



Workforce Development Area 14
Athens, Meigs & Perry Counties
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Area 14 Workforce Development Board

Board Meeting: March 6, 2026

Members of the Area 14 Workforce Development Board (WDB) met for a scheduled meeting on the 6th day of May 2026, both in-person at the Perry County Opportunity Center/OhioMeansJobs – Perry County and virtually via Zoom.

Board Chair Brennan opened the meeting at 10:05am and attendance was taken by Director DeLay:

Board Members Present In-Person: Chair David Brennan, Stephen Carson, Jeff Circle, Mike Lollo and Buddy Malone.

Board Members Present Virtually: Robin Fowler, Brent Patterson, Jennifer Chapman – Kleski, Shannon Jones, Kimberly Foreman, Mollie Fitzgerald, Jessica Stroh and Medea Loibl.

Also in Attendance In-Person: Morgan DeLay (Area 14 Director), Tammy Goniea (OhioMeansJobs – Perry County Supervisor), Jordan Whitlatch (OhioMeansJobs – Athens County Supervisor), Keith Wiens (Athens County JFS Interim Director), Mendra Hupp (Perry County JFS Assistant Director/Area 14 Fiscal Agent), Scott France (Budget Coordinator, Office of Workforce Development), and Samuel Davidson (ODJFS Office of Workforce Development)

Also in Attendance Virtually: Shelly Adams (OhioMeansJobs – Meigs County Supervisor), Julie Scherfel (Meigs County JFS Supervisor), Theresa Lavendar (Meigs County JFS Director) and Lisa Radford (Athens County JFS Assistant Director)

A quorum was established following roll call by Director DeLay. Jeff Circle made a motion to approve the agenda for May 6, 2026, Buddy Malone seconded the motion. All were in favor. Jeff Circle made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 4, 2026, meeting, Stephen Carson seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Special Presentation

Director DeLay introduced Scott France, Budget Coordinator, Office of Workforce Development. Scott presented on the methodology for WIOA awards and explained “Hold Harmless” processes.



OhioMeansJobs Center Updates

Athens: Jordan Whitlatch presented updates for OhioMeansJobs – Athens County. Jordan provided an overview of current and upcoming programming. Their in-house ASPIRE program, which was housed at the former 510 Union St, Athens, OH location has moved to the Nelsonville location, so all programs are now housed in one location. Natalee Andrews, CCMEP Career Navigator, hosted a successful Career Exploration event at Alexander High School. Athens also continues hosting workshops and classes available to the community for free. They will be hosting a Veterans Access Day with 35 partners gathering to provide jobs and resources to Veterans. Athens will host mini job fairs in the summer months, located in the more rural parts of the county. Additionally, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities is on site at OhioMeansJobs – Athens County on Tuesdays, and Unemployment is available on site on Thursdays.

Meigs: Shelly Adams presented updates for OhioMeansJobs – Meigs County. Shelly reported that Mark Porter, signatory employer for Area 14's Registered Apprenticeship program, enrolled two current employees and past pre-apprentices into the Registered Apprenticeship program. They currently have one participant in their pre-apprenticeship program who will stay on at Mark Porter full time after graduation and will also enroll in the Registered Apprenticeship program. Due to timing constraints this year, they had fewer pre-apprentices this year than normal. Meigs County is increasing their CCMEP presence in all their county schools. Meigs is also working on securing an employer of record for their summer youth participants, which was highly supported by Perry County. Meigs also participated in Careerpalooza with Southern High School and is working with Eastern High School on a pre-apprenticeship.

Perry: Tammy Goniea presented updates for OhioMeansJobs – Perry County. Tammy reported Perry County will host monthly career fairs through October where they will table 12 employers. These events are open to the public, and they are working on improving outreach processes to reach more people. Scott France mentioned a pilot in Area 7 where they are sending mass text messages in the area for outreach. Tammy mentioned this was on Perry's radar. In May and June Perry County will be sending postcards to individuals on unemployment informing them about the events. Tammy reports Perry County received \$15,000 from WorkOhio, which they intend to use to for upskilling opportunities. Their summer employment programs will start soon, funded by CCMEP in their Work+ program and also with TANF funds. They offer financial literacy and entrepreneurial classes.



Fiscal Update

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

RESEA Grant Updates: The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) grant was reviewed:

- PY24 RESEA funding totals \$198,084 and is fully expended. The program ends June 30, 2026, with liquidation through September 30, 2026 .
- PY25 RESEA funding totals \$156,288.69, including an additional \$120,000 award. As of the reporting period, \$129,876.17 has been expended, with a remaining balance of \$26,412.52 .

