

Area 14 Workforce Development Board

Board Meeting: February 4, 2026

Members of the Area 14 Workforce Development Board (WDB) met for a scheduled meeting on the 4th day of February 2026, both in-person at Athens County Community Cares Resource Center/OhioMeansJobs – Athens County and virtually via Zoom.

Board Chair Brennan opened the meeting at 10:01am and attendance was taken by Director DeLay:

Board Members Present In-Person: Chair David Brennan, Vice Chair Jennifer Chapman-Kleski, Selena Cottrill (proxy for Mollie Fitzgerald), Buddy Malone, Trevis Thompson, Jennifer Pollard and Mike Lollo

Board Members Present Virtually: Robin Fowler, Josh Rennison (proxy for Stephen Carson), Melissa Sheppard, Kimberly Foreman, Jessica Stroh, David Hannum and Medea Loibl

Also in Attendance In-Person: Morgan DeLay (Area 14 Director), Lisa Radford (ACDJFS Assistant Director), Jean Demosky (ACDJFS Director), Jodan Whitlatch (OhioMeansJobs – Athens County Supervisor), and Stefano Alva (guest speaker with Vitruvian)

Also in Attendance Virtually: Vince Reiber (MCDJFS Deputy Director), Shelly Adams (OhioMeansJobs – Meigs County Supervisor), Dylana Green (OhioMeansJobs – Perry County Workforce Specialist), Theresa Lavendar (MCDJFS Director), Julie Scherfel (MCDJFS Supervisor), and Mendra Hupp (PCDJFS Assistant Director/Area 14 Fiscal Agent)

A quorum was established following roll call by Director DeLay. Buddy Malone made a motion to approve the agenda for February 4, 2026, Trevis Thompson seconded the motion. All were in favor. Buddy Malone made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 5, 2025, meeting, Robin Fowler seconded the motion. All were in favor.

New Board Member Introduction

Director DeLay introduced new board member Kimberly Foreman, Finance Director at Perry County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Kimberly joins as a workforce representative from Perry County.

Director DeLay also introduced new board member Mike Lollo, Executive Director at the Perry County Chamber of Commerce. Mike joins as a business representative from Perry County.

Vitruvian Presentation

The Board received an informational presentation from Stefano Alva, Director of Operations and Workforce Development, on Vitruvian's workforce development initiative addressing construction and advanced manufacturing labor shortages through technology-driven, state-recognized training programs. The presentation highlighted regional workforce needs, the Centrus Energy expansion in Southeast Ohio, Vitruvian's pre-apprenticeship and credentialing model aligned with industry standards, partnerships with schools, unions, and employers, recruitment strategies including pathways for individuals in recovery, and Vitruvian's plan to work with Workforce Area 14 on an application for initial state funding to launch a training program designed to become self-sustaining through TechCred and other workforce reimbursement mechanisms. No action was taken.

2025 Annual Report

Director DeLay presented the 2025 Area 14 Annual Report, which had been included in the meeting folder for Board review. Director DeLay highlighted key performance metrics and program outcomes from the year and commended the OhioMeansJobs centers for their strong performance and continued commitment to serving job seekers and employers across the Area 14 region.

OhioMeansJobs Center Updates

Athens: Jordan Whitlatch presented updates for OhioMeansJobs – Athens County. Jordan provided an overview of current and upcoming programming, emphasizing a continued commitment to accessible, community-centered services delivered through a holistic, one-stop approach. Ongoing initiatives include monthly workshops focused on entrepreneurship, digital literacy, financial literacy, and family-centered supports, along with special events such as the State of the Local Workforce, workforce professional roundtables, wellness activities, and mobile health services. Looking ahead, staff highlighted plans for Women in the Workforce Month, In-Demand Jobs Week, and a South County mini job fair to expand outreach to underserved areas. Updates were also shared on walk-in partner services, job readiness programming launching in March 2026, website improvements, and updated WEP agreements. Employer engagement efforts continue to grow through customized hiring events and expanded use of the Mobile Career Center, with stakeholder collaboration identified as essential to sustaining and expanding these efforts.

Meigs: Shelly Adams presented updates for OhioMeansJobs – Meigs County. Shelly reported that Meigs County continues to experience high demand for services, particularly Unemployment assistance, due to ongoing workforce trends. The county was awarded the VETS O.N.E. incentive again and also received GRIT funding, which will support continued

workforce initiatives. Staff shared updates on employer engagement efforts, including collaboration with Overbrook Rehabilitation Center to address a shortage of STNAs, the launch of a pre-apprenticeship with Mark Porter Auto Group, and a recent hiring event with WISE Staffing, with additional employer prescreening underway. Strong partnerships with local schools remain a priority and continue to support career exploration and workforce pipeline development.

Perry: Dylana Green presented updates for OhioMeansJobs – Perry County. Dylana reported on Cooper Standard’s planned closure in 2027, which is expected to result in the layoff of approximately 238 employees. While not all affected workers are Perry County residents, staff will provide assistance to any impacted individuals as appropriate and make referrals as needed. It was noted that a request for Rapid Response funding may be pursued in the future. Staff also shared that a juvenile facility in Perry County has recently closed. Ongoing workforce efforts include hosting monthly job fairs to support job seekers and connect employers with available talent.

