



## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

MARCH 1, 2024

Buckeye Hills Regional Council

### AGENDA

- I. Call to Order | Lenny Eliason, President
- II. Roll Call | Chasity Schmelzenbach, Secretary
- III. Consent Agenda | Lenny Eliason, President **TAB #1**
- IV. Management Committee Update | Ron Moore, Chair **TAB #2**
  - a. Management Committee Report
  - b. Sick Leave Payout and Sick Leave Bank
  - c. Recommendation of the Administrative Budget: July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 to the General Policy Council
  - d. Request for Approval of Expenditure
- V. RISE Ohio Update | Marty Hohenberger, Director, Center for Economic Development and Community Resilience, Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service, Ohio University, Clara Bone, Senior Project Manager, Center for Economic Development and Community Resilience, Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service, Ohio University and Kate Dunn, Senior Planner, Buckeye Hills Regional Council **TAB #3**
- VI. Staff Spotlight **TAB #4**
  - a. Dave Herbert, Program Manager
  - b. Eric Wade, Senior Planner
- VII. Legislator and Partner Agency Updates
- VIII. Executive Director Report | Chasity Schmelzenbach, Executive Director **TAB #5**
- IX. Citizen Participation
- X. Other Business
- XI. Adjournment

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**GENERAL POLICY COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 5, 2024 AT 11:00 AM**

**Minutes of the February 2, 2024  
Buckeye Hills Regional Council Executive Committee Meeting**

The Buckeye Hills Regional Council (BHRC) Executive Committee meeting was held February 2, 2024. The meeting was held at Buckeye Hills, Marietta, Ohio.

In attendance were:

<b>OFFICERS:</b>	Ron Moore, Vice President	Morgan County (Private Sector)
	Chasity Schmelzenbach, Secretary (non-voting member per Bylaws)	BHRC Executive Director
<b>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:</b>	Steve Patterson	City of Athens
	Jason D'Onofrio	Hocking County
	Mick Schumacher	Monroe County Alternate
	Adam Shriver	Morgan County
	Allen Fraley	Noble County
	Ben Carpenter	Perry County
	Josh Schlicher	City of Marietta
	James Booth	Washington County
<b>GUESTS:</b>	Don Jones	Ohio Representative 95 <sup>th</sup> District
	Danielle Mason	Office of Attorney General Yost
	Susanne Simpson	Office of Ohio Auditor of State Faber
	Juli Stevens	Office of Congressman Wenstrup
<b>STAFF:</b>	Michelle Hyer	Program Manager
	Angie Lawrence	HR & Payroll Manager
	Aaron Martin	Program Assistant
	Sam Miller	Development Director
	Christa Myers	Transportation Planning Manager
	Brad Peoples	Development Specialist II
	Kimy Porter	Fiscal Assistant
	Amanda Reeder	Communications Specialist
	Jenny Simmons	Executive Assistant
	Gabby Smith	Communications Intern
	Drew Tanner	Communications Director
	Eric Wade	Senior Planner
	Jennifer Westfall	Aging & Health Director
	Emma Yeager	Development Specialist
	Melissa Zoller	Planning Director

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ron Moore, Vice President, called the meeting to order.

**ROLE CALL**

Chasity Schmelzenbach conducted roll call.

**APPOINTMENT TO FILL TREASURER**

Ron Moore stated that Kevin Ritter stepped down as the Treasurer and asked if there were any nominations to fill the vacancy. Adam Shriver nominated James Booth. Josh Schlicher seconded the motion. Not hearing any other nomination, Ron Moore moved to close the nominations and appoint James Booth as the new Treasurer. Adam seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

### **APPOINTMENT TO APPALACHIAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

Allen Fraley moved to appoint Jeff Minosky, Village of Caldwell Councilman, to the Appalachian Development Corporation. Steve Patterson seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Steve Patterson moved to approve the consent agenda which included the minutes from the December 1, 2023, meeting; Statement of Activities, Administrative Expense YTD; Quarterly Budget Report, Aging and Disability Programs Services and Funding Report for period July 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023, and Division and Director's Reports. James Booth seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

### **RATIFICATION OF ACTION BY OFFICERS FOR EXPENDITURE REQUEST APPROVAL**

James Booth approved the action by officers for expenditure request approval in January 2024 for cyber insurance of \$10,577. Jason D'Onofrio second the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

### **LEGISLATOR AND PARTNER AGENCY UPDATE**

Don Jones, Ohio Representative, 95<sup>th</sup> District, Juli Stephens, Office of Congressman Wenstrup, provided updates to the members. Susanne Simpson, Office of Ohio Auditor of State Faber, provided updates to the members. Danielle Mason, Office of Ohio Attorney General Yost, provided updates to the members.

### **DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE**

Jason D'Onofrio moved to approve the Resolution Granting Permission to Enter into a Contract with Chmura Economic and Analytics. Jason D'Onofrio seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

Sam Miller, Development Director, provided information to the members on the upcoming county workshops that will provide the opportunity for individuals, local officials, private industry, and other stakeholders to have meaningful conversations about efforts that best serve economic development and improve the quality of life in our region.

Sam Miller provided information on the Buckeye Hills Recreation Corridor project to the members. Buckeye Hills is working with communities in Noble, Morgan, Perry and Hocking counties with 11 popular State Park destinations and Ohio's only National Forest. The project's purpose is to learn best practices of maintaining a sense of place while working to integrate park visitors into the local economies.

### **PLANNING DIVISION REPORT**

Adam Shriver moved to approve Buckeye Hills entering into a contract with Environmental Design Group for GIS Services in the amount of \$10,000.

James Booth moved to approve the Hocking County Master Plan and Washington County Port Proposal presented by Melissa Zoller, Planning Division. Steve Patterson seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

Melissa Zoller stated that the Surface Transportation Block Grant deadline was extended to February 20, 2024.

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Chasity Schmelzenbach provided announcements, current initiatives, state updates and federal updates to the members:

- Congratulations to:

- \$8.7 million to ODOT and the Washington County Engineer's Office for the "Logistics Lane" (State Route 7) project
- Roger Wright recognized as County Engineer of the Year
- Appalachian Ohio Alliance for the recognition of Bison Hollow Preserve as a State Nature Preserve by ODNR
- Getting involved:
  - District 18 Natural Resources Assistance Council (NRAC) nominations will be accepted until 4 pm on Feb. 9, 2024. One vacant position for a local government representative.
  - U.S. 33 Expansion meeting set for February 13<sup>th</sup> from 4:30 – 6:30 pm at the Athens Community Center
  - Mayor Patterson testified before the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee on January 26 about the need to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Funding Opportunities
  - Surface Transportation Block Grant Deadline Extended to February 20<sup>th</sup>
  - Appalachian Regional Commission's READY Local Governments program applications are due February 29<sup>th</sup>.
  - Brownfield Remediation Program applications due April 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Current Initiatives
  - The Ridges
  - Appalachian Community Grant Program Updates
  - GRIT Project and Workforce
  - Sustainable Ohio Public Energy Council was awarded \$12,545,691.00
  - Ohio EPA webinar about the Climate Pollution Reduction Program on February 21 at 10:30 a.m.
- State Updates
  - Brian Chavez, of Marietta, was selected to replace Senator Frank Hoagland, 30th District.
  - Ohio BEAD Challenge Portal Live: Broadband Ohio will host a webinar on February 14 at 2:00 pm
  - OEPA Water Supply Revolving Loan Account Program Webinar on February 8 at 1:30 p.m.
  - \$12 Million in Grants to Drive Coal Innovation from ODOD: Applications due on March 15<sup>th</sup>.
  - Welcome Home Ohio: \$150 million in Housing Tax Credits and Grants
    - \$150 million Welcome Home Ohio program
    - \$100 million: Landbanks to purchase, rehabilitate, or build
    - \$50 million in tax credits: Landbanks and eligible developers
    - Grant application initially closes at 11:59 p.m. on February 9
    - Rolling applications accepted from February 12 to May 31
  - Guidelines for \$750 Million All Ohio Future Fund
  - Ohio Senate Select Committee on Housing at WSCC
- Federal Updates
  - USFS Eastern Region Seeking Recreation Advisory Committee Members. Nominations are due March 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - ARC INSPIRE Letters of Intent Due March 8
    - January 22 – Application portal opens
    - February 8 – Virtual pre-application workshop
    - March 8 – Letters of Intent
    - Fall 2024 – Awards

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

No citizens present wished to address the committee.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Chasity Schmelzenbach asked the members to review the updated General Policy Council roster because there are still many vacancies listed.

Chasity Schmelzenbach asked the members to review, sign and leave at the table the annual Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics forms.

**ADJOURMENT**

With no other business, James Booth moved to adjourn the meeting. Jason D'Onofrio seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chasity Schmelzenbach, Secretary

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

DRAFT



## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

July 1, 2023, through January 31, 2024

### YEAR TO DATE ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE DETAIL

Administrative Expenses for Fiscal Year 2024 totaled \$3,737,760.66 on January 31. This total represents 57.78% of the Council's administrative budget utilized. Total spending for this period is budgeted to be 58%. Individual line-item budgets and expenses are monitored monthly to ensure funds are utilized appropriately and budget revisions are requested from funding agencies as needed. Agency-wide quarterly budget revisions will be presented for review and approval. Specific line-item expenses over the budgeted spending percentage are the result of yearly renewals paid and staff travel increases due to the end of the Public Health Emergency. The cumulative Indirect Cost rate for this period is 47%. Projected Total Indirect Costs for Fiscal Year 2024 are 46%.

### AGING AND DISABILITY PROGRAMS SERVICES & FUNDING REPORT

The Aging and Disability Division worked with various service providers and helped administer many direct service programs to eligible residents of our eight-county region. Between July 1 and January 31, over \$7.3 million in direct service dollars were used to provide the units of service listed in the report. BHRC continues to support our provider network to evaluate the needs of the communities and serve area seniors in the best way possible.



**Administrative Expense Detail**  
**For the Period July 1, 2023 - January 31, 2024**

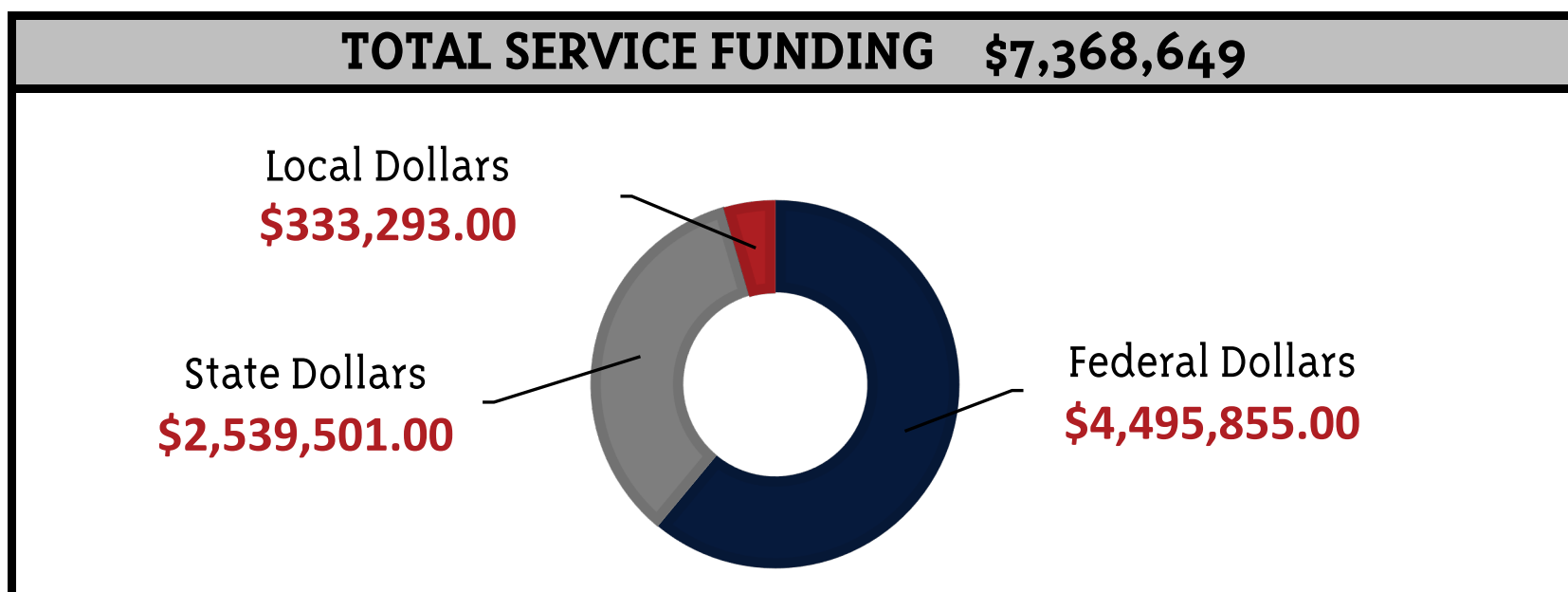
	2023 YTD Actual	2024 YTD Actual	2024 Budget	% of Budget
Salary	\$ 1,881,676.41	\$ 1,892,079.15	\$ 3,268,476.71	57.89%
Fringe Benefits	\$ 850,281.28	\$ 971,035.09	\$ 1,749,214.57	55.51%
Advertising	\$ 138,863.33	\$ 157,233.56	\$ 214,643.00	73.25%
Audit Costs	\$ 18,470.00	\$ 40,220.00	\$ 44,000.00	91.41%
Building Maintenance	\$ 6,859.80	\$ 4,467.00	\$ 11,500.00	38.84%
Communications	\$ 58,489.05	\$ 50,141.44	\$ 104,550.00	47.96%
Conference Registration Fee	\$ 21,731.00	\$ 28,027.80	\$ 36,700.00	76.37%
Contract Services	\$ 25,602.50	\$ 33,056.66	\$ 155,770.00	21.22%
Employee/Governing Board	\$ 14,012.16	\$ 16,720.56	\$ 19,000.00	88.00%
Equipment Purchase/Maintenance	\$ 14,915.11	\$ 46,213.27	\$ 54,500.00	84.79%
Insurance	\$ 33,415.16	\$ 32,571.74	\$ 42,000.00	77.55%
Legal Costs	\$ 1,942.50	\$ 1,831.25	\$ 4,000.00	45.78%
Organizational Dues	\$ 48,298.57	\$ 34,665.90	\$ 40,000.00	86.66%
Other Costs	\$ 15,014.93	\$ 9,398.45	\$ 28,200.00	33.33%
Postage	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 6,054.10	\$ 15,000.00	40.36%
Printing Costs	\$ 15,997.60	\$ 1,207.68	\$ 10,600.00	11.39%
Software & Licenses	\$ 49,496.70	\$ 60,737.10	\$ 115,315.00	52.67%
Space	\$ 148,948.89	\$ 148,948.83	\$ 255,342.00	58.33%
Staff Training Fees	\$ 14,614.37	\$ 11,841.80	\$ 15,000.00	78.95%
Subscriptions	\$ 6,033.06	\$ 7,197.30	\$ 8,000.00	89.97%
Supplies	\$ 82,909.01	\$ 50,308.59	\$ 65,875.00	76.37%
Travel - Mileage Reimbursement	\$ 55,795.51	\$ 86,343.30	\$ 105,698.00	81.69%
Travel - Out of Town Expense	\$ 47,509.12	\$ 47,460.09	\$ 105,698.00	44.90%
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES FOR THE PERIOD</b>	<b>\$ 3,559,876.06</b>	<b>\$ 3,737,760.66</b>	<b>\$ 6,469,082.28</b>	<b>57.78%</b>
<b>INDIRECT COST RATE FOR THE PERIOD</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>47%</b>		