Mendra noted that additional RESEA supplemental and PY26 allocations are anticipated pending guidance from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

FY26 Vets O.N.E. Incentive Awards: OhioMeansJobs Meigs County was selected as one of three recipients statewide for the FY26 Vets O.N.E. Incentive Award for the second consecutive year. The award, funded through the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), totals \$6,334.70 and supports enhanced outreach, training, and employment services for veterans. At the time of reporting, funds remain unspent.

State Special Projects and Grants: The Board was reminded that Area 14 was awarded \$260,000 for a State Special Project for Program Year 2027, with the opportunity to apply for additional years based on performance outcomes. Funds have not yet been distributed in CFIS for tracking purposes.

Recovery Works/Opioid DWG Grant Update: An update was provided regarding the Opioid National Health Emergency Dislocated Worker Grant (Recovery Works). The U.S. Department of Labor is not currently issuing awards and plans to release revised guidance before reopening the application process. The State intends to pursue future funding opportunities through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Auditor of State (AOS) Audit: Auditor of State (AOS) audit is upcoming. The HINKLE financial reporting deadline is May 30, 2026, covering the period January 1, 2025 through



December 31, 2025. Audit costs are estimated to remain under \$10,000, consistent with prior year expenditures

Jeff Circle 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.

WIOA Subgrant Agreements

Director DeLay discussed the one-year extension of WIOA subgrant agreements with Athens, Meigs, and Perry County Job and Family Services agencies. The current contract is for July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2026 with two one year extension options available. These agreements designate each county JFS as the lead agency for OhioMeansJobs and govern how WIOA-funded services are administered. All standard review requirements, including performance, fiscal review, and monitoring, were completed and all three counties met the criteria for extension, with no unresolved findings or disallowed costs. There have been recent developments in Athens County, so additional steps were taken and an internal audit was initiated. At this point, there are no findings, and both fiscal review and state guidance indicate WIOA funds are not at issue. Additionally, Athens has been responsive, and operations have continued without disruption. Efforts were also coordinated with ODJFS before bringing this recommendation forward. Based on available information, approval of the first one-year extension for all three counties, July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027, was recommended. The area will continue the audit and ongoing monitoring, and address anything further if needed. Once approved by the board, the next steps will be to obtain commissioner resolutions for each county and signed amendments.

Board member Jeff Circle motioned to approve one-year WIOA subgrant extensions for Athens, Meigs and Perry Counties, seconded by Buddy Malone. All were in favor.

Policy Updates

Use of WIOA Funds for Food Purchases

ODJFS issued updated guidance in March on the allowability of food purchases. Prior restrictive guidance was rescinded meaning food is not automatically unallowable anymore, however local areas must now define how it is used. Policy was drafted that establishes a clear, consistent framework for Area 14 (Use of WIOA Funds for Food



Purchases Area 14 Policy 14-17.01) This policy aligns with WIOA, Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200) and state guidance. Food is allowable only if it is reasonable, necessary, program-related, properly documented and within federal per diem limits. Food purchases are only allowed under the following provisions:

1. Participant Activities (Youth)

- Removes barriers to participation
- Supports structured program engagement

2. Board / Committee Meetings

- Official meetings
- Occur during a meal period
- Meeting cannot reasonably break without disruption

3. Staff Training

- Required, job-related training
- Multi-hour or full-day sessions
- Leaving would interrupt instruction

Food is now allowed for parties, celebrations, morale events, entertainment or social gatherings, alcohol or luxury catering, or costs above per diem.

Buddy Malone made a motion to approve the policy as presented, seconded by Jeff Circle. All were in favor.

Supportive Services Policy

Due to updated State guidance on food purchases, Area 14's Supportive Service policy (14-15.09.2) required minor updates. The key clarification is that food or meal assistance as a supportive service is limited to Youth participants only, and must be necessary to enable participation. This update also reinforces that supportive services are a *last resort*, and must be properly documented and tied directly to program participation. Policy draft was sent to ODJFS for review and approved.



Stephen Carson made a motion to approve the amendment to the policy as presented, seconded by Mike Lollo. All were in favor.

