26 COMMUNITIES

12 COUNTIES SERVED

11 HISTORIC SITES

12 TRANSFORMED DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS

## WELLSTON

IN APRIL 2025, state and local leaders gathered in Wellston to celebrate the groundbreaking of a new health clinic and pharmacy that will bring expanded primary care services to residents of Jackson and Vinton counties. Supported by a \$1.66 million investment, the project will transform a long-vacant building into a hub of accessible care—filling critical gaps in healthcare and restoring peace of mind for families who have lost access to nearby services. In a community still feeling the impact of its only pharmacy closure, the new clinic will provide vital services, create local jobs, and strengthen the healthcare workforce.



“We go from driving by this building with a disappointed feeling to having hope and excitement about what the future is going to bring for not only Wellston but the area.”

—GOA Director John Carey

## CHILLICOTHE

Chillicothe’s Yoctangee Riverside District will undergo a complete transformation to support its growing tourist population with a \$35 million grant through the program.

THESE COMPREHENSIVE PROJECTS aim to significantly enhance the area, making it a more vibrant and accessible area for both residents and visitors.

The project includes restoring the city’s underutilized armory into the UNESCO World Heritage Sites Visitors’ Center. In 2023, UNESCO World Heritage Committee issued their decision to inscribe Ohio’s Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks as the United States’ 25th addition to the World Heritage List.

The Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks, which includes five locations managed by the National Park Service in Ross County, were built by Native Americans between 1,600 and 2,000 years ago. They are complex masterpieces of landscape architecture and are exceptional among ancient monuments worldwide in their enormous scale, geometric precision and astronomical alignments.

“We’ve been daydreaming for a couple of years. Today we get to celebrate and then tomorrow the hard work begins,” said Chillicothe Mayor Luke Feeney.

In addition to the visitors’ center, the project includes the construction of a nearby pavilion to host year-round farmers’ markets, which will bolster the local economy and provide a venue for community gatherings. Renovations and expansions to the Mighty Children’s Museum will enhance its educational offerings and build on increased tourism to the area. The park’s recreational fields will see major improvements, including the construction of an amphitheater for outdoor performances,



pickleball courts, and the refurbishment of the baseball field, creating a dynamic space for both recreational and cultural activities.

Construction is scheduled to begin in late July or early August, starting with improvements to Water Street and followed by upgrades to the park.

## LOGAN

**HOCKING HILLS STATE PARK**, known for its stunning natural beauty with waterfalls, caves, and hiking trails, is a beloved destination attracting millions of visitors each year. The \$14 million Gateway to Hocking Hills project aims to transform downtown Logan into a vibrant and welcoming corridor for park visitors, while also creating a more walkable and livable downtown for residents. This transformative project will fund various enhancements, including new signage, archways, improved landscaping, and decorative intersections. A section of Main Street will be converted into a “complete street,” reorganizing surface parking to accommodate wider sidewalks and a shared-use path, significantly improving pedestrian safety. Additionally, new lighting will be installed



to enhance the visual appeal and safety of the downtown district. Planning crews have completed the final design and construction is slated to start in early August 2025.

## BLACK HORSE INN

**IN JUNE**, the Appalachian Community Grant Program supported the launch of restoration efforts at the historic Black Horse Inn in Morristown, Belmont County. Built in 1807, the inn was once a well-traveled stop along the Old National Road and a critical refuge along the Underground Railroad. With nearly \$4 million in state funding, the project will transform the site into the new home of Belmont County’s Underground Railroad Museum, currently located in Flushing.

Governor Mike DeWine and First Lady Fran DeWine joined local leaders to commemorate the start of construction. Rather than a traditional groundbreaking with shovels, the ceremony featured lanterns—honoring the building’s historic role as a beacon of safety and freedom.

“When we invest in buildings like the Black Horse Inn, we help turn historic spaces into destinations that people want to visit and experience, and



that means more tourism, more support for local businesses, and more opportunities for visitors to see what makes Appalachian Ohio so special,” said Governor DeWine. “Soon, families, school groups, and others will come here to learn, to reflect, and to discover more of what Belmont County has to offer.”

The restoration will preserve a vital piece of Ohio’s past while creating a meaningful space for education, tourism, and community pride—right in the heart of Appalachian Ohio.

## WONDERFUL WATERFRONTS

**FEW PLACES** offer the natural beauty of Appalachian Ohio—and through the Wonderful Waterfronts Initiative, communities are now turning that beauty into bold opportunity. Across the region, work is underway to transform local waterways into vibrant destinations that support tourism, recreation, and quality of life.

