OHIO METRO CHAMBERS COALITION

2025 Advocacy Priorities

Background

The Ohio Metro Chambers Coalition (OMCC) is dedicated to fostering a vibrant, interconnected, and prosperous economy across Ohio. Our mission is to champion economic development, to advocate for policies that support the growth of our regions, and to serve as a unified voice for the businesses we collectively represent.

As a coalition of business-led, success-driven organizations, we fervently believe the vitality of Ohio's metro regions is crucial to the state's overall economic prosperity. Our regions are hubs of employment and innovation and centers for business and culture. Investing in our state's metro areas provides benefits to the greatest number of Ohioans.

OMCC is supportive of a pro-growth economic environment in Ohio. We encourage state leaders to focus on legislation that will boost our economy, bring jobs and people to our state, increase housing opportunities, and allow our residents to prosper.

OMCC Platform

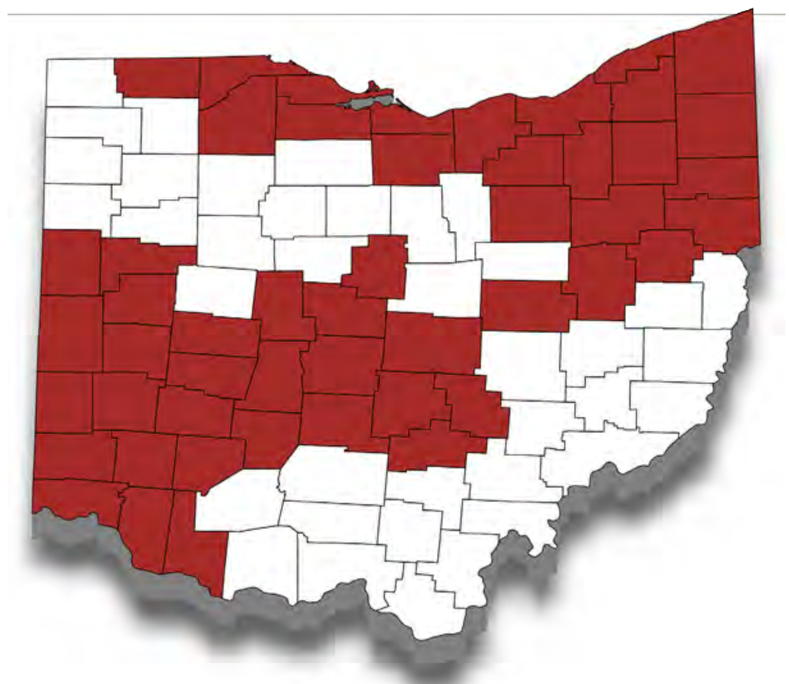
Collectively, Ohio's metropolitan areas and chambers of commerce represent:

4.4M+
Ohio jobs

76%
of Ohio's population (9M people)

82%
of Ohio's overall GDP

80%
of Ohio's overall employment base



Policy Priorities

Business Growth

Maintain a Healthy Small Business Environment: Keeping the Business Income Tax Deduction (BID) and the Commercial Activities (CAT) Tax levels – both of which are very favorable to small business growth in Ohio.

Invest in Innovation & Job Creation: Continue to support Ohio's investment in programs supporting research, entrepreneurship, and business scaling, including funding for and partnership with JobsOhio. These programs and JobsOhio have proven to be instrumental in linking research and industry, building new economic sectors and attracting significant investments, amplifying the competitive edge of Ohio's workforce and securing a prosperous future for our diverse business landscape.

Maintain Investment in Ohio's Military & Federal Installations: Investing in these installations is critical for both national security and the state's economic development. These installations, including Wright-Patterson Air Force

Base, Youngstown Air Reserve Station, and the NASA Glenn Research Center, serve as major hubs of innovation, defense, and research, supporting thousands of high-skilled jobs and fostering advanced industries. Strengthening and expanding these assets ensures Ohio remains a leader in aerospace, defense, and technology while generating significant economic impact through federal contracts and partnerships.

$17.2B

Annual economic impact of Lake Erie

***Continue Support for Ohio's Tourism Economy*:** Tourism plays a vital role in Ohio's economy, generating billions in revenue, supporting thousands of jobs, and driving growth in industries such as hospitality, entertainment, and transportation. From major attractions like the Pro-Football Hall of Fame to scenic destinations like Hocking Hills, Ohio's diverse offerings draw millions of visitors annually. Notably, Lake Erie alone contributes approximately $17.2 billion annually across Ohio's eight northern counties, supporting over 126,000 jobs and accounting for more than a quarter of the state's tourism-related revenue, jobs, and tax base. This influx of tourism helps sustain small

Talent Development

***Enhance Post-Secondary Education Affordability*:** Advocate for increased state funding for community colleges and technical schools, targeted scholarships, and financial aid programs. Emphasize need to keep higher education accessible to all Ohioans.

***Address the Financial Strain on Higher Education Institutions*:** Push for a state-funded program for universities and colleges to stabilize sector. This could include funding for operational costs, innovation grants to develop more cost-effective partnership models, and incentives for institutions that keep tuition increases below a certain threshold.

