Toledo Talent Alignment Strategy

Goal and Strategy Update

September 2026

TOLEDO REGIONAL CHAMBER of COMMERCE

THREE 23 RESOURCES

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01 Introduction

About the Toledo Talent Alignment Strategy

The Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce is championing the Toledo Talent Alignment Strategy in partnership with the Workforce Regional Macro-Coalition. Building on the original strategy completed in 2019, the 2026 update identifies critical challenges informed by the latest employment trends, postsecondary completion data, and regional supply-demand analysis. It provides strategic actions grounded in recognized workforce development practices and illustrative examples from other communities.

The purpose of the updated strategy is to align education, workforce, economic development, and community investments with employer demand, strengthen access to high-quality careers for residents, and expand the region's capacity to attract, develop, retain, and connect talent to opportunity.

The Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce initiated the original strategy, which was developed in 2019 by CAEL and Avalanche Consulting. Three 23 Resources led the 2026 Goal and Strategy Update, utilizing a regional Supply-Demand Analysis prepared by Headlight Data. The analysis provided critical information on the region's labor force, industry and occupational trends, postsecondary graduate output, and critical skills and credentials employers need.

Goal and Strategy Update

This document builds upon the Supply-Demand Analysis Update to present these updated **Goals and Strategies** for aligning and improving the region's talent pipeline. It is organized as follows:

- **Executive Summary** – Topline findings from the data analysis. It puts the findings into a larger context and illustrates the larger intentions and goal structure of the strategy.
- **Strategy Section** – Larger strategic framework and themes of this report as well as guidance on how to use this report.
- **Goal Breakdown Sections** – Overview of each goal, detailing the overall objective, the challenges, and the guiding principles. Following the first page is a further breakdown of the core strategies within the goal and associated specific tactics and illustrative examples and resources to further support.

The strategy centers on four mutually reinforcing goals:

1. **Talent Attraction and Retention** – expands workforce availability
2. **Career Awareness and Pathways** – connects people to opportunity
3. **Skills Development** – prepares people for work and advancement
4. **Systems Alignment and Collaboration** – provides the coordination and shared infrastructure needed to sustain regional progress.

Eash strategy should be implemented through action plans that identify a lead organization, participating partners, required resources, near-term milestones, and performance measures. Regional partners should revisit priorities annually as labor-market conditions, employer needs, and funding opportunities evolve.

Workforce Regional Macro-Coalition

The Workforce Regional Macro-Coalition was created to bring greater coordination, alignment, and shared leadership to Northwest Ohio's workforce development ecosystem. It grew out of the best practices and strategic recommendations identified through the previous Toledo Talent Alignment Strategy, which emphasized the need to connect education, workforce, economic development, employers, and community partners around common goals for talent development, retention, attraction, and reengagement.

The coalition's purpose is to move the region from fragmented, siloed efforts toward a more unified workforce strategy. By convening partners across the region, the macro-coalition helps identify shared priorities, elevate employer needs, coordinate existing programs, and advance practical solutions that strengthen the talent pipeline and support long-term economic growth.

Serving as a central coordinating body, the macro-coalition builds on the Talent Alignment Strategy's focus on data-driven decision-making, cross-sector collaboration, and implementation of proven workforce practices. Its work supports a more resilient, inclusive, and competitive regional workforce system by aligning initiatives that improve participation, career pathways, skill development, and employer access to talent.

02 Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The Toledo Talent Alignment Strategy provides the framework for strengthening the region's ability to attract, develop, retain, and connect talent to opportunity. Building on the original 2019 strategy, this 2026 Goal and Strategy Update is informed by the regional Supply-Demand Analysis prepared by Headlight Data.

The Toledo region (Fulton, Lucas, Ottawa, and Wood counties) has a significant opportunity to more tightly align its education and workforce development efforts with the needs of employers. Collectively, regional stakeholders can:

- **Strengthen workforce availability** to meet employer demand and support regional growth.
- **Expand clear and accessible pathways** into high-opportunity careers.
- **Equip workers with skills** for immediate employment and long-term competitiveness.
- **Align education, workforce, and industry partners** around shared priorities, data, and coordinated action.

