

The Connection

July 2024

TANF Summer Youth Program

The Mahoning County Department of Job and Family Services has once again partnered with MCTA to provide a summer youth work program in Mahoning County.

Lori Murphy from MCDJFS reported that the applicants had to be TANF eligible and had to be between the ages of 14 and 18. They also must have a child of their own or live in the home with a child. They were able to work 40 hours a week while making \$13.00 an hour.

This year, 330 participants were chosen and given educational and

financial training along with work experience. The program's base budget for 2024 was \$800,000 but up to \$1.6 million can be spent. JFS connected with OSU extension who did presentations on a variety of programs. The application for this program was sent to all schools in Mahoning County.

Youth who were accepted into the program were placed throughout Mahoning County close to where they live. They worked in various settings such as schools, faith-based organizations or nonprofits.

They completed job duties that were given to them and were paid for the work that they did. Eight adult aides were hired to monitor and assist youth workers.

MCJFS has a very active Facebook page where these events and others can be located.



MAHONING & COLUMBIANA
TRAINING ASSOCIATION

Unemployment Insurance Pilot Program

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services implemented a new pilot program designed to assist unemployment claimants with complex UI issues that are difficult to resolve over the phone or on the computer. This program was put into place in the month of May, and will be continued for an indefinite period of time.

Once a week, an unemployment staff

member was placed in various OhioMeansJobs offices to help with complicated client unemployment issues. Only certain OMJ offices were chosen for this pilot program. Office management had the choice whether to make appointments available or to have clients be placed in line as a first come, first serve basis.

Mahoning County was one of the offices chosen. Initial feedback from clients and



Department of
Job & Family
Services

“Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly”-Martin Luther King Jr.

Columbiana County News

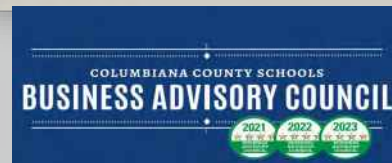
Drive to Succeed Grant In partnership with the Columbiana County Sheriff's Office and Columbiana County Business Advisory Council, the Columbiana County Educational Service Center received a grant from the Ohio Traffic Safety Office for the Drive to Succeed Scholarship Program.

The goal of this program is to expand access to driver's education training for income-eligible teenagers by providing a scholarship to those who cannot af-

ford to take driver's education training. Funding from this \$88,000 grant will be made available to Columbiana County teenagers.

The program will run from May 2024 to June 30, 2026. Anyone who is interested or has questions can call 330-424-9591 or email

mdangerfield@ccesc.k12.oh.us



CCCTC Opens New Mobile Career Exploration Unit CCCTC has partnered with the Columbiana County ESC and VistaAst to create a new mobile Career Exploration Lab that will be able to be moved to all local school districts. Students will be able to explore hands on experiences in various careers. The Mobile unit was piloted at Leetonia Schools in April and at Beaver Local in May. Look for the new mobile Career Exploration Unit at this year's Columbiana County Fair and at the Kids STEAM university in the Fall.



Summer Manufacturing Camp The Columbiana County ESC along with state senator Sherrod Brown, the Columbiana County Business Advisory Council, The Salem Sustainable Opportunity Center, the Ohio State University Extension office and the Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition are planning a 5-day Summer Manufacturing Camp for 7th and 8th grade students in Columbiana County. The camp will feature educational experiences in robotics and coding and visits to local manufacturers and will run from July 22-26, 9:00-3:00. The cost is \$25.00.

Teacher Bootcamp The Columbiana County ESC and the Columbiana County Business Advisory Council has collaborated with Ashland University to offer a Teacher Manufacturing Bootcamp. The bootcamp will be open for 15 middle school/high school teachers in Columbiana County. They will have the opportunity to visit manufacturers and will also have educational sessions with opportunities to develop lessons in financial literacy, work ethics, career exploration and principles of manufacturing. They are able to earn 3 graduate credits from Ashland University upon completion of the program, which runs from July 22nd—July 26th.



Columbiana County Robotics League Continues to Grow The Columbiana County Project Inspire Robotics League was divided into two divisions, a high school VRC league and a middle school/elementary IQ league. With the growing popularity of robotics in the schools and the expansion of Project Inspire, there were 28 teams in the VRC league and 48 teams in the IQ league this year.

