Ohio Announces New Plan to Get High School Dropouts into the Workforce
1.1 Million Citizens Get a New Chance at Education and Job Training

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio took its first steps today to offer a brighter future to the state’s 1.1 million citizens 22 years of age and older who have dropped out of high school.

Five educational institutions have been selected to share $2.5 million to develop a new approach to adult education — one that will link earning a diploma with free job training for in-demand careers.

Stark State Community College, Pickaway-Ross Joint Vocational School, Miami Valley Career Technical Center, Cuyahoga Community College and Penta Career Center — partnering with other institutions and providers — will each receive $500,000 to launch an Adult Diploma Pilot Program.

“As Ohio’s labor market grows, the key to our future success is connecting undereducated men and women to the education and training they need to rise above poverty and thrive,” said Richard A. Ross, superintendent of public instruction at the Ohio Department of Education.

During the planning phase, the five schools will determine how to contact potential students, assess their current knowledge and address potential challenges such as illiteracy. They also will engage industry leaders, determine the most in-demand jobs in their regions and identify the types of certifications graduates need to qualify for those positions.

Each student in the pilot will enter a chosen career pathway program at his or her current ability level and work at the best-suited pace under a personalized “student success plan.” The student will simultaneously earn a high school diploma and an industry credential that will qualify him or her for jobs in manufacturing, medical technology and other in-demand industries.

The approach will embed academics, such as math and reading, into career-technical classes that lead each student to a credential in a chosen field. Students may receive instruction online, through video conferencing, academic coaching, work settings or a blend of classroom and online sources.

Unlike in traditional classrooms, students will show they have mastered their courses by passing a competency-based job skills test such as ACT’s WorkKeys, rather than a traditional test that reflects only academic knowledge.

Program participants also receive career guidance and the benefit of their schools’ connections with local industries. The program will connect students to Ohio’s already well-established career-technical education system.
State data shows that Ohio adults without a high school diploma are twice as likely to live in poverty as those with a diploma. In Ohio, especially, data shows that high school level career-technical education programs are effective in preparing students for success in college and careers.

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