With more than \$152 million awarded across 12 counties, the initiative is revitalizing historic riverfronts, expanding access to lakes and streams, and creating new links between downtowns and the outdoors. Projects include boat ramps and docks, enhanced parks and trails, improved downtown streetscapes, and new infrastructure to draw residents and visitors to the water’s edge—all while boosting local economies and showcasing the landscapes that make this region so special.

### WONDERFUL WATERFRONTS

# \$204M IN GRANTS

**39** PROJECTS

**37** COMMUNITIES

**20** COUNTIES

**25** WATERFRONT  
RECREATION PROJECTS

**8** DOWNTOWN DISTRICT  
TRANSFORMATIONS

**5** IMPROVED RECREATION  
TRAIL NETWORKS

## HIGGINSPOORT

**ON THE BANKS OF THE OHIO RIVER**, just 40 miles east of Cincinnati, sits an abandoned ballfield in the village of Higginsport. With a population of just over 200 people, the village has historically lacked the resources to make improvements and, despite its location on the river, has no public access for water recreation. With a \$6.3 million grant through Ohio’s Wonderful Waterfronts Initiative, the village will redevelop the ballfield and surrounding land into a seven-acre community park. The park will create a public gathering space for the community in addition to a boat dock and launch for water access for residents and visitors alike. Additional improvements include the construction of a fishing pier, bridge and mural at the new park.



## PORTSMOUTH

**With a \$34 million grant from the Appalachian Community Grant Program, the city of Portsmouth's riverfront will be redeveloped to include outdoor parks, recreational amenities along the river, riverfront murals, an amphitheater, improved walking paths, and the installation of a fishing pier, and campsites.**

Elevating Portsmouth's status as a must-see tourist destination is a priority for the project, with hopes that the improvements will make the vibrant riverfront an attractive destination and enrich the experiences at popular festivals like Portsmouth River Days and Winterfest.

These revitalization efforts will make the city's downtown more walkable and better connect the community and downtown businesses to the river while improving the overall quality of life for residents, inspiring visitors to easily explore more of the historic city and encouraging further economic development in the area.

## NEW PHILADELPHIA

**IN THE HEART OF TUSCARAWAS COUNTY**, local leaders and residents gathered to break ground on a major downtown revitalization effort backed by a \$2.95 million investment through the Appalachian Community Grant Program. The project will reimagine two quadrants of the city's historic downtown square—introducing green space, outdoor dining areas, and designated zones for food trucks, live music, and family-friendly events.

A third quadrant will undergo pavement and landscaping upgrades, and two new welcome arches will mark the entry points into downtown, framing the space and enhancing its identity. These improvements aim to increase walkability, boost local tourism, and support small businesses, all while preserving the community's unique character.

By creating more places for people to gather, relax, and connect, the city is making downtown a destination. It's a vision rooted in community and focused on quality of life—where the heart of town becomes a place people want to stay, not just pass through.



## POWER and INSPIRE Grants

**IN FY25**, Ohio continued to benefit from the Appalachian Regional Commission's POWER (Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization) Initiative, with more than \$8.2 million directed toward eight strategic projects across the region. Designed to support communities impacted by the decline of the coal industry, POWER investments focus on strengthening local economies through workforce development, job creation, and new industry growth. Projects in Ohio are advancing initiatives in healthcare, advanced manufacturing, entrepreneurship, and career training—helping residents build skills and access opportunity. With support from the Governor's Office of Appalachia, local development districts collaborated to secure this federal funding, showcasing the power of regional partnerships in shaping a more resilient, diversified Appalachian economy.

Ohio continued to build stronger recovery-to-work pathways through the Appalachian Regional Commission's INSPIRE (Investments Supporting Partnerships In Recovery Ecosystems) Initiative. With more than \$1.1 million awarded to organizations across the region, these projects are strengthening recovery-to-work pipelines, expanding vocational training and support services, and helping communities build more responsive, resilient recovery ecosystems. Projects in Athens, Gallia, Highland, Ross, Pike, and Washington counties will deliver job-readiness programs, launch recovery support navigators, develop leadership training, and assess community-level needs. With leadership from the Governor's Office of Appalachia, the state is leveraging these investments to break down barriers to employment and ensure more Ohioans in recovery have access to the support, training, and opportunities they need to thrive.

# CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

The vision of BroadbandOhio is to close the digital divide by providing high-speed internet access across Ohio and building a best-in-class broadband network. Through a series of impactful initiatives and local projects, more Ohioans than ever before in rural communities and urban areas alike now have the necessary resources to participate in important aspects of the modern economy—such as telehealth, working from home, and learning online. From launching transformative grant programs to addressing infrastructure challenges, BroadbandOhio has worked to reach every corner of the state since its creation in March 2020.

## METRICS *that matter*



**\$94.5M**

IN OHIO RESIDENTIAL BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT (ORBEG) ROUND 2 FUNDING



**3**

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

have completed projects through ORBEG Round 1, delivering critical connectivity to previously unserved areas after more than \$90 million in payments have been disbursed



**\$50M**

TO PROVIDE INTERNET ACCESS TO 38,000 ADDRESSABLE LOCATIONS IN SOUTHWEST OHIO



**\$25M**

FUNDED THROUGH THE POLE REPLACEMENT AND UNDERGROUNDING PROGRAM



**5**

SESSIONS OF BROADBAND COMMUNITY ACCELERATOR PROGRAM

during May 2025 to inform communities of how they can expand broadband in their areas



**\$3M**

AWARDED TO COM NET, INC.

to support a Western Ohio Infrastructure Pilot Project

# Connecting Thousands in Southwest Ohio

**IN AUGUST 2024**, BroadbandOhio announced a \$50 million investment to expand high-speed internet access in Adams, Brown, and Clermont counties—bringing reliable connectivity to more than 30,000 Ohioans. The project, part of the Multi-County Last Mile Fiber Build Pilot program, is being delivered in partnership with alfiber and will extend fiber internet to nearly 38,000 addressable locations, including more than 13,000 households.

The \$110 million project is supported by the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Capital Projects Fund and a \$60 million investment from alfiber.

Construction is on track to be completed by Dec. 31, 2026—marking another step forward in Ohio’s effort

to close the digital divide and connect every corner of the state to opportunity.

*“Expanding broadband means opening the door to economic growth, education, and better healthcare access for thousands across Southwest Ohio,” said former Lt. Governor and now U.S. Senator, Jon Husted.*

He made the announcement at a local library, joined by residents who will soon gain access to high-speed internet at home, rather than having to travel somewhere else.



Former Lt. Governor Husted announces a major collaboration to bring high-speed internet to three Ohio counties

## Connecting Southwest Ohio

**MULTI-COUNTY BUILDOUT**

Funding provides internet access to approximately 38,000 addressable locations, including 13,263 unserved or underserved households in 3 counties

County	Households Served
Clermont County	1,049
Brown County	5,218
Adams County	6,996

**\$50M** to provide internet access to Ohio families and businesses

# Equipping Ohioans with Digital Tools



**AFTER RECEIVING \$100,000** from BroadbandOhio through the **Digital Inclusion Grant program**, the Hocking-Athens-Perry Community Action Program (HAPCAP) expanded its Digital Navigator program by purchasing quality Samsung tablets and refurbished Dell laptops. Since the start of HAPCAP's Digital Navigator program in 2022, Digital Navigator Abby Russell has partnered with local libraries, schools, job and family service programs, and other organizations to ensure people are aware of the service.



- A local resident, **Colt**, was recently released from prison and has begun working in a re-entry program. He does not have transportation but has courses he needs to complete. HAPCAP set him up with a laptop, worked with him on how to do virtual calls, and enrolled him in a training course to help him get more familiar with computer usage. HAPCAP's aid is helping him work towards his goal of securing a job.



**“As the Digital Navigator, Abby Russell has been able to connect patrons with much needed resources, join our staff in bridging the gaps we see in digital literacy, promote the program at community events, and provide devices to families and individuals who need them to continue their education, to work remotely, or to connect with other agencies and resources.”**

**—Melissa Marolt, Director,  
Perry County District Library**

- When schools transitioned to online learning during the pandemic and hybrid learning after, **Maria**, a single mother of two was faced with the challenge of not having reliable internet access and an outdated smartphone as her family's only device. Once Maria connected with a digital navigator, she received assistance to get a refurbished laptop, access her children's school platforms, and learned how to search for jobs online. Since that time, she's landed a job using the digital skills she learned.

## Helping Ohioans REINTEGRATE ONLINE

**THROUGH THE** Digital Inclusion Grant program, BroadbandOhio awarded Accompanying Returning Citizens with Hope (ARCH) an award of \$100,000 to distribute devices, provide digital literacy support, and encourage enrollment in learning programs for previously incarcerated Ohioans.