The region has significant assets to strengthen its position as a competitive place to build a career and grow a business with its strong postsecondary education base, diverse employers, established workforce and economic development partners, and a regional coalition committed to coordination. The opportunity is to convert these assets into stronger local talent outcomes by retaining more of the graduates the region produces, creating clearer pathways into high-opportunity careers, expanding training aligned with employer demand, and coordinating regional investments around shared data and action.

The following research findings from the Supply-Demand Analysis Update were the driving force behind these strategic goals:

Economic, demographic, and labor market trends drive the need for improved talent attraction, retention, and job quality efforts (Goal 1: Talent Attraction and Retention).

> The region produces **30% more postsecondary graduates per capita** than the national average, reflecting a strong education base. In selected fields such as Registered Nurses and Supply Chain Managers, graduates outnumber local openings by **3 to 1.** This comparison does not indicate a regionwide surplus of available talent. Graduate counts alone do not account for the experience required for many positions, and a strong pipeline of graduates can coexist with difficulty recruiting experienced workers. This concentration of emerging talent also creates an opportunity to support business attraction and expansion, particularly among employers able to hire and develop recent graduates or support remote work. Additionally, unfilled openings in key industries indicate that recruitment alone cannot solve turnover, necessitating employee-centric retention efforts and structured employer peer-learning cohorts.

Certificate-level shortages, industry expansion, and technological shifts require clear career awareness and accessible pathways into high-opportunity roles (Goal 2: Career Awareness and Pathways).

> Despite high overall graduation rates, critical shortages persist in technical, certificate-level roles, including Nursing Assistants, Medical Equipment Specialists, Machinists, and Precision Equipment Repairers. Simultaneously, the **Transportation and Logistics** sector is a leading source of

employment growth, experiencing a **37% increase** and generating **6,400 job openings**, expanding faster than the entry-level talent pool for roles such as Logistics Clerks, Packers, and Truck Drivers. Advancing clusters like **Software/IT**, which has increased by 15%, and in **Engineering** also creates new opportunities that require early career awareness, immersive student programming, clear career pathway visuals, and educator externships to connect classroom learning to the workplace.

The region can strengthen access to high-opportunity careers by positioning entry-level jobs as on-ramps to advancement, increasing awareness of short-term, industry-recognized credentials, and expanding educators' understanding of current employer needs and regional career opportunities.

Automation, industry growth, and skill mismatches require robust short-term, industry-recognized credentials, work-based learning, and AI literacy to ensure workforce competitiveness (Goal 3: Skills Development).

Technology and automation are rapidly changing the skills employers need, as evidenced by a **21% decline i**n low-skill Back Office roles and a **52% growth** in higher-skilled Business occupations. Transportation and Logistics growth, along with automation-driven shifts in business occupations, is increasing demand for workers with job-ready technical, digital, and problem-solving skills. Closing these technical gaps demands aligning short-term, industry-recognized credentials with employer demand, establishing pre-apprenticeship and earn-and-learn pipelines, and integrating **AI literacy and automation training** into technical and workforce programs so employees can adapt alongside automated systems. The region can also leverage or develop youth-focused AI and digital skills learning experiences to prepare the emerging workforce for high-growth tech clusters.

Maximizing regional impact builds upon the strong foundation established by the Workforce Regional Macro-Coalition, scaling employer-led sector partnerships, and synchronizing education with real-time labor demand (Goal 4: Systems Alignment and Collaboration).

Northwest Ohio has substantial workforce, education, economic development, and community assets, including **18 postsecondary institutions**. However, the region lacks a shared, regularly updated mechanism to synchronize program enrollment and completions with actual labor market demand. The Workforce Regional Macro-Coalition provides a strong foundation for advancing regional alignment. Maximizing its impact will require scaling **employer-led sector partnerships** in Healthcare, Tech/Business Services, and Transportation and Logistics, developing a comprehensive regional asset map that connects job seekers to training and essential supportive services, and establishing a shared **regional supply-demand dashboard** that is updated annually and used to inform education, workforce, and economic-development decision-making. Workforce development partners should also be integrated into business retention, expansion, and attraction activities so employers' talent needs are identified early and connected to coordinated recruitment, training, upskilling, and supportive-service resources.