Once again, the league was well represented at the state competition and for the second straight year the league had two teams qualify for the World Vex Competition in Dallas, Texas April 25th –April 27th. The two teams representing the Columbiana County League at Worlds were Crestview Middle School and Columbiana Middle School. The teams competed against teams from China, Australia, Finland, Singapore, Korea, Vietnam, Morocco, United Kingdom, Philippines, New Zealand, and Ghana. The Crestview MS team of 4 girls finished the week scoring 47th out of 84 in the Spirit division in qualification rounds and 125th out of 363 in skills. They also WON the 2024 Sportsmanship Award! Congratulations to both teams and a special thank you to the Columbiana Count VEX Robotics League Coordinator Jeff Gill!



CCCTC Graduates 43 LPN-RN Bridge Students



CCCTC graduates, from left, first row, Kali Powell, Heidi Knight, Kristina Jenkins, Paris Blankenship, Jessica Spinks, Kaitlyn Mayle, Trisha Ogle, Heather Carnegie, Tiffany Cianni, Casie Huddleston, Addison Bandy; second row, Kandis Patterson, Brittany Roberson, Chelsea Mike, Amber Lambert, Christy Martin, Ashley Smith, Preslyn Wolfe, Nancy Young, Tamarra Huff, Sharon Benedetto, Hailey Hare; third row, Mercedes Parks, Lian Prisby, Stephanie Giuriceo, McKenna Monath, Renee VanDyke, Jaymie Martin, Emma George, Carly Simms, Kennedy Kessler, My'Lea Washington; fourth row, Samantha Ramsey, Melanie Coburn, Megan Alexander, Erynn Jones, Brandi Burkett, Hedy Zender, Alice Czap, Chelsey Lucarell, Paul Willoughby, Mariah Reel and Vince Hugenberg.

Congratulations! On April 11, at Columbiana County Career & Technical Center, the Adult Education Department graduated 43 LPN-RN Bridge students who will now be eligible to take their registered nursing state boards. The 43 completed a one-year program which brings them from a licensed practical nurse to their eligibility as a registered nurse.

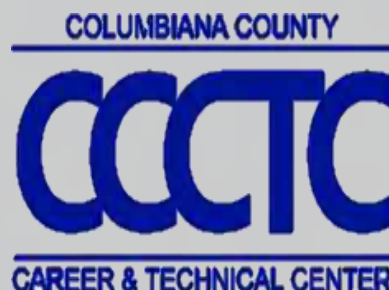
Awards were earned by Paris

Blankenship and Renee VanDyke for their Academic Excellence. Both students achieved a 4.0 GPA in their program. A Florence Nightingale Award was presented to Jaymie Martin for her exceptional caring and nursing ethics in class and clinical. A Professionalism Award was presented to Kandis Patterson for her excellence in patient care.

The diplomas were presented by CCCTC Superintendent Willard Adkins and Assistant Adult Education

Director, Terry Hutson. A graduation address was given by Adult Education Director Dr. Kelly Darney entitled "*Unintended Consequences.*"

Congratulations to all graduates! Good luck in taking your boards!



Congratulations MCCTC!



CONGRATULATIONS to MCCTC Adult Career Center's Adult Diploma Program Phlebotomy Students! For the last several months they have been training to become Certified Phlebotomy Technicians and MCCTC just announced the 100% pass rate of the Spring class!

This is such a huge accomplishment. After all of their hard work, they not only achieved their certification, but have all earned their High School Diploma.

The Adult Diploma Program provides job training and a new pathway for adults, ages 18 or older, to earn a high school diploma and industry credentials aligned to one of Ohio's in-demand jobs. For more information, call (330) 729-4100.

In-Demand Week Celebrated at MCCTC



MCCTC Adult Career Center enjoyed celebrating In-Demand Jobs Week in May. It is a week set aside each year to highlight Ohio's thriving careers and how they shape the future. It was a week of career exploration and showcasing the success of MCCTC students.

Media interviews were held on Monday of that week with the Gary Rivers Show Mix 98.9 and JobsNow with WKBN 27 Dave Sess. Also, welding students participated in videos speaking about their training program.