# Buckeye Hills Regional Council

## Aging and Disability Programs Services & Funding Report

July 1, 2023 - January 31, 2024

SERVICES PROVIDED		
Direct Service Hours Provided	Transportation Trips	Adult Day Service Days Attended
<b>195,127</b>	<b>10,078</b>	<b>1,565</b>
Adult Day Service Miles Traveled	Meals Provided	Home Medical Equipment & Emergency Response Units
<b>16,118</b>	<b>155,964</b>	<b>1,095</b>
Legal Services Contacts	Home Accessibility Modification And Pest Control Jobs	Senior Farmers Market Coupons Redeemed
<b>341</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>20,975</b>
Grocery Shopping and Delivery	Telephone Reassurance	Evidence Based Classes
<b>302</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>2,245</b>
Assisted Living Days	Alzheimers Education Contacts	Senior Volunteer Hours
<b>7,894</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>22,092</b>



REGIONAL STATS		
Total Consumers Served	Total Population	Total Population Eligible for Services by Age (60+)
<b>5,431</b>	<b>249,172</b>	<b>65,746</b>



## CURRENT INITIATIVES

**The GrandPad Program** | was implemented during the COVID 19 Pandemic. Approximately 16 GrandPad devices were distributed to consumers residing in assisted living facilities across the regions. The devices were critical to consumers maintaining contact with family during the shutdown and pandemic. Funding for the program has ended resulting in the collection of the devices.

**BHRC's Housing Grant and Home Modification Program** | for the 2022 Program Year has ended. We were able to assist several individuals around the region with bathroom modifications, ramps, roof repairs and flooring repairs as examples. This program is key to helping individuals remain in their home. Please reach out the Dave at [dherbert@buckeyehills.org](mailto:dherbert@buckeyehills.org) if you have any questions or a referral.

**Community Health Worker Program** | On March 20<sup>th</sup>, AccessTusc, BHRC's partner agency in the Community Health Worker Program, will host a luncheon to educate individuals on social determinants of health and the benefits of implementing CHW programs. Lunch and nursing CEU's will be provided. Contact [Tabatha@accesstusc.org](mailto:Tabatha@accesstusc.org) for more details.

**Healthy Aging Grant** | BHRC's Aging Team continues to assist and support regional partners in the Healthy Aging Grant initiatives. The Aging Team is currently working with Perry, Noble and Washington counties to implement county specific programs. Contact Janie ([jcollins@buckeyehills.org](mailto:jcollins@buckeyehills.org)) or Dave ([dherbert@buckeyehills.org](mailto:dherbert@buckeyehills.org)) for additional details on nutrition and the housing program supported by Healthy Aging Grants.

**SNAP Benefits** | An initiative is being introduced at the State level to increase the minimum allotted amount in SNAP benefits. The current minimum monthly allotment is \$23 per individual. State legislators hope to increase the minimum amount to \$50 per individual. The legislation is being introduced by **Rep. Troy and Rep. Edwards**.

**USAgging Policy Briefing** | Jenn Westfall, Aging and Health Director and Dawn Weber, Home Care Director will be attending the USAgging Policy Briefing in Washington DC, March 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. This two-day event will cover current federal legislative issues and budget advocacy. The event will also include Hill visits with federal representatives.

## ASSESSMENTS COMPLETED

### January 2024

Athens	14
Hocking	10
Meigs	6
Monroe	3
Morgan	6
Noble	5
Perry	10
Washington	29
Total	83

## PASSPORT AND ASSISTED LIVING CASELOAD REGIONWIDE

- Current PASSPORT caseload is **762 individuals** and **55 individuals** on the Assisted Living Waiver.

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**CONTACT INFO:** Jenn Westfall, Aging and Health Director | [jwestfall@buckeyehills.org](mailto:jwestfall@buckeyehills.org), 740-376-1038  
Dawn Weber, Home Care Director | [dweber@buckeyehills.org](mailto:dweber@buckeyehills.org), 740-376-1041

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**[buckeyehills.org](http://buckeyehills.org)**

## CURRENT INITIATIVES

**HEAP Outreach** | Billboards are up in eight counties promoting the HEAP program and directing individuals to call their local community action agencies. The new HEAP application deadline is May 31. Social media continues to be used to promote the program weekly.

**Aging Outreach** | New materials and handouts have been ordered, and supplies restocked for our upcoming spring outreach events. We are currently scheduled to attend the following events:

- MACC 109<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner – March 4- Washington County
- Perry County Senior Fair – March 15- Perry County (sponsoring event)
- Matter of Balance Class- March 28- Washington County
- Hocking County Senior Fair – April 5 – Hocking County (sponsoring event)
- Belpre Senior Center Health Fair – April 8 – Washington County
- Washington County Roundtable – April 18- Washington County
- O’Neill Center Health Fair – April 19 – Washington County

If there is an upcoming outreach event in your community that we should attend or a civic group that would like to have a speaker on Aging topics, please contact Amanda Reeder at [areeder@buckeyehills.org](mailto:areeder@buckeyehills.org).

A new contract has been signed with Moore Bus Shelters to continue our Aging Information and Assistance advertisements. New graphics have been designed with mention of our 50 years of service to the region. These will be going up on six bus shelters in Woodsfield, Caldwell, Corning, McConnelsville, Nelsonville, and Logan.

**PASSPORT** | A round of newspaper ads promoting PASSPORT will start in March and run through the end of April. Half-page ads will run in the Journal Leader, Monroe County Beacon, Morgan County Herald, and the Pomeroy Daily. These papers were specifically chosen due to the lower proportions of enrollment in these counties.

**Medicare Outreach** | General Medicare posts and information on Extra Help, Medicare Savings Programs, and Preventative Services run on a weekly basis across our social media channels. A contract with Medibag has been secured to distribute prescription bags at pharmacies in six of our eight counties starting in March. Each pharmacy will receive 24,000 bags. Through a partnership with Senior Medicare Patrol, half-page newspaper ads are running in all eight of our counties through April.

**Website Redesign & Development** | Our website redesign and development with CH Web Agency of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, is on track for completion by March 18, allowing time for the new website to be introduced at the April 2024 General Policy Council meeting.

**Local Development District Report** | The joint report of Ohio’s Appalachian Local Development Districts has been completed and is being printed. The report features highlights from 2023 ARC- and GOA-funded projects and an overview of the return on investment of ARC and GOA funding. The report will be presented in meetings with congressional staff and representatives during the March 2024 NADO/DDAA Washington DC Policy Summit.

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**CONTACT INFO:** Drew Tanner, Communications Director | [dtanner@buckeyehills.org](mailto:dtanner@buckeyehills.org) | 740-376-1030

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## CURRENT INITIATIVES



**Buckeye Hills Forward: A Regional Economic Plan** | As an Economic Development District designated by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, Buckeye Hills Regional is responsible for working with local leaders and residents to draft and update a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) that encompasses our region. The next version of the CEDs, which looks ahead to 2025-2030, is titled Buckeye Hills Forward: A Regional Economic Plan.

In February and March 2024, Buckeye Hills Regional Council is hosting a series of community workshops in all eight of the counties we serve. Each workshop will provide the opportunity for individuals, local officials, private industry, and other stakeholders to have meaningful conversations about efforts that best serve economic development and improve the quality of life in our region. Find a workshop near you and register today! All workshops will take place 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

- March 4: Noble County - OSU Extension Office, 46049 Marietta Road, Suite 2, Caldwell, OH 43724
- March 7: Washington County – Buckeye Hills Regional Council, 1400 Pike Street, Marietta, OH 45750



**Buckeye Hills Forward SWOT Survey** | To ensure as much public participation as possible in the re-writing of Buckeye Hills Forward, the Development team invites those unable to attend a workshop to share thoughts on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats in your community and our region. Responses will help shape Buckeye Hills Forward: A Regional Economic Plan. Visit [buckeyehills.org/forward](https://buckeyehills.org/forward) to access the survey or scan the QR code.

**Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative** | Development staff submitted a project for the Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative (AGCI) called the Buckeye Hills Recreation Corridor. Working alongside communities in Noble, Morgan, Perry, and Hocking counties with 11 popular State Park destinations and Ohio's only National Forest, the goal is to learn best practices of maintaining a sense of place while working to integrate park visitors into our local economies. We are excited that our project was selected for the program! We will share more information once we receive it.

## NEWS

### Program & Service Updates



**Buckeye Hills Development Selected for NDIA Trailblazer Award** | Buckeye Hills Regional Council was named one of 47 communities as National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) 2023 Digital Inclusion Trailblazers. These recognize the efforts of local governments to close the digital divide. These communities span 23 states, and demonstrate the important role municipal, county, and regional governments have in digital inclusion. Sam Miller and Emma Yeager represented BHRC at the Net Inclusion conference in Philadelphia February 13-15, 2024, where they were recognized as Digital Inclusion Trailblazers.

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**Miller joins Invest Appalachia Committee** | Sam Miller, Development Director, was recently appointed to serve on Invest Appalachia's Community Advisory Council (CAC). This group ensures that Invest Appalachia's (IA) investment priorities, organizational practices, and catalytic capital deployments are in alignment with community needs and IA's founding values. The CAC establishes our priorities for catalytic capital investments, informs impact evaluation practices, and helps shape project pipeline development. The CAC is a community feedback loop between IA staff and the communities in which we all live and work.

## STAFF UPDATES

- **Michelle Hyer** has continued her work on the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) program and working closely with staff on the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs. Michelle has continued her work with the Appalachian Community Grant Program (ACGP) as well. She has also been attending, along with the Development team, the Buckeye Hills Forward community workshops that are being held in the region.
- **Kylee Nichols** has officially joined the Development Team as of Feb. 20. Nichols will work in our growing portfolio of energy and environmental projects.
- **Brad Peoples** has been working with OneOhio Region 12 so the region remains poised to immediately get to work, as soon as a few key technical developments are finalized with the OneOhio Foundation. In the future all public access, and virtual access will be available in Buckeye Hills Regional Council main meeting space. We hope this accommodation continues to encourage the level of engagement and attendance we've had to this point.
- **Jada Riley** has been preparing to host 8 community planning workshops throughout the month of February to inform the latest Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The next CEDS is due April 2025 and is entitled Buckeye Hills Forward: A Regional Economic Plan. One major component of a CEDS is the SWOT Analysis. These workshops will seek to garner opinions from community members regarding the region's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. been working on the CEDS rewrite and preparing for the workshops and advisory group meeting.
- **Emma Yeager** continues to work with Washington and Meigs counties as grantees on the ARC ARISE Connect Humanity project. In the last month, she has worked to submit two project applications on behalf of communities. The first being the Appalachian Gateway Community Initiative and the other being a Local Foods, Local Places grant for Noble County.