One beneficiary of the ARCH reentry program was **Samantha**, who received a Chromebook which enabled her to access the Federal Student Aid portal, enroll at Columbus State Community College, and attend virtual meetings for addiction support.

*“Having access to the internet helped me improve my relationships with my friends and family. This was a valuable resource that I do not think I would have been successful without.”*

**— Samantha, an ARCH client**

**Amanda** received free cellular service and internet through ARCH. This enabled her to apply for jobs online, schedule necessary healthcare appointments, set up a bank account, and coordinate other essential life matters.

*“Internet access became essential for searching job boards, completing online applications, and accessing vital resources for successful reintegration. This support wasn't just convenient; it was the very foundation that allowed me to actively pursue a fresh start and reintegrate into society with a sense of agency and hope.”*

**— Amanda, an ARCH client**

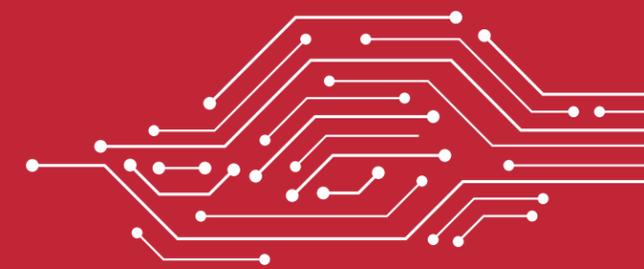
## Connecting Businesses in Northwest Ohio

**BROADBANDOHIO** awarded Mercy Health in Toledo a grant of \$100,000 to help advance the Get Your Business Rolling (GYBR) program, which provides entrepreneurial training, strategic support, device access, and additional opportunities for growth and training through the Toledo-Lucas County Public Library.

During the first two sessions after receiving funding through BroadbandOhio, the GYBR program trained 166 participants and provided 113 computers to graduates of the program. The program, which has had women comprise nearly 75 percent of its participants, has created nearly 100 full-time and 50 part-time jobs in their respective communities.

Megan Reichert is the director of Innovation for Mercy Health and began the program in 2022.

Dickie Ison of Fed Up Concrete is among the biggest successes to come from the program. He received a computer and was able to significantly increase sales in his concrete business. His business also has grown to five employees since completing the program.



## Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant

**THE OHIO** Residential Broadband Expansion Grant (ORBEG) program was created through House Bill 2 of the 134th General Assembly to address the critical need for high-speed internet access in unserved and underserved areas across Ohio. ORBEG is a cornerstone in Ohio's commitment to ensuring every resident has access to broadband internet.

During the first round of ORBEG in 2022, BroadbandOhio approved 33 grant agreements with internet service providers (ISPs) for \$240 million to expand high-speed internet access. To date, more than \$90 million in payments has been disbursed and three ISPs have completed their projects. In 2025-26, additional providers will complete their build projects and additional funds will be distributed towards project completion. BroadbandOhio holds monthly calls with grantees to document project updates and review quarterly reports.

The second round of ORBEG was funded by the U.S. Department of Treasury's Capital Projects Fund under the American Rescue Plan Act. BroadbandOhio received 85 applications requesting more than \$780 million in funding from 30 ISPs. BroadbandOhio conducted a challenge period to refine project areas based on ISPs operational footprints, and on Aug. 20, 2024, the Broadband Expansion Program Authority awarded \$94.5 million in funding to projects covering 45,000 unserved and underserved addresses.

## Broadband Accelerator Program



**TO HELP PREPARE** communities for funding through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program, BroadbandOhio and The Ohio State University Extension traveled across the state to share the current status of broadband access across the state.

In addition to sharing updates on current broadband initiatives, including Ohio's updated BEAD challenge map and an updated timeline towards universal coverage across the state, BroadbandOhio highlighted resources currently available, contacts for partners, and information on the roles communities, anchor institutions, and local leaders play in expanding broadband in their areas.

The BroadbandOhio team met with members of the community for broadband information sessions in Knox County (Central), Preble County (Southwest), Stark County (Northeast), Paulding County (Northwest), and Athens County (Southeast).