Implementation

The 2026 Goal and Strategy Update is intended to serve as a living framework for regional leadership, stakeholders, and the Workforce Regional Macro-Coalition. It can guide investments, coordinate programs, and align talent development efforts across Northwest Ohio around a shared agenda. The four goals are mutually reinforcing: "Talent Attraction and Retention" expand workforce availability, "Career Awareness and Pathways" connect individuals to opportunity, "Skills Development" prepares people for immediate employment and advancement, and "Systems Alignment and Collaboration" provides the coordination and shared infrastructure needed to sustain regional progress.

The Workforce Regional Macro-Coalition will serve as the primary regional convening and alignment structure for implementation. Individual strategies should be led by the organizations best positioned to advance them. Action plans should identify a lead organization, participating partners, required resources, near-term milestones, and performance measures.

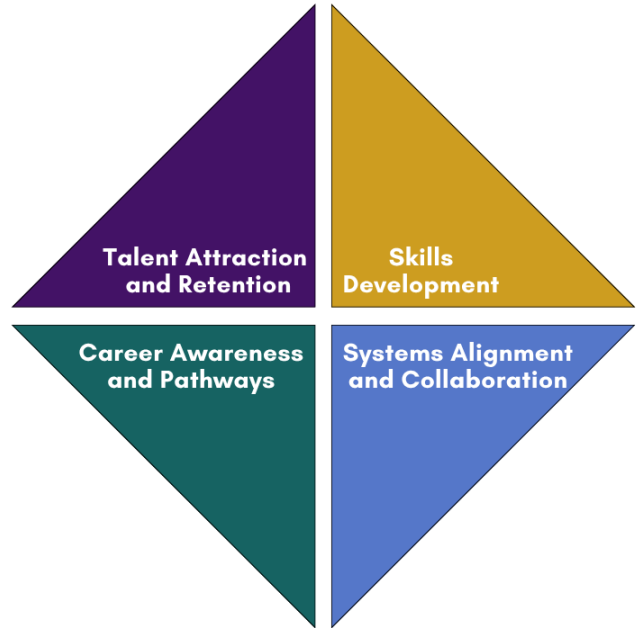
Below is a summary of the overall goals and strategies further detailed in this report:

Goals	Themes	Strategies and Tactics
1 – Strengthen workforce availability to meet employer demand and support regional growth	Talent Attraction and Retention	1. Position strong concentration of qualified graduates as a competitive advantage to support **business attraction, business expansion, and stronger local career connections.** 2. Partner with academic institutions to deploy the **Toledo Region Toolkit**, positioning Toledo as a community that offers **big-city amenities at a fraction of the cost of living.** 3. Leverage **EPIC** networks and relationships to curate employer introductions, industry events, and mentoring. 4. Launch a **targeted return-to-region campaign** that connects and engages former residents, gig workers, and unemployed talent with career opportunities in the region's growing industry clusters. 5. Support **employer peer-learning** cohorts for executives and senior human-resources leaders focused on employee retention, workplace culture, supervisor effectiveness, career advancement, and long-term workforce strategy.
2 – Expand clear and accessible pathways into high-opportunity careers	Career Awareness and Pathways	1. Identify entry-level roles and create visuals that show **clear access points and advancement** through transferable skills, work experience, and credentials. 2. Launch a **targeted awareness campaign** that positions short-term credentials as a fast, accessible path into in-demand roles. 3. Expand **teacher externships** that equip educators with current knowledge of in-demand occupations and employers' workforce needs.
3 – Equip workers with skills for immediate employment and long-term competitiveness	Skills Development	1. Expand **short-term** training programs aligned with employer demand in the region's highest-need occupations. 2. Build **pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship-to-employment** pipelines that lead directly into shortage occupations. 3. Integrate **AI literacy and automation** training into certificate and workforce training programs. 4. Leverage existing or develop youth-focused **AI and digital skills** learning experiences that build practical AI literacy and responsible use, and digital fluency for emerging occupations.
4 – Align education, workforce, and industry partners around shared priorities, data, and coordinated action	Systems Alignment and Collaboration	1. Establish **employer-led sector partnerships i**n priority industries: Healthcare, Tech/Business Services, and Transportation and Logistics. 2. Complete a comprehensive **regional asset map** identifying workforce, education, and social service agencies to connect jobseekers to training and resources that support job-readiness and remove barriers. 3. Provide a shared **regional supply-demand dashboard** to align programs with labor market demand. 4. Integrate **workforce development partners** into business retention, expansion, and attraction activities.