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**CONTACT:** Sam Miller, Development Director | [smiller@buckeyehills.org](mailto:smiller@buckeyehills.org) | 740-376-1028

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# BUCKEYE HILLS FORWARD

## A REGIONAL ECONOMIC PLAN

**Join us for a community workshop near you February 13 through March 7**

What does the future hold for Southeast Ohio? What does economic prosperity and resilience look like for those who live here? Buckeye Hills Regional Council is hosting a series of community workshops on these topics and more in February and March 2024. Each Buckeye Hills Forward workshop will provide the opportunity for individuals, local officials, private industry, and other stakeholders to have meaningful conversations about efforts that best serve economic development and improve the quality of life in our region.

### **Morgan County**

**February 13, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

Twin City Opera House  
15 West Main Street  
McConnelsville, OH 43756

### **Meigs County**

**February 15, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

The Blakeslee Center  
100 Blakeslee Drive  
Middleport, OH 45760

### **Athens County**

**February 20, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

Ohio University Innovation Center  
340 West State Street, Room 103  
Athens, OH 45701

### **Hocking County**

**February 22, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

Logan Theater  
86 East Main Street  
Logan, OH 43138

### **Perry County**

**February 26, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

Perry County Job & Family Services  
5250 State Route 37 East  
New Lexington, OH 43764

### **Monroe County**

**February 29, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

Generations Complex  
47115 Black Walnut Parkway  
Woodsfield, OH 43797

### **Noble County**

**March 4, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

OSU Extension  
46049 Marietta Road, Suite 2  
Caldwell, OH 43724

### **Washington County**

**March 7, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

Buckeye Hills Regional Council  
1400 Pike Street  
Marietta, OH 45750

**REGISTER & TAKE THE SURVEY:**



**BUCKEYEHILLS.ORG/FORWARD**





# BUCKEYE HILLS FORWARD: A Regional Economic Plan

**What makes your community great?  
What could be better?  
What are its untapped opportunities?**

Buckeye Hills Regional Council invites you to share your thoughts on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats in your community and our region. Your responses will help shape *Buckeye Hills Forward: A Regional Economic Plan*.

[buckeyehills.org/forward](https://buckeyehills.org/forward)

**TAKE THE  
SURVEY**



BUCKEYE HILLS  
**regional  
council**

## NEWS

### Program & Service Updates

**Building Demolition and Site Revitalization Program** | Designed to provide grants for demolition of commercial and residential buildings and revitalization of surrounding property on site that are not Brownfields. \$500,000 set aside per county remaining funds will be provided on a first-come, first-serve basis until June 30, 2024. After that date. Any remaining county set-aside will be added to the general fund and made available on a first-come, first-served basis. County set-aside applications are due **April 1, 2024**.

**Brownfield Remediation Program** | Provides grants for cleanup of brownfield sites, to assist in the remediation of hazardous substances or petroleum at an industrial, commercial or institutional property. Remediation includes acquisition, demolition, installation or upgrade of the minimum amount of infrastructure necessary to make brownfield site operational for economic development activity. \$1 million reserved for each county the remaining funds will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis for statewide eligible projects. Unclaimed funds will become available to all eligible statewide projects. Counties must obligate funds by **June 30, 2024**.

**ODOT The Credit Bridge Program** | is available to county governments who use Federal-aid funds to replace or rehabilitate their bridges. This program permits counties to replace, rehabilitate or demolish a bridge that is not on a Federal-aid highway and receive credit for up to 80% of the eligible construction and engineering cost.

**ODOT Small Cities Program** | the application window opens May 1<sup>st</sup> online.

**Chmura Economics & Analytics** | Contact the planning department staff if you would like to analyze data on local demographics, industries, occupation, wages and more.

### Staff Updates

- **Melissa Zoller** has been working with the senior planners to develop applications for Noble and Hocking counties for Demo and Brownfield projects. She will serve on the OARC transportation committee as the vice chair, and she attended the first meeting of the year. Attended a meeting with the Mayors of Meigs County to discuss plans for the villages. She is working on the draft submission of the RTPO workplan for submission to ODOT in March and working with two of the counties in the region on implementing an improved transit program. She and Eric discussed upcoming projects with Jesse Roush, Southeast Ohio Port Authority. She attended a conference call with SIXMO on the site assessment for Athens County and has been developing the planning department policy and procedures.
- **Kate Dunn** has been working on Brownfields and Demolition programming throughout the region and on completing data requests for Buckeye Hills related reports and external requests. Kate will present the final RISE Ohio report-out at the March 1st Executive Committee too. Kate will be going on Maternity Leave beginning sometime in the month of March. Her expected return date will be in late May or early June. During her absence, Melissa Zoller and Eric Wade will be stepping in to manage her workload and ensure the smooth continuation of ongoing projects.

*Serving Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties in Southeast Ohio.*  
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- **Eric Wade** worked on developing the two RFQs for the Hocking Master Plan Study and the Washington County Port Study. Actively working with ODOT to revise and submit the RTP's L RTP regional project list. Created multiple GIS projects for the Analysis of Impediments Document, for the Village of Racine, and Washington County ESZ. Participated in a site visit to the Athens Industrial Park construction site. Attended the streetlight data summit and AI STEM Collaborative Meeting in Cambridge. Routinely engages with the Voinovich School at OU and the GIS Collaborative Group.
- **Christa Myers** worked on Ohio Loves Transit Week - with BH Communication team (Amanda) on the social media posts; with Mobility Managers on Legislative Day in Columbus; participated in ride-alongs with Julia (MM) and the Communications intern (Gabby) on three transit routes, (2 fixed routes and 1 demand response) in Region 8. She participated in a site visit with Bobby White, Morgan County Mobility Manager, attended a Monroe County Commissioners meeting, cross-trained Ben Ziff and Paige Gates on Hocking County Mobility Management, participated in training calls with two regional coordinators, Marlana (Region 7) and Deb (region 9), attended Transportation Advisory Councils in Monroe, Washington and Noble counties, attended Buckeye Hills Forward Listening Session in Hocking County, OARC Transportation Committee Meeting at MORPC, Columbus and AAA Regional Advisory Council at BHRC, and joined the virtual plenary session at the Street Light Summit.
- **Kelly Isaly & Julia Hinzman** have completed quarterly Transportation Advisory meetings (TAC) for Washington, Noble and Monroe Counties. The 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter reports were sent into Ohio Department of Transportation on January 30, 2024. The YMCA presented their new virtual Y360 app at 2 of the 3 TAC meetings. This program will help those unable to attend activities in person participate from the comfort of their homes. Both Mobility Managers are mentoring a new Mobility Manager in Pike County. Distributions for the call center and other information is being provided in all 3 counties. Following the training we received for CarFit, the mobility managers will be engaging with community members to promote the program and begin training local individuals at Spring events. Feb. 11-17 was Ohio Loves Transit Week in Ohio, and mobility managers participated in ride-a-longs in communities, and attended Ohio Legislation Day on Tuesday, allowing us to meet with local representatives and aides to discuss local transportation needs in the region.

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**CONTACT:** Melissa Zoller, Planning Director | [mzoller@buckeyehills.org](mailto:mzoller@buckeyehills.org) | 740-376-1027

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**Minutes of the October 6, 2023  
Buckeye Hills Regional Council Management Committee Meeting**

The Buckeye Hills Regional Council Management Committee meeting was held October 6, 2023. The meeting was held at Buckeye Hills, Marietta, Ohio.

In attendance were:

**MANAGEMENT  
COMMITTEE:**

Ron Moore, Chair  
Kevin Ritter, Vice Chair  
Lenny Eliason  
Brian Howard

Morgan County (Private Sector)  
Washington County  
Athens County  
Meigs County (Private Sector)

**STAFF:**

Denise Keyes  
Angie Lawrence  
Jamie Lewis  
Amanda Reeder  
Chasity Schmelzenbach  
Jenny Simmons

Fiscal Director  
Human Resource/Payroll Manager  
IT Director  
Communications Specialist  
Executive Director  
Executive Assistant

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ron Moore, Chair, called the meeting to order.

**MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 6, 2023, MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**

Kevin Ritter moved to approve the minutes of the October 6, 2023, meeting. Brian Howard seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

**REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURES**

Kevin Ritter moved to recommend the request for approval of expenditures in the amount of \$58,085 for website redesign and audio/visual equipment upgrades to the Executive Committee for approval. Lenny Eliason seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

**MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Angie Lawrence, HR & Payroll Manager, reviewed the Management Committee report. and will present and seek approval at the Executive Committee meeting.

**ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**

Angie Lawrence, HR & Payroll Manager, provided a copy of the updated organizational chart which was approved at the last meeting.

**STAFF EVALUATIONS AND RECOMMENDATION OF SALARY INCREASE FOR JAN. 1, 2024**

Kevin Ritter moved to approve an increase to current salaries in the amount of \$96,244.50. The dollars will be provided to the staff individually based upon their performance appraisal score for the evaluation period July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2023. Brian Howard seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION**

The Management Committee performed the first annual performance appraisal with Executive Director Chasity Schmelzenbach.

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

No citizens wished to address the committee.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no other business, Ron Moore moved to adjourn the meeting. Lenny Eliason seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ron Moore, Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

DRAFT



## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

February 3, 2024 through March 1, 2024

### RESIGNATIONS/TERMINATIONS

None

### RETIREMENTS

None

### NEW HIRES

Kylee Nichols	Development Specialist 2	2/20/24	\$42,000 per annum
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### PROMOTIONS

None

### TRANSFERS

None

## Sick Leave Payout

### **Current:**

From the date of employment, all full-time employees shall accrue paid Sick Leave at a rate of fifteen (15) days per year. Sick Leave can be accumulated to a maximum of one-hundred-thirty-two (132) days which is equivalent to nine-hundred-twenty-four (924) hours. Employees who have reached the maximum will receive pay for accumulated days on a ratio of one-half (1/2) of accumulated days in excess of the one-hundred-thirty-two (132) days. Payment will be calculated at the employee's current rate of pay and made at the end of each fiscal year.

### **Addition:**

Employees who have reached 420 hours may elect to request time above 420 hours to be paid out up to 70 hours annually. Payment for the days will be a ratio of one-half (1/2) of the days requested. Requests must be made prior to the anniversary and made to the HR Department. Payment will be calculated at the employee's current rate of pay and made on the pay date in which their anniversary falls.

## Sick Leave Bank

### Current:

Upon approval by the Executive Director, employees may donate sick leave to a fellow employee. The potential recipient of the donated sick leave must have exhausted all other leave options to be eligible to receive the donated time. The employee wishing to donate sick leave must complete and submit a "Sick Leave Donation Request". This form can be obtained from Human Resources.

### New:

Upon an employee's anniversary, they may donate up to a maximum of 35 hours of unused sick leave to a leave bank. Any leave donated will be forfeited and deducted from the employee's time and not refundable. The employee must have at least 70 hours of unused sick leave remaining after making the contribution to the bank. The employee donating leave must complete and submit a 'Sick Leave Donation' form. This form must be submitted prior to the employee's anniversary.

The potential recipient of the donated sick leave must complete and submit a 'Sick Leave Request' form. The recipient must have exhausted all other leave options and have an extenuating medical circumstance to be eligible to receive time from the leave bank. No more than 105 hours of sick leave can be requested once annually. The request will be reviewed by a committee and is not a guarantee of approval.

Forms can be obtained and submitted through the Human Resources Department.



## Administrative Budget

July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025

### Revenue

Federal Grants and Awards	\$3,721,628
State Grants and Awards	\$2,801,069
Local Cash	\$144,768
Contract Income	\$66,433
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$6,733,898</b>

### Expenditures

Personnel	\$3,483,759
Fringe Benefits	\$ 2,009,341
Operating Expenses	\$1,240,798
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$6,733,898</b>

### Revenue Sources

Appalachian Regional Commission	\$329,690
Economic Development Administration	\$70,000
Fee for Service Contracts	\$66,433
Local Cash	\$144,768
Ohio Department of Aging	\$4,961,407
Ohio Department of Transportation	\$620,742
Ohio Development Services Agency	\$460,858
Ohio Public Works Commission	\$ 80,000



## REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURE

March 1, 2024

### Advertising

---

\$12,000

WTAP – Gray Media Group

- PASSPORT Program Outreach to increase consumer referrals and enrollments
- Prior ad runs resulted in 20% increase in referral calls
- 210 ad spots May 15 to June 15

Funding Source: PASSPORT

**\$12,000.00**

**Total Request**



# Resilience Initiative for Southeastern and Eastern (RISE) Ohio

## Executive Summary

AUTHORS:

OHIO UNIVERSITY

G. Jason Jolley, Ph.D., Brent Lane, Martin Hohenberger,  
Clara Bone, Elham Erfanian, Ph.D., Tuyen Pham, Ph.D.

OHIO MID-EASTERN GOVERNMENTS ASSOCIATION (OMEGA)

Evan Scurti

BUCKEYE HILLS REGIONAL COUNCIL (BHRC)

Kate Dunn

*January 2024*



# Resilience Initiative for Southeastern and Eastern (RISE) Ohio

## Executive Summary

In January 2021, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) funded the Resilience Initiative for Southeastern and Eastern (RISE) Ohio under the Assistance to Coal Communities (ACC) program. RISE Ohio is a joint project of Ohio University’s George V. Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service (GVS), the Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association (OMEGA) and Buckeye Hills Regional Council (BHRC). The project was designed to assist the region with economic diversification and transition with decline in the coal economy. Over a three-year period, RISE Ohio has catalyzed regional collaborations to accelerate the region’s transition out of the coal economy through a potent portfolio of economic development implementation and actionable applied scholarship in entrepreneurial growth, workforce development, industry cluster expansion, opportunity zone enhancement, and infrastructure investment.