*Pictured, above: BroadbandOhio Chief Peter Voderberg shares updates regarding broadband initiatives at a Broadband Accelerator meeting in Athens County.*

## Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD)

Ohio was awarded \$793 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce's **Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program** in June 2023 to provide universal, high-speed internet coverage across Ohio. After receiving approval from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) in April 2024, BroadbandOhio launched the BEAD Challenge process which ran from June through

October 2024. During the process, BroadbandOhio collected data from ISPs, local governments, and nonprofit organizations, validated eligible and ineligible addresses to ensure accurate mapping of unserved and underserved areas, and produced a comprehensive final list of eligible BEAD addresses approved by the NTIA. The Initial Proposal Volume 2 was approved in October 2024, and grant applications are expected to open in mid-2025.

# Pole Replacement and Undergrounding Program

**HIGH-SPEED INTERNET** is only as reliable as the infrastructure that supports it, and for many Ohio communities, outdated or insufficient infrastructure is a barrier to connectivity. The **Pole Replacement and Undergrounding Program** is a \$50 million initiative created by House Bill 33 of the 135th General Assembly to address these challenges by reimbursing ISPs for essential pole replacements, mid-span pole installations, and undergrounding projects in unserved areas. ISPs can request up to \$7,500 per utility pole or 75 percent of the invoice amount for eligible construction.

The program approved its first round of applications in August 2024, resulting in more than \$730,000 in requested reimbursements to support future broadband connections by internet service providers South Central Power, Charter, and JB Nets. During the second round in December 2024, another \$593,000 was approved in requested reimbursements to the same ISPs.

Nearly \$23.7 million was released during the third round in May 2025, with Charter, JB Nets, and South Central Power again receiving funding along with Logan County Gig, Ohio Gig, and the Southern Ohio Communications Company.



# SHOWCASING OHIO'S ATTRACTIONS

The mission of TourismOhio is to showcase Ohio's diverse attractions, vibrant communities, and unique history through strategic partnerships, innovative marketing, and by spotlighting all that makes the state a unique place for residents and visitors alike. By leveraging Ohio's rich history, natural beauty, and second-to-none accommodations, we're demonstrating all that the state has to offer as a place of adventure, a place of promise, and the place for you!

Tourism in Ohio isn't just about travel—it's about impact. By showcasing our unique mix of attractions—from vibrant cities to charming small towns—we're not only bringing visitors in, we're strengthening the economy. This \$57 billion industry supports more than 443,000 jobs and generates billions in tax revenue that benefits communities statewide.

When people visit, they spend at local restaurants, shops, hotels, and attractions. That spending circulates through the economy, creating opportunity and supporting small businesses. And increasingly, those visits spark something deeper as people discover Ohio's quality of life and choose to make it home. Tourism is more than a weekend trip—it's a catalyst for long-term growth.

## METRICS *that matter*



**\$2.6M**

MEDIA SPEND (+27%)



**152M**

PAID IMPRESSIONS  
(+42%)



**823K**

PAID AD CLICKS



**19M**

VIDEO VIEWS



**3.7M**

OHIO.ORG  
PAGEVIEWS



**108**

EXHIBITOR BOOTHS AT OHIO TOURISM DAY



**9,770**

LISTINGS ON OHIO.ORG



**531,900**

CLICKS TO PARTNER WEBSITES



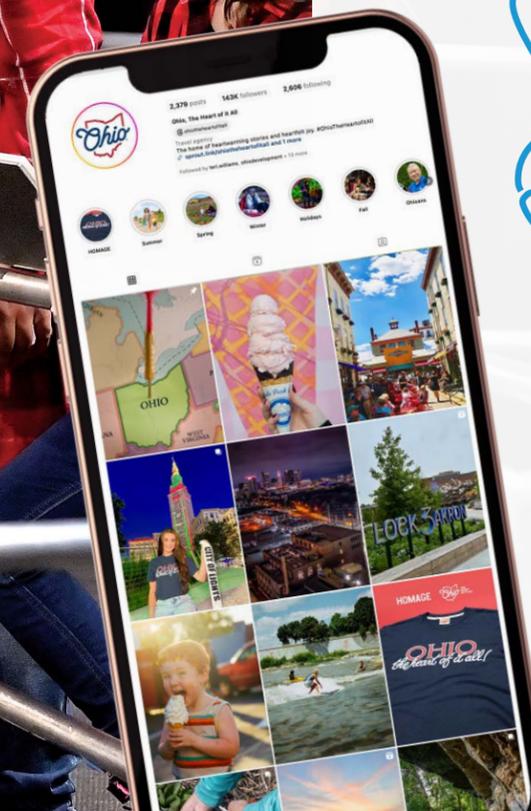
**309,600**

"OHIO, THE HEART OF IT ALL"  
FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS  
(+2.5% INCREASE)



**143,500**

"OHIO, THE HEART OF IT ALL"  
INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS  
(+0.5% INCREASE)



# TourismOhio Showcases Ohio as the 'Best Place on the Map'



**ON MAY 5, 2025,** TourismOhio debuted its latest commercial that reintroduces Ohio to travelers as *The Best Place on the Map*. Whether it's exploring the outdoors, relaxing in a charming small town, or indulging in a great meal, the spot reinforces Ohio's identity as the Heart of it All.