03 Strategy

Strategic Framework

The 2026 Goal and Strategy Update is informed by the regional Supply-Demand Analysis Update which examines employer demand and local postsecondary completions. The framework is organized around four mutually reinforcing strategic goals that support regional economic competitiveness. Each quadrant represents one of the four goals with no quadrant more important or pressing than the other.



Goal 1: Talent Attraction and Retention. Strengthen workforce availability by attracting, retaining, and reconnecting talent to quality career opportunities that support regional growth.

Goal 2: Career Awareness and Pathways. Help students, educators, and jobseekers understand in-demand occupations and navigate clear pathways to employment and career advancement.

Goal 3: Skills Development. Expand training, work-based learning, and digital-skills opportunities that prepare individuals for immediate employment and long-term career mobility.

Goal 4: Systems Alignment and Collaboration. Align employers, education providers, workforce organizations, economic-development entities, and community partners around shared priorities, data, and coordinated action.

The following pages will detail the high-level strategic goals for Toledo as they begin to implement. Within each goal, there are strategies and illustrative examples and resources. The Workforce Regional Macro-Coalition serves as the primary regional convening and alignment structure for implementation. It will coordinate partner engagement and monitor progress. Individual strategies will be led by the organizations best positioned to advance them.

How to take this Update from planning to action:

- *Drive ongoing conversations with key education, workforce, and community stakeholders as you develop and build on the strategy.*
- *Build support, engagement, and buy-in from additional stakeholders in the region and larger parts of the state.*
- *Utilize the strategies and tactics to set priorities for each year for the next 3-5 years, with clear milestones and measurable indicators for each of the four goals. Refine activities as work is implemented.*
- *Use the goals and strategies to promote, develop, and sustain partnerships and investments which address talent alignment across the region.*

Overall Goals

GOAL 1 — **Talent Attraction and Retention**: *Strengthen workforce availability to meet employer demand and support regional growth.*

GOAL 2 — **Career Awareness and Pathways:** *Expand clear and accessible pathways into high-opportunity careers.*

GOAL 3 — **Skills Development:** *Equip workers with skills for immediate employment and long-term competitiveness.*

GOAL 4 — **Systems Alignment and Collaboration:** *Align education, workforce, and industry partners around shared priorities, data, and coordinated action.*

Goal 1

Talent Attraction and Retention: Strengthen workforce availability to meet employer demand and support regional growth

Goal 1: Talent Attraction and Retention: Strengthen workforce availability to meet employer demand and support regional growth.

Talent Retention and Attraction

OBJECTIVE

This goal provides strategies to strengthen workforce availability by attracting, retaining, and reconnecting talent to quality careers that meet employer demand and support regional growth.

CHALLENGES

The region produces 30% more postsecondary graduates per capita than the national average, including a 3:1 surplus in key fields like nursing and supply chain management, contributing to talent leakage and limiting the region's ability to fully leverage its educated workforce.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Toledo can strengthen its workforce by retaining the talent it produces and attracting experienced professionals back to the region.

Goal 1: Talent Attraction and Retention: Strengthen workforce availability to meet employer demand and support regional growth.

Talent Retention and Attraction

Core Strategies

- Leverage Toledo's talent advantage to expand local career opportunities.
- Position Toledo as an affordable, opportunity-rich place to launch and build a career.
- Connect graduates and emerging professionals to local employers through EPIC.
- Re-engage and reconnect Toledo's broader talent network, including former residents and remote workers.
- Strengthen employer capacity to retain, develop, and advance talent.

Goal 1: Talent Attraction and Retention: Strengthen workforce availability to meet employer demand and support regional growth.

Talent Retention and Attraction

CORE STRATEGY

LEVERAGE TOLEDO'S TALENT ADVANTAGE TO EXPAND LOCAL CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

SUPPORTING TACTIC

Identify occupations with a strong local concentration of qualified graduates and position this as competitive advantage to support **business attraction, business expansion, and stronger local career connections.**

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES AND RESOURCES

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN – THE RIGHT PLACE

The Right Place markets Grand Rapids as a premier location for health sciences and medical expansion by highlighting its pipeline of graduates and job growth that outpaces national averages.

DURHAM COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA – RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK

With three major research universities in proximity, Research Triangle Park was launched in 1959 to leverage university talent and attract life sciences, pharmaceutical, and technology employers.