During the course of this work, two announcements were made. First, in January 2022 Intel announced a \$20 Billion investment in Licking County. Second, in June 2022, Governor DeWine announced the Appalachian Community Grant Program which will see \$500 Million invested in Appalachian Ohio. These announcements provide much needed opportunities for Appalachian Ohio communities. The work done through RISE Ohio better prepared and positioned these communities to take advantage of these opportunities in ways the communities would not have been able to prepare for without this funding. Our goal herein is to not only describe the tangible and significant accomplishments of RISE Ohio, but to share how GVS and its partners capitalized on the changing environment to enhance the RISE Ohio strategy, reveal unanticipated new opportunities for the region, and strengthen regional collaboration going forward.



*This project was funded under the U.S. Economic Development Administration, JobsOhio and Appalachian New Economy Partnership*

## **RISE Ohio Genesis and Scope**

The impetus for RISE Ohio was the decommissioning of an American Electric Power (AEP) coal-fired power plant located in Conesville, Ohio in Coshocton County and the continuing decline and closures of coal mines in the BHRC and OMEGA regions. As demonstrated through a previous EDA-funded, the BOBCAT (Building Opportunities Beyond Coal Accelerating Transition) Network, these closures have significant detrimental economic, fiscal, and workforce impacts on communities and their surrounding regions. These detrimental impacts demonstrated not only the need for immediate economic development responses to offset these losses, but also the necessity of actions reinforcing the region's long-term economic vitality by strengthening its economic development capacity and identifying opportunities for future, diverse growth.

RISE Ohio was designed to address these goals through a three-pronged strategy of collaborative actions. One focus was a set of initiatives focused on Coshocton County, which, as the site of the closing power facility would bear a disproportionate share of forecasted economic losses. The second strategy was a focus on the 26 Opportunity Zones located throughout the BHRC and OMEGA regions to prepare for and identify opportunities for investment and provide wrap-around services to communities to help transition coal-impacted communities. The third focus of RISE Ohio was to reinforce both the BHRC and OMEGA regions through initiatives focused on workforce, industry clusters, and the entrepreneurial economy.

RISE Ohio directly assisted these impacted communities in a variety of ways, as shown in the full report. First, GVS directly embedded an employee in the Coshocton County Port Authority. Second,

a recovery coordinator was contracted to directly assist Coshocton County with implementation of project recommendations in real time. Additionally, BHRC and OMEGA contracted with consultants to directly assist with Opportunity Zone readiness and projects throughout the entire region. Finally, GVS worked with BHRC and OMEGA on efforts related to opportunity zones, industry clusters, workforce, and other economic diversification efforts.

## **Findings**

RISE Ohio yielded immediate economic development outcomes, identified economic opportunities, and strengthened regional collaboration. RISE Ohio demonstrated how applied scholarship and research can lead to direct actionable economic development. The following are a few key results of the project in the areas of Economic Development Outcomes, Economic Development Opportunities, and Regional Capacity and Collaboration.

## **Economic Development Outcomes**

RISE Ohio has led to over \$27.8 million in secured or applied for funding from federal, state, and other lenders. This future funding was made possible only through the original investment of \$2.2M by the EDA for RISE Ohio.

### ***Coshocton County***

The Coshocton County Port Authority received \$5.8 million from the Appalachian Community Grant Program for the Coshocton Collaborative. The Coshocton Collaborative will serve the Coshocton community as a co-working space, incubator space, and makerspace. As one of the first recipients of this implementation grant, Coshocton was uniquely positioned to go after implementation funding instead of planning funding due to previous studies completed by the GVS and the support of the GVS employee embedded in the Port Authority's office.

Additionally, support from the recovery coordinator secured over \$13,000 in OhioSE Site Readiness Grants. Likewise, the recovery coordinator prepared an Ohio Rural Industrial Park Loan (RIPL) grant application, which if successful would bring \$500K to \$2.5M for the purchase of a 20-acre site.

### **OMEGA**

In the OMEGA region, the Opportunity Zone educational programming provided through RISE Ohio led to the successful securing of two \$50K Opportunity Appalachia grants for Byesville and Zanesville. Additionally, the programming has led Wellsville and Byesville to apply for the JobsOhio Vibrant Communities grant, which could award up to \$1M in for each community. Additionally, several of the Opportunity Zone analyses and projects contracted out by OMEGA through RISE Ohio funding have resulted in securing or applying for future funding as a direct result of the groundwork RISE Ohio provided these communities. The Jefferson County Port Authority is pursuing ARC ARISE and ARC POWER proposals that build off the South End Opportunity Zone Analysis. In Zanesville, the design concepts created by the consultants have been critical for the proposed downtown redevelopment being proposed in an Appalachian Community Grant. In Wellsville, the planning process led to the pursuing of funding opportunities, including USDA Rural Development and Congressionally Directed Spending proposals, to meet the full project budget (\$1.2 Million) and the analysis has allowed Wellsville to seamlessly join Columbiana County in their county-wide Appalachian Community Grant proposal. Throughout all 10 of the OMEGA counties, \$18M of OMEGA's \$125M Appalachian Community Grant proposal is earmarked for RISE Ohio communities. The need for these particular projects and the groundwork to get them ready for the proposal was conducted through Opportunity Zone Analyses as part of RISE Ohio.

### **BHRC**

In the BHRC region, the Opportunity Zone educational programming provided through RISE Ohio led to the successful securing of three \$75K Opportunity Appalachia grants, two located in Sommerset and one in Chauncey. Additionally, several of the Opportunity Zone analyses and projects contracted out by BHRC through RISE Ohio have secured or are in the process of securing other funding. Monroe County was able to utilize the Appalachian Community Grant program to plan funding to continue building on the technical assistance received through RISE Ohio and will apply for implementation funds once planning is complete. In Meigs County, the floodplain study done through RISE Ohio is being used to pursue Appalachian Community Grant funding and FEMA funding. In addition to the Opportunity Appalachia funding previously mentioned, Chauncey is pursuing other funding opportunities such as ODOB Brownfield Assessment and Demolition and Site Revitalization funding to address contamination and blight on the site. In Washington County, RISE Ohio resources were utilized for initial concepts and plans for the redevelopment of the Harmar Bridge and were used to receive Appalachian Community Grant funding for planning. Washington County will be pursuing Appalachian Community Grant funding for implementation and as well as a USDOT Reconnecting Neighborhoods Community Planning grant directly stemming from the groundwork provided through RISE Ohio. The additional funding that has been secured or is in the process of being secured represents millions of dollars of investment in the region. These communities would not have been prepared to pursue this funding if it had not been for the analyses and technical assistance provided to them through RISE Ohio.

## **Economic Development Opportunities**

Through RISE Ohio several collaborations with local leaders and economic development organizations led to the identification and strengthening of economic diversification efforts by reducing the region's dependence on coal. Likewise, the region and Coshocton County's proximity to the new Intel facility signaled a potential opportunity for diversification into industries that support Intel's supply chain.

### ***Coshocton County Targeted Industry Clusters***

Working with the Coshocton Port Authority and the GVS Staff embedded in that office, the GVS identified industries in which Coshocton has a competitive advantage in which Coshocton should focus their economic development efforts on. These industries include food processing and advanced manufacturing. The advanced manufacturing concentration could be used to attract Intel supply chain businesses, demonstrating the available workforce in the area. Likewise, the polymer and chemical industry is still considered emerging in Coshocton, but has seen significant growth in employment. Working to build existing and attract new businesses in this industry could also support the larger regional supply chain. However, to promote diversification, it is important to continue to support industries such as food and hardwood which are major employers, but have seen a downward trend in growth.

### ***Regional Coal Supply Chain Impacts***

In 2001, the BHRC and OMEGA regions accounted for 82% of all coal mines in Ohio or 57 active mines. By 2020, 15 of the 16 remaining active coal mines in Ohio were located in BHRC or OMEGA counties. Over 1,800 job losses occurred due to the closure of these coal mines. However, this does not account for the impacts on related industries nor the resiliency of

the regional economy. As established in the analysis, nine out of the ten counties in the OMEGA region face a high risk of further hardship and six out of the eight counties in the Buckeye Hills region face a high risk of further job loss. While these counties are still highly dependent on coal, their mines are not productive. Additionally, when considering impact of declining coal on the power industry, Jefferson County has the highest risk of further job loss because the county is home to two coal-fired power plants with a collective capacity of 3,754 MW that will be closed by the end of 2028.

### ***Transitioning the Workforce***

A SWOT analysis showed that the OMEGA and BHRC regions have a competitive advantage in manufacturing, especially petrochemicals and plastics manufacturing, because of the regions' vast amount of natural oil and gas, their long history of oil and gas extraction, and their high regional location quotations in manufacturing industries. When examining the coal mining cluster's declining occupations, GVS found that even though workers in the coal mining industry cluster lack knowledge compared to an average American worker of the same education level, they have better skills when it comes to job performance. Compared to an average worker in the U.S. of the same education level, workers in the coal mining cluster in the BHRC or OMEGA region have better skills in literacy, critical thinking, strategies, problem-solving, coordination, technology design, equipment selection, system analysis, and management of time and personnel resources. These skills are essential in manufacturing industries. However, compared to an average American worker of the same education level, they lack other skills, such as persuasion, service orientation, operation analysis, and installation. Using Skillshed heatmaps, GVS identified how coal mining and power plant occupations may

transition to emerging occupations in southeastern and eastern Ohio. This identifies needs for upskilling, training, or further education before transitioning occupations and also shows the change in average wages between occupations. Using these heatmaps, the regions can be better prepared to assist workers displaced by the declining coal industry. In particular, GVS finds that workforce training for individuals who have been displaced in the coal economy may be a necessary strategy to re-introduce workers into the labor market of other fields, especially the petrochemical industry.

### ***Entrepreneurial Opportunities***

The GVS analysis found that the OMEGA and BHRC region's number of all businesses per capita lags behind the numbers for Ohio and the US. Additionally, the share of small business is significantly higher in this region than in Ohio or the US. This demonstrates the importance of formulating public policy and economic development strategies around small business for this region. Furthermore, while the region still lags the State at its current rate of entrepreneurial activity, that gap is closing.

The proportion of businesses qualifying as High Growth, or exceeding \$2.5M in annual revenue, is larger for the region (5.6%) than for Ohio (4.9%) or the US (5.1%) and is still reflected when adjusted on a per capita basis. This 5.6% of businesses in the region account for more than 23% of the total employment in the region.

One concern for the region is access to growth capital. The current availability and activity of such capital is likely not sufficient to meet demand in the region. Public policy initiatives currently do not meet the need for capital in terms of types nor amount. Likewise, there is a scarcity of private equity firms in the region. The GVS analysis provides examples and resources to inform efforts to support the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the BHRC and OMEGA regions.

## **Regional Capacity and Collaboration**

RISE Ohio strengthened regional collaboration to address challenges and opportunities throughout the region and will continue to promote ongoing collaboration after the project ended.

### ***Creating Investment Ready Communities/ Opportunity Zones***

In the OMEGA and BHRC regions, there are a total of 26 opportunity zones spread over 17 of the 18 counties. Many communities lacked the knowledge of how to use opportunity zones to attract investment to their community. Through RISE Ohio, a series of educational workshops were conducted and a toolkit was created and hosted on the BHRC website. This information remains publicly available to anyone who wishes to use it.

In the BHRC region, 13 projects were identified within opportunity zones with at least one project in every BHRC county. Projects supported initiatives related to downtown redevelopment, entrepreneurial support, strategic planning, and giving projects a momentum-building push forward.

In the OMEGA Region, 10 projects were identified within opportunity zones with at least one project in every OMEGA county, except Coshocton County which does not have an opportunity zone. These projects included opportunity zone prospectuses, strategic planning, design, and renderings.

### ***Actionable Partnerships Post Project***

Over the course of three years, RISE Ohio has fostered sustained engagement and strengthened the partnerships between GVS, OMEGA, and BHRC. Additionally, it has fostered relationships with local economic developers such as the case with the Coshocton Port Authority and the communities that received technical assistance through RISE Ohio regarding their opportunity zones. While many of

these relationships existed before RISE Ohio, this project allowed for continued engagement and helped identify areas for future collaboration to support regional growth.

## Conclusions

RISE Ohio was designed to assist the BHRC and OMEGA regions with economic diversification and transition with the decline in the coal economy. The RISE Ohio project has already led to approximately \$6.1M in secured funding with at least another \$21M in funding currently being pursued. These funding opportunities would not have been available if not for the \$2.2M received from the EDA to establish RISE Ohio in the first place.