Fiscal Update

Mendra Hupp presented the fiscal update. Fiscal documentation was provided and added to the meeting folder.

RESEA: The Re-employment Services and Eligibility Assessment program is a federal grant program designed to allow states to provide intensive re-employment assistance to individuals who are receiving unemployment benefits and are determined likely to exhaust their benefits before becoming re-employed. PY24 cycle ends and liquidates June 30, 2026. The Area received three separate distributions: \$37,218, \$85,866 and \$75,000 for a total of \$198,084. Balance remaining is \$34,707.52. PY25 cycle end and liquidates September 30, 2026 and the Area received \$36,288.25 with \$11,258.03 remaining. An additional \$120,000 was requested and received for the Area. PY25 supplemental and PY26 allocations will be shared once we know more from OWD/DOL.

FY26 Vets O.N.E. Incentive Awards: Ends and liquidates September 30, 2026. Awarded to OhioMeansJobs centers that provide extraordinary and commendable service to veterans and improves service delivery to veterans. Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) annually sets aside funds for this award. There are 3 Ohio recipients and OhioMeansJobs – Meigs County was one of them for a second year in a row. It is used to enhance both the awareness of and access to employment services for Ohio’s military veterans through an outreach and awareness campaign, veteran-focused career training programs, job fairs and networking events, and veteran support services. Meigs County received \$6,334.70 for this grant and it currently all remains unspent.

FY25 Rapid Response Funding: Perry County applied for and received funding as a result of a large business layoff – Post Holdings. These funds helped to cover costs associated with trainings, supportive services and RMS. \$29,504.32 was requested and was 100% spent.

Recovery Works Update: Sonia Tillman, Project Manager with ODJFS connected with Area WDB's on 12/23/25 with an update on the Recovery Works submission. Department of Labor (DOL) is not granting awards at this time for the Opioid National Health Emergency DWG. DOL reported that they plan to publish revised guidance for TEGL 9-24 and will consider new grant applications after the release of their new TEGL. The State does plan to reach out to local WDB's and will be submitting a new application for the grant from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Auditor of State (AOS) Audit: HINKLE financials deadline for audit is May 30, 2026 for calendar year January 2025 – December 2025. The audit costs are required and estimated to remain under \$10,000. Last year's single audit was \$7,956.

Real Workforce Solutions: The Area's monitoring contract with Real Workforce Solutions expired March 31, 2025. The agreement allowed two one-year extension. The first extension was granted via Executive Committee vote for April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026. It was recommended to extend the agreement for one additional year, from April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027. Trevis Thompson moved to approve the extension, and Jennifer Chapman-Kleksi seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Buddy Malone moved to approve the fiscal update, seconded by Mike Lollo. All were in favor.

WIOA Updates

Director Morgan DeLay presented the following WIOA and grant updates to the board.

Upcoming Certifications and Contract Timelines

Board Certification: The board certification expires June 2026. This certification is to ensure WIOA compliance for the board and ensures performance accountability measures are met. Director DeLay will prepare this for the board during the scheduled May meeting.

WIOA Subgrant Agreements: These are agreements between the county commissioners and Job and Family Services agencies, who currently act as the lead agencies for the OhioMeansJobs centers in Area 14. This also expires in June 2026, however the current agreement allows for two one-year extensions, neither of which have been utilized at this time. Director DeLay will meet with OhioMeansJobs operators and lead agencies to discuss and will likely bring first one-year extension to the scheduled May meeting.

OhioMeansJobs Center Certifications/Recertification

OhioMeansJobs center certifications and recertifications were due to the state December 31, 2025. All three Area 14 OhioMeansJobs centers had successful on-site reviews. Meigs and Athens County had their review on December 1st and Perry County had their review on December 4th. Athens and Perry County are both in new locations since their last certification, and Meigs is in the same location. The board was provided with the complete checklist from the review team in their folder. All three counties received approval from the Bureau of Civil Rights verifying ADA compliance. The operators took note of what improvements were suggested and some changes have already been implemented. Although reviews were completed and all documentation was received timely, Director DeLay requested an extension from the state on the deadline in order to bring the reviews to the full board for a vote. An extension was granted through February 6, 2026. Director DeLay also thanked the review teams, which consisted of board member Jeff Circle, Stephen Carson and Buddy Malone.

David Brennan moved to approve the certification of OhioMeansJobs – Athens County (10 W Washington St. Nelsonville, OH 45764), and this was seconded by Trevis Thompson. All were in favor.

Jennifer Chapman-Kleski moved to approve the certification of OhioMeansJobs – Meigs County (150 Mill St. Middleport, OH 45760), and this was seconded by Robin Fowler. All were in favor.

Jennifer Chapman-Kleski moved to approve the certification of OhioMeansJobs – Perry County (5250 SR 37 E. New Lexington, OH 43764), and this was seconded by Kimberly Foreman. All were in favor.

