



**Ohio House Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education
State Operating Budget (HB 33)
March 21, 2023**

**Testimony of the Career-Technical Education Associations
(Ohio ACTE, OACTS, Ohio CCS)
Dave Mangas, Superintendent, Cuyahoga Valley Career Center**

Chair Manning, Ranking Member Jarrells, and members of the Ohio House Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Dave Mangas, Superintendent of Cuyahoga Valley Career Center, and I am testifying on behalf my school and its adult education Ohio Technical Center (OTC), as well as the Ohio Association for Career Technical Education (Ohio ACTE), the Ohio Association of Career Technical Superintendents (OACTS), and the Ohio Association of Comprehensive and Compact Career Technical Schools (Ohio CCS). These Associations not only represent the state's 89 career-technical schools (including its 49 JVSDs), but also its 51 OTCs—which focus on providing short-term adult technical training to meet Ohio's diverse, regional workforce needs.

My name is Dave Mangas, and I have served northeast Ohio as Superintendent of Cuyahoga Valley Career Center for the past 6 years. With over 25 years in Career Education, I have worked in urban, rural, and suburban areas of this great State. Cuyahoga Valley is ideally situated between Akron and Cleveland providing a convenient location for thousands of adults to receive the skilled training they need to ensure our communities are great places to live. One example is Requil Wheat, an adult in our community who recently completed her requirement to become a State Tested Nurse Aide (STNA). Utilizing the resources from the Adult Diploma Program, Requil has earned both her STNA certification and a high school diploma.

Background on OTCs: OTCs play a unique and vital role in the state's higher education framework. We offer the most efficient, successful, and cost-effective short-term technical training programs that deliver an immediate and lasting impact. Our track record of success is truly unmatched: we are proud to boast a 96% job placement rate and 81% program completion rate—statistics the state often promotes, and which justify the renewed focus and investment in our sector. The state's OTC infrastructure offers adults a menu of options for their career pathway that do not necessitate an expensive, multi-year college commitment. And our infrastructure is strong: OTCs are located in every area of the state and accessible to all adult students.

Funded and regulated by the Ohio Department of Higher Education, OTCs provide a host of educational services; adults can earn certificates, licenses and other credentials in typically a year or less. Although normally housed and governed by either the Career Center (Joint Vocational School District), or the comprehensive school district of which they are part, each OTC has a

separate funding mechanism than their secondary counterpart. General funds from local levies or other local funds are not used for OTC expenses. Each OTC therefore stands alone except for the use of facilities and utilities (although there is a trend that more OTCs are paying for these expenses).

Funding for OTCs: The Governor’s executive budget proposal calls for increasing OTC funding to \$22.5 million in FY 24 and \$23.1 million in FY 25. These funding levels represent a three percent increase in funding each fiscal year. The increase is necessary for OTCs to maintain a healthy menu of adult education programming and otherwise continue their mission of preparing Ohioans for the workforce.

The Executive Budget proposal contains other beneficial programs and funding streams that recognize the value of OTCs and encourage expansion of adult education. Highlights include:

- Short-Term Certificate Funding: Short-term certificates are the “bread and butter” of OTC operations. State statistics on student outcomes prove that we are the most efficient and effective at operating and delivering short-term programs to Ohio’s adult student population. To that end, we are pleased the Executive Budget proposal increases investments in need-based financial aid for students enrolled in short-term certificate programs from \$7 million to \$14 million over the biennium to help more students enroll in critical adult education programs. OTC students have significantly benefited from this stream of funding over the last two years; increasing funding for this program is an important step to assuring all Ohioans have the opportunity to acquire employable skills that will help address regional workforce needs.
- SuperRAPIDS: The Executive Budget proposal uses Federal ARPA dollars to boost funding for the coveted Regionally Aligned Priorities in Delivering Skills (RAPDS) program, which will have a positive impact on CTE and adult education in Ohio. The \$200 million SuperRAPIDS appropriation will help OTCs address regional workforce issues by facilitating the purchase of new equipment, which will allow for program expansion in response to local and regional workforce needs. Additionally, through co-op’s, internships, customized training, and earn-while you learn opportunities, this funding will help drive partnerships between OTCs and businesses—expanding career opportunities for adults statewide.
- TechCred: The Executive Budget proposal maintains the successful TechCred program, increasing funding to more than \$50 million over the biennium to support the upskilling of Ohio’s workforce and to help individuals qualify for a better job in today’s modern economy. Recall TechCred reimburses businesses and individuals for the cost of short-term certificate programs, and has to date assisted more than 1,800 employers with more than 44,000 credentials earned.

These three examples of support for upskilling are so meaningful for our communities. Requil, mentioned earlier as a success story, is now in the process of enrolling in our Licensed Practical Nurse Program. OTCs are changing the trajectory of individual’s lives.

On a concluding note, we seek to encourage a thoughtful, inclusive approach to the creation of higher education programs targeting workforce development. Policy initiatives like expanding short-term certificates, enhancing funding for technical equipment, or investing in student scholarships / financial aid, should always include OTCs and their robust adult student population. We have been the leaders in this arena for decades and have demonstrated a track record of success that justifies increased state investment. We are proud to be an integral part of our state's higher education system and are excited to continue working with our college counterparts to grow the state's workforce and deliver career opportunities to all Ohioans.