The impetus for RISE Ohio was the decommissioning of an American Electric Power (AEP) coal-fired power plant located in Conesville, Ohio in Coshocton County and the continuing decline and closures of coal mines in the BHRC and OMEGA regions. As demonstrated through a previous EDA-funded, the BOBCAT Network, these closures have significant detrimental economic, fiscal, and workforce impacts on communities and their surrounding regions. These detrimental impacts demonstrated not only the need for immediate economic development responses to offset these losses, but also the necessity of actions reinforcing the region's long-term economic vitality by strengthening its economic development capacity and identifying opportunities for future, diverse growth.

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Over the three years of the project, RISE Ohio yielded immediate economic development outcomes, identified economic opportunities, and strengthened regional collaboration. RISE Ohio demonstrated how applied scholarship and research can lead to direct actionable economic development.

Announcements by Intel and by the Governor in 2022 provided opportunities for the region in terms of potential economic diversification, industrial development, and funding. The team capitalized on these opportunities by taking into consideration the supply chain impacts Intel will have on the region and by utilizing the technical assistance funding provided through RISE Ohio to better position communities to take advantage of the \$500M investment through the Appalachian Community Grant Program and other funding opportunities.

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# Economic Overview

# Buckeye Hills Region



Any data inquires or questions can be directed to: Eric Wade | Senior  
Planner | Buckeye Hills Regional Council | 1400 Pike Street, Marietta OH | 740.336.2042 |  
[ewade@buckeyehills.org](mailto:ewade@buckeyehills.org)

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# Demographic Profile

The population in the Buckeye Hills Region was 250,490 per American Community Survey data for 2017-2021.

The region has a civilian labor force of 112,884 with a participation rate of 54.5%. Of individuals 25 to 64 in the Buckeye Hills Region, 19.6% have a bachelor's degree or higher which compares with 35.1% in the nation.

The median household income in the Buckeye Hills Region is \$51,352 and the median house value is \$134,693.

## Summary<sup>1</sup>

Demographics	Percent			Value		
	Buckeye Hills Region	Ohio	USA	Buckeye Hills Region	Ohio	USA
Population (ACS)	—	—	—	250,490	11,769,923	329,725,481
Male	50.6%	49.3%	49.5%	126,660	5,800,004	163,206,615
Female	49.4%	50.7%	50.5%	123,830	5,969,919	166,518,866
Median Age <sup>2</sup>	—	—	—	40.6	39.4	38.4
Under 18 Years	19.6%	22.3%	22.5%	49,068	2,629,989	74,234,075
18 to 24 Years	12.7%	9.0%	9.2%	31,759	1,062,481	30,339,089
25 to 34 Years	11.6%	13.1%	13.8%	28,943	1,543,258	45,360,942
35 to 44 Years	11.1%	12.2%	12.9%	27,873	1,430,057	42,441,883
45 to 54 Years	12.0%	12.6%	12.6%	30,079	1,478,888	41,631,458
55 to 64 Years	14.5%	13.8%	13.0%	36,309	1,620,448	42,829,413
65 to 74 Years	11.2%	10.2%	9.6%	27,966	1,196,942	31,590,619
75 Years and Over	7.4%	6.9%	6.5%	18,493	807,860	21,298,002
Race: White	94.4%	79.6%	68.2%	236,338	9,374,538	224,789,109
Race: Black or African American	1.6%	12.3%	12.6%	4,133	1,452,530	41,393,012
Race: American Indian and Alaska Native	0.2%	0.2%	0.8%	441	18,416	2,722,661
Race: Asian	0.9%	2.4%	5.7%	2,199	276,828	18,782,924
Race: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	76	3,899	615,557
Race: Some Other Race	0.4%	1.2%	5.6%	986	141,320	18,382,796
Race: Two or More Races	2.5%	4.3%	7.0%	6,317	502,392	23,039,422
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	1.2%	4.1%	18.4%	3,095	480,347	60,806,969
<b>Population Growth</b>						
Population (Pop Estimates) <sup>4</sup>	—	—	—	244,424	11,756,058	333,287,557
Population Annual Average Growth <sup>4</sup>	-0.6%	0.2%	0.6%	-1,466	20,509	1,940,990
People per Square Mile	—	—	—	66.7	287.7	94.3
<b>Economic</b>						
Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 16 years and over)	54.5%	63.3%	63.4%	112,884	5,970,869	166,672,597
Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 25-54)	75.4%	83.0%	82.5%	65,503	3,689,524	106,173,534
Armed Forces Labor Force	0.1%	0.1%	0.5%	144	10,776	1,196,529
Veterans, Age 18-64	5.1%	4.6%	4.4%	7,884	325,281	8,848,937
Veterans Labor Force Participation Rate and Size, Age 18-64	71.0%	77.0%	77.0%	5,597	250,476	6,809,906
Median Household Income <sup>2</sup>	—	—	—	\$51,352	\$61,938	\$69,021
Per Capita Income	—	—	—	\$27,292	\$34,526	\$37,638
Mean Commute Time (minutes)	—	—	—	26.9	23.7	26.8
Commute via Public Transportation	0.6%	1.3%	4.2%	597	71,200	6,472,373
<b>Educational Attainment, Age 25-64</b>						
No High School Diploma	9.9%	7.9%	10.3%	12,168	476,837	17,756,046
High School Graduate	39.2%	30.4%	25.3%	48,249	1,848,646	43,535,564
Some College, No Degree	19.0%	20.4%	20.1%	23,386	1,237,292	34,637,141
Associate's Degree	12.4%	9.7%	9.3%	15,272	590,852	15,944,395

## Summary<sup>1</sup>

	Percent			Value		
	Buckeye Hills Region	Ohio	USA	Buckeye Hills Region	Ohio	USA
Bachelor's Degree	11.6%	20.0%	22.0%	14,237	1,216,053	37,890,674
Postgraduate Degree	8.0%	11.6%	13.1%	9,892	702,971	22,499,876
<b>Housing</b>						
Total Housing Units	—	—	—	113,497	5,232,733	139,647,020
Median House Value (of owner-occupied units) <sup>2</sup>	—	—	—	\$134,693	\$159,900	\$244,900
Homeowner Vacancy	1.5%	1.1%	1.2%	1,046	34,069	1,021,651
Rental Vacancy	4.9%	4.8%	5.7%	1,372	80,933	2,674,125
Renter-Occupied Housing Units (% of Occupied Units)	27.4%	33.4%	35.4%	26,213	1,588,226	43,858,831
Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicle Available (% of Occupied Units)	6.5%	7.5%	8.3%	6,223	357,194	10,349,174
<b>Social</b>						
Poverty Level (of all people)	17.9%	13.4%	12.6%	42,239	1,528,963	40,661,636
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	16.2%	12.4%	11.4%	15,497	587,542	14,105,231
Enrolled in Grade 12 (% of total population)	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	3,158	153,746	4,425,322
Disconnected Youth <sup>3</sup>	2.1%	2.5%	2.5%	352	15,640	432,389
Children in Single Parent Families (% of all children)	36.7%	36.4%	34.0%	16,757	902,666	23,909,672
Uninsured	6.8%	6.3%	8.8%	16,691	735,559	28,489,142
With a Disability, Age 18-64	16.0%	11.9%	10.3%	24,228	834,849	20,537,729
With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate and Size	36.9%	43.6%	44.2%	8,942	364,285	9,068,973
Foreign Born	1.6%	4.8%	13.6%	3,992	559,518	44,844,808
Speak English Less Than Very Well (population 5 yrs and over)	0.8%	2.5%	8.2%	1,921	281,534	25,535,259

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

1. American Community Survey 2017-2021, unless noted otherwise

2. Median values for certain aggregate regions (such as MSAs) may be estimated as the weighted averages of the median values from the composing counties.

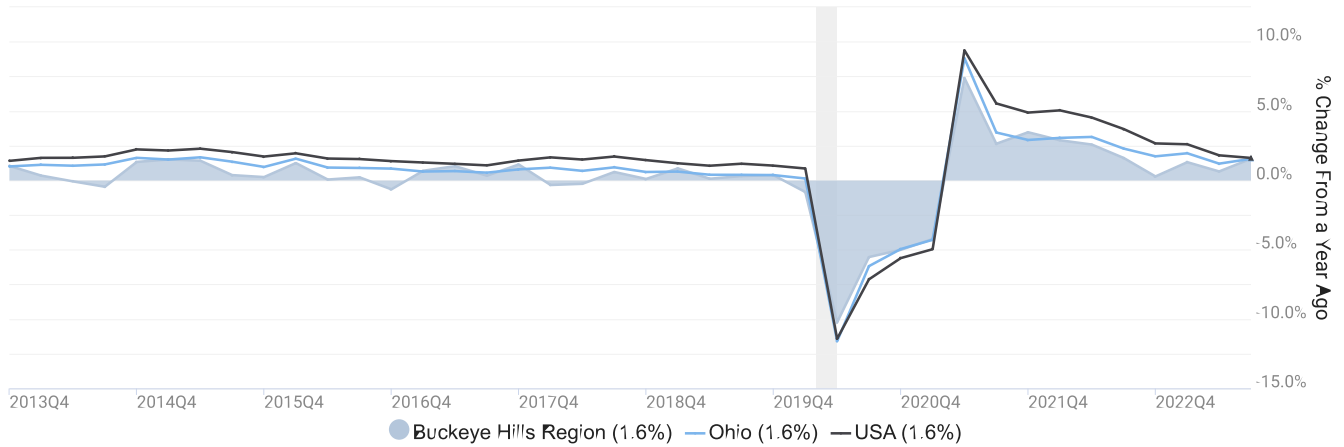
3. Disconnected Youth are 16-19 year olds who are (1) not in school, (2) not high school graduates, and (3) either unemployed or not in the labor force.

4. Census Population Estimate for 2022, annual average growth rate since 2012. Post-2019 data for Connecticut counties are imputed by Chmura.

# Employment Trends

As of 2023Q3, total employment for the Buckeye Hills Region was 79,562 (based on a four-quarter moving average). Over the year ending 2023Q3, employment increased 1.6% in the region.

Employment for Buckeye Hills Region

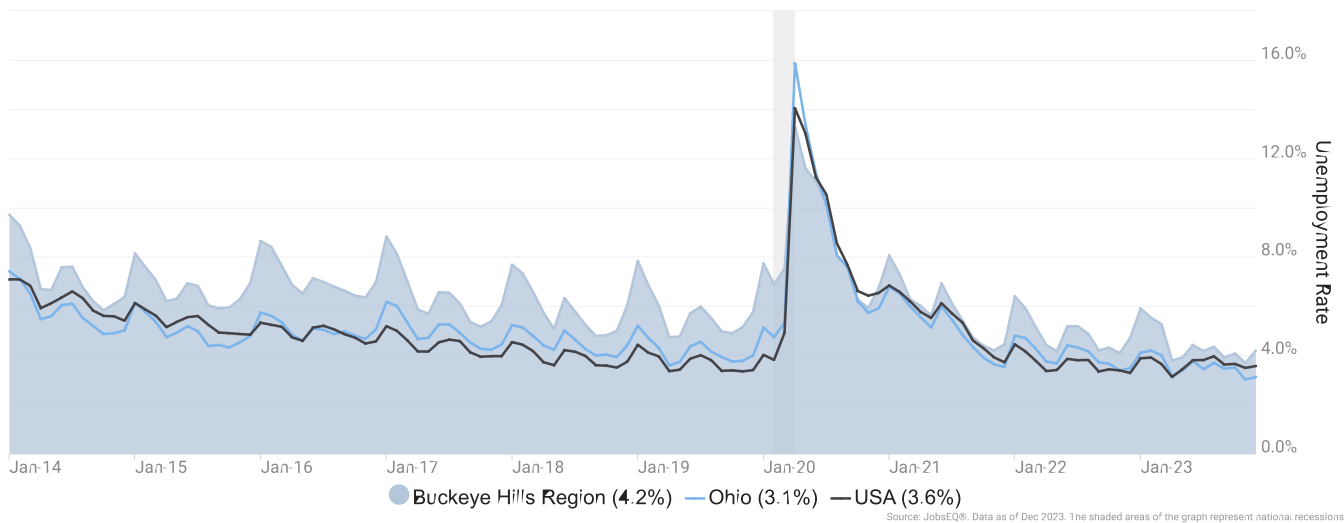


Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2023Q2 with preliminary estimates updated to 2023Q3.

# Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate for the Buckeye Hills Region was 4.2% as of December 2023. The regional unemployment rate was higher than the national rate of 3.6%. One year earlier, in December 2022, the unemployment rate in the Buckeye Hills Region was 4.7%.