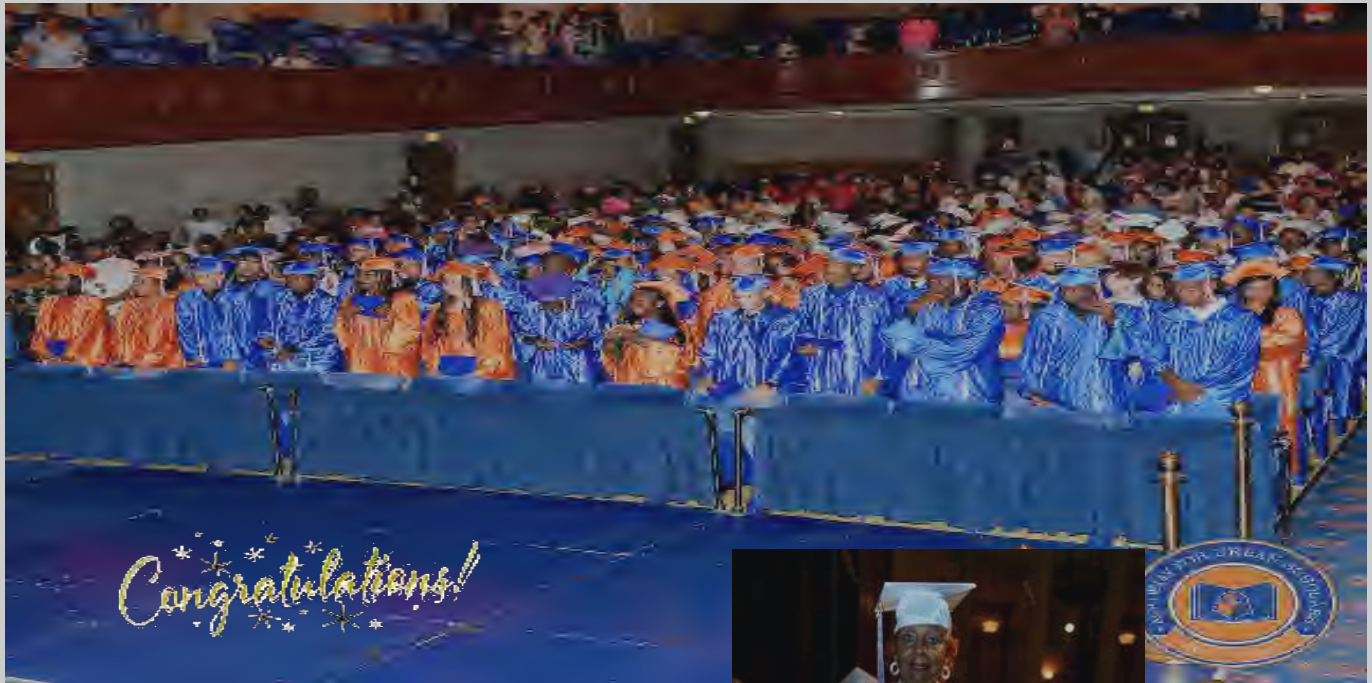
Tuesday, Career Center staff hosted a well attended Campus Tour and Open Houses event by offering career exploration tours and a mini resource fair with free ice cream sundaes and on the same day, Firefighter II students took their certification exam!

Wednesday, staff was on the road and at the United Local Schools Career Fair where the Career Center hosted two career exploration tables and their recruiter and marketing coordinator ran 6 breakout sessions for students covering the importance of maintaining a positive online reputation and understanding background checks. Over 800 students were reached!

On Thursday and Friday, MCCTC and Valley STEM + ME2 Academy students were presented with financial aid and career training information at a resource fair.

Thanks MCCTC for offering such valuable and exciting news and events!

150 Students Graduate from The Academy for Urban Scholars



On Monday, June 3rd, 2024 The Academy for Urban Scholars High School proudly graduated nearly 150 students at Stambaugh Auditorium, marking a significant achievement in their mission to provide quality education and create brighter futures for all of their Scholars.

The diverse student body included traditional high school students, young adults aged 18-21 seeking credit recovery, and adult learners over 22 years old. This year, they celebrated several extraordinary moments, including two instances where mothers graduated alongside their daughters in the same ceremony—a testament to the supportive and inclusive environment they foster. They also achieved the graduation of their oldest Scholar to date (78 years old), who helped fulfill the school's mantra that "It's never too late to graduate!"

As they reflect on these successes, they are excited to announce that enrollment for the 2024-25 school year is now open. They invite you to join them in spreading the word of their legacy of educational excellence and personal achievement.

Together, we can create even more success stories!!!