The commercial ran across multiple platforms, including broadcast TV, Connected TV, online video, and social media where it delivered 38 million impressions and 10 million video views. Ahead of the launch, it was tested with an online panel of 800 viewers from Ohio's out-of-state target markets—results include:

-  **88%** of viewers like the ad
-  **73%** said Ohio is a great destination for families
-  **68%** saw Ohio as a place for outdoor adventures
-  **60%** said they now see Ohio as worth a multi-day visit

The campaign reflects TourismOhio's continued effort to position the state as a must-visit destination that delivers meaningful, memorable experiences for every kind of traveler.

# Record-Setting Numbers Including Highest-Ever Economic Impact

**IN 2024,** Ohio welcomed a record-breaking 242 million visits—an increase of 3.5 million over the previous year. Of those, 48 million were overnight stays, with an impressive 93 percent of overnight visitors indicating they're likely to return within the next 12 months. Tourism activity generated \$4.7 billion in state and local tax revenue and supported more than 443,000 jobs across Ohio. These jobs span key sectors including food and beverage, recreation and entertainment, retail, trade, and lodging—underscoring the industry's vital role in Ohio's economy.



**\$57B**  
VISITOR SPENDING +  
INDIRECT BUSINESS SALES

Marblehead Lighthouse State Park in Ottawa County

# Adventure Trails

Originally launched in 2018 to celebrate Ohio’s “Year of Trails,” the Ohio Adventure Trails initiative has grown into a favorite feature at Ohio.org.

FOR 2025, the Ohio Adventure Trails page was refreshed and expanded, providing even more trails in an easier format to explore. Local partners and County Convention Visitors Bureaus were contacted to supply additional content — and they delivered! In total, TourismOhio added an additional 40 trails to the page, bringing the total to 120 trails.

## OHIO HOLIDAY LIGHTS TRAIL

TOURISMOHIO ONCE AGAIN made the snowy winter season a little bit warmer this year with its ever-popular **Holiday Lights Trail**. This glowing statewide tradition showcases dazzling displays, festive train rides, and small-town charm that draws in visitors looking to soak up the sights of the season. With 73 stops, this year’s trail brought together Ohio’s most beloved displays and exciting new additions, inviting Ohioans and visitors, alike, to experience the magic of the holidays.

**TOP 4**  
page on  
Ohio.org



Displays along the self-guided trail include the impressive seven million lights at Winterfest at Kings Island; the nationally recognized and

locally beloved Steubenville Nutcracker Village; six beautifully lit botanical gardens to stroll through; five illuminated zoos to explore; and four museums and historical parks to wander.

The trail continued to be one of the most-visited features on Ohio.org — ranking 4th overall with more than 153,933 page views, and a 31 percent increase in engagement when compared to last year.



## OHIO ICE CREAM TRAIL

AND WHEN THE WEATHER heated up, the TourismOhio team kept things cool with the returning **Ohio Ice Cream Trail**. Now in its eighth year, this beloved summertime tradition returned bigger and better than ever — boasting a record 150 stops across Ohio. The trail, which launched in 2018 with 15 stops, highlights family-owned shops, beloved local favorites, and nationally recognized Ohio chains.



New stops on this year’s trail include Quarry Hill Orchards in Berlin Heights, which adds a twist to its unique treats by using its own orchard-grown fruit blended with vanilla ice cream, and Erin Ann’s in Sylvania, known for its allergen-friendly menu of dairy-free, gluten-free, soy-free, and dye-free treats. You’ll also find Dulce Vida in Columbus dishing out bold Mexican desserts, and The Jug in Middletown, famous for its classic root beer floats made with house-brewed root beer.

But there’s more to it than just dessert — the trail also highlights the impact of Ohio’s dairy industry, a key contributor to the state’s economy. With more than 1,400 dairy farms and 250,000 cows, Ohio ranks 11th nationally in milk production — churning out nearly 650 million gallons annually.