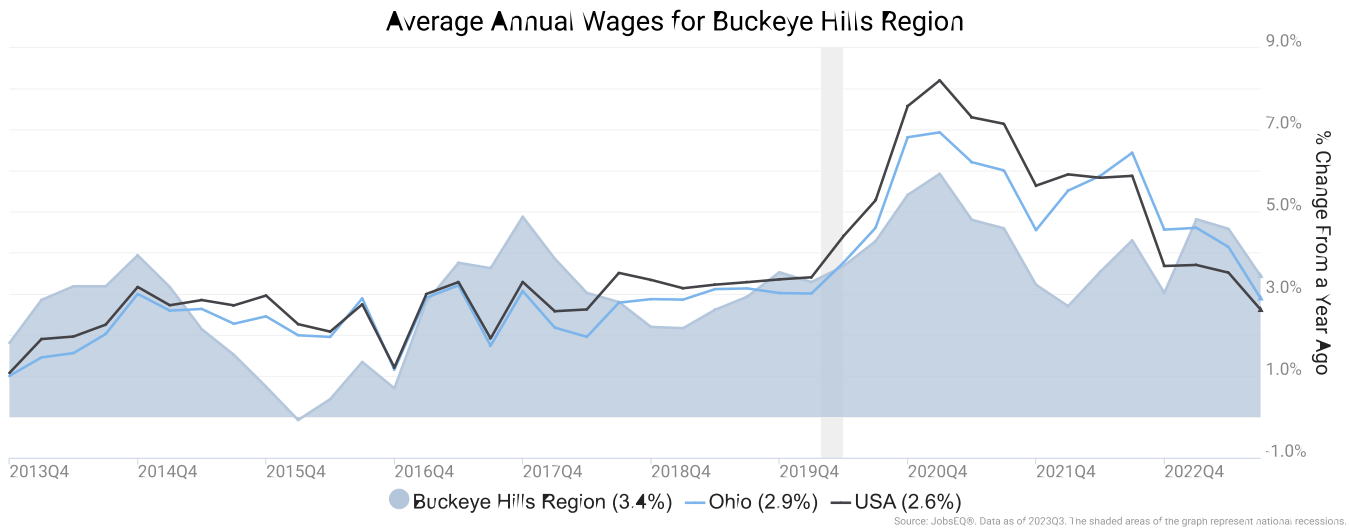
Unemployment Rate for Buckeye Hills Region



Unemployment rate data are from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and updated through December 2023.

# Wage Trends

The average worker in the Buckeye Hills Region earned annual wages of \$47,517 as of 2023Q3. Average annual wages per worker increased 3.4% in the region over the preceding four quarters. For comparison purposes, annual average wages were \$70,183 in the nation as of 2023Q3.



Annual average wages per worker data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2023Q2 with preliminary estimates updated to 2023Q3.

# Cost of Living Index

The Cost of Living Index estimates the relative price levels for consumer goods and services. When applied to wages and salaries, the result is a measure of relative purchasing power. The cost of living is 13.3% lower in Buckeye Hills Region than the U.S. average.

## Cost of Living Information

	Annual Average Salary	Cost of Living Index	
		(Base US)	US Purchasing Power
Buckeye Hills Region	\$47,517	86.7	\$54,808
Ohio	\$61,452	90.9	\$67,612
USA	\$70,183	100.0	\$70,183

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

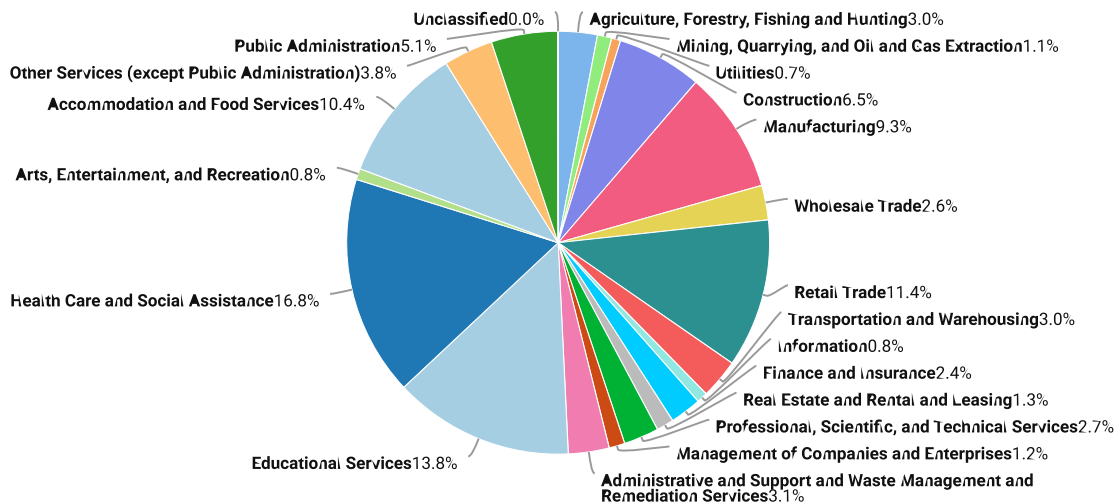
Data as of 2023Q3

Cost of Living per [COLI](#), data as of 2023Q3, imputed by Chmura where necessary.

# Industry Snapshot

The largest sector in the Buckeye Hills Region is Health Care and Social Assistance, employing 13,390 workers. The next-largest sectors in the region are Educational Services (10,963 workers) and Retail Trade (9,040). High location quotients (LQs) indicate sectors in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The sectors with the largest LQs in the region are Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (LQ = 3.04), Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (2.36), and Educational Services (1.73).

Total Workers for Buckeye Hills Region by Industry



Source: JobsEQ® Data as of 2023Q3

Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2023Q2 with preliminary estimates updated to 2023Q3.

Sectors in the Buckeye Hills Region with the highest average wages per worker are Utilities (\$92,462), Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (\$73,231), and Manufacturing (\$67,431). Regional sectors with the best job growth (or most moderate job losses) over the last 5 years are Manufacturing (+358 jobs), Accommodation and Food Services (+324), and Construction (+235).

Over the next 1 year, employment in the Buckeye Hills Region is projected to contract by 597 jobs. The fastest growing sector in the region is expected to be Management of Companies and Enterprises with a +0.1% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Management of Companies and Enterprises (+1 jobs), Health Care and Social Assistance (-1), and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (-1).



## Buckeye Hills Region, 2023Q3<sup>1</sup>

NAICS	Industry	Current			5-Year History		1-Year Forecast				
		Empl	Avg Ann Wages	LQ	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	13,390	\$57,134	1.16	-137	-0.2%	1,306	630	678	-1	0.0%
61	Educational Services	10,963	\$52,604	1.73	-220	-0.4%	948	505	523	-80	-0.7%
44	Retail Trade	9,040	\$32,010	1.14	74	0.2%	1,115	548	686	-119	-1.3%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	8,304	\$19,980	1.20	324	0.8%	1,398	658	803	-63	-0.8%
31	Manufacturing	7,430	\$67,431	1.16	358	1.0%	660	298	447	-86	-1.2%
23	Construction	5,188	\$58,234	1.09	235	0.9%	403	181	265	-44	-0.8%
92	Public Administration	4,041	\$53,019	1.11	94	0.5%	333	164	207	-38	-0.9%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	3,015	\$27,742	0.89	-70	-0.5%	323	150	193	-20	-0.7%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2,484	\$38,088	0.49	-85	-0.7%	267	122	162	-17	-0.7%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	2,409	\$56,026	0.61	14	0.1%	243	114	148	-19	-0.8%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2,384	\$11,838	2.36	-195	-1.6%	239	137	145	-44	-1.8%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,137	\$56,627	0.36	-64	-0.6%	166	70	103	-7	-0.3%
42	Wholesale Trade	2,106	\$59,127	0.70	-85	-0.8%	188	85	127	-24	-1.1%
52	Finance and Insurance	1,918	\$60,221	0.60	-118	-1.2%	145	67	93	-15	-0.8%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,045	\$42,427	0.74	75	1.5%	95	48	52	-6	-0.6%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	968	\$66,931	0.78	167	3.9%	83	34	49	1	0.1%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	872	\$73,231	3.04	-314	-6.0%	67	31	50	-14	-1.6%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	660	\$20,177	0.42	78	2.6%	97	42	57	-1	-0.2%
51	Information	657	\$47,517	0.41	-283	-6.9%	57	23	36	-1	-0.2%
22	Utilities	541	\$92,462	1.34	-44	-1.5%	40	19	28	-7	-1.3%
99	Unclassified	10	\$83,799	0.06	2	5.3%	1	0	1	0	-0.9%
<b>Total - All Industries</b>		<b>79,562</b>	<b>\$47,517</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>-193</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>8,052</b>	<b>3,813</b>	<b>4,836</b>	<b>-597</b>	<b>-0.8%</b>

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

Data as of 2023Q3

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding.

1. All data based upon a four-quarter moving average.

Exits and transfers are approximate estimates based upon occupation separation rates.

Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2023Q2 with preliminary estimates updated to 2023Q3. Forecast employment growth uses national projections adapted for regional growth patterns.

# Occupation Snapshot

The largest major occupation group in the Buckeye Hills Region is Office and Administrative Support Occupations, employing 8,563 workers. The next-largest occupation groups in the region are Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (7,785 workers) and Educational Instruction and Library Occupations (6,990). High location quotients (LQs) indicate occupation groups in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The major groups with the largest LQs in the region are Educational Instruction and Library Occupations (LQ = 1.65), Community and Social Service Occupations (1.43), and Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (1.21).

Occupation groups in the Buckeye Hills Region with the highest average wages per worker are Legal Occupations (\$99,400), Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations (\$94,700), and Management Occupations (\$93,400). The unemployment rate in the region varied among the major groups from 1.5% among Legal Occupations to 7.0% among Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations.

Over the next 1 year, the fastest growing occupation group in the Buckeye Hills Region is expected to be Community and Social Service Occupations with a +0.4% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Healthcare Support Occupations (+10 jobs) and Community and Social Service Occupations (+8). Over the same period, the highest separation demand (occupation demand due to retirements and workers moving from one occupation to another) is expected in Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (1,427 jobs) and Office and Administrative Support Occupations (907).

**Buckeye Hills Region, 2023Q3<sup>1</sup>**

SOC	Occupation	Current					5-Year History			1-Year Forecast				
		Empl	Mean Ann Wages <sup>2</sup>	LQ	Unempl	Unempl Rate	Online Job Ads <sup>3</sup>	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support	8,563	\$41,900	0.89	453	4.1%	217	-449	-1.0%	773	431	476	-134	-1.6%
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	7,785	\$28,300	1.21	724	7.0%	494	181	0.5%	1,366	645	782	-61	-0.8%
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library	6,990	\$63,300	1.65	253	3.3%	187	-96	-0.3%	525	296	275	-47	-0.7%
11-0000	Management	6,791	\$93,400	1.13	139	1.9%	214	262	0.8%	479	249	286	-57	-0.8%
41-0000	Sales and Related	6,582	\$40,800	0.93	513	5.8%	353	-101	-0.3%	781	401	470	-91	-1.4%
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving	6,154	\$41,600	0.88	689	6.4%	232	189	0.6%	713	308	442	-37	-0.6%
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	5,028	\$94,700	1.08	142	2.1%	491	52	0.2%	274	156	126	-9	-0.2%
51-0000	Production	4,831	\$45,500	1.09	377	4.7%	58	72	0.3%	421	194	295	-68	-1.4%
47-0000	Construction and Extraction	4,025	\$54,600	1.11	366	6.0%	52	-50	-0.2%	301	134	198	-31	-0.8%
31-0000	Healthcare Support	3,752	\$32,500	1.06	233	4.5%	217	-341	-1.7%	519	238	271	10	0.3%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations	3,466	\$71,500	0.68	118	3.1%	76	317	1.9%	254	103	166	-16	-0.5%
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	3,186	\$52,300	1.03	141	2.6%	96	2	0.0%	247	120	149	-21	-0.7%
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	2,451	\$34,300	0.94	225	6.3%	85	31	0.3%	300	150	169	-19	-0.8%
21-0000	Community and Social Service	2,046	\$50,100	1.43	76	3.2%	129	98	1.0%	180	76	96	8	0.4%
33-0000	Protective Service	1,795	\$50,300	1.05	87	4.1%	23	5	0.1%	158	79	96	-17	-1.0%
39-0000	Personal Care and Service	1,578	\$34,600	0.80	111	5.8%	39	-27	-0.3%	262	104	162	-4	-0.2%
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical	1,188	\$84,400	0.46	40	2.8%	42	20	0.3%	70	26	44	1	0.0%

## Buckeye Hills Region, 2023Q3<sup>1</sup>

SOC	Occupation	Current				5-Year History				1-Year Forecast				
		Empl	Mean Ann Wages <sup>2</sup>	LQ	Unempl	Unempl Rate	Online Job Ads <sup>3</sup>	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	1,107	\$53,800	0.76	51	5.1%	42	-36	-0.6%	105	49	62	-6	-0.5%
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering	955	\$82,700	0.74	23	2.3%	60	8	0.2%	56	26	35	-5	-0.5%
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science	615	\$74,000	0.88	19	3.0%	47	-32	-1.0%	51	13	40	-2	-0.3%
23-0000	Legal	383	\$99,400	0.59	7	1.5%	8	-38	-1.9%	19	10	10	-2	-0.4%
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	290	\$36,000	0.61	28	6.5%	1	10	0.7%	35	15	25	-5	-1.6%
<b>Total - All Occupations</b>		<b>79,562</b>	<b>\$54,000</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>4,814</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>3,163</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>7,898</b>	<b>3,825</b>	<b>4,675</b>	<b>-602</b>	<b>-0.8%</b>

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

Data as of 2023Q3 unless noted otherwise

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding.