MCTA Fiscal Staff Receives Award



Congratulations are in order for the MCTA fiscal staff! Jennifer Drlik, Regional Liaison for the Auditor of State's Office, came to the MCTA's Administrative Offices to present Lynn Esposito, Barb Bush and Shereen Conlan with an award for having a clean audit. This is a very big deal!

The recognition is a testament to their dedication, hard work, and commitment to excellence in financial management. The jobs they do can be very challenging at times because of the paperwork and payroll processed. Recognition by the State Auditor's Office is a feat to be acknowledged and appreciated.

Sometimes a number does not tell the whole story

Older workers struggle to find jobs...As a facilitator at the Mahoning County OhioMeansJobs office for nearly three years and since my time here, the number of job seekers in their 60's 70's and even 80's has increased significantly. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of workers aged 65 or older has grown by 117% within 20 years. Employment of individuals 75 years or older has increased by 117%. Workers aged 65 and older are a growing segment of the workforce.

Some in these age groups are choosing to continue to work to add experience, expertise and wisdom to the fields they are in, but many are job seeking just to make ends meet. New owners and increased technological advances have created situations where the aging population is let go. Their skill level may not be adequate for the changing world, and companies may not be willing to take the time to update their training. Along with this, many of these workers are not yet old enough to claim social security or get on Medicare.

While hiring aging workers may require a little more time and training, their work ethic along with their knowledge and experience can ultimately enrich the company in immeasurable ways. Don't let numbers be a road block to hiring your next employee!

"Aging is just another word for living."-Cindy Joseph

Dave Oesch Receives the Dan Bloodworth Award



David Oesch, the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist in Columbiana County, has been honored with The Dan Bloodworth Memorial Award. It is awarded annually to OWD staff who demonstrate outstanding advocacy for veterans on the impact they have had on raising the quality of life not only for veteran customers they serve, but for veterans in their local communities, in the state of Ohio and/or nationally.

Dave served in four military branches, the Navy, the Merchant Marines, the Army and the Air Force. He enlisted in the Air Force as a Medical Technician and was able to retire as an E-7 Master Sergeant. While in the military, he traveled to 52 countries and was deployed to Iraq. Dave sustained many injuries while in the military which forced him to have to retire.

He received this prestigious award for what he has done with his job with the state and the things that he has done since retiring from the military. Congratulations Dave and thank you for your service!!

Here is a list of some of his accomplishments:

- Volunteered as a commanding officer for a Sea Cadet unit
- Commissioner at the Columbiana County Veteran Service Office
- Current Commander of a local DAV(disabled American veterans) Chapter #122
- Was a Chef de Graw(commander) at the 40 & 8 in Columbiana
- Current Chaplain at the Am Vets in Salem
- Member of the American Legion
- Member of the VFW
- Nursing school alumni president
- Master of Jenkins Masonic Lodge and past master of Allen Lodge of Columbiana



Standing from left to right are: Ronnie Marquez-Posey-Bureau Chief Trade & Veteran Services OWD, Coretta Pettway-Deputy Director OWD, David Oesch -DVOP OWD, David Stonerock-Veteran Services Administrator OWD.



Ohio, which is located in the US Midwest, has a population of 11.8 million and is the seventh most populated state. Lake Erie lies to the north, Pennsylvania to the east, West Virginia and Kentucky to the southeast and south, Indiana to the west and Michigan to the northwest. Ohio ranks 34th in terms of total area among the 50 states, but it is one of the smallest states west of the Appalachian Mountains. We are within a day's drive of 60% of the U.S. and the Canadian populations.

Ohio is reflective of the urban-

Ohio, The **Heart** of it All

ized, industrialized and ethnically mixed United States and because it is such a representation of this country, it is often used to test ideas, attitudes and commercial products.

Perhaps this is one reason that the new branding which represents Ohio is referred to as “**The Heart of it All.**” According to Governor DeWine, the state is quite prosperous now, and should be positioned as “the **heart** of opportunity, the **heart** of technology, the **heart** of adventure, and the **heart** of family”.

Lt. Governor Jon Husted explains that tourism is very important for Ohio, but it is only a part of the puzzle. Moving for-



ward, we are going to attract not only visitors, but also people who want to live and work here.

The base structure of the logo has changed little. The lettering “Ohio” is still colored in blue, embedded into a red outline of the state. It is bigger though, with a handwritten font and thicker lines. The logo sports a brand that is creative, inclusive and unifying.