Goal 1: Talent Attraction and Retention: Strengthen workforce availability to meet employer demand and support regional growth.

Talent Retention and Attraction

CORE STRATEGY

POSITION TOLEDO AS AN AFFORDABLE, OPPORTUNITY-RICH PLACE TO LAUNCH AND BUILD A CAREER

SUPPORTING TACTIC

Partner with academic institutions to deploy the **Toledo Region Toolkit,** positioning Toledo as a community that offers **career opportunities, affordable housing, transportation options, and big-city amenities at a fraction of the cost of living.**

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES AND RESOURCES

CLEVELAND, OHIO – TALENT ALLIANCE

The Cleveland Talent Alliance offers talent-recruitment resources that help promote the region to students and workers.

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSLVANIA – CAMPUS PHILLY

Campus Philly helps students and recent graduates connect to jobs and opportunities in the region.

MINNESOTA – EXPLORE MINNESOTA

Minnesota is recognized as one of the happiest, healthiest, and most prosperous states in the United States.

Goal 1: Talent Attraction and Retention: Strengthen workforce availability to meet employer demand and support regional growth.

Talent Retention and Attraction

CORE STRATEGY

CONNECT GRADUATES AND EMERGING PROFESSIONALS TO LOCAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH EPIC

SUPPORTING TACTIC

Leverage **EPIC members** to curate employer introductions, industry events, and mentoring for students and recent graduates.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES AND RESOURCES

COLUMBUS, OHIO – COLUMBUS YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

The CYP Club hosts events with employers designed to help young professionals build connections and navigate today's job market.

FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA – FARGO MOORHEAD WEST FARGO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Community Concierge Program at the Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo Chamber is integrated into the onboarding process to create a supportive network for new employees and strengthen their connections to the community.

FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA – FREDERICKSBURG REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Fredericksburg Regional Chamber Influencer Program fosters business connections and networking opportunities.

FISHERS, INDIANA – ONEZONE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

OneZoneNextGen connects emerging professionals with employers through structured leadership development, mentoring, executive networks to build the region's long-term talent pipeline.

Goal 1: Talent Attraction and Retention: Strengthen workforce availability to meet employer demand and support regional growth.

Talent Retention and Attraction

CORE STRATEGY

RE-ENGAGE AND RECONNECT TOLEDO'S TALENT NETWORK, INCLUDING FORMER RESIDENTS AND REMOTE WORKERS

SUPPORTING TACTIC

Partner with local universities, employers, community partners, local government, and visitors' bureaus to launch a **targeted return-to-region campaign** that connects and engages former residents, gig workers, and unemployed talent with career opportunities in the region's growing industry clusters.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES AND RESOURCES

GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA – BOOMERANG GREENSBORO

Boomerang Greensboro successfully attracts former residents back to the area, generating an estimated $17 million in annual income.

SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI – SPRINGFIELD BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Springfield Business Development Corporation showcases professional associations and networks across key industries to help people build connections, advance their careers, and engage in the community.

NATIONWIDE – JPMORGANCHASE

JPMorganChase's ReEntry Program is a paid pathway for individuals who have taken an extended career break. It provides mentoring, professional development, and work experience that can lead to long-term employment.

NATIONWIDE – PATH FORWARD

Returnship Matcher is a directory of all US returnship programs to help individuals who have taken a career break and have a gap on their resume.

Goal 1: Talent Attraction and Retention: Strengthen workforce availability to meet employer demand and support regional growth.

Talent Retention and Attraction

CORE STRATEGY

STRENGTHEN EMPLOYER CAPACITY TO RETAIN, DEVELOP, AND ADVANCE TALENT

SUPPORTING TACTIC

Establish **employer peer-learning** cohorts for executives, human resources leaders, and frontline supervisors focused on employee retention, workplace culture, supervisor effectiveness, career advancement, and long-term workforce strategy.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES AND RESOURCES

FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY – KENTUCKY CHAMBER

The Kentucky Chamber provides Workplace Training, a series of workshops and resources to help human resource professionals address critical workforce challenges.

NATIONWIDE – VISTAGE

Vistage offers an executive peer-advisory model that brings together business leaders in monthly groups facilitated by a coach. The model enables members to examine complex challenges with trusted peers and gain candid feedback to make stronger strategic decisions and lead more effectively.