1. Data based on a four-quarter moving average unless noted otherwise.

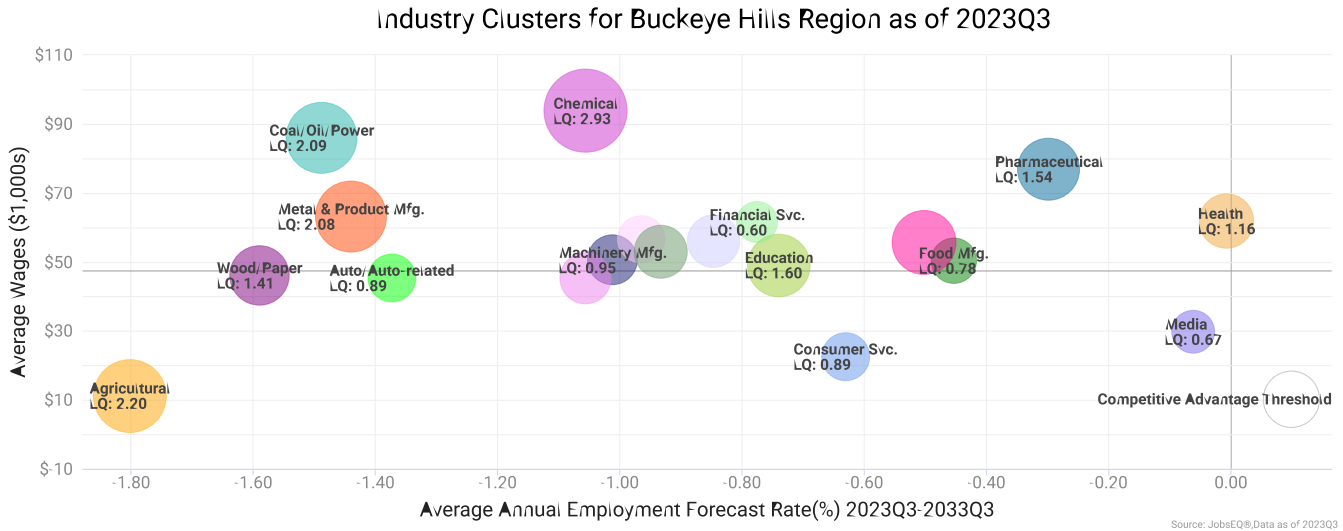
2. Wage data represent the average for all Covered Employment

3. Data represent found online ads active within the last thirty days in the selected region. Due to alternative county-assignment algorithms, ad counts in this analytic may not match that shown in RTI (nor in the popup window ad list). Ad counts for ZCTA-based regions are estimates.

Occupation employment data are estimated via industry employment data and the estimated industry/occupation mix. Industry employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and currently updated through 2023Q2, imputed where necessary with preliminary estimates updated to 2023Q3. Wages by occupation are as of 2023 provided by the BLS and imputed where necessary. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

# Industry Clusters

A cluster is a geographic concentration of interrelated industries or occupations. The industry cluster in the Buckeye Hills Region with the highest relative concentration is Chemical with a location quotient of 2.93. This cluster employs 2,107 workers in the region with an average wage of \$93,807. Employment in the Chemical cluster is projected to contract in the region about 1.1% per year over the next ten years.

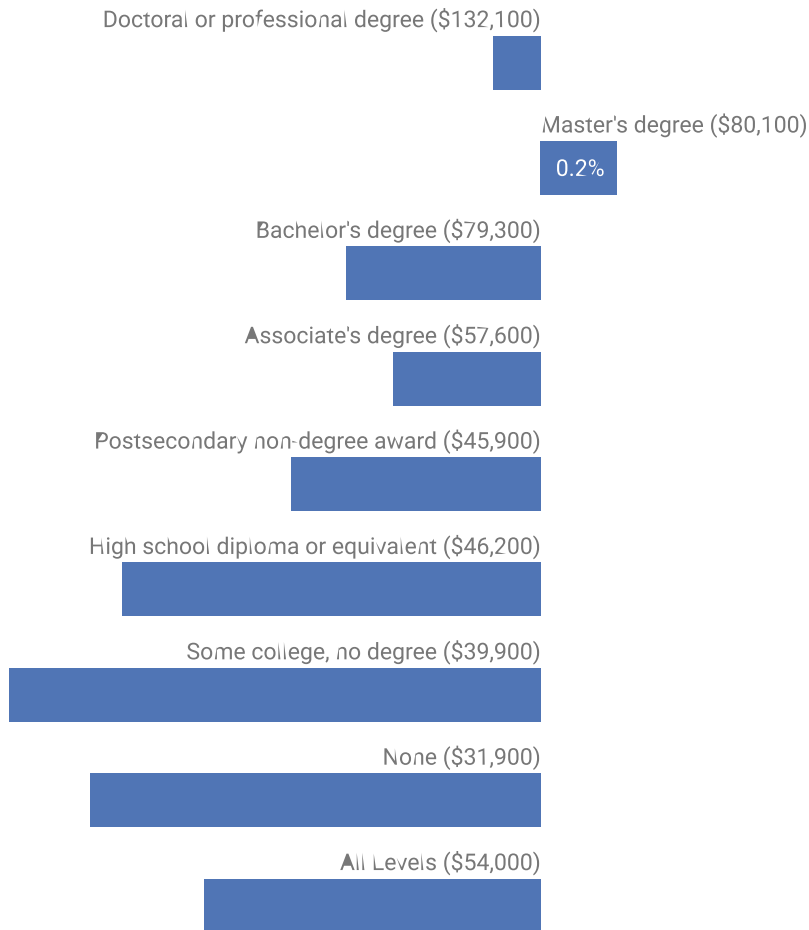


Location quotient and average wage data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, imputed where necessary, and updated through 2023Q2 with preliminary estimates updated to 2023Q3. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

# Education Levels

Expected growth rates for occupations vary by the education and training required. While all employment in the Buckeye Hills Region is projected to contract 0.8% over the next ten years, occupations typically requiring a postgraduate degree are expected to contract 0.1% per year, those requiring a bachelor’s degree are forecast to contract 0.4% per year, and occupations typically needing a 2-year degree or certificate are expected to contract 0.3% per year.

## Annual Average Projected Job Growth by Education Levels

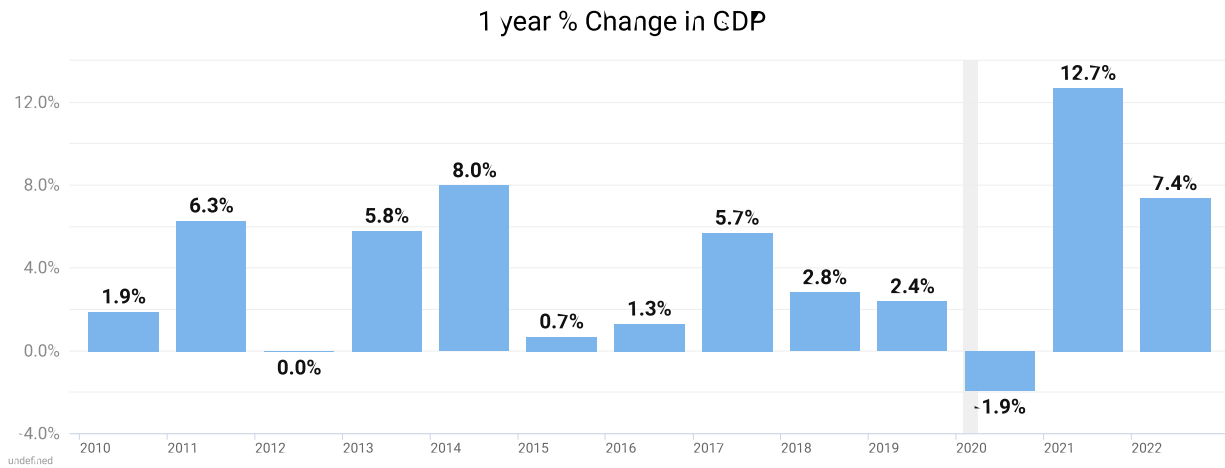


Source: JobsEQ®  
Data as of 2023Q3

Employment by occupation data are estimates as of 2023Q3. Education levels of occupations are based on BLS assignments. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

# Gross Domestic Product

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the total value of goods and services produced by a region. In 2022, nominal GDP in the Buckeye Hills Region expanded 7.4%. This follows growth of 12.7% in 2021. As of 2022, total GDP in the Buckeye Hills Region was \$9,290,805,000.



Gross Domestic Product data are provided by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, imputed by Chmura where necessary, updated through 2022.

Of the sectors in the Buckeye Hills Region, Manufacturing contributed the largest portion of GDP in 2022, \$1,413,352,000. The next-largest contributions came from Health Care and Social Assistance (\$1,084,664,000); Educational Services (\$975,486,000); and Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (\$830,365,000).

## GDP (in \$ millions)

Manufacturing (31)

\$1,413

Health Care and Social Assistance (62)

\$1,085

Educational Services (61)

\$975

Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (21)

\$830

Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (53)

\$765

Finance and Insurance (52)

\$663

Retail Trade (44)

\$642

Construction (23)

\$482

Public Administration (92)

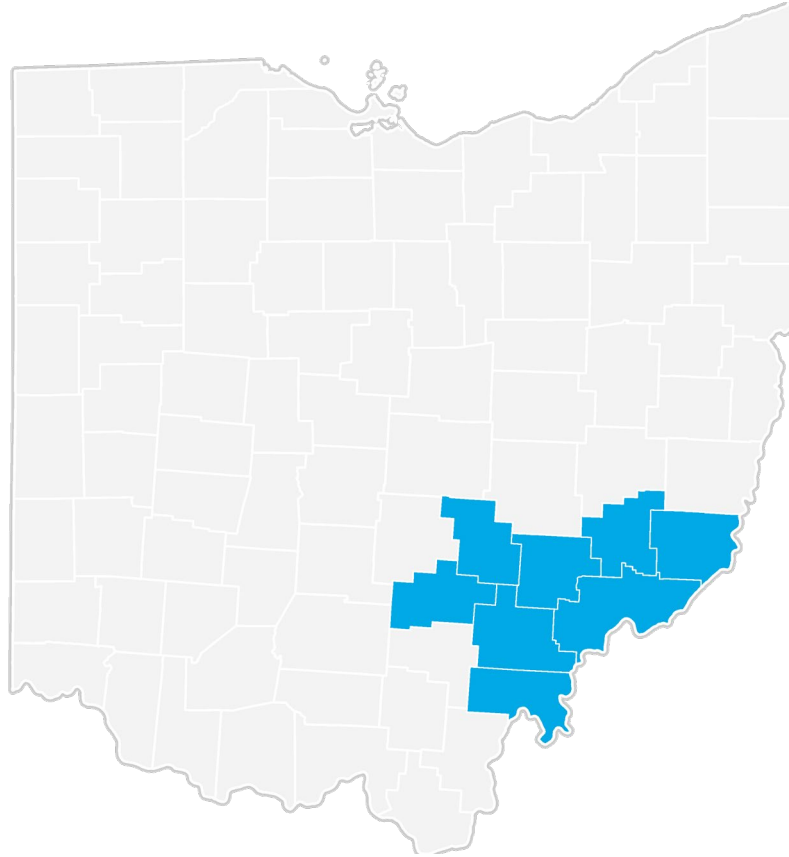
\$338

Wholesale Trade (42)

\$318

Gross Domestic Product data are provided by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, imputed by Chmura where necessary, updated through 2022.

# Buckeye Hills Region Regional Map





# Region Definition

**Buckeye Hills Region is defined as the following counties:**

Athens County, Ohio

---

Hocking County, Ohio

---

Meigs County, Ohio

---

Monroe County, Ohio

---

Morgan County, Ohio

---

Noble County, Ohio

---

Perry County, Ohio

---

Washington County, Ohio

---

# FAQ

## What is a location quotient?

A location quotient (LQ) is a measurement of concentration in comparison to the nation. An LQ of 1.00 indicates a region has the same concentration of an industry (or occupation) as the nation. An LQ of 2.00 would mean the region has twice the expected employment compared to the nation and an LQ of 0.50 would mean the region has half the expected employment in comparison to the nation.

## What is separation demand?

Separation demand is the number of jobs required due to separations—labor force exits (including retirements) and turnover resulting from workers moving from one occupation into another. Note that separation demand does not include all turnover—it does not include when workers stay in the same occupation but switch employers. The total projected demand for an occupation is the sum of the separation demand and the growth demand (which is the increase or decrease of jobs in an occupation expected due to expansion or contraction of the overall number of jobs in that occupation).

## What is a cluster?

A cluster is a geographic concentration of interrelated industries or occupations. If a regional cluster has a location quotient of 1.25 or greater, the region is considered to possess a competitive advantage in that cluster.

## What is the difference between industry wages and occupation wages?

Industry wages and occupation wages are estimated via separate data sets, often the time periods being reported do not align, and wages are defined slightly differently in the two systems (for example, certain bonuses are included in the industry wages but not the occupation wages). It is therefore common that estimates of the average industry wages and average occupation wages in a region do not match exactly.

## What is NAICS?

The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is used to classify business establishments according to the type of economic activity. The NAICS Code comprises six levels, from the “all industry” level to the 6-digit level. The first two digits define the top level category, known as the “sector,” which is the level examined in this report.