RREAF Layoff Aversion – Hocking Hills Garment Center

Director DeLay briefed the Board on a pending Rapid Response Emergency Assistance Funds (RREAF) Layoff Aversion/Incumbent Worker Training request for Hocking Hills Garment Center totaling \$49,800 to support training for 12 incumbent workers. She explained that the application must be submitted by the Area 14 Workforce Development Board, with associated fiscal and compliance responsibility. Director DeLay noted concerns raised during State review related to cumulative public investment, evolving project scope and budget, and the need to determine whether the request aligns with the intent of Layoff Aversion funding. Board guidance was requested on how to proceed, including whether to continue, pause, condition, or withdraw the application. The board concluded that they would like more information in order to make a decision. They wanted to know:

1. Can Hocking Hills Garment Center guarantee there will not be layoffs if this application is submitted and approved?
2. Is it truly the speed of the employees causing time issues or is it an equipment issue, or a combination of both?
3. Who regulates the quoted times you must give for specific garments?

Director DeLay suggested scheduling a meeting with Hocking Hills Garment Center and the local OhioMeansJobs operators to get a better understanding of what is being requested and if it is allowable under RREAF Layoff Aversion/Incumbent Worker Training.

Meigs VETS O.N.E Award

OhioMeansJobs – Meigs County was selected as a recipient of the 2026 Ohio Network for Employment (O.N.E) VETS O.N.E award for the second year in a row. This annual award recognizes OhioMeansJobs Centers that go above and beyond in serving veterans and improving how services are delivered to them. Meigs County plans to use the award to conduct an outreach and awareness campaign, to provide veteran-focused career training, to expand job fairs and networking events, and to offer transportation and employment support services.

Unemployment Information

- Unemployment Information: December
- Athens: 4.8%
- Meigs: 6.4%
- Perry: 4.8%
- State: 4.0%
- Employed Persons in Area: 51,100
- Labor Force in Area: 53,900
- Unemployment in Area: 2800 (5.2%)

Performance Reports

Director DeLay presented the PY25 Q1 Unadjusted Performance Reports for WIOA and CCMEP. It was noted that many measures, especially Measurable Skill Gains, will continue to populate through June 30. Employment outcomes are strong across CCMEP and WIOA. Credential attainment currently exceeds statewide averages in multiple programs and median earnings are above the state average. This is early quarter data and nothing in these reports raises compliance or performance concerns.

Area 14 OhioMeansJobs Reports

For the months of October – December 2025:

- On-Site or Virtual Visits: 2071
- Staff Assisted Resumes: 114
- Jobs Reported: 57
- Occupational Skills Certificate Participants: 43

Help Wanted Reports

As an Area we are starting to see an increase in job ads being posted. Customer service remains top skill in job ads. Ohio University has the most ads in the area. Top certifications include driver's license and CDL.

Grants

RESEA: Area 14 surpassed 2025 goals and has a fresh start in 2026. New area goals have not been shared with us yet.

ARC ARISE: Area 14 was invited to participate as a partner in a multi-state ARC ARISE Implementation pre-application titled *Tri-State Apprenticeship Consortium*, led by the Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board (PA). The proposal seeks five years of implementation funding to expand registered apprenticeships and strengthen K-12 to apprenticeship pipelines across Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, with 11 workforce boards participating, including Areas 1, 14, 15, and 16 in Ohio. The submission is a pre-application only and does not commit Area 14 to participation or funding. Director DeLay advised that if the project advances to a full application with defined scope, budget, or match requirements, the matter would be brought back to the Board for consideration and approval.

Ohio to Work Connectors: WorkOhio is a statewide initiative launched by the Governor's Office to create a centralized access point connecting Ohioans to in-demand jobs, training programs, and workforce supports, with referrals to OhioMeansJobs centers as appropriate. Ohio University's application for the grant was not selected; however, Area 15 was chosen as the regional lead, with Area 14 included as part of the region and represented on the steering committee. Director DeLay noted she attended a January 21 press conference with Lt. Governor Jim Tressel and that additional details will be shared following an upcoming regional kickoff meeting.

Upcoming Workforce Events

State of the Local Workforce

- Tuesday, February 17th
- 9am – 11am
- OhioMeansJobs – Athens County

Workforce Professionals Roundtable

- Thursday, March 12th
- 9am – 11am
- OhioMeansJobs – Athens County

TriCounty Employment Extravaganza

- Tuesday, March 17th
- TriCounty Career Center

Southeast Ohio Regional Summit

- Thursday, April 16th
- 8am – 3:30pm
- Lafayette Hotel, Marietta, OH
- More information to be provided

Area 14 Partner Meeting

- Wednesday, April 22nd
- 1pm – 2pm
- Ohio University Innovation Center

Area 14 22nd Annual Job Fair

- Wednesday, April 29th
- 10am – 2pm
- Athens Community Center

Motion to Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Trevis Thompson and seconded by Jennifer Chapman-Kleski. Motion was carried without opposition. A reminder was given for the next scheduled board meeting on May 6, 2026 @ 10am in a hybrid format, virtually via Zoom or in person at the Perry County Opportunity Center. Motion to adjourn was approved at 11:46am.