Ohio, “**The Heart of it All**”, is a great place to call home!

Employment...Not quite as easy as it appears

Finding employees in the state of Ohio can be a challenge for employers these days. Unemployment rates have been below 4% for 14 straight months.

Ben Ayers, senior economist for Nationwide said, “Lack of labor remains a pressing issue for many employers, driving up wages and holding back production.” According to Ayers, there are 50% more job listings than unemployed Ohioans.

One reason for this lack of labor can be the definite disparity between the education/training level and skillset of many job seekers. Get-

ting a good paying job is what every job seeker wants, but their level of education or training may not match up with those desired jobs.

Along with inadequate credentials, a practical distance commute along with suitable working conditions and hours that work with home and family life also plays into the equation. Rural areas tend to have a higher unemployment rates than metro areas like Columbus.

While adjustments may need to be made to get the job of choice, some of these issues may be non-negotiable. Finding child care that is affordable and that works with

changing schedules, weekends or overtime can be quite challenging and sometimes impossible. Paying for the child care while still making enough to live on can be another stumbling block. Transportation, too, can be a consideration. Some bus lines do not run after a certain hours or on weekends.

While there are jobs available in the state of Ohio, looking to fill these jobs may take some additional training, ingenuity and patience, but the time and effort can prove to be well worth it!

“Employee loyalty begins with employer loyalty.” –Harvey Mackay

The Solar Eclipse Passes Through Ohio

On April 8, 2024, people within a 124-mile wide stretch of Ohio experienced a total solar eclipse. A total solar eclipse happens when, at just the right time, the moon passes between the sun and the earth. These types of events are very rare and unique. The last visible total solar eclipse that occurred in Ohio was back in 1806!

The totality began in Texas at 1:27 PM and ended in Maine at 3:35 PM. The major cities in the path is the U.S. were San Antonio, Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Indianapolis, Cleveland, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Montreal.

When the total eclipse of the sun occurred, those who were

viewing it saw the inner black circle, the umbra. That is where the shadow was complete. The outer shadow circle is called the penumbra, which shows the extent of the partial eclipse.

It is never safe to look directly at the sun's rays, so the only way to look directly at the partially eclipsed sun was through special-purpose solar filters, such as eclipse glasses or hand-held solar.

If you were in the path of totality, once the total eclipse occurred, you were able to remove your eclipse glasses and look at the sun directly.

At that point, it grew darker outside and the temperature dropped which let you know that a truly special event was occurring. Even the ani-

mals and insects acted differently during the total eclipse.

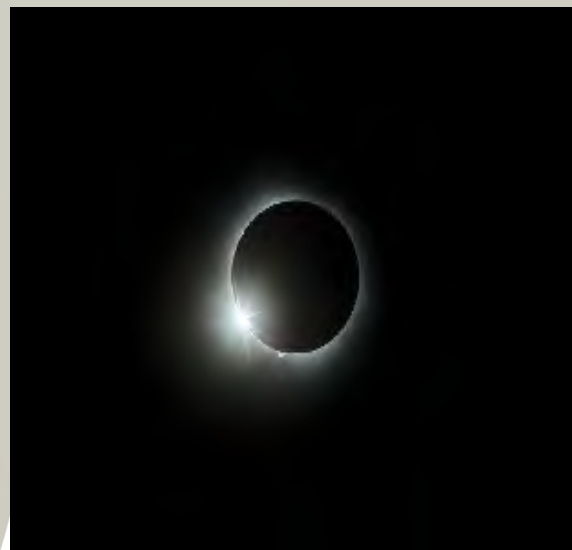
This breathtaking and maybe once in a lifetime site brought people together in a way that made them feel like they were all sharing in something as one. Taken from greatamericaneclipse.com, it was predicted that between 931,000 and 3,725,000 people traveled from outside to inside of the path of totality just to get a glimpse of this amazing event.

However near or far you were from the eclipse, knowing that you were a part of such an historical event had to lead you to believe that there are still things that can bring us together as one. Keep looking for more ways to do so!!



Coworkers at the OMJ office in Mahoning county share an historic moment in time. Solar eclipse 2024!!

The total solar eclipse as seen in the Cleveland, Ohio area.



“Today, give a stranger one of your smiles. It might be the only sunshine he will see that day.”-H. Jackson Brown Jr.

Why Should I Vote?