## What is SOC?

The Standard Occupational Classification system (SOC) is used to classify workers into occupational categories. All workers are classified into one of over 804 occupations according to their occupational definition. To facilitate classification, occupations are combined to form 22 major groups, 95 minor groups, and 452 occupation groups. Each occupation group includes detailed occupations requiring similar job duties, skills, education, or experience.

## About This Report

This report and all data herein were produced by JobsEQ®, a product of Chmura Economics & Analytics. The information contained herein was obtained from sources we believe to be reliable. However, we cannot guarantee its accuracy and completeness.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Athens Building Receives Transformational Mixed-Use Development Funding** | The renovation of the Lostro Building, on the corner of South Court and Union streets in Athens, is among 15 projects across the state recently awarded in the third round of **Ohio's Transformational Mixed-Use Development Program**. The proposal calls for developing the 24,000-square-foot building by converting the top two floors to an upscale, 22-suite extended-stay hotel, with two restaurants on the ground floor and retail in the basement. Renovations on the four-story building are expected to cost approximately \$10,953,765. The developers, Indus Development LLC, will receive \$1 million in tax credits under the program.

**ODNR Designates Bison Hollow State Nature Preserve** | ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves held a signing ceremony with Director Mertz for the recently announced designation of core portions of Appalachia Ohio Alliance's Bison Hollow Preserve, near Hocking Hills State Park, as Ohio's newest State Nature Preserve (SNP). Located south of Ash Cave, Bison Hollow is centered on the protection of the East Fork of Queer Creek, a coldwater habitat system designated Outstanding State Waters, the highest classification in Ohio. The Preserve features a spectacular narrow, steep-walled Black Hand Sandstone gorge with numerous picturesque rock outcrops and waterfalls. Several of the Bison Hollow tracts were purchased with Clean Ohio grants awarded through the District 18 Natural Resources Assistance Council.

**ORCA Receives EDA Economic Recovery Corps Fellow** | Ten of the 65 inaugural Economic Recovery Corps (ERC) Fellows will be placed with host organizations in states served by the Economic Development Administration's Chicago Regional Office. One fellow, Jess Leibson, will be placed in the Buckeye Hills region with the Outdoor Recreation Coalition of Appalachia (ORCA), where she will help the organization in its work to support rural outdoor recreation economies, enhance entrepreneurial ecosystems, and contribute to long-term regional economic sustainability. The 65 new Fellows, who were announced on February 12, will spend the next two and a half years spearheading projects that advance new ways of doing economic development to build more resilient, inclusive, and equitable economies. The novel ERC program is designed to build capacity in some of the hardest-hit and most economically distressed areas across the United States while cultivating the next generation of economic development leaders.

## CURRENT INITIATIVES

**The Ridges** | The New Community Authority continues work with Ohio University on the package to propose the land transfer to the State of Ohio. The survey is complete, and the condominium rules are being developed to govern building use. The City of Athens has simultaneously begun prioritizing and seeking funding for the infrastructure expansions needed.

**Appalachian Community Grant Program Updates** | The region is patiently waiting on announcements of awards tentatively at the March 25 State Controlling Board meeting. We continue to work with Planners, our communities and lead applicants to move projects along through design. BHRC continues to allocate TA funds awarded to supplement targeted activities such as building assessments, legal services for title search and contracts, land survey and geotechnical activities. All funds have now been committed to a contract. Lead Applicants and two jurisdictions still have outstanding deliverables under the legal contract with Bricker and

Graydon, a few building surveys and a land survey are outstanding with Sixmo, core drilling samples are outstanding with Triad, Geotech and Under Ground Utility Investigation is outstanding for one community with Terracon, and finally our two contractors helping in house remain thru April.

**Appalachian Community Gateway Initiative** | BHRC submitted an application and was recently approved for a regional project from Seneca Lake/Wolf Run in Noble County to Hocking Hills and everything in between. The program is about connecting communities to State and National Park and Recreation areas. Our goal is to encourage the communities to embrace their outdoor economy and tourism potential. The corridor planning will connect I-77 to SR 33 highways.

## STATE UPDATES

**Appalachian Community Innovation Centers Grant Program Announced** | The State of Ohio was awarded \$85 million in funding under the Capital Projects Fund to supplement \$500 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State Fiscal Recovery Funds to support OhioBuilds – Small Communities, Big Impact – A Plan for Appalachia. This plan makes historic investments in the underserved Ohio Appalachian region by creating greater educational opportunities, increasing workforce participation, and improving health outcomes. This \$85 million will support the construction of Appalachian Community Innovation Center facilities that provide a combined access point for public education, community health services, and workforce development. The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission will administer the program with support from the Ohio Office of Budget and Management. No local match is required, but applicants must locally fund any project costs over the grant amount. Applications are due March 21.

**Senate Housing Committee Eyes April for Introduction of Omnibus Bill** | The Ohio Senate Select Committee on Housing is anticipated to release a report in March, with an omnibus bill expected in April, addressing various housing issues, including zoning, property taxes, density, transparency, accessibility, and affordability. During the committee's final meeting, discussions involved calls to curb real estate wholesaling, protect local zoning control, and increase affordable housing. Witnesses emphasized concerns about transparency, affordable housing shortages, and the need for local government involvement. The committee aims to address various challenges to improve housing conditions across the state.

**March 8: WSRLA Program 2025 Nomination Deadline** | The Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA) is pleased to announce the Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) Program Year 2025 call for nominations and invite you to submit projects for financial assistance. Project nominations will be accepted until March 8, 2024. Ohio EPA encourages applicants to submit project nominations for consideration of funding from WSRLA and other funds that may become available during the program year (e.g., additional grants from USEPA, H2Ohio funding, etc.). The nomination form and instructions are available on the WSRLA webpage. Please note that only electronic submissions will be accepted and must be received no later than March 8, 2024.

**Ohio Department of Development Releases Application Guidelines for Local Fair Funding** | The Ohio Department of Development has released official program guidelines for \$10 million in grant funding available to support local fair access and economic impact. The County & Independent Fairs Grant Program aims to support county and independent agricultural societies in promoting and improving their annual exhibitions, ensuring that fairs remain vibrant hubs in their communities. Eligible costs include future expenses for new and upgraded machinery and equipment, technology improvements, repairs or improvements to property, structures, and roads, upgrades to electrical or sanitation systems, and ADA accommodation improvements. Grants will be distributed evenly among all eligible grant applicants. Applications will open at 10:00 a.m. on March 1 and be available on the program webpage at [development.ohio.gov/CountyFairs](https://development.ohio.gov/CountyFairs). Applications will be accepted through **4:00 p.m. on April 30**.

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**March 21: Industrial Site Development Webinar** | Ohio's cities and villages are on the ground floor of retaining and attracting high-wage industrial jobs to the state, as they have the economic development tools from zoning to tax abatements to Tax Increment Financing that are needed to develop and promote industrial sites. However, rising interest rates have slowed to a crawl the development of private sector speculative industrial space. This presents an opportunity for cities and villages to use an "old" tool to create public sector industrial parks to capture the manufacturing product that remains strong throughout the United States. Register to join the Ohio Municipal League and the Montrose Group on March 21, 10:00-11:00 a.m. for a free webinar to discuss industrial park strategies at [register.gotowebinar.com/register/2488388764816843872](https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/2488388764816843872). Montrose has negotiated dozens of industrial park public-private partnerships that have created thousands of acres and millions of square feet of industrial space. They will discuss how to build an industrial park based on land use regulation through zoning and annexation, property tax abatements, school and other compensation agreements, public infrastructure funding through Joint Economic Development Districts and tax increment financing agreements, and state funding like Ohio's All Future Ohio Fund.

**House's \$2B Plan for Improvement Projects Advances to Senate** | The House on Wednesday quickly approved a \$2 billion spending package to speed up the capital budget process, despite opposition from a faction within its majority caucus as well as criticism from Senate President Matt Huffman. The hybrid plan (**HB 2**) includes \$350 million worth of flexible funding authorized by the operating budget (HB 33) as well as support for bond-backed projects typically reserved for the capital budget. The bill is likely to sit dormant for at least another two months, based on a timeline reconfirmed by Senate President Matt Huffman in a **memo** to Senate members.

**Ohio Launches Nursing Home Quality Navigator** | Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and Ohio Department of Aging (ODA) Director Ursel J. McElroy recently announced the launch of the Ohio Nursing Home Quality Navigator – a new online tool providing users with detailed information about nursing homes across the state in one convenient digital location. A recommendation of the Governor's Nursing Home Quality & Accountability Task Force, the Navigator includes a searchable map of all active nursing homes in Ohio with care quality metrics, facility comparison functionality, and other features, such as staffing ratios, specialty services offered, and the number of health and safety violations a nursing home received. The tool is designed to empower Ohioans when considering a nursing home for themselves or a loved one. The Ohio Nursing Home Quality Navigator is available through the Department of Aging's website at [Aging.Ohio.gov/Navigator](https://Aging.Ohio.gov/Navigator).

## FEDERAL UPDATES

**ARC POWER Applications Now Open** | Projects to boost economic development and diversification in affected communities can now apply for 2024 funding via POWER. Applications are due by 5:00 p.m. on April 17. Through POWER awards in 2024, ARC funding will continue to leverage entrepreneurship, workforce development, infrastructure, agriculture, and other projects to enhance job training and reemployment opportunities, create jobs in existing or new industries, and attract new sources of private investment in coal-impacted communities. Letters of Intent are due March 1, and final applications are due April 17. For more information and to apply, visit [arc.gov/POWER](https://arc.gov/POWER). Applicants are encouraged to work with their Local Development Districts to prepare their applications.

**March 8: Assistance to Firefighters Grant Deadline** | The Federal Emergency Management Agency's FY 2023 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) application period is open and will close on March 8 at 5 p.m. The AFG program provides financial assistance to eligible fire departments, independent emergency medical services (EMS) organizations, and State Fire Training Academies (SFTAs) for critical training and equipment. Plan your FY 2023 AFG application by reviewing the FY 2023 AFG NOFO today at **AFG Grant Documents** | [FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov).

**Office of Senator Brown Issues Congressionally Directed Spending Guidelines** | Senator Brown will be accepting programmatic and congressionally directed spending (CDS) appropriations requests for fiscal year 2025 (FY25) through 11:59 p.m. on Friday, March 22, 2024, via his website at [brown.senate.gov/appropriations](https://brown.senate.gov/appropriations). Programmatic/Bill and Report Language requests are general funding requests for national and regional programs, and/or bill and report language requests that direct, encourage, or urge an Agency or Department to carry out an action.

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**Updates to Older Americans Act Program Regulations Finalized** | The Administration for Community Living (ACL) **released a final rule to update regulations** implementing its Older Americans Act (OAA) programs. This is the first substantial update to most OAA program regulations since 1988, and aims to align the regulations to the current statute, address issues that have emerged since the last update, and provide clarification on a number of requirements. The rule will take effect on March 15, 2024, but regulated entities have until October 1, 2025, to comply. The final rule:

- Clarifies requirements for state and area plans on aging and details requirements for coordination among state and local programs.
- Clarifies and strengthens provisions for meeting OAA requirements for prioritizing people with the greatest social and economic needs.
- Requires state agencies to establish flexible and streamlined processes for area agencies to receive approval for contracts and commercial relationships.
- Addresses emergency preparedness and response, incorporating lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Establishes expectations for legal assistance and activities to prevent elder abuse.
- Updates definitions, modernizes requirements, and clarifies flexibilities within the OAA nutrition programs. For example, the rule allows for continuation of innovations developed during the pandemic, such as providing carry-out meals through the congregate meals program, in certain circumstances.

ACL announced that they will share resources and provide robust technical assistance in the coming months to support the aging network in complying with the updated regulations. Information about future webinars will be available at [acl.gov/OAArule](https://acl.gov/OAArule).

**SSI Restoration Act Introduced in the House** | The Supplementary Security Income (SSI) Restoration Act has been introduced in the House. The bill would affect millions of SSI beneficiaries around the country, including over 2 million older adults receiving benefits who struggle to meet their basic needs due to inadequate benefit levels and who often lose or are denied benefits due to outdated eligibility rules. The bill would:

- Increase benefits to the Federal Poverty Level;
- Repeal the marriage penalty that provides less in benefits to SSI recipients if they are married;
- Allow SSI recipients to keep more of their income from sources like Social Security to supplement their benefits;
- Increase the amount of savings that people can have while still qualifying for benefits; and
- Repeal penalties for people who receive help with food or shelter from friends or family members.

## UPCOMING CONFERENCES & EVENTS:

- **March 4, 6:00 p.m. – Buckeye Hills Forward: Noble County** | OSU Extension, Caldwell
- **March 7, 6:00 p.m. – Buckeye Hills Forward: Washington County** | Buckeye Hills Regional Council, Marietta
- **April 5, 11:00 a.m. – BHRC General Policy Council Annual Meeting** | Buckeye Hills Regional Council, Marietta. RSVP at [buckeyehills.org/events](https://buckeyehills.org/events).
- **May 14, 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. – 2024 Appalachian Ohio State of the Region Conference** | Ohio University, Athens. Agenda and registration available at [sotr.ohio.edu](https://sotr.ohio.edu)

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