Goal 2

Career Awareness and Pathways: Expand clear and accessible pathways into high-opportunity careers

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Career Awareness and Pathways

OBJECTIVE

This goal provides strategies to help individuals identify careers and their entry requirements so they can move through education into employment.

CHALLENGES

Many students and job seekers are unaware of the region's in-demand occupations. Persistent shortages exist in technical and certificate-level jobs, while fast-growing sectors such as transportation, logistics, technology, and engineering are creating new opportunities that require greater career awareness, stronger pathway alignment, and better connections between education and the labor market.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Toledo will build a stronger workforce by closing certificate-level shortages, supporting logistics growth, and developing the skills needed for automation-driven and emerging tech opportunities.

Goal 2: Career Awareness and Pathways: Expand clear and accessible pathways into high-opportunity careers.

Career Awareness and Pathways

Core Strategies

Position entry-level roles as on-ramps to career mobility.
Increase awareness of short-term, industry-recognized credentials that lead to high-demand, quality careers.
Expand educator externships to strengthen career awareness.

Goal 2: Career Awareness and Pathways: Expand clear and accessible pathways into high-opportunity careers.

Career Awareness and Pathways

CORE STRATEGY

POSITION ENTRY-LEVEL ROLES AS ON-RAMPS TO CAREER MOBILITY

SUPPORTING TACTICS

Identify entry-level roles and create visuals that show **clear access points and advancement** through transferable skills, work experience, and credentials.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES AND RESOURCES

NEW YORK, NEW YORK – ACADEMY TO INNOVATE HR

AIHR describes the career lattice model as showing advancement can occur vertically, horizontally, or diagonally rather than through a single upward career ladder.

HOUSTON, TEXAS – KAHUNA WORKFORCE

Kahuna Workforce illustrates how career lattices make multiple career pathways by connecting employees' skills to opportunities for vertical, lateral, and cross-functional growth.

WARSAW, POLAND – SKILL PANEL

SkillPanel describes a career lattice provides multiple pathways for growth, allowing individuals to advance vertically while also moving horizontally or diagonally to build skills and experience across roles and functions.

Goal 2: Career Awareness and Pathways: Expand clear and accessible pathways into high-opportunity careers.

Career Awareness and Pathways

CORE STRATEGY

INCREASE AWARENESS OF SHORT-TERM, INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS THAT LEAD TO HIGH-DEMAND, QUALITY CAREERS

SUPPORTING TACTIC

Launch a **targeted awareness campaign** that positions short-term, industry-recognized credentials as a fast, accessible path into in-demand roles.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES AND RESOURCES

RICHMOND VIRGINIA – VIRGINIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Virginia's FastForward program promotes short-term training for in-demand jobs.

CAMARILLO, CALIFORNIA – MODERN CAMPUS

The Annual Education Digital Marketing Awards recognizes colleges and universities for their marketing campaigns.

WASHINGTON, DC – ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES

The Association of Community College Trustees provided talking points about the value of community college, e.g., train workers quickly, skills training, ROI, multiple pathways).

STATE OF OHIO – JOBSOHIO

JobsOhio has invested $300 million in Technician Earn and Learn to enroll employees into apprenticeships, associate's and certificate training or hire those enrolled in qualified education programs.

Goal 2: Career Awareness and Pathways: Expand clear and accessible pathways into high-opportunity careers.

CORE STRATEGY

STRENGTHEN EDUCATORS' UNDERSTANDING OF REGIONAL CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

SUPPORTING TACTIC

Expand paid **externships** for teachers, counselors, coaches, and administrators to equip them with knowledge of in-demand occupations and employers' workforce needs.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES AND RESOURCES

STATE OF OHIO – OHIO STEM LEARNING NETWORK

Ohio STEM Learning Network supports summer externships through its Battelle Teacher Academy.

WACO, TEXAS – GREATER WACO CHAMBER

The Greater Waco Chamber's Teacher Externship program is a summer professional development experience that places high school educators at local businesses to learn about industry trends, career pathways, and in-demand skills, helping them connect classroom learning to real workplace expectations.

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE – SCORE

SCORE provides an educator externship playbook for building employer partnerships that place educators in workplaces so teachers and counselors understand in-demand careers, workplace expectations, and regional industry needs.