<https://www.ohio.org/adventuretrails>



 **120**  
trails listed

 **10,687**  
Adventure Trails pageviews

 **2,192**  
outbound click links



**TRAVEL BUTLER COUNTY** launched the **Donut Trail** in January 2016. Since its inception, over 40,000 people from all 50 states and 24 countries have traveled to Butler County to complete the Donut Trail, bringing in over \$6 million in economic impact into Butler County, Ohio. The Donut Trail originally launched with 9 locations, and the trail today includes 13 mom-and-pop donut shops.

**“The Lucy Depp Park Light Show was honored to be included in the 2024 Ohio Holiday Lights Trail. Thanks to the new exposure provided by TourismOhio, we successfully doubled our fundraising goal and were able to provide 20,000 meals to Feed the Kids Columbus!”**

**—Byron Gunter, Lucy Depp Park Light Show**



# Rest Areas

In FY2025, 17 new rest areas opened their doors across Ohio.

**THESE SPACES** welcome travelers with modern amenities, creative exhibits, and a true sense of place. From Van Wert to Meigs county, these sites are part of a bold, statewide plan to reimagine 33 rest areas and upgrade more than 40 others by the end of 2026.

Each rest area is thoughtfully designed to reflect the character of its surrounding community, with custom interior graphics that highlight nearby attractions and points of interest. Many locations also feature interactive digital displays with local tourism content, as well as dedicated exhibit rooms

that serve as miniature museums—giving travelers a taste of what they can experience in the area. Exhibit partners range from regional cultural institutions to one-of-a-kind museums, including the National Barber Museum and Hall of Fame, the Underground Railroad–Ohio Valley, the Zanesville Museum of Art, the Clark Gable Foundation, the Polymer Industry Cluster, OH WOW! Children’s Center, the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center, and the Sons and Daughters of Pioneer Rivermen.

To date, 66 rest areas and welcome centers have been redesigned, with 37 already installed.



Gov. DeWine and Director Mihalik open the new Ashtabula County Welcome Center



**AT THE BELMONT** Westbound Welcome Center, visitors can see a true work of art: a hand-carved replica of a Baltimore & Ohio Engine No. 100. The locomotive was crafted in 1919 by legendary master carver Ernest Warther. This remarkable piece was once part of a celebrated train collection showcased at the World’s Fairs in Chicago and St. Louis, as well as Grand Central Terminal in New York City.

## Universal Changing Stations



Gov. DeWine announces plans for universal changing tables at Ohio’s rest areas

**IN JANUARY 2025**, Ohio unveiled the first of 29 planned universal changing stations at the newly redesigned I-71 rest areas in Jeffersonville. Installed in family restrooms, these stations feature height-adjustable changing tables in clean, private, and secure spaces. They’re designed for people of all ages and abilities, especially those with disabilities or medical conditions who require assistance from a caregiver.

This statewide initiative is a collaboration between the Department of Development, the Department of Developmental Disabilities, the Department of Transportation, and the Ohio chapter of the Changing Spaces campaign.

# Thousands of Summer Adventures Begin at Ohio Tourism Day



**EACH YEAR**, Ohio Tourism Day brings the state’s travel industry to the front steps of the Ohio Statehouse—and in 2025, the celebration was the biggest yet. More than 100 travel and tourism partners from every corner of the state joined Director Lydia Mihalik and the TourismOhio team to showcase the people, places, and experiences that fuel Ohio’s thriving visitor economy.

The lawn buzzed with activity as thousands of visitors gathered brochures, snapped selfies,

and mapped out summer getaways. Local exhibitors offered a taste of everything Ohio has to offer, while TourismOhio showcased its Ohio Adventure Trails and the Ohio Summer Events Guide.

The event served as a powerful reminder: tourism is more than just fun—it’s a driving force behind Ohio’s economy. With events like Ohio Tourism Day, the state continues to champion local businesses, boost regional pride, and inspire unforgettable travel experiences.



*Development staff join Director Mihalik for a photo with 2025 Miss Ohio Volunteer Baylee Joy Martin (and her puppet, Rita)*



“I know of no free, public event that can gather so many partners from so many places in Ohio to share the myriads of interesting, unique, fun, and educational opportunities that our state has to offer for people of every age group. It is a colorful, exciting, delicious (more ice cream please!) celebration of everything great that Ohio has in every county in the state. I am so happy to see attendees leave my booth wondering why they haven’t come up to our area lately or looking forward to planning a first trip to our parks, museums, restaurants, and other attractions. I am reminded constantly of just how cool Ohio is and how lucky we are to have so many neat things to experience and places to enjoy.”