According to the Meriam Webster dictionary, the definition for the word **vote** is: **a usually formal expression of opinion or will in response to a proposed decision.**

Sounds like a simple activity with usually good results, but not all will agree. Voting these days has become a topic that has been hotly discussed at family gatherings, water coolers, around the dinner table and even in the line at your local grocery store. Much attention is paid to this topic, but not much is really known about the history of voting in our country.

Voting rights in this country have always been faced with obstacles as far back as the 1700's when America began its great democratic experiment. At that time, only white male landowners were given the opportunity to vote. Poll taxes and literacy tests kept voting out of the hands of African American men.

The U.S. Constitution originally left to the states to decide who was qualified to vote. For decades, white male landowners were always assured of their voting rights.

During the 19th century, states began to limit the property requirement for voting and during the Reconstruction period following the Civil War, the 15th Amendment was ratified which stated that people could not be denied the vote due to their race. Even so, many African American men were denied the vote because of poll taxes or the inability to pass literacy tests.

Women were mostly left out of the voting arena until 1920 when ratifi-

cation of the 19th Amendment occurred.

In the 1960s, some states, many in the South, were still erecting barriers to suppress the vote among people of color, immigrants and low-income populations. After activists put their lives on the line to march in protest, The Voting Rights Act was passed by Congress in 1965. From this point on, states and local jurisdictions were required to submit changes to their elections to the U.S. Justice Department for approval or "preclearance". This measure was very effective in keeping states from erecting new voter barriers.

In 1971, student activism and the war in Vietnam prompted Congress to pass the 26th Amendment. 18-21 year olds who were not able to vote were now given that right.

Another milestone was in 1975 when the Voting Rights Act was passed which protected voters who had limited or no proficiency in English. Multilingual voting materials were available to this group of voters.

In 1982, the Voting Rights Act was extended for another 25 years. Additional assistance was made available to people with disabilities and the elderly.

In 1993, the "Motor Voter" became law. This required states to allow those to register to vote when they applied for their driver's license. In the first year of this becoming law, mail-in registration and the ability to register to vote at offices where public assistance was available afforded more than 30 million people

to complete or update their voter registration.

Due to issues in the 2000 presidential election, Congress passed the Help America Vote Act which helped to streamline election procedures and mandated that states and localities were to update voting equipment in addition to other updates.

In 2013, the Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act. States and localities that had a history of voter suppression were no longer required to submit election law changes to the U.S. Justice Department for review (preclearance). Because of this decision many states began enacting stronger voting laws which was seen to some as an attempt to suppress the votes of people of color.

2016 saw the beginning of claiming "large" number of voters cast their ballots illegally. This was not founded to be true, but did create a maelstrom that is still felt today.

Over the years, many people have worked tirelessly to enact constitutional amendments and laws that would broaden access to the vote, sometimes even putting their lives in danger to achieve this.

As you contemplate whether voting is important to you or if you even wish to vote, think about all those in the past who would have so loved to be faced with the questions of **"Should I vote or not?"**



"If we don't vote, we are ignoring history and giving away the future." -Pat Mitchell



The Connection welcomes stories of interest from all partners. We love to share what is happening with our partners. This may be the only place that we get to know what is going on with your organization, so please SHARE! Email your submission to: jschuler@mctaworkforce.org. Please include contact information. The next edition is scheduled to be published in January 2025.



DMJ Columbiana County Partners

Columbiana County Board of Developmental Disabilities
Columbiana County Career & Technical Center
Columbiana County Port Authority Consortium
Columbiana County Department of Job & Family Services
Columbiana County Educational Service Center
Community Action Agency for Columbiana County
Counseling Center
Eastern Ohio Correction Center
Mahoning & Columbiana Training Association
ODJFS-Veteran Services
Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities
Ohio Department of Job & Family Services

DMJ Mahoning County Partners

Academy for Urban Scholars/NCUS Tech
Choffin Career & Technical Center
Community Corrections Association Inc.
Educational Service Center of Eastern Ohio
Flying High, Inc.
Job Corps
Mahoning & Columbiana Training Association
Mahoning County Career & Technical Center
MYCAP
ODJFS-Veteran Services
Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities
Ohio Department of Job & Family Services
Public Library of Youngstown & Mahoning County
Vantage Aging
Youngstown Area Goodwill Industries
Youngstown Metropolitan Housing Authority
Youngstown State University

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