Goal 3

Skills Development:

Equip workers with skills for immediate employment and long-term competitiveness

Goal 3: Skills Development: Equip workers with skills for immediate employment and long-term competitiveness.

Skills Development

OBJECTIVE

This goal provides strategies to expand access to short-term, industry-recognized credentials and digital skills development for immediate employment and advancement over time.

CHALLENGES

Despite strong graduation rates, the region's workforce is not developing the specific skills needed to fill critical technical and certificate-level roles. Transportation and logistics growth, along with automation-driven shifts in business occupations, are increasing demand for workers with job-ready technical, digital, and problem-solving skills.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Toledo will build a stronger workforce by closing certificate-level shortages, preparing workers for automation-driven higher-skill roles, and aligning talent development with high-growth occupations in priority sectors.

Goal 3: Skills Development: Equip workers with skills for immediate employment and long-term competitiveness.

Skills Development

Core Strategies

Strengthen short-term training as a pathway into high-demand careers.
Expand work-based learning pathways into high-demand careers.
Embed AI literacy and automation into education, training, and work-based learning.

Goal 3: Skills Development: Equip workers with skills for immediate employment and long-term competitiveness.

Skills Development

CORE STRATEGY

STRENGTHEN SHORT-TERM TRAINING AS A PATHWAY INTO HIGH-DEMAND CAREERS

SUPPORTING TACTIC

Expand and improve **short-term** training programs aligned with employer demand in the region's highest-need occupations.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES AND RESOURCES

STATE OF OHIO – TECH CRED AND CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Ohio TechCred supports short-term, industry-recognized credentials tied to employer demand.

Ohio invests in Career Technical Education to support programming, instruction, and facilities.

Goal 3: Skills Development: Equip workers with skills for immediate employment and long-term competitiveness.

Skills Development

CORE STRATEGY

EXPAND WORK-BASED LEARNING PATHWAYS INTO HIGH-DEMAND CAREERS

SUPPORTING TACTIC

Build **pre-apprenticeship, earn-and-learn, and apprenticeship** pipelines that lead directly into shortage occupations.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES AND RESOURCES

WASHINGTON, DC – US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Apprenticeship.gov connects job seekers and employers to apprenticeship opportunities.

MEDINA, OHIO – WELSER AND MEDINA COUNTY CAREER CENTER

At manufacturer Welser, a core talent strategy is apprenticeships with 10% of the company's workforce being apprentices.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON – SOUTH SEATTLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE APPRENTICESHIP AND EDUCATION CENTER

The South Seattle College Georgetown Apprenticeship and Education Center trains 3,000 apprentices and journey-level workers annually in 20 different trades.

NORTHWEST OHIO – JOBSOHIO TECHNICIAN PATH

The JobsOhio Technician Path helps companies create earn-and-learn pathways for in-demand technician roles, leveraging ApprenticeOhio as a valuable resource.

Goal 3: Skills Development: Equip workers with skills for immediate employment and long-term competitiveness.

Skills Development

CORE STRATEGY

EMBED AI LITERACY INTO EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND WORK-BASED LEARNING

SUPPORTING TACTIC

Integrate **AI literacy and automation** training into career and technical education, postsecondary programs, adult learning, and work-based learning.

Leverage existing or develop youth-focused **AI and digital skills** learning experiences that build practical AI literacy and responsible use, and digital fluency for emerging occupations.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES AND RESOURCES

NATIONWIDE – NATIONAL APPLIED AI CONSORTIUM

The National Applied AI Consortium provides a repository of curriculum and training to support postsecondary training.

REDMOND, WASHINGTON – MICROSOFT

Microsoft provides free training, resources, and programs to help educators prepare students for the AI economy.

WASHINGTON, DC – US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

The US DOL's Make America AI-Ready offers a free, 1-week AI literacy course via text message.

WASHINGTON, DC – MANUFACTURING INSTITUTE

The Manufacturing Institute will create no-cost AI training for current and future manufacturing workers.

Goal 4

Systems Alignment and Collaboration: Align education, workforce, and industry partners around shared priorities, data, and coordinated action.

Goal 4: Systems Alignment and Collaboration: Align education, workforce, and industry partners around shared priorities, data, and coordinated action.

Systems Alignment and Collaboration

OBJECTIVE

This goal provides strategies for an aligned workforce development ecosystem in which employers, education, workforce, and community organizations use shared information and coordinated partnerships to respond to talent needs.