Labor Exchange Activities Policy

Area 14 Labor Exchange Policy (14-24) was drafted as this is a required policy for all areas. Policy aligns with WIOAPL 24-03 and standardizes services across OMJ centers. This requires use of OhioMeansJobs.com for employer services (recruitment, job orders) and job seeker services (job matching, resumes). These actions are already being performed at OhioMeansJobs centers, however local policy is needed for compliance. Policy draft was sent to ODJFS for review and approved.

Mike Lollo made a motion to approve the policy as presented, seconded by Buddy Malone. All were in favor.

State Special Projects Participant Eligibility

Special Projects Participant Eligibility Policy (14-25) was drafted as needed due to approval of Special Project funds being received by the area. This policy is specific to statewide funding. It establishes how participant eligibility is determined and how those projects will operate locally. This policy clearly separates eligibility from priority of service. Participants still must be WIOA eligible, but income, including our 250% FPL threshold, is not a requirement for eligibility. Instead, income is used as a priority tool when needed. Overall, this policy ensures compliance with WIOA and state guidance while still allowing flexibility for these newer funding streams. Policy draft was sent to ODJFS for review and approved.

Jeff Circle made a motion to approve the policy as presented, seconded by Mike Lollo. All were in favor.

Grant, Monitoring and Program Updates

RESEA: The area RESEA goal for 2026 is to select 153 participants. At this date 126 have been selected, leaving 27 remaining for the year. Failure to Report (FTR) for the area is 15%. The area is on track to meet and exceed RESEA goals.

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 group was not asked to submit a full application. No further action on this.



OhioMeansJobs Certification: The Area 14 Workforce Development Board approved recertification of the area OhioMeansJobs Centers at the February 4, 2026 meeting. The state accepted this approval for two years. No further action at this time.

Perry County Monitoring: Perry County began PY25 WIOA/CCMEP monitoring on April 27th. This is part of the State's standard monitoring process to ensure compliance with WIOA law, federal regulations and ODJFS policies. Monitoring will continue and updates will be available at the next meeting.

Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) Monitoring: The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL VETS) is conducting Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) audits. For Area 14, this is housed at OhioMeansJobs – Athens County. Monitoring in Athens County began April 27. The primary focus is ensuring veterans are receiving priority of service and that area processes reflect that in practice. Initial interviews went well, monitoring will continue and updates will be available at the next meeting.

Vitruvian Special Project

Overview

Area 14 applied for WIOA Statewide Special Projects funding in partnership with Vitruvian to expand pre-apprenticeship and advanced manufacturing pathways. The application requested funding for 3 years at \$520,000 annually. The State approved the project as an SFY27 pilot initiative, awarding the area \$260,000 to demonstrate outcomes for future expansion. 4% requested for administrative funds (\$10,000) for Area 14. The pilot model aims to serve approximately 20–25 participants and engage 3–5 schools and career technical centers. Vitruvian will deliver training, while Area 14 and OhioMeansJobs will handle eligibility, case management, and oversight. The goal of the pilot is to deliver strong outcomes in SFY27 to position for expansion in SFY28–29. Performance and outcomes will be tracked and reported to ODJFS. An MOU with Vitruvian is being drafted, and payment structure is still being determined. Director DeLay requested board approval to move forward with this project and accept the award amount, and allowing the Executive Committee to vote on the MOU once it is complete.

Jeff Circle made a motion to approve, seconded by Buddy Malone. All were in favor.

Unemployment Information

Unemployment Information: February 2026



Athens: 5.4%

Meigs: 7.6%

Perry: 5.9%

State: 4.7%

Employed Persons in Area: 51,100

Labor Force in Area: 54,500

Unemployment in Area: 3200 (6.3%)

Performance Reports

Director DeLay presented the PY25 Q2 Unadjusted Performance Reports for WIOA and CCMEP. Overall performance remains strong and competitive with the state. Earnings, credential attainment, and employment (2nd quarter) are key strengths. Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) is the primary area needing improvement (but timing plays a role). CCMEP Youth saw major MSG recovery in Q2 from Q1 (from 1.3% to 39.8%). WIOA Adult metrics show very strong credentials and wages. Employment dipped slightly but is still solid overall. WIOA Dislocated Worker performance looks excellent, but numbers are very small and should be interpreted cautiously. Overall the area shows strong earnings across programs, high credential attainment (especially Adult) and Q2 shows major improvement in Measurable Skill Gains. However, Measurable Skill Gains still below state in WIOA.