***Increase Support for Alternative Pathways to High-Wage Employment*:** Invest in career tech and apprenticeship programs. Ohio must increase its support and funding for post-secondary alternatives such as skilled trades, career tech, and apprenticeships, to meet the growing demand for skilled workers and provide residents with diverse opportunities for economic mobility. Traditional two-year and four-year degrees are not the only route to financial stability, and many industries, including manufacturing, IT, construction, and healthcare, are facing critical labor shortages. By investing in these programs, Ohio can better prepare its workforce for high-demand jobs, stimulate economic growth, and ensure more Ohioans have access to rewarding, well-paying careers without the burden of student loan debt.

***Push for Renewed Focus on the 'Benefits Cliff'*:** This is crucial for workers in Ohio, as the benefits cliff creates a barrier to upward mobility by discouraging individuals from accepting higher-paying jobs or promotions out of fear of losing essential benefits like healthcare, childcare, or housing assistance. This unintended consequence traps many workers in low-wage positions, limiting economic growth and workforce development.

Expanding Ohio's Labor Force

***Address Childcare Affordability and Accessibility*:** Propose a multi-faceted approach to make childcare more affordable and accessible, including increased wages for childcare workers, tax credits for families, and zoning reforms to encourage the childcare centers near transit hubs.

***Additional Solutions for State and Local Governments*:**

> **Investment in Quality and Workforce:** Funding programs to improve childcare quality, such as professional development for childcare workers, accreditation programs for childcare centers, and initiatives to increase childcare worker compensation.
>
> **Infrastructure Grants and Loans:** Offering grants or low-interest loans to help start or expand childcare facilities. This financial support can help cover the costs of renovations, equipment, and other necessary expenses to increase capacity.
>
> **Universal or Expanded Pre-K Programs:** Developing or expanding publicly funded pre-kindergarten programs to provide free or low-cost early childhood education options. This approach can relieve the burden on private childcare providers and make high-quality early education accessible to more children.
>
> **Public-Private Partnerships:** Encouraging partnerships to increase the availability and affordability of childcare. This could include financial incentives for businesses to offer childcare benefits or support for community-based childcare solutions.

Talent Attraction

***Incentivize the Attraction of Skilled Workers*:** Propose state-level tax incentives, relocation grants, and marketing campaigns aimed at drawing skilled workers from other states. Focus on sectors where Ohio seeks to expand or maintain a competitive edge.

***Expand Attraction of International Talent*:** Collaborate with state policymakers to encourage accelerated licensure for international talent, contextualized ESL training to support employers, and greater employer awareness of work-visa readiness of international students and newcomers. Advocate for federal agencies to increase quota of skilled worker visas, higher education, and other international visas allocated to Ohio.

Housing and Neighborhood Development

***Support Downtown Renewal through Mixed-Use Development*:** Advocate for tax incentives or grants for developers to convert office buildings into mixed-use properties. Emphasize benefits of revitalizing downtown areas and increasing affordable housing options.

***Promote Financial Incentives for Small-Scale Development*:** Advocate for the creation of a state-funded program or tax incentives specifically designed for small-scale developers, emphasizing the role of these projects in revitalizing communities.

***Rebuild Older Neighborhoods*:** Push for comprehensive renewal projects that include infrastructure improvements, incentives for small businesses, and affordable housing development, aiming to breathe new life into older communities.

***Create Financial Incentives for New Homebuyers*:** Work with lawmakers to explore legislation that offers tax credits, grants, or subsidized loan rates for first-time homebuyers. Highlight the long-term economic benefits of increasing homeownership rates, such as improved community stability and increased local spending.

***Promote Policies to Encourage Housing Market Fluidity*:** Consider development of a program that offers incentives for empty-nesters to downsize, including tax benefits or streamlined property sale processes, to free up housing stock for new prospective homebuyers and young people looking to grow their families in Ohio.

Expanding Energy Sources

***Develop a Diverse Energy Strategy*:** Advocate for state investment in a broad spectrum of energy sources, including low-carbon and carbon-free energy solutions, to ensure energy security and sustainability.

***Prevent Electric Grid Failures*:** Encourage state programs to invest in upgrading transmission capacity and resilience, potentially through public-private partnerships, to prevent catastrophic failures, increase reliability, and support the state's growing energy needs.

Transportation Infrastructure

***Focus on Approval and Completion of Major Infrastructure Projects*:** These include: establishing a free flow highway connection between Toledo and Columbus, Cincinnati's Brent Spence Bridge, Cleveland's Innerbelt redevelopment, expansion of key airports and ports, exploration of passenger rail development, and other projects critical to travel and commerce in the state.

***Prioritize Permitting Reform to Reduce Costs & Improve Development*:** : Simplifying and streamlining the permitting process is essential for fostering economic growth and encouraging business investment in Ohio. By reducing bureaucratic delays and improving the efficiency of obtaining permits, the state can accelerate development projects, support small businesses, and attract larger investments. A more transparent and efficient process lowers costs for entrepreneurs and companies, stimulates job creation, and enhances Ohio's competitiveness as a destination for new industries. Clearer, faster permitting helps ensure that projects move forward without unnecessary obstacles, benefiting the economy as a whole.