CHALLENGES

With substantial workforce, education, economic development, and community assets, the region would benefit from more integrated and accessible infrastructure to guide investments and help residents navigate resources and opportunities across systems.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Regional alignment is not new to Toledo and has demonstrated success in preparing talent for Advanced Manufacturing which can be replicated in other key industries.

Goal 4: Systems Alignment and Collaboration: Align education, workforce, and industry partners around shared priorities, data, and coordinated action.

Systems Alignment and Collaboration

Core Strategies

Scale the employer-led sector partnership framework.
Build regional data and resource infrastructure to support coordinated decision-making.
Make workforce development a standard component of economic development strategies and activities.

Goal 4: Systems Alignment and Collaboration: Align education, workforce, and industry partners around shared priorities, data, and coordinated action.

Systems Alignment and Collaboration

CORE STRATEGY

SCALE THE EMPLOYER-LED SECTOR PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

SUPPORTING TACTICS

Establish employer-led sector partnerships in **Healthcare, Tech/Business Services**, and **Transportation and Logistics** to identify shared workforce challenges and develop innovative, coordinated solutions that address them.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES AND RESOURCES

ROSEVILLE, CALIFORNIA – ROSEVILLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Roseville Chamber of Commerce launched the Placer Workforce Development Foundation and uses the US Chamber of Commerce Talent Pipeline Management model to support sector partnerships.

NATIONWIDE – NEXT GENERATION SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Next Generation Sector Partnerships provides critical resources for launching and sustaining successful initiatives.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK – HEALTH CAREER ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

Healthcare Career Advancement Program provides resources to support healthcare workforce development. Colorado is rich in healthcare sector partnerships.

ADVANCEMENT HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT – CAPITAL AREA TRANSPORTATION, LOGISTICS, AND DISTRIBUTION PARTNERSHIP

CATLDP illustrates that transportation and logistics can be a formal sector partnership to support career awareness, talent development in a sector that keeps the economy moving.

Goal 4: Systems Alignment and Collaboration: Align education, workforce, and industry partners around shared priorities, data, and coordinated action.

CORE STRATEGY

BUILD REGIONAL DATA AND RESOURCE INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT COORDINATED DECISION-MAKING

SUPPORTING TACTICS

Develop and maintain a comprehensive **regional asset map** identifying workforce, education, and social service agencies to connect job seekers to training and resources that support job-readiness and remove barriers.

Develop and maintain a **shared regional supply-demand dashboard**, updated annually and used by all 18 regional providers, to align programs with current labor market demand.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES AND RESOURCES

CINCINNATI, OHIO – WORKFORCE INNOVATION CENTER

The Workforce Innovation Center's Workforce and Talent Map connects business to workforce, talent, education, and social service agencies that can support them.

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA – EMPLOYINDY

EmployIndy's interactive Workforce Ecosystem Map visually organizes the region's workforce, education, employer, community, and public-system partners, allowing users to explore programs and identify service providers.

STATEWIDE – UNITE US

Unite Us is a platform that connects organizations through coordinated networks to enable partners to securely identify needs, make and track referrals, and coordinate services so individuals can more easily access the resources they need.

NATIONWIDE – FINDHELP

Findhelp is a searchable online directory that helps people locate and connect with local services such as food, housing, healthcare, transportation, financial assistance, employment supports, and other community resources.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON – WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF SEATTLE

The King County Talent Pipeline Dashboard compares projected occupational demand with the available local supply of postsecondary graduates and unemployment-insurance claimants, helping industry, education, and workforce leaders identify shortages, surpluses, cross-sector competition for talent, and priority areas for training investment.

Goal 4: Systems Alignment and Collaboration: Align education, workforce, and industry partners around shared priorities, data, and coordinated action.

Systems Alignment and Collaboration

CORE STRATEGY

MAKE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT A STANDARD COMPONENT IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

SUPPORTING TACTICS

Integrate **workforce development partners** into business retention, expansion, and attraction activities so employers' talent needs are identified early and connected to coordinated recruitment, training, upskilling, and supportive service resources.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES AND RESOURCES

AKRON, OH – ELEVATE GREATER AKRON

Elevate Greater Akron integrates workforce professionals into business retention, expansion, and attraction visits.