—Sean McAllister, Akron-Summit Convention and Visitors Bureau



Tour Lake County traveled the furthest to join Tourism Day 2025: Over 170 miles from Painesville to the Ohio Statehouse!

# Official Ohio Travel Guide 2025



**WHETHER YOU'RE PLANNING** a weekend road trip, a weeklong family vacation, or just looking for inspiration to explore somewhere new, the **Ohio Travel Guide** is your go-to resource for discovering everything the Buckeye State has to offer. Published annually by TourismOhio, the guide showcases hundreds of destinations across all five regions of the state—from iconic landmarks and bustling cities to charming small towns, scenic trails, and hidden gems that locals love.

This year's edition shines a spotlight on Ohio's culinary scene, outdoor adventures in every season, family-friendly festivals, and the new World Heritage Trail—a journey that connects visitors to Ohio's UNESCO-designated Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks. Each section of the guide includes curated travel ideas, insider tips, and locally driven stories that celebrate Ohio's people and places.

This year's cover transports readers to one of Ohio's natural treasures: Nelson-Kennedy Ledges State Park in Portage

County. Known for its towering sandstone cliffs, narrow rock passageways, and moss-covered ledges, the park evokes a sense of wonder and exploration that reflects the spirit of the entire guide. These striking formations are among the last remaining rock outcrops in northern Ohio and have long been a favorite destination for hikers, nature lovers, and photographers.

**Within one month of release, nearly half of the 350,000 available copies of the 2025 Ohio Travel Guide were distributed to perspective travelers. TourismOhio also partnered with many of the state's colleges and universities to provide the guide to incoming freshmen and their families, helping them discover all that Ohio has to offer.**

*Key storytelling content, Ohio's on the World Stage and Bring Your Taste Buds to Ohio were migrated to Ohio.org to extend reach.*



**Ohio's on the World Stage**  
12,000 pageviews  
Time spent on page: 1m 20s



**Bring Your Taste Buds to Ohio**  
3,600 pageviews  
Time spent on page: 42s

# Seasonal Events Guides

**TOURISMOHIO'S SEASONAL EVENTS** guide has become a go-to resource for travelers and Ohioans alike, helping people plan their getaways around festivals, fairs, and can't-miss community events.

Building on the success of the first summer edition in 2024, TourismOhio expanded the series to include fall, holiday, and spring guides—each featuring 440 events, with five from every one of Ohio's 88 counties. Curated with support from local organizations and county Convention and Visitors Bureaus, the guides have driven more than 182,000 pageviews and over 55,000 direct clicks to event websites.

*"I had someone come into my office a few weeks ago that informed me they had completed the Vinton County Scavenger Hunt because they saw it in the Spring Events Guide! They even stayed in one of our lodging facilities to enjoy the whole weekend here!! Thank you for all you do!"*

—Amanda Boring, Executive Director, Vinton County Department of Tourism



**2,200**

**EVENTS PROMOTED SINCE 2024**

# Joint Marketing Program

**THE JOINT MARKETING PROGRAM** offers powerful support to tourism industry partners of all sizes across Ohio. Participants gain access to qualified media experts and professional content marketers to create and execute high-impact advertising strategies and content that elevate visibility and drive visitation. Offerings include Google paid search, paid Meta, storytelling, and custom photography.

**73** PARTNERS

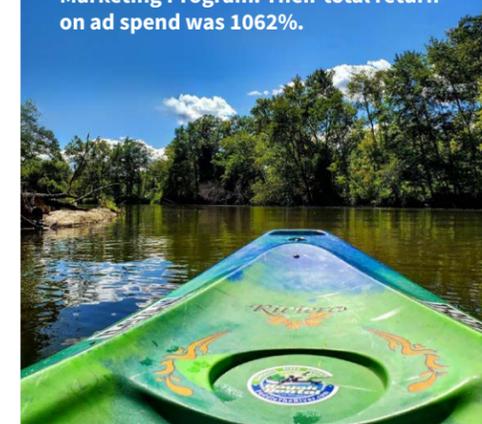
**114** SEARCH CAMPAIGNS

**1.23M**

AD CLICKS TO PARTNER WEBSITES

**200** SOCIAL CAMPAIGNS

Paddle the River sought to promote their kayak and canoe tours to users looking for kayak adventures outside the Cleveland DMA. They generated 4,922 clicks, 455 purchases, and \$42,000 in revenue through the Joint Marketing Program. Their total return on ad spend was 1062%.





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