Area 14 OhioMeansJobs Reports

For the months of January – March 2026, total customers served increased (2,642 vs. 2,071) showing a strong upward trend in foot traffic and service utilization. The area saw a short-term dip in adult placements, but strong youth outcomes. Fewer but more effective hiring events were held, and there was continued expansion of mobile outreach strategy. Additionally, apprenticeship activity is beginning to build.

Help Wanted Reports

As an Area we are back to see a decrease 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.

2026 Job Fair



Area 14 hosted their 22nd Annual Job Fair on April 29 at the Athens Community Center. 70 businesses and 200+ job seekers attended, including 62 students from 3 area high schools. HAPCAP, an employer at the event, reported 175 job postings were picked up and reviewed by participants at the job fair. Survey results indicated the main issue was that the employers left early. The Area Director and OMJ staff will work together to find a solution for future events.

Board Recertification

Local area workforce boards are required to get recertified every two years by the State (ODJFS). This ensures Area 14 remains eligible to operate under WIOA. Area 14's current certification expires at the end of June 2026. Certification is submitted by the CEO Consortium (Commissioners) as CEOs are the official recipients of WIOA funds for Area 14. If approved, the board remains certified for another 2-year period. No board action is needed; this was presented for transparency.

RREAF Updates

Director DeLay provided a quick update on the HHGC Layoff Aversion request that was discussed at the February meeting. This proposal has been in development since late 2025. Following the February Board meeting, additional information was requested before any decision could be made. At the end of February, initial revised materials were submitted; however, the overall scope and budget have continued to change. In early March, the employer indicated they would review the feedback and resubmit a complete package. In late April, Director DeLay was contacted by the employer and asked what was needed to continue. It was explained that information was provided in February - a detailed checklist outlining all required items. It was also explained that both the Director and the Board would need time to review the submission, and that materials would need to be received no later than April 27th. A complete submission was not received within that time frame. The primary issue is not whether the project has merit, it is that the area does not yet have a stable, compliant proposal to evaluate. When targeted revisions are requested, the broader project has continued to shift rather than addressing specific items. This requires a full re-review each time and has prevented the proposal from reaching a stable, compliant state for evaluation. Additionally, required cost documentation remains incomplete, which is critical given that this is reimbursement-based funding and subject to audit. Based on this, Director DeLay recommended the Board take no action at this time.



Federal Updates

House Republicans released a new WIOA reauthorization bill based on the prior A Stronger Workforce for America Act, but without bipartisan support. This bill states that 50% of funds must go to training with an increased focus on employer-led training, sector partnerships and apprenticeships. There would be dedicated funding for dislocated workers and justice-involved individuals. Under this bill, adult education programs shift to Department of Labor and a new state “block grant” pilot (MASA) allows combining workforce funds into one flexible pot. Per OWA, not a lot of movement expected on this. The Area will continue business as usual and continue to track federal developments closely.

Other Business

SAM.gov Account

Fiscal agent Mendra Hupp explained to the board that the Area’s SAM.gov account needs to be renewed, and the address of the fiscal agent needs to be updated. When the registration was first purchased, the fiscal agent was temporarily housed at Perry County Hocking College branch. A resolution was requested as an attempt to update the address to the address where the fiscal agent is now housed, 5250 OH-37, New Lexington, OH 43764.

Buddy Malone made a motion to approve, seconded by Stephen Carson. All were in favor.

Area 20 Discussions

Director DeLay informed the Board of ongoing discussions regarding a potential merger of Workforce Areas 14 and 20. Gallia County, currently part of Area 7, has also been included in preliminary discussions.

At this time, conversations are exploratory and focused on determining whether a merger would be an appropriate fit for the involved areas. Commissioners from all affected counties have been engaged in these discussions.

It was noted that Ohio currently has 20 local workforce areas, with Area 7 comprising 43 counties. Local leadership has expressed concern that the State may pursue consolidation of workforce areas in the future. As a result, Areas 14 and 20 are proactively exploring a potential merger to help maintain local input regarding any future alignment.



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No formal decisions have been made at this time. This update was provided for Board transparency.

Board members requested reassurance that, in the event of a merger, all counties would maintain appropriate representation. Director DeLay confirmed that equitable representation would be a priority in any proposed structure.

Motion to Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Mike Lollo and seconded by Jeff Circle. Motion was carried without opposition. A reminder was given for the next scheduled board meeting on August 20, 2026 @ 10am in person. Location to be determined. Motion to adjourn was approved at 11:24am.

DRAFT