

Ohio Focus On Workforce Development

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Most employers want and need employees with the job ready skills to begin work on day one. The problem that many employers face ranges from employees who lack the general soft skills necessary in the workplace to workers who lack either the advanced training or technical skills needed for jobs of the future. In Ohio, as in other states, a highly skilled and competitive workforce is an important economic driver and one that is recently getting even more attention from policymakers. The Executive Workforce Board was recently tasked to identify ways to prepare and continuously retrain Ohioans of all ages for the jobs of today and tomorrow. As a result of that charge, the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation recently released a report, "[Building Ohio's Future Workforce](#)," that outlines Ohio's challenges to an effective workforce from the perspective of the business leaders across the state who serve on the Executive Workforce Board. The report's purpose was "to identify the most prominent challenges in early, secondary, postsecondary and adult education with the goal of identifying actionable solutions to ensure Ohio's businesses have access to a skilled and productive workforce." A few of the problems the board identified with the current workforce development structures are:

- A disconnect exists between school curricula and relevant, practical workplace skills, resulting in a gap between worker capabilities and employer expectations
- Students do not have adequate opportunities for "work-based learning"
- Parents and students lack awareness of non-four-year, postsecondary degree pathways Persistent misconceptions and related stigmas have further limited exposure to these viable career options
- Adult retraining programs are not widely known, often duplicative, not easily accessible (time/location) and reactive (after job loss has occurred)

The report outlines a variety of recommended solutions to these and other identified problems. Many of these recommendations were included in House Bill 49, the state's biennial budget currently being debated in the Ohio House of Representatives. We will be following these recommendations and issues impacting the state's workforce development efforts closely in the coming weeks.

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